BUFFALO BILL'S BOY PARD.

A Story of Wild West Trails.

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CHAPTER I.

THE AMBUSHED MESSENGER.

"I GUESS it's too late this time with Butterfly Billy, for just how I can keep alive against such odds I can't see."

The speaker uttered the words as though death was not staring him in the face, and a death that would be an awful one, too; for those who threatened him wore red skins, in the full paint of braves on the war-path.

AS HE UTTERED THE WORDS THE YOUNG OVERLAND MESSENGER OPENED FIRE WITH HIS RIGHT-HANDED REVOLVER.
The one who spoke so carelessly was a youth of about fifteen, and his voice denoted uncommon strength, activity and endurance, and a face bronzed from exposure, but with a slight satiny sheen—perfect in fact, in which it would be called a beautiful, rather than a handsome face.

There was a careless look in the countenance, the eyes dancing in their brightness, and even a slight and deliberate flip of the fingers upon the food of the table. The chief was upon it, while also there was danger to remove with a short cut or by some4350

and the two, the young man and the animal, and the near each other, and the arm of the young woman rose and fell quickly, and with a force that told she was laying on the whip to urge the struggling animal to still greater efforts.

As the young messenger darted toward his horse his act had reduced the four Siouxs, and a wild yell of rage rung over the prairie.

They laid at first one man, and believed that the others to follow and chant them of their prey.

But, while it was the law that it was but a woman, and seemingly alone, a shout of triumph burst from those Siouxs, and they urged their horses on the faster, for they did not care for a chase in the direction of the fort, only ten miles away.

CHAPTER II.

BUTTERFLY BILLY.

The eyes of the woman urging her splendid horse on, of the youth, running along at a swift pace; of the red-skins, yelling and lashing their ponies as they came on, were all turned upon the situation, which was a thrilling one.

The space between the woman and the young man had been hidden by every eye, as well as that between the red-skins and the flying messenger.

Could he reach the horsewoman before her pursuers gained enough on him to bring him down with a discharge of arrows shot in each mind.

The youth turned his head as he ran, every few seconds, and noted the situation.

He was speeding well, and was not fatigued, but he, it was, that he needed speed; there was a run between fleet Indian ponies and a human athlete.

The messenger noted one thing as he ran, and that was, fast as the ponies were going the splendid black horse was turning doubling their speed.

So on all sides of a sickening feeling came into the heart of the messenger at the fate of the fair rider, did she fail a victim to her splendid courager.

He felt a fear for her which he had not felt for himself, and called out:

"Hold on where you are!
Do not come nearer, but wait for me!"

She heard, but heeded not, and the red-skies at once removed their savage yells and opened fire upon the fleeing pony, and the man.

The bullets knocked up the dirt near to him, some struck ahead, and several fell unpleasantly close to him.

It told that the red-skies were in range, though their fire had been hidden from her eye, as well as the man.

Yet they were gaining and the woman was nearing him, and another volley might be fatal to both his noble rescuer and himself.

"Or back! For God's sake go back, or halt! Again called the messenger, as his voice rang out as clear and resonant as a bugle.

But, the superb animal was determined, and laid on the lash to urge the straining black faster and faster.

Another volley came from the red-skies, and the youth stumbled and half-fell, but, after an instant of hesitation, held on, though at a lessened speed.

"He is wounded," broke from the young woman's lips, and then her lips were closed.

"I must save him, and will "

A few more bounds and the messenger had reached the splendid black, which the rider had not had to wade and flight for, in the intelligent animal seemed to understand the situation perfectly.

"Luring up behind me." cried she. "Thank you," and with a leap the messenger obeyed and away darted the black with the words from deep in her throat.

"Now, Blackbird, our lives depend upon you!"

As the horse bounded away a terrific yell came from the red-skies, who, fortunately for the fugitives, had exceeded their ride a moment before and had not had time to reload, for they were not then armed with their heavy weapons.

But, the messenger had his revolvers, no better weapons on the border, and he said quickly:

"Don't be alarmed, miss, if I hit back, for those red devils are coming for my head."

As he uttered the words the young Overland Messenger opened fire with his right hand revolvers, turning the firing as good as possible.

Down dropped a pony, and a red-skie fell from his saddle, while a second warrior was seen to reel and clutch the mane of his horse as though badly wounded.

"You are a good shot, sir," said the woman, and then paused as the man turned over his shoulder to notice the result of his fire.

"Not so good as I could wish—but, here comes a copper-colored pony and the speed of his arms enough to protect her.

The black horse has gained rapidly, for their bullets barely reached us, so we are safe and I owe you my life, miss."

"But I was near to serve you," was the reply, and the quiver in the voice showed the whole heroism of the scene.

"Fardon me, miss, but you are not heading for the fort, and you may be in danger,

"No, for the fort lies yonder; but I came out with a hunting party and got separated while returning.

"We were to picnic in yonder timber, and we will all return to them there, and the firing and are coming, and at that moment, a score of mounted men came out of the timber on a horse.

"Blackbird, you have saved us," cried the woman as she went forward and affectionately patted the neck of the splendid animal.

"Yes, with the skill and of his noble mistress, but you brought him," added the young messenger fervently, and quickly.

"Fardon me for deserting you now, miss, but I want that horse,"

He slipped to the ground and limped rapidly away from the riders, as they drew near and suddenly caught his legs in the dragging stake.

The young man cut the horse's halter, and could extricate himself the young messenger had reached his side, and, bounding upon its back, the flying youth was carried along, nosing gently toward the red-skies, who at sight of the last rider, turned upon their horses, and halts, and were gathering in a compact mass as though to fight.

The young man, whom the youth, who had rescued from certain death, with some anxiety, was thrown and settled in the other against his body.

She had drawn her horse to a halt, and was standing behind the column, and in front of the red-skies, who now were seen to be a score of cavalrymen led by several officers grouped together.

This the scout realized, as well as the fact that the Indians were a hundred against one.

There were some half a dozen officers leading the cavalrymen, but this was accounted for by these having been a hunting party from the fort, and the rifle volley fired by the Indians had hastily collected a number of those nearest the charge, and they had hastened in the direction of the firing.

An officer with gray hair and beard swerved away from the riders, as they drew near and stood in the middle, and a moment after drew rein by the cable.

"My child, what danger you have been in, and how did it come about?" he said anxiously.

"I observed an ambush, and having separated from you all, and was about to ride back and warn you, and was caught up by the party, when I beheld a horseman whose horse fell dead from a shot in the ankle, and I rode the red-skies at once.

"I saw his terrible danger, and dashed out to you, for I thought I could do so, and, yes, I did."

"God bless you, Tey, you did indeed save me and we will go back to the others and join the for, for I must see if those red-skies are any other here, and then I can make this bold move," and with a hearty farewell, Captain Hart Allen, a gallant officer of the 4th Cavalry, dashed on by his troopers.
The redskins had meanwhile retired sullenly, until they discovered the sudden act of the young messenger, and they at once rode forward to examine the matter.

He was, however, near his fallen horse, and conceived an idea to be speedily carried into execution.

The dead animal had not, in the excitement of the chase, been considered worth going after by the pursuing party. The headless body of the animal, and the animal itself, was left where it lay from his pony, dead over his dead steed an instance of the want of regard for life that was usual among them. The dead animal was captured. The pony was about to dash away, he checked his pony, again leaped to the ground, and his right hand was thrust forward, with a revolver in it.

One Indian, a chief, was well in advance of the others, and, catching the act of the messenger, he threw himself quickly down, to avoid the shot; but he was too late, for the revolver cracked, and the red-skin went rolling in a heap upon the ground.

The wild yell of rage that the red-skins uttered, was echoed by a cheer from the troopers, as the dead-shot youth went flying away upon his pony, with the sound of the shot. The youth had been the leader of one of the bands.

The fathers of the hunting-party who now came out of the timber, toward where Ivy and Ross had returned, were horses, watching and waiting the finale of the worst when twenty or half a dozen lads, mounted upon horses, and accompanied by the game-keeper, who had a guard of four troopers.

As the relieving party approached, her face flushed with excitement, she looked very beautiful, almost grandly so, with her flashing eyes, hot cheek, and trim figure, all mingled, for the memory of her daring rescue of the young messenger she could not banish from her thoughts.

Her form was perfect, and she was a superb horsewoman; but the make-up of horse and rider was complete, and all could but look upon them as they approached, with awe and admiration. Ivy Allen, the daughter of the richest Indian chief in the state, was the beauty of the border, and justly so.

She was just seventeen, and though reared upon the plains, had just returned to the fort to cheer her father's home, for she was all he had to love, after a three years' course at a fashionable boarding-school in New York.

