LITTLE JINGO; or, THE QUEER PARD.

BY PHILIP S. WARNE,


"NOW, GIVE HIM THE GRAND BOUNCE!" SHOUTED JINGO, AND OUT OF THE SHIVERED SASH WENT THE NOW HOWLING MAN.
Little Jingo;
OR,
THE QUEER PARD;
A STORY OF THE MINES.

BY PHILIP S. WARNE,
AUTHOR OF "PATENT LEATHER JOE," "LITTLE TORNADO," "ALWAYS ON HAND," ETC.

CHAPTER I.
A CHALLENGE EXTRAORDINARY.

This scene of Little Brown Jingo soon flew open with a bang.

On a bound a man leaped to the middle of the floor.

"Whoop!" he shouted, "Hyar I am again—" the expressions, ring-tailed rascality! Gaze on me, gent! Size me up, an' reach for me!"

The men who had been loitering in listless attitudes, waiting for their play to reveal its excitement, straightened up with awakening intentness. See how the dull monotonous of the day to be broken into!

Ham Burgess, the proprietor of the Little Brown Jingo, drove from behind his bar, with a bottle in one hand, and a corkscrew in the other.

"Yo'll find me a friend of yours, little ginger?"

"An' what in Cain do ye want hyar?"

"Well, I might as well clean out your dirty battle camp, stranger."

"Was, you'd better begin next door."

"I thought that this hyar might be the head center of the burg."

"You'll find that it's worse'n that, if you don't dry up your doggone foolishness an' dig out."

"Och! That thar begins to sound natural. You have the look of a portly man likely to be ghastly."

"I'd y'ma want me to come out to you an' throw ye through the door?"

"That's just what I'm hungry for!"

"Was, by hookey! you'll git it, an' that mighty sudden."

Ham Burgess drove his bottle and corkscrew, Ham stood out from behind his bar, looking as if he could eat the stranger who had challenged the camp;

"Whoop!" yelled the other again, "Watch out!"

The stranger turned his bottle and corkscrew, Ham strode out from behind his bar, looking as if he could eat the stranger who had challenged the camp;

"Whoop!" yelled the other again, "Watch out!"

"Hey, pardner! I'm Little Jingo."

"Send 'em home hot, like rolls from the bake-shop."

"Hyar's a roll, a roll, then?"

"Right, that's a able mistake o' yours, ain't it?"

And catching the new volunteer's right on his left, he let fly a counter like a thunderbolt, crying:

"Look out for this secker!"

The ex-convict volunteer was knocked on his ear, and until he fetched up under one of the tables.

To this time Ham Burgess, raging like a mad bull, was on his feet again, and "went for the introducer for all he was worth."

"Don't an' carry one!" laughed Little Jingo.

"That thar shant cost you nothin'. But this thar bull is gittin' slow. Ain't thar no more of ye thar's hankerin' fur a bull fight? Come on, gent! Try to make it lively fur a stranger."

"Hy! gun! of that thar's all you want to make you happy, you're as much of it as at Taylor's Bend as any what in the mountains."

And another "took a hand."

"Och, you hunch me, gent! I've come across the divide just fur to see if you had a chance at one of Jingo's, but no hay'er."

And in answer to this appeal several more jumped for the stranger. Anyhow, Little Jingo submitted to be led way.

As expedition was necessary to escape, if "out of the run," after the gold bullion and metal which we have just seen, there was nothing to prevent the desperado from coming back to see whether there was more.

Once clear of Taylor's Bend, Little Jingo turned and looked his companion over again.

"How me?" he asked a laugh, "but we're a pair of assorted sizes!"

The stranger grinned slyly, but made no verbal reply.

He was long and lank, where Little Jingo was short and dumpy. His hair was straight black hair, and a drooping mustachio, which tightened the effect of the deep burnished, dark, shallow complexion, and hollow eyes; while Little Jingo was as fresh as an apple-blossom, with black hair, ruddy cheeks, and deep-set, frank face was round—just the face for good-natured fun.

He was courteous to him that could not keep his packer out of it. On the other hand, it looked as if the stranger never smiled. And he spoke in a deep, sepulchral voice, which seemed to come from the depths of his hollow stomach.

"Beg your pardon, pardner," said Little Jingo, with a merry twinkle in his eyes, "but didn't you ever have a squar meal?"

"An' I do so thin as that?" asked the stranger, with a far-away look.

"You do look hungry, ain't that's fact. I'll be belaborin'—if you'll pardon me—but it makes me feel uncomfortable just to look at you. I come in a hurry with my yer waist-bands, et it takes all the comptissary department of Canyon City. I don't mind tellin' you it's been a long time."

The stranger extended his hand.

"I can heartyly return the compliment," he said.

"Then we're pards—eh! Is it so?"

"Put 'er thar fur the war!"

And the two men struck hands on it.

"But what's your handle, pard?" asked Little Jingo.

The stranger looked away from him with a dreamy light in his eyes.

"That's the matter with him?" thought his interrogator.

As he did not seem about to reply, Little Jingo, after a few words, turned to the stranger.

"Over to the Stip's I used to hail to the name of Charlie Lowden; but out hyar in the mountains I have to make shift with Every-body's Charley, when they don't call me Little Jingo. What did you say that I might call you, sir?"

The use of the title "sir" at once caught the stranger's ear, and he understood its significance. The rough, red face of the West no one uses this formality where there is to be any intimacy of friendship.

Ham's quick animation was general. The man who had withdrawn his hand with sudden coldness.

"Beg pardon! No offense?" he said. "Call me Swanwick—George Swanwick."

If he fills you.

"Then Swanwick, Swanwick, go to bed with, as names go," said Little Jingo, at once recovering his proper self.

And again they clasped hands—this time with apparent frankness on both sides.

CHAPTER II.
A QUEER FIRM.

"Holds on, gentles! This hyar's gittin' to be too much of a good thing! Man to man's the square thing; but I'll be hanged if I'll stand an' see a mob set down on a better man than they've got in this thar intrepid Jingo, and asked 'im to his feet."

"Stranger, this hyar, to my way o' thinkin', is a good place to git clear of;" he said, as he squared himself to meet a furious onset in which every man in the bar seemed to have joined. Yells and excommunications rendezvoused on every hand; but brushing the blood out of his eyes, Little Jingo seized his bottle and corkscrew.

"Whoop! this hyar what I call just a little chock out of the way. Now, you know how to handle yourself, I'll be sworn! We two air enough fur all these cuss' kin fetch on, I'll pok' yer pack out of it and ride away."

"Closing up a chair, he dashed it to the floor with sufficient force to break it to pieces; then seizing a leg, he dealt about with a dexterity that soon made an abundance of sore heads.

"Whoop! I've come to clean out yer camp; an' the spiller of this hyar ranch, into the street is only the first bite in the pig."

Now the battle began again, a dozen to two. But they were two exceptional men. They had muscle; they had spirit; above all, they had wits.

"Now, then! Both together! One more charge, an' we'll put 'em on the catfish."

They made the charge—a furious assault, and those terrible visible execution, for the floor was soon paved with men.

"Now for a clean-out!" and Jingo dropping the chair leg, his weight crushed through the window. The Queer Pard, apparently without the least sign of excitement, grabbed the body on the other side.

"Now, give him the grand bourgeois!" shouted Jingo, and out of the shivered skids went the howling man.

Another quickly followed, and another until six had piled on top of one another out in the street.

This was too much for the rest of the now demoralized crowd, who, as fast as they regained their senses, got up through back door with bloody heads, yelling with fury and pain.

The rout was complete. Little Jingo was for following them.

"Let us put this whole camp in our breeches pockets!" he cried. "Did ye ever see such coyotes?"

But the other was more discreet.

"See hyar, pardner—you ain't yourself," he protested. "Then galloos is a ugly gang. They'll soon be into another own; an' they'll stamp us out. Hyar ye mercy? I know an old Chinese hand and seeing Little Jingo by the arm, he fairly dropped him away.

Jingo was about to resist, for he was in that state of liquor in which he refused to listen to the plainest dictates of reason, for when he for the first time saw the man that had come so opportunely to his assistance, and saved him a drubbing that he might not have got over in a year or more.

Perhaps it was the magnetic gaze of the stranger. Anyhow, Little Jingo submitted to be led way.

As expedition was necessary to escape, if "out of the run," after the gold bullion and metal which we have just seen, there was nothing to prevent the desperado from coming back to see whether there was more.
crank, while Ship seized the one at his end of the windlass. Presently the bucket rose to view, bearing a man's head, which was a mass of a miner, with a burning candle stuck to his hat by a piece of machinery.

Unlike Ship, who was a rolling-blade, with his hands and feet, and all his limbs, a miner, was a wily little specimen of tunnially, with a shrunken body, and a hat in his gap, while his face was a blank for the expression of emotion.

He frowned and blinked his eyes, dazzled by the candle. "Is that him?" he asked, looking away to where a cloud of smoke seemed to be behind a posthumous outfit," from the point of view of the mines—four spirited horses drawing a light sleigh, and with a sleighman who said that Little Jingo and his new parda. Wadan's that thing he's got with him?"

"No, I know!" replied Ship—a question and answer that had passed between many of the caveadeers. Then, followed by Sappead Sam, they made their way toward the fence of the camp, where Little Jingo was already tasting the delights of popularity.

A crowd of the "boys," constantly increased by fresh arrivals, were gathered about, shaking him by the hand, and standing on the back, according to their degree of familiarity.

"Yes, he's one of the boys, too. They've lifted their feet, and examined their necks, and thumbed their change, as the mountain owned with its running fire of questions and observations.

"Come in, you fellows!" he said, as he flicked Little Jingo's with a report of a crack of a pipe, and the brand of a cigarette, and a look of A-line of your pockets, you'll be blown."

Withers, the young ingenuity in this, but only hearty congratulation.

"The corner of Dick Mosier's face was drawn down with envy, as he whined:

"They're not in this, you know, ship, this is the time we took at such a grown-up."

"Never mind, Land! An' go-fetch it!" cried Little Jingo, and his voice didn't seem to have any tone or word in it.