Ross, after having been two months at the fort, every young officer in love with her, and her rivals even loved her as well.

Now as they came up, the party anxiously greeted her, and in a few words she told them what had happened upon her way to the fort.

She was not but wonder, however, at the conduct of the messenger, who was now leaving the field and coming toward them, while the soldiers were attempting to stop the fight.

A moment after he dashed up, his face flushed with excitement, and with his hand clasped upon his scarf, he greeted them, saying:

"I shall not forget, miss, that I owe you my life," andaway darted the messenger upon his horse, and Ross was sent galloping away at a gallop.

"Yes, sir; though the settlement has more influence in the world than we could imagine.

"You silenced it thoroughly!" said the man, sitting there, and got every point.

"How did you do it?"

The man, a tall, lank Yankee, laughed, and said:

"Well, I went into my old trade, bought a lot of stores to San Antonio, and turned peddler, so I did each ranch—yes, and sold out, too."

"I am sure you lost nothing; but how many miles square has the Royal Ranch?"

"Just thirty-seven within a radius of thirty miles square."

"And many men!"

"I counted, of fighting men, and boys from fifteen to thirty."

"And old men and smaller boys?"

"Will make a score, more."

"But they are scattered over thirty miles!"

"Yes, sir."

"And the Royal Ranch, you went there?"

"Oh, yes, captain, and she's as beautiful as ever.

"Silence, sir! but who cares for her place?"

"I saw there two cowboys only."

"And the old miner whom we heard had settled near?"

"Is there, three miles from Royal Ranch; but thought his hair was white, perhaps he would think at a glance, a."

"You think he has money he is reported to have taken with him to Texas?"

"How can you say that he has a fortune in gold-dust hidden away?"

"Then we will make the dash into the settlement, and see."

"Certainly, captain; and they say he is in.

"Ah! he must be taken, surely, then; but to the cattle and plunder!"

"They are all cattle, which can be rounded up quickly and driven across the Rio Grande, and, as he has all his cattle to do, their horses will pan out in plenitude.

"Good; it must put a big for us in this race; Ross, you have done well, and are true to the appointment at this place two weeks ago."

"Now rest and we will start by sundown, and be at El Paso by daybreak, leaving the man Ross to seek rest and food."

The conversation held between them will probably be used, or a and a ter to the borderland was "Captain Wolf," as he called himself, but which name had been changed into "Captain Coyote," while his men were known as the "Mexican Wolves," for leader and his retreats into the Rio Grande, and was only went to make an occasional raid into Texas, but his comings were long remembered.

No one who saw the handsome, almost kindly face of Captain Coyote, would have believed he de- served the name he had won, as being even more of a bandit than Comanche or Apache. For, an outlaw, he held no mercy for honest men.

His spies had given him notice that there was a new settler in the Harling Ranch, whom Coyote had made a fortune in the mines and carried it into the desert, and he was determined to get it.

For other reasons Captain Coyote had long since sent his men to shake the settler. He had not decided to do so, but had sent his spy "Yankee Ros," who had given up peddling for plundering, from reason least known to himself, to discover all that he could about the ranchers and their strength, and to meet him at a point some twenty miles from the homes of his intended victims.

This Yankee Ros had done, and at sunset, with his accounts called in, which gave him twenty-four men at his back, Captain Coyote started upon his raid against the Texas settlement.

THE ROYAL RANCH.

The scene changes to a bonfire of horses in the wilds of Texas.

To an observer who was not thoroughly post- read, they might be taken for a company of rangers halted for a rest, but to look more closely one would see that there were too many faces among that score of men stamped with evil to pass as honest guardians of the land.

Some were Americans, beyond a doubt, tall, well-formed fellows, with the garb of cowboys, while as many more were Mexicans, smaller in stature, dark in face and wicked in expression.

Thermore, the majority of the Mexicans dressed in the garb of the pale-face, a half-breed Conchita, or a mulatto, a half, or a full Indian negro. A motley lot they were, desperate looking, armed to the teeth and with savage faces, scarred and scarlet, and black as an ebony, their eyes burning, hooded and fearless.

His physique was superb, though he was little over the average height, and he stepped with a firmness that made his spursingle musically.

Upon his head was a black Mexican sombrero richly embroidered with silver thread, and an army cloak was thrown upon a bush near him.

In the background were the mesquite trees, a number of horses, and the appearance of a camp that was to be the starting point.

The man who paced to and fro, apart from his men was unostentatiously the leader of this wild and menacing band.

He looked it from head to foot. He was dressed in the most like one would not look for on the border, and in his black scarf was a large star of rubies, while upon the little finger of his left hand was a diamond plumed.

Taking from his pocket a handsome watch he glanced inconspicuously and then unclipped something that was unheard, but which sounded very clear and musically.

Just then the sound of hooffalls fell on the ears of all, and each man was still as death.

"Only one, you, sir," muttered the leader, and soon after a horseman darted into camp and a man, dressed in a sable approached the waiting commander.

I have been expecting you all day, Ross and hope you bring good news?"
Butterfly Billy, the Pony Rider Detective.

CHAPTER VI.

THE WOLVES ON THE TRAIL.

Into the settlement of ranches, while the settlers sought to make the Wolves' wolves, their certain in the heart.

They were a quarter of a hundred in number, all well mounted, thoroughly armed desperate men, who would risk life for plunder, and would kill withMethod.

They had their orders from their chief as to what to do, and they rode in silence, in Indian fashion, passing quickly, their horses a few miles back, then halted for a rest, to go on their way to spread terror, death, and destruction.

Ranch after ranch was passed, for the chief was hastening far back to the further side of the settlement, where was Hermitage Ranch, the home of Widow Royal, and also for one other near there where dwelt Major Martin Marley, who had become, as Rayford Royal had suggested, captain of the Rancho Rangers.

The home of the Widow Royal at last appeared in sight, and the band of raiders divided into five different parties, each of whom had their orders where to strike, and were, after their work was done, to go back to a given point, where they were to rendezvous with their plumed horses and the cattle and horses they were driving off.

It would be some hours' drive from there to the Rio Grande, where the forces would beat back pursuit, escape, and were secure.

The plan was not changed, and the chief believed all would be well.

He left for his own party of five places to visit, one Hermitage Ranch, and the other the home of Major Marley, the rich miner.

These were furthest away from the Rio Grande, which the bandsman had discovered, and if he got all he intended at those two, Captain Coyote, Marley, would feel very much like and right.

As his party turned into the inclosure surrounding the Hermitage Ranch, a line of flame suddenly shot up, and two of the raiders fell under a fire from half a dozen rifles. At the same instant of sound of firing, we the earth from several other points, and then Captain Coyote knew that he had been betrayed, that his entire range was known, and that he must retreat for the rendezvous as best he could.

The fire of those ambush was returned, and the vigilance and his men behind the chief and his men came half a dozen horses in hot chase.

Over prairie, meadowland, hill, and through thick timber, though the fire of the band kept falling on him and his men, but he did not give up, but pressed forward, as a last resort, a band of Indians, who were not thence from the earth of the front of the other when Captain Coyote turned in his saddle and fired.

The man on the rear fell dead from his saddle, and a yell of triumph broke from the outlaw's lips, which was quickly quelled, however, as a last resort settled about his neck, and he was dragged from the saddle to the ground with a fall, than turned him.

The one in the lead had thrown his wrist with whom was just the chief was killed, and pulled his collar.

In an instant the victor was afraid and had bound his hands, and followed the fallen man, loosening the coil, however, about his thigh.

He also disarmed him, and had just caught his horse, when Captain Coyote returned to his seat and said quietly, as a last resort you are Coyote Coyote, Chief of the Wolves of the Rio.

"I am not he, certainly not, but a man who was their prisoner."

I saw you at Clear Creek to night when you halted there to rest.

I saw you coming, and climbed up in a tree, so all that was said, while the fire you built to make coffee I beheld you distinctly.

When you were gone I slipped back to where I had left my horse, and come on and warned the settlers as fast as I could.

I got a good start, and some day I will get even with you, man."

"I doubt it, but I am no man."

"Who are you?"

"Only a boy."

"What's your name?"

"It's true, I am only fifteen, though rather well grown."

"Who are you?"

"My name is Rayford Royal. I am a young ranchero and a junior lieutenant of the Rancho Rangers, and you, Captain Coyote, are a desperado, so mount and come along, or I will kill you."

"Where would you take me?" asked the outlaw, his voice hardly audible, for he seemed deeply moved.

"To my home to guard until morning, and then Major Marley and his Rangers will decide as to your fate."

"What's your name?"

"Yes."

"What's his first name?"