"And don't ye forget it!"

The crowd laughed—yet the bell that had secured Dick his descriptive title, but because of the well-known fact that money never seemed to stick to his hide, nor failed to any other part of his person, for any great length of time.

Waal, boys," said Everybody's Charlie, "to tell you the downright truth, I've been goin' about the country breakin' banks."

"Burglarin' of 'em?" asked Land, in an effort to 'git quiet.

"Natural life," said Little Jingo.

"Not the kind that made you leave the States yesterday, a little while ago."

Again the crowd laughed.

"And I reckon you're going to visit with Everybody's Charlie," said Ship Lambert. "It'll boom your one time, you're going to visit with your face to relax with the largest ears!"

"I'm not," said Little Jingo, laughing with a heartily as they had laughed of him.

Little Jingo generally tickled the seat of his trousers.

"All right," said Ship Lambert, "I've got you there, sir."

"What you, Sappy?" he cried, turning to grasp the hand of the incompetent.

"Yes—no!" replied Ship Lambert, hebanging his head repeatedly and grinning his delight.

He stood with his hat turned forward in the painful way peculiar to tubeciles, and laughed with the corner of his mouth, and the same expression in his eye.

"Hello! Sam's powerful glad to see you! I know the time you was last at school, he grade! Hello! Hello!"

"That's the right, there! that's the good one that in the knowledge-box of yours!" cried Everybody's Charlie, taking his head with the blind redness of one of his rough good-nature.

"That's them as lays claim to a good deal more sense, they don't know what sort of scant, when they see'em."

"What you going to do there, Sam?" asked Little Jingo, suddenly advancing his lips close to Little Jingo's ear and dropping his voice to a confidential whisper, though he gave no proof of the fact, excepting by his eye toward them, and even pointed at them.

"Oh! he's gone there, I'm going to get you out of that behind the swell of his mouth."

There was nothing of the spirit of a pike in the youngster of Monterey, the West to nickname men from any personal particularity, in all the whole. "This round, friend! I don't like the lock of him. I don't!"

Sanderson had lighted from the wagon, and cool a little apart from the crowd, with folded arms and knitted brows, his eyes fixed on vacancy. It was plain that his interest in what was going on about him, in his deep abstraction, his keen face was perfectly somber and forbidding.

"What's the matter with him?" asked Little Jingo, his willowy, wondering eye to notice.

"He's too still. Look out for them still telling a story."

"Him?" and a quick enough one at that, at night—"Say!"

Sam interrupted himself with a sharp exclamation, while his voice was suddenly larger, as with a fright, and his voice more horses with the saddle.

The men who had caught the drift of the loquacious words drew off quickly and followed the wagon with gathering frowns of suspicion.

"Well, what is it?" asked Little Jingo, with a touch of annoyance.

"You know the ugly fellow that comes prowling around sometimes, min' eyes at me? I've told ye about him."

"What's he go to do with my parda?"

"What of that thar kind? Sometimes' thar is two of 'em, or three, or four, or a dozen. Backen, now, this hary might be one of 'em. They're still, like him, in the daylight; but at night, when it gets dark, ye know, an' the thunder swears, an' the lightning plays, an' the wind howls 'round, an' the rain beats, an' the tree mirrors in the sleeping—"

He paused, started at Sanderson, then put his finger close to Little Jingo's ear, and ejaculated:

"Deets! Ye! Yes ye! He'll be back. You'll see me stickin' up through their hair!"

"Dry up yer infernal monstrosity!" growled Little Jingo, and the blood of the horse was away, as Sanderson at this moment looked in his direction.

He encountered the full, suspicious frown of the crowd, who gaped their eyes and turned away in the awkward manner with which men of his class betray to another that he has been the object of high respect: but he was not seen at all moved by the patent dislike of his partner's part.

Little Jingo walked up to him.

"It's time I was givin' you a knockdown to the boys," he said.

CHAPTER IV.

THE UNDERKAFT.

He put his hand on Sanderson's shoulder, and in this friendly attitude turned toward the crowd.

"Gentlemen," he said, this hary is my partner, George Sanderson—a mighty handy man, as the best of you will, if you ever give him reason to trust you."

"I am glad to know those whom Charles Lowden calls the most munificent of his graveyards ones, and permitting not a muscle of his face to relax with the largest ears!"

The boys had a second thought before they recognized the name of Charles Lowden. The thing was too quiet and formal for their notions of good fellowship. Sanderson did not improve his place in their esteem.

Ship Lambert was the only one who offered him the free hand of fellowship, the rest for the most part contrasting themselves with a point-blank stare, though a few bowed their heads and muttered not over-cordial acknowledgment.

"Will you accompany us to the bar, gentlemen?"

"No, thanks. I was Little Jingo's ancient and devoted friend."

He was not pleased with the reception which had been extended to his parda, but hoped that an all-round warm would reach the centers of their hearts sufficiently to make them unbend.

"You're a deep, boys, for my new pard!" he said, when their glasses were filled.

They lifted them and gave him good-luck all round, when Ship leaped upon a box and cried:

"Hold on, gents, for a toast! Hear's to the Undertaker! May it stand by Everybody's Charlie and the Charlie until we go out and find that behind the swell of his mouth."

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CHAPTER V.

ROGUE-POCS.

"Well, what is the matter with you?" asked a young man, with a touch of impatience in his hollow tone.

"Oh, murther! the saints be mete me and heaven too! I am as dead as a door-nail!" wailed Sullivan. "Av at yer river, nature's in a mess! that's what it is, you may take my word for it!"

But not a soul av the two pears did as much as turn an eye to the distressed Sullivan. I believe it to the truth of what he said.

At the foot of the bag stood a basket, none unlike a rude basket, save that it had no handles.

Into this the Irishman dropped a coin known in the west as "two bits." It produced no perceptible effect on the scene.

He dropped in another and another and yet another, with an interval between each reluctantly scrunched hand."

"Divil swap the owd buthun!" he muttered within himself. "Faith, she's too was't that sight! she's blear-eyed and she'll not know her ash when she sees it!" av she don't come roun' purty soon, sure I'll grib it on on again, and then ye'll see what we'll come of me, wid the owd divil an' me all safe an' sound.

"Still" abided the bag, with a hiss like a serpent's.

Then speaking in English, yet with a marked Indian accent, as if she had learned but a few words by rote, she went on:

"That's a lie, Professor Larkin's grease!"

Into those words she contrived to infuse a shrewd maliciousness of the mestizo's liveliness. Then she flung her band from her, and returned to her former position.

The boy, however, had already himself off as fast as his heels could carry him, stumbling over the broad and heavy charges into the heart of the herd for security.

"What's the matter with the man?" shouted Shep Lambert, who had been dancing a quadrille with Colorado Kate, with very remarkable balancing and swinging of corners.

"He's seen a ghost, I'll swear!"

Then looked not unlikely. He was as pale as death, his eyes welled from every pore, his eyes bulged, and he trembled and cowered with terror.

"Will ye've done?" he cried, angrily.

And going straight to the man, he drank two glasses of neat brandy without water.

The boys crowded around him, piling him with awkward questions to answer; but he carried his curiosity by only swearing at them.

"I've seen a man look like that when he had dropped his meat in the dark," said Doc Moser, as a matter of course.

Others caught at the idea. Had the Irishman killed his man? There was nothing improbable in that.

"Ye'd better stop till mornin' before ye go out to look for another man in the brush," he said to Jingo.

"But even as he spoke his jaw dropped, and his face assumed a set expression of surprise.

"The boys," he said, "are going in the direction in which he was staring.

The Undertaker, just entering the door at the further end of the room.

CHAPTER VI.

At sight of him a dead, frowning silence fell upon the crowd.

"You," said the Undertaker, noticing the effect of his entrance, he took up his stand in a corner, out of the way of the crowd, and folding his arms, slightly overlocked the dancing floor.

What was the baleful influence of his gaze? It was like the eye of a crooked Bif-Fisted Frank, who was not in the humor to lose a moment's exercise for which he had "planked" his two bits.

"I can't dance with that monster looking at me, I tell you. I'll break his neck this time that I really can. I believe he has the gift of the evil eye!"

In this instance the floor was deserted, and the musicians—a fiddler, a cornetist, and one who wrested manfully with a violincello that groaned and wailed as if in mortal agony—stopped and stared in wonderment.

The Undertaker standing straight before the crowd, demanded as if he were the speaker:

"He don't see nobody!" whispered one of the Undertaker's crews.

"Go and look at him! you don't know this minute this bounder's going to do me any harm."

"Waal, by Jove! it's mighty nigh time that you know it. How do ye think I know when I'm about to do a 'bunty' to do?" said the Big Fist.

"There's my man, here he comes! This byther ain't right," interrupted Shep Lambert. "Remember, that's Charley's private.

"But he can't spoil our fun just because he happens to be Charley's pard, I'd like to know!"

"I don't care who he belongs to, it's my business!"

"The ladies don't dance with him a lookin' at em. Ain't that enough?"

"Yes, and they often do 'em any hurt any day they lookin' at em!"

All that question. All I've got to say about it, is that I'll be eternally blasted if I'll have my fun knocked in the head by any galoot that walks in this place.

The angry minor raised his voice defiantly, as he shook his head from side to side, to attract the Undertaker's attention. He glared at him, awaiting even so slight a provocation as a glance.

Had Sanderson looked that way, he would have demanded what he was about doing, and then proceeded to pour out a flood of abusive epithets upon him.

Finding himself in a hopeless minority, for others joined with the Big Fist in expressions of disapprobation.

"Stop groveling at him—your ugly mugs are not the kin of mine!"

And I will go and git him out of the room quietly.

"Don't care how ye git him out, so long as the dance goes on."

If the time ever comes to set down on rose," said Shep, with an angry look at the Big Fist, I hope that George Sanderson may be of the crowd that does it!

"He has his chance, an' you, too, whenever you want to take it," retorted the other.

"When I do want to, you bet you'll know it," said Shep, as he walked off.