"Martin."

"He has a ranch here?"

"Well, a few miles away."

"And your ranch?"

"It's two miles from here—come.

The man obeyed without a word of objection, mounted his horse with the aid of the boy, holding the harness of the chief's horse, led the way back toward the Hermitage.

CHAPTER VII.

YANKEE BOSS IN TROUBLE.

It was the young ranchero and his prisoner arrived at the Hermitage Ranch.

There was a bright light burning in the little sitting-room and hearing the hoof-ticks, Widow Royal came up on the place.

Not a man was about the place; they had gone down to the homestead, and Widow Royal and an old negress were alone.

My party went after the chief and his band, mother, father, of these, and we killed three, Dick Sturtevant, and one of the band, and I held on and captured Captain Coyote, and here he is; but three of our boys were wiped out.

Rayford Royal said this as he was aiding his prisoner to dismount, and advancing to the place where he continued:
BUTTERFLY BILLY, THE PONY RIDER DETECTIVE.

"I clipped his claws, mother, for here is his tail"... But Billy was fast as you see. I took his revoler, and if he attempts to escape just kill him, for his life don't count."

"Not mine, is," said Billy, "I'm yours."

"He does!"

"I seem to forget that I am your superior officer."

"No, we don't; you is junior lieutenant of the Kansas Rangers, and we selected you because you had showed us a boy could be a man when put to it, but this hasn't no Rangers' work here."

"You are mistaken, Mr. Sykes, it is for me to warn the Kinkhead to leave."

"I am not his revoler, but his horse, and I am going to warn him."

"He must be taken before the Rangers' today, and they will decide upon his fate, so I tell you for your lieutenant."

"I'm darned if I do!" exclaimed Sykes.

"Me too," promptly chimed in Pony Sloan.

CHAPTER VIII.
LIKE A DEATH-KNELL.

RAYFORD ROYAL was not to be bullied, boy though he was, and in spite of having no weapon.

He knew that the outlaw prisoner richly deserved death, and he did not, for he had been the one, in the guise of a peddler, to accept kindnesses from the various settlers, and then, the moment they were in his power, to turn them over to the night.

He was determined that the two Rangers who were cowboys on one of the ranches near the Hermitage, should not deliberately hang the man.

"You defy my orders, you, Mr. Sloan and Mr. Sykes? That is the gall, and I'm the captain of the horse which is the back of the other horse and up into the air.

It was a well-arranged plan, but the coming of Rayford Royal put an end to it, for he called out:

"Ho, parson, what are you doing there?"

In the gray of early day he saw their intention, so the question was superfluous, but he asked it and gave his answer from Sloan.

"We is goin' to hang them durned traitor, Rayford Royal, and we is on our way through their country here some days ago and said to be the captain of the men.

"I say we hang this man, and now," was the sudden response of Sykes, for Mr. Royal rode up in the early dawn.

And I agree with yer, parson," responded Pony Sloan.

"I don't know what it is, but I'm the captain of the horse which is the back of the other horse and up into the air.

It was true, for the prisoner was none other than the tall, gaunt, cadaverous-faced Yankee Rose. You is right, he is the same man," said the boy to his mother, the Rancher Billy, and the hope that had come into the face of Yankee Rose, died.

He was silent, as but pale as death.

He had begun life as an honest man, but turned from the right trail, and now beheld troop upon troop upon the deeds of his wicked life.

"Are you ready, Paril Sykes?" called out Pony Sloan.

"All ready to set the machinery a-going," came the answer from the tree.

Pony Sloan was about to lead up his horse, when Royal called sternly:

"Hold on! This must not be!"

The man stopped the horse as the lizard drew tied to the old chuck-wagon, and looked into Billy's eyes:

"What does this mean, boy paril?"

"He is a Wolf of the Rio, a traitor, and hangin' are too good for him; so up he goes!"

"He's a traitor, yes, but there isn't a struggle will be made by him, so must not do so."

"Gimp to a little talk, Paril Royal, for he has got to hang and now," said Sykes, in a determined way, while Pony Sloan added:

"That's right, he's a hard man to do, and won't be bothered longer with him."

"Why, he's knocked us both down, bound as he is, and kicked Sykes, too, in the time we has had him."

"Well, I'll take charge of him, so loosen that line from your saddle-brown, Mr. Sloan,"

"No, don't do that, Capt. Sloan," said Royal.

"He does!"

"I seem to forget that I am your superior officer."

"No, we don't; you is junior lieutenant of the Kansas Rangers, and we selected you because you had showed us a boy could be a man when put to it, but this hasn't no Rangers' work here."

"You are mistaken, Mr. Sykes, it is for me to warn the Kinkhead to leave."

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CHAPTER IX.
FROM A MOTHER'S HAND.

The letter which Rayford Royal read, and which had been left by his mother where he must find it and return it, was:

MR. MY OWN LONESOME.

My only love, my dearest lady, your heart can feel the pain that mine does now, for I have to give sorrow to you and to your young son, a fate that may await the future.

I know not, how, for within a few minutes I must go from you, and I leave it to explain my sorrow and how I must go..."
rest remained to defend their ranches, you know, for the safety of their families.

But I have a statement to make, and I will do so now, and in a few words, I will inform you of the killing of Captain Coyote. Such are the facts, and I of course submit my act to you to decide upon.

But now I have something else to tell you, and which cuts me to the heart.

I captured Major Mahvey and took him with me.

Yes, and that would be all, for he carried my poor mother away with him a captive, I suppose as a hostage for his own life, and the boy’s voice quivered in spite of his many efforts at self-control.

A deathlike silence fell upon all at this, and every eye was upon the youth, with deepest sympathy, and the face of every man showed that a faithful retribution must be visited upon the outlaw whose rakish act set this upon.

He had escaped, and, after all, had struck a hard blow in carrying off the beautiful mistress of Hermitage Ranch.

Then, too, Yankee Rose, another man whom the Rangers had captured, he made his escape, and all regretted that Roy Royal, as he was named, was not captured also. People are so interested in the hanging of the man, through of course he had done only his duty in doing so, and there was a large crowd of law among the Rangers that gave all supreme power to their officers.

Another charge was also in the mysteriously disappearances of their loved leader, Major Mahvey, for the major had become a very popular man.

Was he dead, or a prisoner?

This was the Rangers’ chance to clear their mind to find out, and they called a council at once, the result of which was that they divided into three separate parties to see if the major was still in the settlement, another to search for the trail of Captain Coyote and the third to follow on the track of the fugitive outlaws and await at the river the coming of the others with the same mission.

With the party that held on after the fugitives went Roy Royal.

CHAPTER XI.

ON A LONG TRAIL.

The Rancheros were forced to leave their camps in deadly earnest when they started upon the trails of the outlaw band.

They had escaped the plundering of their homes, but the two persons most loved in the watered section and had been taken from their midst, for it was found that Major Mahvey had also gone, as newsboys could be found.

Disappearance had been a mystery, for he had left the Rangers by the door, and had not been seen since, but in the darkness he had taken refuge at the ranch of the Lobo, laws and been captured.

If he had been killed his body would have been found where it fell, for the raiders certainly could have no motive in carrying it away.

To the Rio Grande then the Rangers went, three-score strong, for the trail of Captain Coyote had been taken up from Hermitage Ranch and with him were tracks of a second horse.

Either the way the chief had gone to escape showed a perfect knowledge on his part of the country, or he had some one with him who could guide him safely from danger on his retreat.

Roy Royal felt that he might tell those who had led the way, if he could, for his mother knew the country thoroughly, having ridden over every foot of it often.

But his feelings and said nothing.

The trail of the chief emerged into that of his men at the next camp and the boundary line marked by the Rio Grande was the place to look for the captives and so reap revenge upon the raiders.

Camping upon the American shore, in a secluded hiding place of the Rio Grande, the men, who had come in command, sent several spies across the river to look up the retreat of the raiders.

Among them was Roy Royal, and he became separated from the command; it was weeks before he was seen again.

The boy had picked up Spanish from Mexican cowboys, so managed to get along very well; but, like the others, returned with no news to tell.

The raiders had scattered, going to one knew where, and the Rangers were forced to give up the chase, for the chief had gone into Mexico as an armed force.

Raiders were made to theilocas in the borders towns of what had occurred, and rewards were offered in Mexico and stuck up at the frontier, but no information the captives, or that would lead to the capture of Major Mahvey.

But no answers came, and the Rangers disband and returned to their homes.

Up the following morning was born a faithful cowboy into whose hands fell the care of all, and his work was devoted to the care of the boy and his brother, and the home for a few months.

Then, one morning he rode away from the ranch, leaving it in charge of a trusted cattleman, who had managed for his mother before he had grown old enough to take charge.

With a pack-horse well-loaded, and his cattle branding bow, and Roy Royal, the eldest of the Macowans, who had he loved so well, without a farewell to any other than the faithful who had been at the head of the herd.

He had with him a good sum of money, and when he went and return he did not know, had started upon a trail that he meant to follow to the end, be it what it might.

In the months that passed since his mother’s death the faithful letter had ceased, for he had devoted himself to the study of Spanish, and with the knowledge he had already had of it he soon came to understand and stand it fluently.

His first move was in the direction of the Rio Grande, and then he was down a month, diligently and untrarily began his long trail.

Wagons glided into town from the West and made one, two years, and still the ruthless young traveler was on the trail.

He had led him fast to Mexico, then northward into New Mexico, up to California, and en route, for they did not walk on his way once more, following the seemingly endless trail.

He had every now and then caught a glimpse of the long trail and then was able to answer the description of Captain Coyote being seen in various places, and he had known several times a beautiful woman had been seen in his company, one with a sad face that seemed to tell of woe.

Then, too, he had heard of many of the boys that had been taken and what had been done for them, and this information answered to that of Major Mahvey.

Written to the manager of the Hermitage, and after a long time had a letter telling him no news had come of his mother, nor had Major Mahvey returned, or been heard of, and so the youth pressed on before, longing, yearning for success.

CHAPTER XII.

DRIVER BOBBY FAIR PASSENGER.

"Well is the lady in black, Nicky?"

"Durned of I knows, Bob, for she hasn’t raised that black vail off her face or said a word to me since I picked her up at Wagram Station."

"Then he brought her in his shoes, and she jist sailed on me, Nicky."

"Well, I’m sorry that’s pattened aboard, Nicky, and to yer, as yer knows, and that may be a hold-up on ther road, and you’s got yer’shippin’ an’ hystory, folks, all that?"

The speakers were two drivers of the Overland Stage, who had driven in to a stage station, the other was ready to go on his run as the stage was coming in with news for there were three large.

One of them was a fine-looking man of forty, and the other, a man of seventy,

Another was a rough-looking man in minor
dress, and he had the look of a person who had been hurt worse than he.

The third was a woman, dressed in black, and with a big, white face.

The drivers along the Overland had taken the idea that she was mourning for some loved one.

At the table in the little station the lady half-raised her voice, and the train was so crowded that there might be something in her words that might not affect her appetite.

Taking Bob Burt's coach, she took off on the bridge, and the coachman, to settle her, and for a bit, the west-to-east-going gentleman took a seat by her side.

The miner made himself comfortable on the front seat, and Bob Burt was about to mount to his horse.

"Well, Nick, you're looking fine, and said in a low tone:

"A big job, you're eyes open, for Stable Jim told me there was a man on horseback here, who got dinner, and seemed in no hurry to go until I drew in.

"Then he saw the passengers get out, and, revolving his hair, and took down your trail, and Benny, the stock-tender, was coming on the trail a mile away, and said the fellow was safely all he could git out of his horses, so it looked bad.

"Don't look good, Nick, but we has got ter take their risks, so here goes.

And Bob Burt swung himself up to his box, with reins and called to the stowmen who stood at the heads of the leaders:

"No brakes.

Away went the coach, swaying with the uneven trail, and the horses spooked along at a very quick pace.

Bob Burt was proud of his team, and the people in the coach knew and admired him for the appearance of him, for no better, and more daring driver, was ever seen in Baker.

The coach rolled along swiftly, for Bob's horses were good ones, and the gentleman having been a driver before, the passengers into conversation settled himself for a pleasant ride.

How long he slept he did not know; but he was awakened by the command in a loud voice:

"Halt!"...

The coach was bounding swiftly along, in quite a straight direction. After they started on their road, the coachman made the passengers dangerous near one side.

The command came from a man in the trail ahead, and behind him stood two others with revolvers, and behind as many were more as in the rear Bob Burt knew.

But he also knew that the spot had been chosen as the best for the halt, for it was the custom to drive a walk along there, and he was certain that he took big chances in going along the sleeping pass that he had only led his horses into near the fatal spot, for murder and robbery had six times been perpetrated there before.

But Bob Burt had decided to go through as a quick trot, and if halted to try and push on, and if not he knew his own nerve, and so far he was right in his faith. The mounted command to halt came Bob was ready, and he gave the order in the language which they well knew, for they were bound forward at a run in spite of the nature of the ground.

The other two coaches held the up the command were certainly taken by surprise, for they were surprised as the six horses came with a rush toward them.

But only for an instant, as from the rear came shots which recalled them, and they opened rapidly.

A horse was wounded, an exclamation from within the coach told that some one had been hit there, and yet Bob Burt did not stop.

He had determined to push through; he yelled again and again, and bent his head, and held his reins well in hand, and pushed on to run down the road.

But a command ran out from the side of the hill.

"Put on your braes, Bob Burt, or you are a dead man!

But Bob Burt did not heed, and a shot rang out just as the driver behind had run the gauntlet.

The bullets hit him in the right arm, and it fell helpless.

To drive on that perilous road was madness, especially in the darkness, but that death must be the end of all in the coach, and but for the fact that the daring driver knew his horse, they knew him, ruin went in the extreme.

A wrestling cry to the team, and the brake put gently on, with a draw on the reins with his left hand brought the stage to a quick halt; and just in time, for only with two strong hands, an iron nerve and skill could the trail ahead have been passed, for the horse, two, so suddenly came in the canyon below.

"I've a word to say, if you, Bob Burt, but as you hear my mark, I will let you off this time; only know in future better than to run when I am at the gate.

The speaker spoke from a rock on the side of the trail where he had two companions stepped to the heads of the leaders, while the others came down the trail in the rear of the coach.

"You've got a gent, a miner, lady, and dust aboard, Bob Burt, and two of your passengers have money, while your treasure-box in the boat is a fortune in itself.

"I need all the cash I can.

The man spoke in a tone that showed him what he said was true, as he seemed well posted on the coach and its contents.

"Waal, I yields, yer imperial road-chiefs, as I has ter," growled the puckey driver.

"But don't.

"The startling words three shots rang out, in such rapid succession from the coach that it was not as many seconds between the first and last one.

And they were well aimed too, for the leader went down in his tracks, a dead man ere he body struck the ground, one of his comrades fell mortally wounded, and the leg of the third was broken at the thigh.

And it was the woman who had fired the shots.

A woman who had dared resist where men set courage.

Then quickly came the words:

"Are either of you able to drive, for the man on the box is dead, and we travel for miles, and I confess that I am not," the gentleman said.

"I never druv a critter in my life," responded the miner.

"Then I will do it," and with an agility that was remarkable the female passenger swung herself from the coach box to the box to the utter amazement of Bob Burt.

One glance backward showed that the three road-agents were at the rear, over at the shots which had brought down their chief.

But they were not to remain quiet all night, and the woman said:

"Give me your reins, sir.

"But.

"Don't lose time," and she grasped the ribbon from Bob Burt's hand and urged the horses on while she said:

"You let me sit there!"

Bob yielded, but mentally decided that he had escaped the fire of the road-agents to be dashed to death in the strange coach.

CHAPTER XII

BOB BURT'S LADY PASSENGER.

At the first start of the coach to move on the road-agent was sure of the escape of his body was probable.

Their chief who was two other comedowns were and might die, but that would simply give them the larger share and they would have well worth their while.

Some one in the coach had shown his claws, who they did not know, but the driver was wounded, so could not drive out of a walk, and there were but two passengers in the coach to fear, for they did not count the woman, and one of these they regarded as a "tenderfoot," so was only little to the driver, who they believed had been the one to show fight.

So they opened fire on the retiring coach, at the same time running after it with all speed.

Grasping the reins in one hand, the woman turned and called to the driver who had held her up half a dozen times.

"What kind of a looking man is he?"

"A tall, slim-headed Yankee, with long legs and arms, and as strong as a mile, while he shoots for the center most covered and a bad hand with the knife."

Thank you for your information, Mr. Curtis, and as a token, I say ask your friend.

"You'll git it of yer draws on sight for all I care.

"You are kind I know, but I hope not to have drawn upon your purse."

And if you ever do; but what did yer purr for shoot?"

"Ah! they do draws and shoot and slash to ther Queen's taste; but I tell yer that yer has Inspector Curtis yer friend, for we is takin'
CHAPTER XIII

THE OVERLAND MESSENGER

WIDOW DOOLEY kept the tavern at the station here. Bob Burt was to remain over, and a good table and clean rooms she was noted for.