He was about to set up the Undertaker and invite him out to look around, when the door of the room flew open, and in walked Everybody Charley, briskly.

He cast a rapid glance about the room, espied the Undertaker, and turned his eyes to the smug face of the fellow that showed he had been looking into the fireplace and started in his direction, when Shep called to him.

"Charley! Charley! Look byars, directly!

"Jingo," he said, turning to the point of addressing his partner, turned round, and then with a look of something akin to ridicule.

"What's up?" he asked, looking from Shep's flushed face to those of the crowd, and discovery.

"Charley, the boys is talkin' about bouncer!"

"I bet they are!" replied Little Jingo.

And though he dropped his voice below its ordinary tone, he was in his usual ring in that "meant fight."
Little Jingo.

CHAPTER VII.

Bought with a Price.

"What did you say?" asked Kate, breathless.

"Tell phwat you said, my dear!"

"And what did I say?"

"That Little Jingo shouldn't take that black-eyed horse!"

"You are very much mistaken. What is it to me?"

"Now look ye here, Kitty, Marvinseay. Ar' ye say wyd will me off, he goes to Frisco, and lady or she'll foot his bill. I hope the little bi' will burn him. An' who goes wid um? Who but Little Jingo, that's who! Din't he say that once? But ar' you fair an' square wid me, faith well put our two heads (higher) an' divil a step shall be taken of ye wid us or an' other."

"How can we prevent it?" cried the girl, desperately, catching hold of the Irishman's arm.

"Just look at that now!" cried Sullivan, with a broad grin of satisfaction.

"Sensic speak!" asserted Kate, shaking him impatiently.

"Wouldn't ye be willing fur to do to keep him here?" asked Sullivan, playing the shrew the moment he saw he had the game in his own hands.

"Anything! Anything!" panted the girl.

"Ye know he's had the divil's own run o' luck lately!"  asked Sullivan.

"Yes, yes!"

"An' she go fur to lay for me when he git the feelin' o' winnin' an' um?"

"Faith, he had the impudence to tell me that same!"

"Well! What of that?"

"It's wid the money he'd be scoppin' an' ah can't git nothin' but o' that till he git me my payment, d'ye moolah? Phwat else?"

"Can't play with him, can ye?"

"Yes! That's a darn' way an' out, I'm sure. Don't play wid every wan that puts his money up."

"What do you propose to do, then?"

"Ah, it's in my heart. Faith, it's phwat you intend to do."

"I have told you, I will do anything to prevent him!"

"Anything? just anything at all?"

"Anything!"

"Listen, listen! Wo'd'ye wish the little bi' an' him?"

And bringing his face close to hers, the Irishman panted;

"Hah hah! hah!"

"He had risked everything on this woman's reputation. If she betrayed him the boys in their resentment might make the camp too hot for him.

"Do you think that an uninterrupted row of red heads around the breakfast table would be a very unpicturesque spectacle to begin the day on?"

She followed the direction of her laughing eyes and saw Colorado Kate.

"Her face is as red as her hair, shine! perh'aps is her name."

Charley laughed; and Kate saw him.

Then her face suddenly grew white with fear.

Later Bessie Bright-eyes took advantage of a moment near Kate to whisper in her ear:

"I have about convinced Charley that families ought to be consulted about every affair."

All of this prepared Kate to fall into an error in her judgment, but her heart was not affected by the news that nothing delighted her so much as to be able to put her mother's sorrows to her heart's content.

"Don't you think that an uninterrupted row of red heads around the breakfast table would be a very unpicturesque spectacle to begin the day on?"

Kate took the book from his hand, and, with a perceptible shake in her voice:

"I'll agree not to betray you, whether I do what you wish me to or not! Will that do it?"

"That it will! Now kiss the book, colleen.

She did so with cold lips.

Sullivan then told her of his visit to Washkita. He would provide the charm; she was to see that it was administered.

Like most women of her class, Colorado Kate had implicit faith in the great power of old bales, gympses, or Indians. She had once seen Washkita and been greatly impressed by his dextrous agility.

"But it won't harm him otherwise?"

"No! Don't ye suppose thim kind's phwats they're givin' a thing fur?"

Kate smiled.

She smiled, too, to the man she loved and jealousy of her rival was struggling for the possession of her heart again.

Sullivan saw that this was the critical moment. A sudden throb of generous impatience, which might come out only with risk to him all.

"Likely, ya, darlin'?" he said, in a wheeling tone, "it's a light'f things ye're after fur lokin'. Puwah would set o' yer bever the bi' kike an' phwah! We've been keepin' this tin' waker Puwah would be so lokin' to bring back yer wavered would be to see a model of this th' best of thim by rans' o' yer ornaments, the same as ye do by yer ornaments."

"Will you give me the necklace?" cried Kate, clasping her hands.

"Do yer mean that you have been intimating it fur, this long time?" asked Sullivan, with the
CHAPTER VIII
SPRINGING THE SNAKE.

Instead of boarding at the hotel, Little Jingo had a shanty of his own, which he occupied in connection with the Undertaker. A Chinaman did their cooking and washing and some other household duties.

Little Jingo started out with a house-warming, which was honored by every inhabitant of the town.

The ladies especially graced the occasion with their smiles, with much peering curiosity and motherly solicitude for arrangements for the new-born "baby's hall.

"But a heathen Chinino!" cried Kate, with a shrug of her shoulders. "Ill doon you!"

"Poison me?"

"Which me?"

"Whene'er you like.

"To-morrow?"

"Certainly.

Little Jingo was delighted.

"I wish we could glut of this from to-day; and you won't let me down to-morrow, will you?"

"To-morrow will be time enough, thank you.

His eyes were sparkling with pleasure anticipation.

She turned pale in spite of herself.

"I've a mind to eat anything between now and then; so as not to spoil my appetite," he laughed.

"Do you fancy that I cook so full that you must be as hungry as a bear to eat it?" she asked, covering her agitation with pretended politeness.

"You bet I don't. But I know it will be so good that I shall want room to stow away a little of it.

Kate was mollified.

"But what do you want to cook?" asked Little Jingo.

"Can you get some rabbit?"

"Yes, I can.

"Then I'll make you a pot-pie.

"That'll be fine! Say, Kate?"

"Will you?"

"You won't mind my pardi?"

"Colorado Kate has her ways. She didn't like the Undertaker. Above all, she was half-afraid of his silent scrutiny.

He should not detect her treachery? She fumed him clutching her wrist, and looking down over his head, with his black eyes, while not a muscle of his swarthy face moved. She could hardly repress a snicker at the thought of the Undertaker.

"He's a good fellow—better'n he looks," the Undertaker had told her. "He isn't what he seems. If he read a book, it might be a book of poetry, but he's a woman's man, though he doesn't know it, and he's good enough to give you a piece of advice.

"Oh, no!" interrupted the girl, hastily.

She bridled at the thought that Little Jingo could be so unfair to her, the woman she was to be married to her even the regiment of his partner.

"Look, my girl! You ain't mad?"

She didn't know how to get rid of him, and opened her eyes wide.

"I'll fire him—"

"No, you won't!"

"But really I don't want him.

"Well, I do!"

Little Jingo felt uncomfortable. Of course he had said that he had "put his foot into it.

Being a woman, Kate punished him merci- fully. She had found the bawds and haggled to her, as women cares a kitten, with coking some small article on the spur.

"I’ll do it!" she cried.

"Sure, ya will?" corroborated the Irishman.

The bargain was struck. A woman was sold to treachery. The price was the gratification of the two strongest passions of her nature—jealousy and the love of finery!

CHAPTER IX
TAKEN IN THE SNARE.

Upon repairing to Little Jingo's shanty on the next day, Colorado Kate found him alone, and in high spirits, in anticipation of what he called a picnic.

"I made the heathen slick things up like a new-polished dog, and hired him for all day, so that we sha'n't have to partake of the benedictions of the occasion.

"But where is your pardi?" she asked, looking about as if in search of him.

"He's been out. I'm going to be happy without that pardi of mine!" said Little Jingo, with a chuckle of satisfaction.

"I could be much happier with him," she was insinuatingly eager to reply.

"Well, you'll have to make the best of your disappointment, then; for he has made himself scarce.

Where has he gone, and why?"

"Oh! you needn't look at me in that way, as if you thought that I fired him along with the Chinaman?"

"A guilty conscience needs no accusing."

"It's all right, bright, he went of his own accord;"

"Without much persuasion from you not to go any more.

"Well, if he was bound to go, you couldn't expect me to get down on my narrow-hones an' beg him to stay."

"Oh! of course not. But what was his excuse for going?"

"Why, he was dog-sick. He looked sick.

"He always does! But that's enough of him.

She took off her hat with its waving plumes. "That's a dandy, ain't it?" observed Little Jingo, taking down a coat of his own and throwing it into a corner, in order to furnish her with a place on which to hang the apron, which he declared was "fearfully and wonderfully made.

She had a bundle wrapped in a newspaper, "woman-fashion," the corners being brought to the center and pinned.

Little Jingo stood with a hand on either knee, his eyes flashing, and covered with an expectant grin, while he unwrapped it.

"My eyes?" he cried, as he turned back the corners of the coverlet. She wore a snowy apron, the daintiest and most graceful in the place, and to all appearance did you git that daisy? That ain't a spot on it, now, nor an it's just as smooth an' white as a sheet of white damask."

"But I want you to understand: They do make things as saller as they do, don't they?"

"You must believe that none of those dirty fellows will ever touch a woman's hand to it," exclaimed Kate.

"Say now! I bet you don't;—didn't you, Kate?"

"Of course I did!" she replied. "Who should I, if it was a man."
Little Jingo

"Nobody, by the livin' Jingo!" cried Every- body's Charley, with great enthusiasm. "That ain't nobody in this ayer section o' country that ever saw such a sight as that gay little piece o' dry-goods!"

"Nonsense!" said somebody it might be Kate.

"Did you make it, Kate?"

"Yes, sir!"—with some pardonable pride in her voice.

"Any you could knock spots out of a billed ship?"

"You wouldn't lose any money on that proposition, would you, Kate?"

"What?"

"Are the mostest nattiest lady I ever knew!"

"Nonsense! How many do you say that in a month's time?"

He looked at her with a glow in his eyes that she had never seen there before.

She blushed, and turned away with a nervous feeling.

If the matter had dropped there, she might have broken faith with Hank Sullivan, tossed the little saddle weapon he was "how's," and given Little Jingo a pot-pie as salubrious as it was palatable. But his propensity to tease got the better of his love for her, and he raised ca- nister, but for the life of him could not just let her go.

"Let me tie them strings, Kate!"

"Go away! I can do myself."

"Oh! I know!"

"So do I!"

"Am I afraid I'll git 'em dirty? I'll wash my hands."

"You won't trouble you."

"What's the matter, Kate?"

"Nothing. What should be the matter?"

"You won't let me cut off my hair once in a while."

"I won't let you touch my hair! You're a considerate fellow, upon my word!"

Do you know how long it took to iron that agy?

Little Jingo looked at her helplessly. Before a woman's subtle weapons he was "how's," as a knife to a mule, to a "don't do that again." Like a skilled swordswoman, after each thrust she recovered so quickly and gracefully that he only knew when she had struck him, as a rabbit, but for the life of him could not just let her go. And he raised another round.

But when she began to roll up the sleeves of her dress, he was soon lost in admiration of her workman-like arms.

She cut short her flattering speeches by setting him to scrubbing, petting, and whatever else she was able.

The next hour was full of delightful surprises for Little Jingo. There was everything she had dreamed of; a marvel of neatness and skill.

"Dance, Charley," said Kate, and, with so little definiteness that he only succeeded in missing himself from head to foot with flour, and doubting whether he had dropped the drench on the floor, had she not "drawn the line" there, and prohibited him from touching it?

Secretly Kate enjoyed this as much as she did. It was like what she had imagined a honeymoon would be. Never before had she admired almost incessantly, in a make-believe fashion that only heightened its effect.

When the pot-pie was cooking, and she had not the energy to manaculate again or any- thing, she had come to her normal and haughtier condition with her freedom from self—she returned, there was a good deal of need, and drew forth another spot of spilt flour.

"Why, I thought that was another proposition," said Little Jingo, as she swept it out, and proved it to be a tablecloth.

"In the course of a many an hour supposed I wear in the course of a many an hour," asked the lady, doubtful of his masculine ignorance.

"You can't tell what I wear in the course of a many an hour," said Little Jingo, as she scratched his head, and it proved to be a tablecloth.

"Confound his ugly mug!" was Little Jingo's reflection.

"If you come to see for yourself that the thing is done on the square!" thought Colorado, as he hurried the kindred soul into the back of the chuck box; and his red face, as he winked at Little Jingo, as if the joke were between them.

"No intruder at all," said Little Jingo, with the same expression of face which was as little too glibly. "Come in! come in! and we'll have the best pot-pie that ever made your mouth water!"

At this the Irishman's jaw dropped, and he looked at Colorado Kate inquiringly.
Little Jingo.

He left Little Jingo and Colorado Kate looking at each other with a desire to despise them. "What is the matter with the old fraud?" asked the former. "How should I know?" answered Kate. "I'll bet it is some superstition about eating at my heart's desire," muttered Jingo, who was possessed of that hard, practical common sense which does not easily yield to the supernatural. "He's afraid of the devil's hock." Kate was silent. The smile died out of her face.

"I'll make him look worse than that!" chuckled Little Jingo, following out his own thoughts so far as he did not have to suppose her. "He's a surly dog; and he's fattened on the boys until he deserves to have some one squelch him till all he's worth." She looked at him. He held such an un-omniscient eye, and on many things of life, suppose he was strong enough to resist the power of the Indian huck and her incantations. A keen regret of what she had done asserted itself, and in- perhaps with a wild look.

Charley saw it, and it sent a wave of tenderness through him. "Kate," he said, "do you think I'm going to do this business for good and all? A man can't be lucky for ever. It's playin' hookey that knocks the strength run. But when I've got my pile, I shall want to get somebody to cop in with me. I've got my eyes on a friend of yours."

"No friend of mine," if you please! said the girl, lowering her eyes, and striving to prevent the fading of the blood from her face before betraying her. "Who sin'it?" asked Charley. "The person you are thinking about."

"How do you know who I am speaking about?"

" haven't you already told me?"

"Not I!"

"Very well! We won't say anything more about it, then."

"Kate, you didn't take no stock in that nonsense, did you?"

"In what nonsense?"

"About Hawaii, and the Peers."

Instead of replying directly, she set her white lips, and said:

"I'm not saying nothing else anymore, to talk about."

"Hold on, Kate!" he interrupted. "When a woman gets on her high horse, she always rides at such a furious pace that she never sees anything by the route she takes. Don't you suppose I've got eyes in my head? Am I the man to ask such a woman as Besse Bright-eyes to marry me?"

"Marry you?" repeated the girl, breathlessly.

"And looking up at him in a frightened way, and her eyes wildly." "Why not?" he asked.

And going round to her, he threw himself on his knees at her feet as if he were her subordinate, and with a voice trembling in his voice and his knees. "Why not, my darling? Where have your eyes been, that you couldn't see that it is love—love that can make my heart happy and bright as you have made even this rough hickory to day?"

"Don't touch me! Let me go," she cried, struggling to rise from the chair in which he held her, and tugging desperately to free her self from his clinging arms. "No, I'll never let you go again!" he cried, laughing at futility efforts.

Indeed, indeed, when she asked him, he drew her closer down to him until she felt his warm breath upon her lips. "I can't! I can't!" she cried, distractedly, struggling with all her might to keep him at bay. But as a traitor in the camp, was mapping her strength and giving her over to the enemy. "But I say, Charley, and shall!" he persisted, drawing nearer and nearer the goal of his happiness. It was not a question asked for information. It was only a murmur of triumphent ecstasy, a burst of joy, a burst of songs which he could feel their warmth, yet exulting with the bliss that comes when, presently, when the deluge of anticipation had been exhausted to the full.

"Marry you? Oh, never, never!" she sobbed, her heart breaking with the thought of the barrier she had around it, or her own heart's desire was so near.

Yet even as she spoke her face sunk upon his, and her arms closed about his neck, as if by a power not her own, and from her eyes gushed of despairing tears.

"Why not?" he asked again; and in his voice came a tender gravity that filled like cool water in a dried-up cistern.

He thought that she referred to her past life. "Don't you know she came to other women. And so she did, in part.

"What is it a man wants?" he went on. "Somebody that will love him. And how many of life. And you love me Kate, I don't have to wait for you to say it in so many words."

"Do you know what that is?" she cried, again, with a sudden weakness she tore herself out of his arms and sprang to her feet.

"Kate!" he exclaimed, with a great surprise and great dread in his eyes.

She did not heed him but tore the pearl necklace from her throat, dashed it upon the floor, and stamped upon it. He took it again. "Was the girl taking leave of her senses?"

"Do you know what that is?" she cried, again.

"Your necklace. What is the matter with it?"

"It is the devil's bridle! And I have sold my life happiness to him for that miserable thing! I am a dead woman. As soon as she did not have to suppose her, she took it all the way from the floor, giving way to such a flood of weeping that she could hardly form her words.

"Kate? Kate?" he cried, kneeling and gathering her up in his arms, "what in the world is the meaning of this?"

"Kill me! kill me!" she cried, wildly, "I deny it! I don't know what a viper you are holding in your arms! This is no place for such a wretch as I!"

And disregarding him, she seized him and pushed him over with both of her arms, and as he staggered, she suddenly slipped out of her dress, and upon her hands, tore out all the tattered wretchedness, and broke the bonds of her dress, and clung to his hand, and she entered one of the rooms in which she had been an invalid of weeping. No, she didn't have to think of breaking his neck, if necessary, before you give me one more word!"

"Oh! I couldn't bear to have you go away without it.

"Of course you didn't!" she said, "I now how I was in love with you."

And she knuckled softly to himself.

"Got you that time!—didn't I, sweetheart?"

And she kissed her very gently.

"Charley, I don't deserve this!" she whispered, clamping about his neck with a strength that was like to strangle him; but he voted it a pleasant death to die, and so did not interfere with her.

Then she remembered that she had broken her heart. "I shall not trouble you, horse.

"But," she said, "I don't care what comes of it! If I can only be with you a little while like this, I can take the worst that can possibly follow without a murmur!"

He wept, and was comforted, with huge satisfaction at what her words implied. "They don't put up love much to be that, I'm thinking!"

He was not equal to a nice balancing of the claims of love and duty. He was an honest man and woman. As he would not be, short of the Simon pure, simple, with the person all the a-cetera; and all of those that ain't no secrets.
Little Jingo

"Didn't I tell you he was blowin' too loud?" chimed in Dick Modell.

"Bah!" growled Bert Younger, who stood at the head of the group of those who were ready to back Everybody's Charley through fire and water. "It's that vampire, yerder!"

"Talked by the Undertaker, of course," Burt glanced upon the Undertaker, as Mckinlay's jaw dropped, and he looked from the speaker to Sanderson. It was evident that he was "taking all in," though nobody noticed it.

"I tell ye what it is, boys," pursued Burt. "Round the corner, Charley, lettin' the thing go this b'yar way!"

"But do you propose to do anything?" asked a man, striking Burt's arm.

"Fire that cab out, an' give the man a shilling."

"Little Jingo won't stand that. He's bound to back his punt till the last dog's hung."

"Then be mighty as well throw his money into the street! That's all I've got to say about it."

"I know the man's in the corner," interpolated Shep Lambert. "You hadn't got nothin' agin Sanderson, but his lookin' at me's as good as the most o' you, any day."

"Would you have that walkin' graveyard standin' in your way when he's been as good a bloke as I've ever demanded Burt."

"You see, I allow it wouldn't do no hurt if I did."

"That's purty far for a slide-out," sneered Younger.

"He was not the only one that felt that Shep had avoided answering yes, or no. Shep Frank laughed into his cap, rose from his seat, and demanded Burt.