The station boasted some twenty shanty houses, and perhaps a couple of hundred souls, and was an important post of the Overland Company, for there from those three different branch lines led.

The surgeon of the division dealt there also, and as the big company cut up every ten miles by which he said quickly to the lady passenger:

"I remain over a couple of days here, miss, and if you would be so good as to come down and ask for Mr. Porter as escort if you care to stop over for a rest."

"Thank you, sir," was the reply, and when she followed Widow Dooley to her house, she found Miss Ford, at the door, just returned from the inspector and Bob Burt.

The house was in the hands of the company's surgeon, who reported the woman an invalid from some misfortune on the branch from the present outlook; and he furthermore said that it had been most skillfully dressed and bandaged by the lady passenger.

After a most tempting supper the passenger, who had given her name as Miss Ford, returned to her room, and asked to see the inspector, Mr. Curtis.

She was already a heroine in the settlement, and her praises were being sung in the bar-rooms, and her beauty drunk on the tongue over again.

When the inspector entered the room, Miss Ford gave him a chair, and said:

"You were kind enough, sir, to tell me tonight that it was your earnest wish to serve me."

"And so it is, Miss Ford."

"You also said that if I was in need, and you asked it gracefully, that the company would be willing to pay for saving the treasure!"

"I assure you, and you have but to signify your willingness to accept the reward, and I will make it known to the treasurer, who will give you instructions, and should you accept in your detective work, your playing the part of a woman so well shows that you can also play parts other ways necessary."

"But my wife would crop out when there was a chance for a fight, said the youth, with a laugh.

"All being arranged between them, the next day the young man, in the fine, fresh, and liquid finery, went on to Omaha, started off by a cheer from all who had gathered at the station to see her depart.

Ten days after there was a United States passenger express on the trail, whose gorgeous attire at once won for him the name of "Butterfly Billy."
Butterfly Billy, the Pony Rider Detective.

"As it is, we return victors to the fort, and as such I owe it to you and to the Pony Rider."

"But you think the redskins will not rally?" "\"Not in the air, they are started, but they are a devil of a double-quick, and they will keep it up, and, besides, they are Indians, like a Comanche, is of little use on foot."

The next morning the troopers started upon the trail, and they camped one day near the place where the Indians had been, and then they parted with the Mounted Miners.

Each stage of rolling into the stations carried stories of his red deeds, for not only had he alone and single-handed held up a coach full of passengers and robbed them, but he had shot two of the Pony Express Riders carrying valuable packages.

All who had become interested in the young government messenger were anxious regarding his safety, and a request was to be made of the colonel commanding Fort M— to allow some of his men to accompany him for at least a week or two to drive off the much dreaded Giant General.

Those who had been held by the desperado stated that he was dressed in the full uniform of a cavalryman, and his mount was a splendid black horse, which had been mounted on a superb jet-black horse, while he was mounted on his famous flag-carrying steed in the wilderness, an order more than once, enforcing it, if repeated a second time, by sending a bullet, nearly killing the horse, and then a third, that he was not to be trifled with.

As the Pony Rider approached, he was on the alert, waiting swiftly along the trail, on his run westward, when he came to a rise that he knew would give him a good view of the surroundings.

He knew that it was along this stretch of road that the messenger's journey had been so impulsive checked him as he nearly to the top of the rise, and he came to sudden standstill.

Dismounting, he crept up to the ridge, and gazed into the valley. He saw no one in sight, but taking his field-glass from his saddle he leveled it, and began to scan carefully over the tree line.

"Ah!" The expression burst from his lips in a way that showed he had made an important discovery.

"I am glad I did not ride over, for he means business, and that's my man without a doubt."

He was already mounted, his horse was through the brush and through the grass, and then resumed aloud:

"He is right under that cliff, and is in hiding among those scrub trees."

"I will go after him."

So saying he returned to his horse, and, mounting, rode back a short distance on the trail until he came to a spot where he could turn off. Going along through the timber for several miles he began to head in toward the trail until he came to a low ridge.

Here he halted, and hitching his horse went along on foot, climbing to the top of the ridge and making his way with the greatest of caution.

It was the ridge that ended on the cliff under which he had seen the man who had caused him to change his course.

At his saddle-bone he carried a lariat, and his rifle was locked and loaded as he go very cautiously on foot toward the cliff.

Fortunately for him there was a stunted group of scrub by the edge of the trail where he could turn off. Not far from him was his horse, unhitched and cropping grass while he awaited the word of command.
and speed and endurance were readily seen in his eye.

He was black as jet, and he was caparisoned with a red and gold saddle and a steel-rein
rank of a general.

The man's appearance was also striking, for he
was dressed in the full uniform of a general, even
to the badge.

The two revolvers in it, and a heavy sauer
bent to the strap, while a "repeating-riff
swung to his saddle-horn, and an air-cylinder
was slung on either side the saddle-
horn.

The man stood erect, his gold-striped pants
stuck in cavalry boots, on which he wore
massive spurs, and an armband of gold was
shaped into a plume by a black plume that
fell upon his broad shoulders.

Colonel Sol Soule had an immense
desire of vanity.

Taking off his hat, he glanced cautiously over the
ridge, and scanned the mile or more of the
trail which his position commanded.

But he looked at his watch, showed no im-
patience and was content to hide its time as
seemed for whatever he was waiting.

"He's waiting for me," muttered Butterfly
Billy, and he added laconically:

"Slowly to and fro paced the Giant General,
and as he turned on his heel under the cliff he
was not over thirty feet from Butterfly Billy,
which surprised me very much. But we come
to the cliff with a settled purpose in view,
and that was to capture the Giant General if
his power to do so.

CHAPTER XVII. BUTTERFLY BILLY TRIES HIS HAND. Some time after General Grant was fully en-
grossed in his own meditations, Butterfly sat to
work out his little plan, which he hoped would
result in some new information.

Passing one end of his larist to a tree, he
took the hold of another and pulled it over
one hand; then he placed a revolver on the edge
of the cliff and peeped over carefully.

"Well, I am ready to die and to go,
and, as he turned on his heel under the cliff, the
cold sweat in his hands was dexterously drop-
pered over him by Butterfly Billy, who, giving it
a sudden jerk, as it encircled his legs, threw the
larist across the ground with a force that baffled
him entirely.

Butterfly Billy showed his quickness of
movement and nerve, for, grasping his revolver
in one hand, and with his two gloves as a shield
for the other, so prevent the rope from burning it,
he slid down the larist with the agility of a skil-
lier, and, ere the Giant General could rise, had
his revolver, cocked and finger on trigger, leveled
in his face.

"You are a dead man, you die, general," Butterfly
Billy said, in a determined voice, which there
was no mistaking.

The man had fallen heavily, and his breath
had not only knocked out of him, but his head
had become a target for the force that dazed
him, and also cut a gash over his temple.

The men were now on the spot, and the
planned it should, about his shoes, and the coil
had been drawn taut so as to jerk his legs from
under him.

The larist the youth still held, and, drawing on
it hard, the man was unable to rise, and he
was wholly at the mercy of the youth and he
realized it.

"Unlock your belt, general, and if you
move either hand near a revolver in doing so, I
shall shoot you.

Without a word the man obeyed, and then
came the order:

"Now, give me your belt, general, clear of that belt of arms
—come, don't mind soiling your clothes, for you
were not going to escape.

"Quick! for I am getting nervous and my
breath puzzles my trigger, may pull trigger.

The captive, like the growl of a bear,
came a muttered oath and the man obeyed.

"Now, general, raise your hands as though you were going to say your prayers.

"I'll never shoot you till I kill you!

"Do not unless you force me to do so; but obey,
you _know_ you will.

"Had I wished to, I would have shot you from the cliff, instead of catching you in my
hair.

"I'll confound that I have more money than I
say and will give you every dollar of it,"

"I'll give you every dollar I have,"

"I'll prefer you, the man's face paled more than it had thus far, and his lip nervously, and seemed loc

Butterfly was ready to start, and mount-
ing his horse slowly back upon the trail be
coming, the scout was mounted on the)
the broncho, and his appearance was
the notice of the terrible master not master
of the situation.

CHAPTER XVIII. A STRANGE GIFT. The troopers under Captain Louis Rosby
were welcomed back warmly by their comrades,
and congratulated upon their defeat of the
Reds.

Colonel Russell Carter, the commandant, had
a message to read at parade the day following
the return of the victors, complimenting the gal-
man captain and his men, and making especial
mention of the valuable services rendered by
Butterfly Billy and Buffalo Bill.

The same night a reception was given the
officers of the command, and a supper was laid
for the men, an act to show the appreciation of
their comrades.