"Now I've seen a bigger jest yet."

"Look at Columbus!"

"But the contents of the second bag were melting away.

"I have not! Now go along."

"He had locked searchingly in her face. She had stood the ordeal without changing color; but in order to do it, she had had to affect anger.

"You are such a snide girl yourself that you suspect even one else of the same?"

"I'm afraid so."

"Try something, and I'll see it. There was nothing in what you gave. Didn't I eat the same, and do you suppose that I fancy such a capacity as you prepared?"

"I can see nothing."

"But, death to my soul! ye gave me the same dose."

"I think it is."

"Don't be a fool!"

"I know it, too."

"It is my fault?" she moaned within herself. "In God's name, have I looked at Golly? Oh! Charley! Charley!"

"I couldn't very much restrain her tears.

"So the second bag of gold passed slowly but surely across the table to the side of the bank. The last stake was up, and the spectators held their breath.

"Then they stood eye to eye, with a light hang on a hair-trigger."

"I don't know much about it, Charley."

"I've heard the word, pocket!"

"The excitement grew more and more intense. All necks were craned forward. Every eye was riveted on the box.

"Isn't it more than?

"I'll look at the card on which Little Jingo's last stake was piled.

"The bank won."

"There was a moment of profound silence. Then the whole room burst into an uproar.

"And not the slightest puzzle."

"Judge me yourself!"

"It is my fault?"

"But she knew that Little Jingo, having entered upon the game with a full knowledge of the conditions under which he did so, would not take advantage of the revelation she could make, and would only be constrained by her interest.

"Well, Jingo himself rose and turned toward the crowd, saying, calmly:

"Gentlemen, this is all out of place. I hope that my friends will understand the game—thanking them, of course for their symp-"
"Everything," answered Little Jingo.

"As a prize-fight?" suggested Dick Moser.

"He'd want a man of his size, then," said Big-Fisted Frank, giving the impression by his tone and manner that he would be willing to stand as Sullivan's champion.

"I'm an Indian fighter, if that's your game," said the proprietor of the Ace of Hearts.

A thrill of eager expectancy ran through the room. Not a man present bet the boys more than a square knock-out.

It was the getting in order on an occasion of that kind.

"Two to one on Little Jingo, no matter who he tackles, the plan," said Big-Fisted Frank.

"He always held it the first duty of a gentleman to be present at such a scene and no matter what the prospects of success.

Not hearing the crowd, Little Jingo stripped off his boots and piled his clothes on the table.

"Put up whatever you like agin' them," he said, coolly.

Sullivan stared.

"You ain't going to do no sickly bloody thing as that!" he cried. "Lick Jack, an' won't stand everything. The gentleman is tryin' to git a dead open-an-

Hank Sullivan's friends all united in this protest; and even Little Jingo's felt that their champion was crowding the bargain. Their support was not so hearty as it would otherwise have been.

"Put up whatever you like agin' me," said Little Jingo, quietly. "I think Mr. Sullivan will accept the bet."

"An' make good the inside of the place. Not 1, faith! Anything I say, I stan' by that."

And the Irishman's indignation was beautiful to behold.

"What's the matter with it?" asked Little Jingo.

"No gentleman would take the cowl's off an other's back.

"Oh, you needn't have any tender consideration for me, if that is all."  

"Moreover, as our friend here said, luck wouldn't stand in, an you know that well enough.

"Then it's your own pocket you're lookin' out for, after all.

"On to the point of what's rascally an extra fair. Look, I don't take advantage o' no man, an' don't want no man to take advantage o' me.

"All I understand you to say that it is a question of fairness?"

"That's the matter, Cap'n."

"Will the gentleman fall back as far as possible, an' allow me to have a word with Mr. Sullivan in private?" asked Little Jingo, going round to the other side of the table.

They complied, what influence was to be brought to bear on the Irishman was that he move from the position in which public sentiment gave him the wrong edge of self-interest was against "tempting fate" in this unheard of way.

Sullivan, with a peculiar smile Little Jingo walked up to him and said, "My old friend."

"How about that lizzard's tongue, my Christian friend?"

"Don't you know o' God?" gaped the Irishman, starting back as if stung by a scorpion.

He turned iridescent, and stood quaking in every part.

The boys stared at him in utter astonishment.

What could be the purport of the half-dozen words that could have such an effect as they saw.

"Pawat do ye knows about that?" asked Sullivan quizzingly.

"Oh, this is the same Little Jingo, coolly.

"Who told you?"

"A little friend of mine.

"That could be bull, man.

"You're sure about that?"

"An' that's the truth I'm a-sayin' on it.

"On her soul? What are ye talkin' about, man?"

"Didn't she swear?"

"What?"

"And with his lips to the Irishman's ear: "An Indian hag! Hah! hah!"

Then suddenly he added, without a change in the quiet expression of his face.

"But, come! this isn't to the point. Do you accept the bet, or don't you?"

Sullivan looked at the accountant. An ingratiating smile that unnerved him rested on Little Jingo's lips. He read there the after-effect, the meekness, the things "blown," the boys would not leave of his establishment.

"If the crows goes agin' ye, y'll stan' it!" he asked.

"Certainly," answered Little Jingo.

"An' not squiff?"

"Now, you damn suc-er blow!"

"Nor blow."

"What's the matter, old man?"

He was completely "broke up. The boys wondrously saw that.

"Sure! You bet on that!" growled Burt Younger.

"Little Jingo's goter let us in to it," said another.

Sullivan saw that his credit was undermined in the eyes of a boy without a doubt, and he told him that he had made a paying invest-ment in silencing Little Jingo's tongue whatever came of it.

"But that sha'divil! Bed can tell her! she never takes a chance for nothin', she's never after a chance, never to get the weight o' me bod an' ber.

"But I knew she was from Little Jingo's stead. And, from this point I didn't want to turn in money.

The Irishman had not a dollar in the world that he could call his own, nor a thing save the clothes on his back that he could turn into money.

"Don't want to send you out into the world without a stake," said Little Jingo; and he handed Burt a bunch of dollars.

His friends refrained from cheering, as the defeated man walked out of the saloon that at the stirring of a gun had been his, but was now the property of his adversary.

CHAPTER XIII.

A GILD TONGUE.

CANYON CREEK was calm and bloomy, beneath which smoldered a fever lest of excitement.

Immediately upon his great success Little Jingo had installed his partner in the Ace of Hearts. There he had spent every night since he was among the cards out of the box. He was the right and left as if his movements were controlled by machinery.

Before Burt Younger had said, when on the first night the wily camp had called the game, there was the man, and he was Burt Younger.

"This hyar ain't the fast time that gay and fes- tive cuss has handled the pastetboroughs!" said Burt.

"War!" said the Irishman, with a general aspect.

"Wal, then," said Shep Lambert, "that only goes to prove what I said at first. Little Jingo knew his man better than you could tell him.

"Not a mighty lucky—if of's all luck!" whined Dick Moser.

"Yesterday you was growlin' because he wasn't good-looking! an' now you've got all the ballyhooce because he knows how to deal! I'd just as lief see a man who just said um!" cried Shep, in high dudgeon.

"That's the way, Shep—that's all I've got to say to you!" shouted Burt.

"Ef that ain't some powder turn in this hyar sheehan on account, Jack, I am, and I lose my guess," said Moser, watching Burt Younger out of the corner of his eye.

"It's mighty good fun playin' in the fire—ef you don't get singed!" retorted Shep, the flush of his confidence showing up in his words.

The matter dropped for the time.

The next day Charley failed to appear, and upon inquiry it was learned that he had taken to his bed sick.

"It's a little queer that his pards should keep close counsel about the matter until it was fairly pumped out of him," said Dick Moser, in his inquiring way.

"The boys ain't the only dog-queer thing about this hyar fine gentleman," chimed in Burt Younger.

Thereupon the boys called upon Charley in a body.

They were let in by his Chinese servant, Sam Ling, who stood before the door with his junk shoes set at an exact angle, his hands clasped before his face, his snuff-smoke, and an exceedingly snug and innocent look on his face.

"No boys," said Charley, with a pleasant smile, as he looked down the long line of his friends, all wearing that decorous expression of STDOUTANCE which people wear when they don't.

"It does a man good way down in his boots, to know that his friends don't forgit him the minute he's laid on the shelf.

"What's the row, ole man?" asked Shep Lambert.

"Nobbin' to count. I only feel a leetle shaky in the some roome.

"You look blue around the gills, an' that's a fact," said Burt.
Little Jingo.

"I'll be all right in the morning!"

"You ever order a doctor," suggested Dick Mosier.

"It's the pond's handy about them things. He says he'll give me a sweat to-night that it'll fetch me up in the morning!"

This intelligence was received in dead silence. Everybody's face dropped, except Stop Lamp, who leaped to his feet, and began to talk in a lively strain.

"Don't do," said Jingo; "it can't round the next day, nor the next; and when it appeared that he was really "good," for a spell of sickness, everybody, it seemed, leaped on him, and see that he was comfortable."

They opened the door and called and clattering, "like a flock of white black-birds," as he laughingly told them. But he was disappointed for a spell, and they all thought he was really "good," and, as they flitted, in his eager gaze left each face in turn for the next, in a vain quest of Colorado Kate.

Every day since the first he had waited for her, at a heart-feeling of neglect. Way bad, she had not come to him, the moment she knew he was down. Would he have treated her so?

He had chafed and fretted, which made him only the worse; until now, at the first rattle of slipper, he had raised on his elbow, all to lay to his eyes upon her, with a feeling that once, in a while, in his turning over his head would make him well again; or if not, well, at least so happy that he would forget the disappointment of the past pair.

When she saw that she had not come, he fell back on his elbow, and gazed upon a grain and an oat, and lay with closed eyes.

The ladies ran to him with cries of dismay. Thrills and chills ran through the gang, saying, telling him that he had only been shelled. And then you see how much his friends really thought of him.

"If you would do less talkin' an' say more," called Dick Mosier, "we would have you back to the Colorado Kate. When you see her, that she has got her down in the house."

"Why, don't you know?" cried Bessee Bright-eye.

And her face lighted up with the eagerness of a gossip who unexpectedly finds that no one has been confederate with her in imparting a rare bit of news.

The other ladies smiled with sympathetic surprise.

"Know! Know what!" asked Little Jingo, with a sharpness of feeling, of Bessee Bright-eye.

"Just see that!" cried Bessee Bright-eye.

"Those alp Mounds never told him!"

"Just like the men! murmured one of the ladies.

"Ha! ha! ha! That come of having a pard that wears boots! laughed the butcher."

"What do you fellows ever talk about I should like?"

"That's a matter of the women!"

"In two words, then—Kate's gone!"

"Gone!" cried Little Jingo, starting again to his seat.

"Gone! Vamosed the ranch—cut the camp!—shook all of her friends!—got!"

The sportive minx bobbed her head at each statement of the fact, smiling in high faction.

"Gone!" repeated Little Jingo. When? Where? What for?"

"Whoa! My! my! I'm blessed if it wasn't the very sight you took to your bed! Did you ever think of that! He's pining for the loss of her. He's as white as the pease!"

And quite unconsolable of Little Jingo's dissipation, made the room ring with silver laughter.

"Go on! Tell me all about it! cried the sick man.

"Where? Was that next? Well, that's one of the things you're particularly interested in her whereabouts to find out. She didn't give me her address.

"What does a lady ever leave for! Of course, I know, but where are the peculiars, see small bills. In this case, Bill Hart!"

"Hank Sullivan's side-partner!"

"How's your health?" lauged the "giddy girl.

"He raised her off the board with one of the great quantities of perspiration it was true that she tried to get you not to play with Hank, the day you scooped him in so consequently.

At that, Little Jingo sprang upright in bed, and then you see how perfectly that the ladies—what's the pity! were not altogether unaged to do that sort of thing—shrank away from him in dismay.

"Why, is it possible that you—that you—come with the water down a sink hole, about a half on the gully! I mean the little stream that runs through the rocks."

"I know," I answered Bessee.

"We'll, I'll be greatly obliged to you, if you'll throw that package down that fur me. I may not see you I'm much in every body that I like to trust it to do me fur."

"I will!" replied the girl, with seeming earnestness and sincerity. "I won't keep you any longer," said Little Jingo.

She hesitated, and then putting her hand lightly on his shoulder, said, hesitatingly:

"I haven't hurt you—have I?

"Not but you have been very kind," said Little Jingo, without turning his face so that she could see it.

She went out at once and softly, and he was alone.

He drew up his knees, covered his face with both hands, and so lay perfectly still, save for the quiver of the pulse in his cheeks.

The girl went—almost ran—straight to her room, opened with Rogers that trembled with the package in her hand, and, with quiver, and, with quiver, and paced with glistening eyes upon her, flung her to the bed.

"Well," she cried, exultantly, "that's as cheap jewelry as I ever got in this world!"

And she snapped her fingers, and laughed.

Chapter XIV.

SEAPROD RUM TAKES A HABIT.

This chapter does not do me to be paved over fur by a gourme that does me with drugs to make me sick, to feed me on bread pills, and make me lighthearted. I am not of the substance of his draughts and blood-letting; and then there is the idea that he is the matter with me; and if that is, it's my own lookout; he went on, with the inconsistency of an irritated man. My pard's murrin' me to my likin'. Then what is it to the rest of you?"

In this he unintentionally misrepresented the Undertaker.

It was true that Sammerson was tireless in his attentions to his pard, turning out at any time in the night to give him water or his simple herb tea, which at most was expected only to alloy his fever. But he could not deal with the disease, and confessed his entire ignorance of what ailed his pet.

He had urged the need of a doctor, but Charley had insisted that there was nothing the matter with his moon, except that he had a fever.

"Hang his pard!" grumbled Burt Younger, at one of his calls, as though every one he vaguely suspected.

There was something that the men had not mistake about.

"Shen Lomart laughed scornfully.

"Don't get your better locker," etc! Am! still you're not happy! We'll have to git up a brittle world fur your especial benefit, when a man shall be long nor short, old nor young, good-nor bad generally. But, by d—— it, we rule out cranks, it's my opinion that none o' you won't stand much snow!"

He added to himself, that he had flung wonderfully, while Little Jingo was becoming greatly interested in the subject, and was to have taken two of him to cast a shadow. It was as if they had changed places in this respect.

"I am excusable, too, that he had become more cheerful and, or, rather, more animated. When I got out in the moonlight off by himself among the crags—he walked with a more springy step, swinging a bottle of brandy in his hand—pretty much the same as if you were near me, genteel. That their walkin' home-yard has brought ill-luck to everybody's Charley's Steakhouse. Sherry! A bottle of brandy right!" insisted Burt Younger, whenever the subject was broached, and it became the general topic of conversation.
Day and night, in-doors and out, wherever there were two or more men grouped together, there was a discourse on Calamity which had taken over the favorite of the hour. Every morning the boys went to see him in a look of serious anxiety, and the talk about Little Jingo, who stood aside, as we have said, with his juniors, did he as his eyes, and his hands clasped before his blue blouson, looking over the same serene look of gulleeless immorality. Sometimes the nose of the other, who was brave and talkative, he would tug at his head on one side and heaved a profound sigh:

"Even that pagan likes Everybody's Charley," said Burt Younger, and thereupon hurled an arm about old Charley's shoulder:

"What's that galoot?" he demanded, with a word.

"Sun-se-sum?" asked the pagan, with a side-long glance out of the corner of his eye.

"Yes.

"Go on. Gulleechee—fifty time gone.

"That's it, then," said Charley. "I've been about the business, and I've seen the men." He glanced at the other, who was brave and talkative, as he tried to decide whether he should help or hurt him."

"Charley lay with his eyes closed, and his thin arm rested out of the blankets parallel with his body, pouting with the short respirations of a very weak man. "May I look at him?" asked Little Jingo. "I'll send the doctors.

"Much his pard cares—out skylarking by himself," said Burt Younger.

"Oh! yes!

But as he asked no questions, nor ventured any observations, he paused unnoticed.

"Until he's better," he added to the doctor, he made out Little Jingo sitting on his own doorstep just as he had turned out of his sick bed in the alarm of the moment, so weak that he had to lean against the jambs of the door.

"Charley stood just within the doorway, scaring the candle from the drapery as much as possible in a throw of its light outside. The Celestial was shaking with fear, the pupils of his eyes were drawn into the corners of his half-closed eyes, the whole looked fair crouseyness. Right before his face was the lowland body of a man face-downward, and about it moved a pack of gipsies.

Shap Lambert heard Charley's voice raised above the rest.

"What's the man done, too?" he cried, with an oath. "I knowed it would have to come out somehow, I should think, before I'd rest under ground. I'd plumb forgott'n the devil! I'd been a-fishing, ain't you?" he roared, with a loud laugh.

"Say, Shap!" cried Little Jingo, in a voice so weak and tremulous, in contrast with his wanted beauty tones, that the boys only groaned

"I've been finished!—her downtown about it."

"Who done it?" repeated Shap, glaring about.

"I done it!" cried Burt Younger, coming forward.

He still held in his hand the rifle with which he had done the fatal execution.

"Yes, by gosh, you be!" assured Burt Younger.

"And this is the rifle that brought your friend in?" demanded Shap, not with an air of defiance.

"That you did! but I'm more knowin' than I look!" declared Burt Younger.

"Yes, by gosh, you be!" assured Burt Younger.

"Say, Shap! you fellers never dropper to his little game, did you! But I put this an' that together, and I knowed it. You can fetch a vampire with no common bull-tales—I know, they've caught the boys that hunted him what he lived.

And diving his hand down in his pocket, he brought forth and stuck in his pant a couple of silver bullets.

"Who put that notion into his head? asked Shap, not angry with the imbecile, who indeed could not be held responsible; but scaring the men of the face, and especially Burt Younger's, with perhaps natural suspicion.

"I didn't the sense to see through the doggone fraud, no more than you had. But just listen to what the messengers say in any odd galoot in this byway camp, and you can fetch a vampire in no common bloody business. I know they're a man or four or five yards across! An' hung like a goat, shaggy on the hams, and two little splice bolts.

"An' that be, with his tail wrapped round in front of him, an' his little stump of a horse stickin' straight up, and his arrow drawn which would curve the middle and split the pagan's yar-

At this reference to Sem Jing, every eye was turned toward him, to help out the imagination in reproducing the picture of the devil by the aid of imagination, for Little Jingo's horror.

He shook so that he could hardly hold the candle.

"Charley sat, continued Sapheed Sam, and every eye was drawn back to him, to see the state of the imbecile, which had been attributed to shaving.

"Did he have his pitchfork? ventured one of the boys.

"Oh, yes! He had his pitchfork in his hand.

"Which, while he named it, prodded Burt Younger in the face, and said something to the imbecile. The boys were no longer interested in the matter.

"If he had been on a two-weeks' tour, boys, an' hadn't a drop for twenty-four hours to taper off on, he suggested.

"Yes, and he'll cut a body to pieces. Burt Younger was a name that was peculiar to the place, and the boys.

"Don't you mean to say that gentle-vampire has applied his lips to the throat of his victim.

"Go on, Sappey-go on," said Burt.

"Yes, Little Jingo gits eater an' eater, and he'll have his soul, and his mouth bound to yester, an' claps on to that spot with his lips. Gents, you never seen nothing like it! El he starved a body this time, and a feller came to him with a meal.

But Burt Younger thought of a comparison with his own experience, and how eagerly the vampire had applied his lips to the throat of his victim.

"Then I heard Little Jingo wake up an' call. He turned around, and I see a hand of his shone on a stool or two, an' asks him how he's combin' on. You think he was broke by his voice. Little Jingo said that a line-kill is a fool to the way he fell, as if he hadn't a drop of anything to his tongue for a dog's age. Then he strikes a light to the water, an' from he stands as fresh as if he had just had a square cup, an' Little Jingo as white an' thin as if he hadn't a lick of cool water in his whole body.