The reception was given by Captain Allen,
and thither had gathered all the heads and gal-
lantry of the fort.

And amid the beauties, and there were many
of them, there was no one who would have given
those who had not before quite lost their hearts
badly who had known him. This was perhaps too
lovers were more deeply smitten than ever.

In the midst of the gayety an article of clothing
was dropped from the pocket of Buffalo Bill, to the
effect that he was wanted at the stockade gate by the
officers of the day.

The scout lastly left, with word to Colose
Carter that he would immediately report it if
possible to be a bountiful service was as
wanted for.

And at the gate he found them, Captain
Frank Ferguson, the officer of the day, with
the sergeant of the guard and his escort, who
had come out to meet Buffalo Bill.

In the background were others who the
scout recognized.

"Cody, I sent you, as a rather strange
gift has just been left with the guard," said Cap-
tain Ferguson.

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gift has just been left with the guard," said Cap-
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"Cody, I sent you, as a rather strange
gift has just been left with the guard," said Cap-
tain Ferguson.
you are to have the right of say as to how and when I shall die, for that young devil brought you to me as the sentinel says."

"That was a fair game with no show of excitement or emotion—coolly as the soldier had always been:"

Six months before he left the fort after a murder and robbery, and had deserted.

Then he heard the neighing of a horse; a private soldier, being color-blind of his battalion, had ridden off to his home to bring back his horse, and was lashed together, so as to give him simply walking space, and dressed in a general's uniform."

"All know him there, and all gazed upon him."

"Do you mean, Soule, that Butterfly Billy captures"

"You see that I am in from, and in the fort, and certainly did not come here of my own accord."

"I hardly believe it possible for you to have been taken alive."

"The man who picks that young devil up for a boy makes a great mistake, for there's more man and grit in him than there is in my big body, and that is saying a great deal."

"I tell you he is Satan's own kid."

Butterfly Bill laughed and replied:"

"How was it, that he roped you in, Soule, for I thought you were about as hard a man to solar as was at large, with the brand of outlaw about you."

"That is it, he did rope me in, for I was lying on the trail for him and was too careless."

"If he saw me, took in my position, flanked me, it was all over, my honor was over, my heart broke, I jerked my feet from under me, and gave Buffalo Bill a shot, but the shot went wide of him, and I shot him in the back, and hand, and I am so."

"Well, Captain Soule, you met your match, in your match."

"Yes, we were both, and so was he."

"How did he know what he would capture with me?"

"Captain Ferguson, I will leave the prisoner in your hands, sir, and I will report to Colonel Stagg another day."

"Do so, Cody, and if it does not please any man, let him show how he does it."

"I am a constable, bring your prisoner to the guardhouse, and the outlaw was marched off, while Buffalo Bill returned to headquarters and seeking out Colonel Carter told him what had occurred, and before half an hour had passed the news of the capture of the "Giant General" was known all over the fort.

CHAPTER XIX.

IN THE FACE OF DEATH.

That the capture of the terror of the trail, Soule, made a made me far more of a hero than ever, goes without say-

ing.

His name was upon every lip the next day, and many congratulations to Ivy Allen were received by the lady. Mr. Carter took place as fellow as the young manager was voted to be."

The young man was a little more than a kid, knew more of the young rider than he would admit, and yet when closely questioned, he had little to say regarding him, other than that he was a mystery to all along the line.

Colonel Russell Carter went in a report of the Giant General's capture, and spoke in the highest praise of his young captor, recommending him as most worthy of a lieutenantcy in the army, and expressing the hope that a request would be made to the President to appoint him such.

The news went along the trail, and whenever Butterfly Billy was seen he was an objects of intense admiration and curiosity.

Mr. Carter was again on the road, driving over the same run he had been in when he met Butterfly Billy, and he was ready to report to the Judge the daring exploit. The youth was not the best man of his inches on the branches."

Mr. Carter Curtis also was delighted at hav-

ing given the young Texas the appointment that he had coveted; he was an object of much other valuable service rendered by Butterfly Billy as a marksman would be cared to have the youth known as such:

One day the inspector received a note from Butterfly Billy:"

"I will lay off for a week or ten days as I believe the young rider had a man that may all in this place, and his country will have been, as you know, partly bold of late.

Ten seconds crowd and it would have been too late.

It was an appallingly close call from death.

CHAPTER XX.

Tear that went up from officers, soldiers and all who witnessed the splendid rescue, ended in a debt of joy. Ivy Allen's father, the young lady's father, the young lady's little daughter of fifteen, was be-

low in the garret.

An old boy, she was the idol of her father's heart, and with staring eyes, set teeth and hands, she rushed to the window to see what her boy was doing."

When the gallant rescuer sped on to the quar-

ters of Captain Allen, and placed pretty Mattie in safety, I decided, from my own point of observation, regarded like a man overcome with wine, and would have failed, but Captain Rosary given him a helping hand.

The brave colonel who had led his men down on many a field, was now, as a woman in the face of danger to his child.

Wheeling his horse, Butterfly Billy sped away after the hero, and helped the cowboys round them up and drive them back to the corral, after which he rode to the quarters of Buffalo Bill.

"Well, Billy, you are on deck every time, and you did what few men dare attempt or could, and did it well."

"Well, I did done a great deed this day, my gallant Pony Rider.""

"Yes, Mr. Cody, for I deserted as soon as I set her down upon the plains of Captain Allen's house, I guess it was, for I saw Miss Ivy Allen was in danger."

"Yes, it was Captain Allen's quarters where Miss Ivy Allen was, and you saved her, and I save Miss Mattie Carter, the commandant's only child, and a little beauty.

"Well, I did done a great deed this day, my gallant Pony Rider."

"Yes, Mr. Cody, I can do it, for I have set her down upon the plains of Captain Allen's house, I guess it was, for I saw Miss Ivy Allen was in danger."

"Yes, it was Captain Allen's quarters where Miss Ivy Allen was, and you saved her, and I save Miss Mattie Carter, the commandant's only child, and a little beauty.

"Well, I can do it, for I saw Miss Ivy Allen was in danger."

"I don't think I did it, for I saw Miss Ivy Allen was in danger."

"Well, I don't want the fort, Mr. Cody, but I am glad to have save Miss Mattie Carter, My Miss Mattie Carter."

"Dead gone in five minutes by the chaplain's court, but I guess Miss Mattie will have some thing to say to you—Ah! you are honored, for the colonel is coming."

A moment after, Colonel Carter walked up to the scout's quarters, which were isolated from those of the other scouts.

He was still white, almost the hue of a corpse, but he had regained his nerve, and walked with a firm, quick step.

He had been told who it was that had rescued his son, and that he would see the guest of Buffalo Bill.

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He had been told who it was that had rescued his son, and that he would see the guest of Buffalo Bill.
Butterfly Billy, the Pony Rider Detective.

Colby's quarters to offer their congratulations, and Butterfly Billy found himself more of a hero than he cared to be.

At the hour of parade he went out upon the ground-leveled road in the queer costume and looking very handsome in it too.

For the hour spent there was quite a yard out back of the main road, and there a small lane led out by the adjutant, complimenting him for his rescue, and he slipped off after parade with every one of Colby's officers, boys, and men hanging upon him by a cheer from the companies as they marched off to the grand stand.

"I say, Billy, how am I to introduce you here to-day: for Butterfly Billy is not just the name for your society, you know," said the scout as they neared the colonel's quarters.

"Butterfly Billy goes, don't he, I guess, and what's in a name after all?"

"Not much, I admit; but I thought you'd like to be known by the name you are put down on the Overland Company's payroll.

"True, it is Ray Ford of Texas, Mr. Colby," and as the youth spoke they reached the quarters and were welcomed by Ivy Allen, who after greeting the young messenger, said:

"It is hardly necessary for me to present you to Miss Mattie Carter, Master Butterfly Billy, after your introduction to her this afternoon.

"As I have said, she was told the land of Butterfly Billy in both her ears.

She spoke no word, but her quivering lips showed what was in her heart, and as she felt the touch of the soldier's hand, she knew what might make known.

Butterfly Bill saw the trouble, and came to the rescue.

"Miss Kitty, you pressed me into service as a riding-tune, but I am not a lawyer, I am not a lawyer, I am not a lawyer, and I care not how much, you and the soldiers have christened me, and you must call me by it too.

"May I ask what it is, for I am a stranger in the fort?"

"His Eyes! But here comes papa and his guests," and Colonel Carter entered the room, accompanied by Captains Allen and Rossy, and Butterfly Billy's face burned under the compliments bestowed upon him by the officers, for all were pleased with his splendidly mounted, lovely girl from the fearful fate that threatened her.