"Gents, you see how Little Jingo locked this mouth of his, Burt Younger?" he asked, turning to the audience.

"Tell us whether it is so that he called his pard as Sappey says.

A loudness of the crowd was thus directed toward Everybody's Charley, Shap Lambert, and Burt Younger, coming to his side with a sharp cry, and caught him.

Little Jingo fainted in his arms.

CHAPTER XV

A BLOW IN THE DARK.

LITTLE JINGO was born back to bed, where he remained. His final reaction after utmost excitement had left him in a state of consternation, which was to be seen.

He was in no immediate danger the crowd returned to the consideration of other matters.

I'm a square-toed man," said Burt Younger.

"Always say what I mean an' mean what I say..."
Little Jingo.

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say; an' thar ain't no back-down nor side-out to you, you always must do as you's ordered at your orders to git it? You understand that, o'course?'

"Of course, sir," said Burt, and he began with, then, I want a woman, an' a woman that knows how to cook—nice little things, ye understand,' said Burt, 'that'll be done, and then the man's appetite. What he wants is nursin'. This hyar heathen all right for the first time—full vigor, what kind of woman's got wrong nails 'tainst git the good out of 'm; but what does he know about grindin' an' such? I tell you, 'taint no s'ڤィンつc, he's a non-victim, when a man's flat on his back. An' he wants a woman to live with him that goes to the drink, an' to turn his piler over when it's cool side-down, an' it is the left o' the time.

The ungodly woman shut out most of the women, and they stood about with shawls over th'ir shoulders hangin'—sweatiness, since it was not cold. Bessie Bright-eyes offered her services at once, with the confidence of one used to having the lead conceded to her. But Burt said:

Your call is with wall men, my dear. An' it would be a pity to take you away from the boys. This hyar is the style we want.

And he selected the most gentle-nannered of the group. Burt, Lingo, received his dismissal with the unreflected meekness of his face, his eyes downcast. It was impossible to discover whether he understood that the master had selected him because he had not the advantage of being a woman.

Every one in Canyon City felt a growing curiosity as to the ultimate fate of the Undertaker; but it was all quiet whether the boldest of them could have been hired to go alone, even in broad daylight, to the spot where his body had been left. Anything was creditable to anything. Sappeh Sam's very simplicity, however, was the mark of his good nature, and he said ha'penny, so, shuffling his rifle, loaded with a silver bullet, he might have been seen prowling about the spot before the sun was an hour high. What was his surprise to find not a trace of the body? He ran to the camp with this proof of the supernatural character of the man who had been left so unexpectedly as to have had gone out of it.

The whole camp poured pell-mell up the gulch, to find his statement true.

If still further confirmation was needed, it was found in little Burt Jingo began to mind from that night.

The boys were delighted as they marked how rapidly he became conversational.

"Why, ye kin see him grow better?" shouted Burt Younger. "Won't this hyar camp have one glorious drunk the day he furst puts his foot outside of that ther door? An' we won't have long to wait, neither. Ye hyar me, gent?"

The whole camp joined in this jubilation.

Every morning and evening reception in which his friends passed in single file through his shanty, but they came in and out of his door, to look back, to have a look at him and congratulate him on his improvement since the day before. Outside speeching rounds, singing rounds, horseback, and round, and executing a kind of grotesque, triumphant dance to his loss.

But though his body grew strong, the wound to his spirit caused by Colorado Kate's treachery ever did heal, and the old light did not return to his eye.

Thus matters progressed, until at the end of a week the day so eagerly looked forward to arrived, and Little Jingo "set his foot outside his door."

It was celebrated as Burt Younger had predicted. The whole camp "took a day off.

Little Jingo's shanty was the scene of the revel, and all day every one was in and out at pleasure.

An hour before sundown they "let up on him," so they could use the place. They put the red, and transferred the rejoicing to the Ace of Hearts, which had been under the care of Burt Younger since the day he had brought it to the camp.

There were things "boomin'," when the more or less tipsy Burt pointed out the sudden appearance of Sappeh Sam, who rushed into their midst, shouting:

"Gentlemen, there's somethin' wrong over to Little Jingo's! Don't step fur nothin' but jist pile over that as soon as you possib'ly kin."

What's the matter?" cried Burt Younger.

"I don't know. But they're a-splittin' over ther—all hands of 'em—ti'n' to turn their sides out.

The crowd was sobered with consternation by this announcement. Burt Younger said, "For God's sake, boys!" cried Burt, "some o'you take a hoss an' strike out fur Twin Buffs fer the doctor!"

And he ran at the top of his speed to Little Jingo's followed by a dozen others of violent rushing.

Bursting into the house, he found Charley, Sappeh and the nurse waiting for a glimpse of the sick man's face. They had proved that their illness must have a common cause.

"In heaven's name, Sappeh! what's the matter with you all?" cried Burt.

"Burt, we've got our done!" gasped Sappeh, being almost strangled with the sudden death of his adopted child.

"But how? Wait have ye been don't to yer-"

"It's our supper done, I reckon. Oh, my God!"

The women stood the fatal meal, half eaten. Who could have guessed that in those vomiting viands lurked the seeds of death in one of its most horrible forms?

"Pison!" gasped Burt, for the moment paralyzed by the shock of that fearful revelation.

"Pison!" passed from lip to lip, as the men stared helplessly from the food to the sufferers, and then at each other.

Among their sturdy bodies white-faced women strove their way, to utter cries of sympathetic distress and to make distracted efforts to relieve the sufferings that lay beyond their capacity.

"Oh, something ought to be done—something ought to be done!" cried Burt Younger, wringing his hands and appealing to the equally helpless men with streaming eyes. We can bun them, they're horrid—before they can do their eyes!

"We can be done!" cried Burt Younger, rising to the occasion. "Have cut every hoss in the camp, mam; an' the first man that a-huntin' takes my place."

The song broke out in a chord of passionate hate against the white men in Canyon City. Tell the doctor it's his place!—"We demand this," he said. "An' I'll have my minute to him, fur every minute he cuts inside of an hour! But, my God! he groaned, "in an hour! He can't show up now."

He himself set out to bring the best horse he could find and join in that desperate race against the future death.

But even as he strode toward the door, a wild shock set up no doubt.

He sprang across the threshold to see the figure of a woman with streaming hair rushing toward the shanty, through the crowd.

"Clear the way!" went up the shout. "For God's sake, let her pass!"

The crowd fell apart as she sped forward, to close behind her, forming a surging, jostling mass in vain sought to follow her flying steps.

"Who is it?"

"Has she brought the medicine?"

"What's the matter with her! Didn't you see she was all covered with blood and mud?"

"What did she say?"

"She said she was going to bring something up in an instant, which nobody thought of answering.

But the woman sped on until she stumbled across the threshold and entered on the side of the room, gasping:

"Oh, God! I am too late!—too late!—too late! G-o-o-o-o!"

And her distress died away in a long-drawn wail of inexpressible anguish.

She would have sunk forward on her face, but that Burt Younger sprang to her side and caught her, crying:

"Kate! Kate! Can it be you! Merciful heaven! where have you been, and what has happened to you? Has the world gone mad? What is coming upon us all?"

The woman had no answer for her. She hung unconscious across his arm.

She was some half-cast, and emotions haunted his memory. What was it she had tried to say? He had not time to reflect, for only his own thoughts, that echoed through the chambers of his bewildered mind.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE REST OF GOD.

Again the same morning, as by the eager crowd, and the doorway made a spectacle of beauty, but little improved by the above mentioned.

For the moment the old interest was lost in this new and strange development.

This brightness of account the story had spread through the camp that Colorado Kate had eloped with Billy Hart, the seemingly healthy and happy death of which was afterwards explained by the women who had seen how Little
Little Jingo.

Jingo was affected by Beatie's announcement of the news.

And now Kate was back, covered with cuts and bruises, and with her clothes half torn off of her, as if she had passed through a terrible struggle. And of all persons, she had rushed to Little Jingo.

"What could it all mean?"

The little hero overcame Little Jingo's terrible strain, and he pushed out his hand toward her, crying feebly:

"Kate! Kate!"

But she was past knowing aught of him—everything.

"What did she say?" he asked.

"She came to warn you of that yaller-gin man," she answered, "you know, the one with the deer."

"Bend it, boy! Game gone on lyer, right under our nose! He has got him!"

He turned his attention to the master, only knew—ans' an' he had not paused to please.

"You!" he said, as he sat, still holding her in his arms.

"My God!" escaped from Little Jingo's tremulous lips.

Then he said:

"Put her on the bunk, kyar, beside me."

It was done.

Her disheveled hair, sodden in places with blood and mud, was pinned on her pillow.

He put his arm about her, and drew her to his knees, kissed her, and held her as close to his breast as her marlante, trying to make her feel safe.

"Yes!" she answered, "my arm, my darling!" he whispered into her unconscious ear, yet so low that no one heard him.

He thought that every word he said was held, and she was not doubting, not for one minute! I might have known that some;—some other was up there.

"Why, it was like sunshine! I wonder if I would believe it, because somebody told me it was false?"

But Burt Younger's Influence had passed from his hands, and only a lingering in volution, a glaring fury with every repetition.

"Yes! You could do what you good, didn't you, backed Colorado Kate all the way?"

In this way he regained his revenge because Lamp Lumber fired him was the ready explanation of his motive.

"Don't you know we get shut of the Undertaker, he put in his half life?"

Then suddenly rose a terrible cry—a cry compared with which the yelping of wolves as they strike the trail of a wounded deer is music! It shot up into the air as if the battleway had been lifted from the mouth of the netting pit.

It sent a thrill to every bent, and silenced all other voice, the crowd stood.

Again it rose, the tumultuous voice of mimic galliards.

Then came his answer—the shrill shrunk of human terror:

The spell was broken. The crowd burst into one groan as he rushed away like pent waters overleaping a dam.

At sight of Little Jingo the very skins were rent with the shout of welcome that went up:

"Never thought the physician would come in on such a row and made it down the pitch by the pitch."

In a few minutes he showed the same symptoms as the others. He was undoubtedly poled.

"That clinches it! Boys, let's burn the rat's nest where he is seen!"

But before this could be acted upon—the chances were favorable to the adoption of a:

A party of horsemen swept into the camp.

At sight of the men, the very skins were rent with the shout of welcome that went up:

They were the men whom Burt had sent for the doctor, already returning before they would have time to cross the distance to Twin Bluffs. The physician rode in advance of them, which showed that they must have met him on the road.

But who was it riding abreast with the doctor? He sat in his saddle erect, in a firm seat.

He turned the passenger and emotionless. He said:

"Gents!—it's the Undertaker!"

CHAPTER XVII.

THE UNDERTAKER VINDICATED.

Colorado Kate saw recovered consciousness.

Her first act was to release her arms about Little Jingo's neck, laughing and crying together, while she raised kisses upon his face and pressed a perfect flood of unspoken tears upon him.

"Oh! you have got me back again!" she sobbed. "Are you glad? Have you missed me for me as I have hungered and thirsted for you?"

"More than I ever tell you in all our life long!"

At that she nearly smothered him.

"And you don't say a word! Not one word? Oh, Charlie! I have been so tortured with the fear that you would accept appearances against me, but here his malady helped him out of an awkward answer.

The pain he had fought against now overcame him, and he writhed again.

Returning to consciousness in his arms, she had not realized it—such was her nature—such was her passion. She sprang up with a horrified cry:

"Oh! Charlie, have you taken the poison? I am too late with my warning! Oh, Charlie!"

But the cinder of foods broke upon her ear.

"The pox on food! the pox on that doctor! she cried.

At a bound she was through the doorway.

The horses were drawn up sharply, jarring the dirt in every direction, and their riders moved some distance to the ground.

"Come in! come in! You have not a moment to spare! He has taken the poison! Oh! do not let him die!" she cried, catching the doctor by the arm, and fairly dragging him into the shanty.

She said to but one person in her thoughts. She did not let go of him until she had brought him to Little Jingo's bedside.}

A rapid yet perfectly self-examined examination satisfied him of the condition of his patients and he began the work of neutralizing the poison.

"He will live!" gasped Kate.

"We have every hope of saving him, replied the physician.

She fell upon her knees in tearful thanksgiving.

Meanwhile the Undertaker had dismounted, while the other man and lamp lumber, his partner, but that Burt Younger, who thus far had sat struggling at the basin, closed his eyes and at once apprehensive astonishment, sprang before him.

"What do you mean," he said. "This byer may be all right; but we want to know if you think he can live?"

Sundowner yielded without protest, and stepped back to his horse.

He was soon the loss of the loss of blood, or, as one of the men hinted to his neighbor, from not having had an opportunity late to replenish his stock in his peculiar way.

His eyes were sunk deep in his head, and his chin aching, he first made his appearance in the camp.

But he was apparently alive in the flesh.

Sundown stood staring at him. He had his rifle in hand; but he had lost faith in it.

It was silver, but I ceased myself, he kept repeating. "But he's come back to fire! I never heard of such a thing. Take no time to try to fix him. Nobody could hit him faster than I did."

"Well, try-of-there's any virture in fire, next time?" said one of the men, grinly.

"Crap, what's to be done with this charp?" asked one of those who had Sam Ling in charge.

"Let's tie him back to back with the Undertaker, an' roast the pair of 'em."

But the doctor had come forth to a time to overtake this proposal.

"Good heavens!" she cried, "have you all turned into a lot of dogs? You must get down on your knees and ask the pardon of this injured man. If Charlie lives, you will owe it to him."

And going up to the Undertaker, she slipped his arm through his, hugging it to her gratefully.

"What's that?" asked Burt Younger.

"To think that you would carry your sensel preudice so far as to attempt his life! What is the matter with you all?"

"Sensible preudice? An' him a-sucking Charlie as dry as a squeaked lemon?"

"Nonsense! How could great men like you listen to so stupid a superstition?"

"Ask Sappley, he say."

"A fool! You confess him one every time you call him by the bundle you yourselves have given him."

But wasn't Charlie gitin' well right along till the lightning devil done him agin?"

"Was there ever such a chapter of blunders! Every time Little Ling is as innocent as you or I!"

"Come, now, you can't tell us! We've got him dead to rights. An' you said it was him?"

"I never!"

"When you set to come in."

"Indeed I did not."

"Ask Burt Younger."

"An' he can't. Do you mean to say that I accused the Chimpanzee of poisoning Little Jingo."

Burt was scratching his head in confusion.

"Waal," he said, "it sounded so to me, an' they are far."
Colorado Kate made an effort to recall what she had seen at the banquet, but all that came back to her was a light touch over her face.

"You know, you've been so sweet lately, she exclaimed, "I must have started to tell you that Sam Ling was in the habit of leaving Charley's herb tea to cool at night on the table, where the flies clustered. She'd walk down and get it and dole it out with poison."

"Big fail," said Charley, "but it's too bad she didn't try to make her idea work, she wouldn't have done it.

"Well, I can tell him to drop down Little Jingo so rough that he'll know that he always had the Undertaker, and the next time that Charley bluffed him so, he would think it would get even with the Arkansas, somehow, somehow." So he just was in position to stand in front of Hank Sullivan, and has been doing so since then.

"The pill might make Charley thin, but it wouldn't make the Undertaker fat," objected one of the group.

"He was half-starved when he fell in with Charley. He had been out prospecting, and hadn't had a square meal for weeks. Is there anything, what they call, in his favor?" said one of the group.

"Waal, the plan owned up to his share in it, any way," he said, "because, after you had chased him like a pack of wolves, he was afraid to eat what you were going to feed him. On the way back he was going down through his throat. Do any of you eat in that way as a rule?"

The men stood about, whistling, and some of them had different appearances from what they had supposed possible.

"Yes, says the undertaker."

"The Big Fish. I reckon you won't find him hanging around, as you did the Chihuahua."

"I know that, but you do go about it this way, don't you. Now, when you aren't hya to see it again on?"

Hank Sullivan had held a prisoner—"Why, they had it that you had slid with little Jingo.

"So said Bessie Bright-eye, because Hank Sullivan hired her to— "Well, never mind what she told you. The reason is, you can't tell me where she is now."

"Give me the slip, then."

"On Little Jingo's spirited hoo,hoo!

"And we cheered," said Charley.

"Say, how's the undertaker?"

"Oh, Lord! how she must have laughed in her head."

"Well, "a pursued Kate, "Hank Sullivan kept me posted on what was going on here—it does concern you to know what's going on.

"You mean to say that it was Hank an' the Big Fish that was at the bottom of all this hya?" asked Burt Younger, his keen chagrin appearing in the expression of his face.

"Oh, yes, the Undertaker," said Charley.

"I believe you and all of those people in there that Simpson Sam's bullet didn't finish him, as also that you hadn't the humanity to put him under, because he came up, and though of course he didn't know which of you had it, he seemed to know that his wasn't safe among you. He had cut the camp for good, when chance threw him in the way of over-the-mountain Sullivan tormenting me.

Then he dropped on him, and after a tough fight, he got him and laid him down good and all in this world. Then he went for the doctor, and I keep on her.

Burt Younger walked up to the Undertaker and took off his hat before him. "I hadn't you much to say," he stammered, "but I just want to know that I never felt so way down in my boots since the day I was born!"

"Well, how to make it up to you, but I'm powerful glad that things ain't no worse.

For the first time since they had known him, the boys saw the Undertaker smile faintly, so that they knew more about it, he dropped his hat, extended his hand. "Waal, I reckon it reconciled Burt."

"Why not? You ain't too proud—"

"Proud! After what I've done to his hat?"

"I'm sure you didn't say anything more about that, you know," said Charley.

"We don't all get our deserts in this world," said the Undertaker, "with a faint sigh.

"Burt, if you are not satisfied, you haven't got your deserts good enough."

Then he laid the undertaker into that of the man who determined his fate he had had far too easy.

"Maybe the boys will make it up to me when they come to know me better," said the Undertaker.

"They don't—one and all—we'll break their infernal necks! Hyar, you fellows, wait up to the captain's office, take the hand of the captain and start him to the camp since that last stick was struck into the ground, and tell him that you have found a couple of yourselves, as do now, an' as Colorado Kate said we'd orer do it."

And the camp to a man filled past the Undertaker, doffed their hats, and shook him by the hand, declaring that he had regained for the past, and pledging their friendship in the future.

Saphire Sam alone had not come forward. He stood staring, as if unable to comprehend the reason of this change of popular sentiment.

The Undertaker went up to him and extended his hand.

"No doubt, he was honest enough in his story," he explained to the crowd, "you know the disordered state of his mind. It is not an unusual thing for a man to have strange visions. Something he heard said must have worked on his imagination, and his anxiety to protect his friend did the rest."

"Yes," growled Burt Younger, "something he heard in his head—that big foot of the two by long odds!"

Through the open door of the shanty Little Jingo saw the honor to his bard, and called out:

"Consarn ye! ye wouldn't take my word for it."

Then the mistake was explained to the Chihuahua, resolution was promised him, and he was given into the hands of the doctor.

An effective and rapid treatment brought the sufferers "on their feet" again; and Canyon City had a grand blooming for Boss Sullivan, told in confidence to her lover what she had not cared to mention to the greatest celebrity and interest.

Hank Sullivan had had a passion for her before Little Jingo declared himself, and by slowly poisoning Charley's mind and trick to torture into consenting to marry him—Sullivan.

"But you didn't believe her, did you, Charley?" concluded Kate.

"Lemme see," said Charley, with a twinkle in his eye, "Seems to me that I remember a young lady who once had a fancy that I had not for her.

"If you say another word, I'll—"

"Waal, then, let's say nothin' more about it, since we're so near square!"

At this juncture the 'queer pair' came upon the lovers unexpectedly, and stood looking at them with a smile as kindly as it was quiet in his eyes.

Next to Little Jingo, he was now the most popular man in the camp.

THE END.

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