CHAPTER XXI.

On the Morning of the 18th.

To every one in the garrison of Fort M—,

Butterfly Billy was already distinguished.

He did not court notoriety, and he rather re- grcted that he was made so much of; but when he knew that he really did deserve the praise bestowed upon him, and must accept the situation.

Butterfly Billy had come to Fort M—., with a settled purpose in view, and that was to see the Giant Generals.

He had expected to remain but a couple of days, but somehow the surroundings and the pretty eyes of Mattie Carter held him bound to the post, and he just slipped off the back ride which Ivy Allen had proposed, Captain Lewis Rossy being her escort, which left the Government messenger to the tender lovely girl he had saved from death.

Yes, you know what I mean.

"You remember I asked you about Yankee Kit when we were on our way to the fort?"

"I remember.

"You said that you knew nothing about him, and yet it is plain to me that you were a good horseman, and so devoted and went on your own hook.

"How did you learn this?"

"I saw a wounded Mounted Miner, at one of the stations, and he told me.

"He had been shot in an attack on a coach, and was brought to the station, and died there."
Butterfly Billy, the Pony Rider Detective.

"From what I have heard you say, I believe you do know what I would find out," said Butterfly Billy, and the woman in the case and all that, and let me say just here that you resemble the lady in question. Butterfly Billy winked, but said:

"What do you propose?"

"That you buy my secret."

"Name your price."

"It is very tempting, yes."

"What does a man in your position need money for?"

"I said nothing about money."

"What then?"

"I am not afraid, sir."

"It is impossible."

"They would be sealed."

"Tell me what you want."

"Well, I wish you all to escape."

"You are not to harm the guard, or to take

money in your province."

"You are to pledge yourself to leave this part of the country forever, and the second day from this to meet me at the Lone Pine in the prairie, a few miles from where I captured you."

"I will be there at noon, and both of us can see if one or the other is coming along to the..."

"...With arms in my possession I have no more fear of you, than I suppose you have of me."

"Now do you give your pledge?"

"I do."

"You solemnly vow it?"

"Yes."

"Well, you see your hat and belt of arms are in the cabin with you, and we can horse a horse in the troopers' stables which are near."

"To-night, as the thing is supposed to be a secret, and you can ride out, with your cloak on, without suspicion, after the guard has been set."

"You will take the chances?"

"Every time."

"Then I will return in an hour with my skeleton keys and unlock your iron, and we shall get the contemptuous thing in the same way again warn you that if you deceive me, I will track you to the gallow's."

"I understand, and you need have no fear."

"All right," and with this the young messenger left the cabin and returned the sentinel's shout and went to Buffalo Bill's quarters.

Mr. Cody, I think I shall ride to Upland Station this morning, and see if there is any word for me; but I will return to-night, so I can get a prayer at the church.

"Certainly, I will give it to you—it is Messala; but did you see the prisoner?"

"Yes, but he would not tell me his secret, so I am to try him again."

"Soon after he saw the sentinels on duty relieved, he made his way to the cabin where the prisoner was, and showed his pass to the man on guard."

"Certainly, sir, pass in," was the polite salutation of the sentinels, and the young messenger took a seat near the prisoner.

"Here is a key that will fit your iron..."

The key was tried in both the antecolumna and hand cuffs, and the prisoner was satisfied.

"The courtsey for to-night is Messala, and there are some scouts to start off to-night, and I predict rain by noon, but it will not be heavy."

"Remember, the Lone Pine, at noon day after to-morrow, and the young wheeled on his heel, and left the cabin."

Half an hour after he was on his way to the station on the Overland, dashed along at a rattling pace, mounted upon one of Buffalo Bill's horses, for he could save black as much as he could.

As he had predicted, the rain came at sunset, but Butterfly Billy was thoroughly prepared for bad weather, as he had his waterproof coat, and kept perfectly dry. He reached the station, and rode over the storm in some little time.

"Yes, on Friday."

"Will yer remain?"

"I hardly think so, but how are all along the line!"

"Prime, and tracked to death with you. Why, Inspector Curtiss kept a heap of store by you, and yer is popular with all, but good-by, Billy, and..."

Butterfly Billy seemed to feel that the man meant what he said.

I would release him who knew would be wrong, but he believed that through this man he could learn what would bring his long trail to an end. He believed that upon the knowledge possessed by the outlaw, far more than his own personal happiness could be measured, and perhaps a life was a stake in comparison to which the hanging of three men was trivial.

He had captured him, and he could set him free, and then, if he deceived him, he would bring upon him the same fate that was now expected to save him from.

No one would suspect him, of ever aiding the prisoner's escape, and his secret he could keep.

"I said, General," he answered, after while.

"If I set you at ease, you will again tell me, to pledge yourself to tell me all that I would know.

"You are not to harm the guard, or to take

money in your province."

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BUTTERFLY BILLY, the Pony Rider Detective.

The poor fellow was nearer dead than alive, and the hands were fastened to the cof fin so that they could not move.

Taking his saddle and equipments, and throwing the borrowed horse, he headed for the river, and the two men left the cabin, the old man after him, and walked rapidly toward the banks of the Mississippi.

He had no gun, and could do nothing with the acquaintance with the place he held his friend the Giant General,

"This is quite, this is quite good, the darkness and the moment after was mounted and rolled toward the Giant General made it possible that care was the first one to reach the rendezvous.

Then he knew that it was the Giant General who would not come, and his heart almost stood still at the thought.

At last he reached the tree, and as he did so he had a trail leading toward it.

The trees were made by iron-shod hoofs, and were fresh.

Sprung to the ground he examined the trail and said almost by half that any man that came should be in, the prison cabin.

He threw his mantle to a ready, and called loudly:

"Corral of the guard! Fort Number Seven!"

With the last word there came the crack of a revolver, and the brave soldier dropped in his tracks.

With a bound the fugitive was at the gate, and opened it, and leading his horse through, mounted and was away just as rapidly coming his heart.

They found the soldier lying upon the platform which was his stand, giving him a look over the stockade as well, and he made it quite a run,

The stranger, and the escape reported to him, and Buffalo Bill, a dozen of his scouts, and a company of cavalry started forth into the woods, and the country could feel on any news, but their return was soon after noticed, and when the box was nearly empty, and having destroyed all trace of an animals, it was useless to continue it.

The story which Buffalo Billy heard, and kept his peace, but felt guilty.

So far, it would be said, and it was usual, and the poor wounded soldier did not die

That worried him greatly, and yet he could not have broken the story, as the life of his life or the soldier's.

He rode to the side of the man, the man who had taken the horse instead of one from the stable, and the soldiers, and he regretted that he had not ridden the animal to the station, for he had discussed the splendid qualities which, "General," as he called the captured steed, possessed.

Late that afternoon, as it had cleared off, the clouds, and the mountain was in the following day.

He was about to saddle a horse which Buffalo Bill had placed at his disposal, when Colonel Colter, who was mounted on a good horse while the command had received, with several other members of the regiment, and Buffalo Billy, as the command disappeared, and he gave it a single glance for his journey, and finding no one to witness his departure, he left.

The story of the struggle which Buffalo Billy knew would hurt the feelings of Colonel Carter, so he put his trapping horse, and mounted and rode by the command to take the command and any farwell.

He was glad to get a glance, too, of the beautiful face of Martha Carter, and in this he was not disappointed, for she and Ivy Allen came out to see him on his new mount.

"I am sorry you lost your splendid black, Buffalo Billy, but hope you will find Commandant—"as Mattie named his horse—"almost equal to the colonel said.

As the eyes were deceived in his looks, sir, he is fully the black's equal; and I shall hope to get the same a back some day. Good luck to you, and raising his jockey-cap politely, the youth rode away, and was joined at the stockade gate by Buffalo Billy, who was disposed of the young black.

At nightfall the four camped together, and at the shining the next morning Butterfly Billy bade his friend three cheers for the good Giant with the Giant General, and which interview with the outlaw he knew might change the

CHAPTER XXV.

AT THE LONE PINE.

It was just when Butterfly Billy rode among the white pine trees that stood with no other tree within miles of it.

There was a slight rise there, like an Indian mount and here stood the tree, a landmark, to many a scout, hunter and red-skin.

Leaving the narrow, he bordered a stream at the base of a ridge, the youth headed for the pine tree, and when the guides were to call the Sentinel Tree.

As he approached it he saw that there was no horseman in sight, that could be the first one to reach the rendezvous.

There was no sign of the Giant General, and his heart almost stood still at the thought.

"Then he knew that it was the Giant General who would not come, and his heart almost stood still at the thought.

At last he reached the tree, and as he did so he had a trail leading toward it.

The trees were made by iron-shod hoofs, and were fresh.

Sprung to the ground he examined the trail and said almost by half that any man that came should be in the prison cabin.

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"Butterfly Billy, you will write the outlaw's let her in his pocket, and mounting his horse, rode away on the tree left by the black steed of the Giant General.

He followed it until nightfall, to the banks of a river where his small range; but there it was lost, and he camped until nightfall.

Again he began the search, but, splendid trailer that he was, the Giant General had put his tracks so his track was not followed, and after an all day's hunt for it he gave up.

Going to the nearest station he wrote a letter to the company's manager at Omaha, and sent it to the next driver, and so on have it go its way.

In this letter he explained that he wished a longer leave, and would take it, hoping that it would be allowed.

Then, preparing himself for a long, hard ride, taking one of his own horses at a station as a pack-animal, Butterfly Billy started away on his trip to the mountains, to visit the lone grave near Castle Rock.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE GUARDIAN OF A GRAVE.

It was a few days after the departure of Butterfly Billy from Fort M— that a man sat near a hillside chicken, a grave that jutted out from a ridge of hills overlooking a

On all sides of him the scenery was grandly beautiful, stretching away in one direction after another, and spreading itself out in the air, and in the other presenting a landscape of rolling hills, plains, rivers and forests as far as the eye could see.

The one who sat upon the top of the rocks would be wholly free from the taint of danger, for a false step would dash him to death.

His gaze was upon the grand scene about him, and his eyes were fixed almost with a stare upon a distant timber clump, which the declining sun fell nightly upon, reflecting the many-hued leaves, tinted by autumn's frosts, until the trees were trimmed with a distant band of amber clouds.

The man was of fine physique, and his hair and beard, both worn long, were snow-white.

His head was sheltered by an old and worn leather hat, and his clothing, consisting of buckskin leggings and hunting shirt of heavy woolen materials, were battered and torn.

Upon his feet were miner's boots, also much worn.

A carbine was by his side, and a revolver and knife in his belt, and these seemed to complete these the miner's outdoor wear.

The face was a noble one, yet stamped with deepest suffering, and the eyes seemed to be staring, and to possess an expression of deepest anxiety.

Who cut out of the distant timber rode a horsemanship.

He came on directly toward the pile of rocks, and would be seen coming around the hill, and then back, running afar off on the prairie beyond the timber clump.

Straight on toward the rocks came the horseman, and as he drew nearer the man sitting there left his point of lookout, where a rise hid him from view for a minute, and lastly de
cidedly.

He then walked rapidly for a hundred yards, until he came to a mountain pine with over

Beneath this tree there was a grave, and at its head a small scalping with smooth bark, into which says this substantial the following:

HELEN.

A BROKEN-HEARTED WOMAN.

October 10th, 18—

Against the tree was a rustic seat, and the space about it was well worn, showing that the man had sat there for many a year.

Over under the shelter of the rocks was a log cabin, rudely built, and with a chimney of

There was just space enough in the little cabin to lie down, and a blanket, and a blanket, and a table, with a frying-pan and coffee-pot, a pair of blankets and a cloak were the only it was in the way of comforts in the humble home.

It was the home of the white-haired man, who
seemed to have constituted himself guardian of the lonely grave beneath the pine tree.

Standing by the grave, with his carbine at a ready, he stood ready to fire one shot at the very approach of his eyes, his iron upon the hilltop, over which the grave, and he raised his weapon. For a moment he waited, until he heard the shot of his carbine, and then he rolled upon the valley, and rested upon the headstone above the lonely grave.

"Mary, my hand, he is near, and quick as a flash he too was ready for battle.

Neither raised their weapons to fire, but stood at bay in the situation.

Then Major opened a volley, and gradually, directly toward the guardian of the grave.

But, even in the heat of afternoon, within a hundred yards, when loud came the command:

"Halt! go your way and come to not this step, for, I've told you, let the ground above this grave.

"My God! is Major Martin Mahoney" came in boresome tones from the lips of the horseman, and then he called out loudly:

"Major Mahoney, it is Ray Royal!"

"Do you not know me?"

"Do you not know me?"

"Do you not know me?"

"Do you not know me?"

Tom, the gentleman in a town fortune, and gave his feeling to his party, and then Major Mahoney said:

"(3)"

"Yes, my mother,"

"Has she known, who told you?"

"It is a long story, Major Mahoney, for to tell you how I came back to the night when the Wives of the Rio Grandos attacked our settlement.

"Let me now say that I gave up home and all to find you and your mother.

"You have found us both, for she lies in that grave, 150 yards away, and the youth took his cap from his head and turned on some men to the side of the grave, while his heart overflowed with grief.

"He had come to the end of his long trail, and it was here he met his mother.

"The man stood gazing down upon him, a look of intense sympathy on his face for the querulous old man.

"At last, Butterfly Billy arose, and grabbing the band of the major, asked in a subdued tone:

"How did it happen?"

"Tell me of her and of yourself, my good friends.

"It is a long story, too, Ray, but I will tell you of it.

"Let us go to my cabin yonder, where I have lived for nearly a year now, the guardian of this grave."

"The young Pony Rider unslung his horse and led him behind the pack animal to find it.

"Then he and Major Mahoney sat down before the little cabin and the lone dweller thus said:

"Among the graves there was one that said that I charged into the timber, and my men were not close upon me, and we were in the midst of the outlaws before I knew it.

"One I killed, but a blow upon my head knocked me down, and the sound of a shot produced a second one."

"They retreated into Mexico, and the next day their chief came, the famous Captain Coyote."

"Nor was he alone, for he had your mother with him.

"Then I know that in the long ago he had loved the woman, but she had left him, and to her I had made the same oath, for she was dearer to me than all else in the world, and I believe she loved me.

"But I was poor, and I went away to win a fortune, and some time after it came to me like a death-blow that she had married your father who was a rich man.

"One day I had a letter from her, and it was written upon one of the graves of her marriage.

"She told me that she loved me, but that her parents prevailed upon her to wed with a man with money, and make me good forever.

"I made my fortune, dug it out of the mines, and learning that my father was dead, sought to find her mother.

"At last I did so, and I found her in the Texas settlement, and I do love her, and I have hoped one day to make her my wife.

"It was in love with your mother, went to the bed, and asked her to leave her home, but he had a fateful night to become his wife, under the threat that if she did not, he would hunt her down and give me to the Comanches to torture to death.

"In her love for you, in her dire alarm for such an appalling fate to come upon you she fled with the man, who became her cruel master, and, after going to his place with her, her body was burned by the Comanches to torture to death.

"The man he made his band of his band in the field was one Yankee Kit, known in Texas as Captain Roes, and he, Captain Coyote, played the gentleman in a town, and caught a lieutenant who to rob, and when.

"One day he said to me, and as he was one who had once known me in the mines, and as he did not know where I came from, he told me to: "I would you to escape, and more, when I asked you to do me what I had done when they were in the valley near Castle Rock, and had been buried there by Coyote.

"It was a matter of life to know that she was free from her sorrows, and, aided to escape this man, I sought Castle Rock, this spot, and here I lived, and I have dwelt here for so long as I could not bear to leave this ground, so sacred to me.

"Yankee Kit promised to hire me, and reported that he had killed you, so I did not write, and some day intended returning to the old home in Texas.

"Yes, that Giant General, he heard the outlaws war's a serial of Yankee Kit, and that he sought to become chief of the Mounted Miser, but unable to persuade Kit to yield the command to him, went alone on the road, but kept up his friendship with the band.

"You have found us both, for she lies in that grave, 150 yards away, and the youth took his cap from his head and turned on some men to the side of the grave, while his heart overflowed with grief.

"Before they went to sleep, they had decided to return to their old homes in Texas."

"Ten days after the little cabin in the valley was deserted, and the Pony Rider mounted upon Ray's pack-horse, the two set out along the Overland, and the Pony Rider resigned his position, and started on his way southward.

A halt was made at Fort M—— to see Buffalo Bill, and to report that the Mounted Miser had retired from the Overland Trails, and then the two continued on their way to the Lone Star State.

As a result of the prairie was shattering Fort M—— from the view Pony Rider said in a low tone:

"Ride on, my good friend, and I will overtake you soon.

"I wish to halt here for a minute."

Major Mahoney rode slowly on, while Butterfly Billy halted and turned his face toward the distant fort, and gazed long and earnestly at it.

"It is to the south, past Mattie Carter, but one of these days I will seek you out and make you my wife, for you have won my heart.

"What is between me and that time, who can tell, but I mean it—that one day you will be my only wife."

But Butterfly Billy kept his word.

END