BULLION BRETT, THE GIANT GRIP.

BY EDWARD LYTTON.
Bullion Bret,
THE GIANT GRIP;

OR,

THE RACKET AT GH-THAR.

BY EDWARD LYTTON,
AUTHOR OF "HILLY BURR," "BUSTLING BOB," ETC., ETC.

PROLOGUE.

Does any galoot in this shanghaing desire to be a lord? Has he any game of cards, wif a !

This query was uttered by the mining-camp police, and the answer was but a small scattering of shanties, before the immensely valuable claims were settled. "Punch Bowl" was the only saloon in the place. A delegation of grim-visaged miners were seated on the steps of the store, in three or more-mentioned resort, taking over the thousand doubtful future of the camp, when the door opened, a stranger stepped within the room, and doffed his sun- hat gallantly, as he propped the query, "It's a ducky wet outside, gente; suppose we get our faces to the bar and sympathise!" he added.

It was a "go." No one ever asked a miner of this or any other camp for refreshments.

So the man ranged along the bar with the pleasant curiosity as if they had been called upon to replap an Indian attack—if not more.

The man who had so generously invited them to "smile" smiled, but poured individual that, to say, his hair was shiny and fell in profusion on his shoulders.

He also wore a black mustache and imperial, was handsome of face, and had a piercing brown eye of wonderful magnetic influence.

A miner, no doubt, and a perfectly proportioned, and clearly was no weakening in a personal encounter.

One, a ruffian, in respect to his head and knee boots, a belt at the waist, a red woolen shirt, and his shlock somewhat made up his wardrobe.

A thin, black, freckled-looking man than he was easy-to-told; yet a peculiar some- thing about his person impressed the miners with a sense of his prowess, and that he was the ordinary run of humanity.

"Nothing like having wet on the inside when it's wet on the outside," the stranger went on to assure, holding his beverage lip high, and balancing the glass on the end of his finger. "When I handle, I alias like company—convivial company.

"Slip her off, galacka, and see if we can't play a few hands here tonight with a pack of pasteboards. Give me your word I don't know much about "em myself, an' I'll play every ten games I play. But, if I git stuck, I kin pop!"

"Speak up!" you know, about it. one miner sneered. "What do you find much in the game?"

I reckon not. Don't insult me by calling me a sharp, because I'm nothing of the kind. My name is Silversmith, at your service, and I am a wild out from Wyoming. My motto is: anything for sociability and to keep peace in the family!"

The drinks were hoisted, and the men exchanged family news.

"Well, stranger, we'll try ye a ruin, but if we find you're a skin, hanged of ye don't fire yo."

"Don't you think that this is a very eve ever plays nothing else in "GH-THAR?"

Old Bill Travis declared.

Lighting his stubby clay pipe, and laying a re- view of the table, around which they become seated.

The others, however, objected to this "parlor game," and the banquet was free and hot greenbacks. A beloved aunt of mine was kind enough to send me around. I had just acquired a respectable business. A large amount of it, however, has been dropped at the card.

It appeared that a miner of Silver- smith was in fair prospect of losing another ten dollars on the mine, and—thirty dollars out.

Mr. Silversmith, scowling, while the miners grew calls.

It is evident that they were playing "smokes"—that is, would divide the stakes when they got the honorable Mr. Silversmith cleaned out, out of the game. "Just my old confounded luck!" the latter de- clared. "I'd bet a thousand on my hand if I could.

"And a gold mine!" returned Silversmith.

"I see a hundred!"

"Two hundred, sir!"

"Good grief!" exclaimed the Wild Out of Wyoming am as game as deer at Christmas time, I'll swop you up to five hundred. "Show up!"

"No!"

"Boof! bombast, Eight!"

Tobias, the leader of the miners.

"I've reached the extremity of my pils, boys. Has any of you any loose about you? If so, you know me."

The miners began to spill out their cash and dust, and among them made up a purse of five dollars that Mr. Silversmith declined, on the discovery, as at that time he was considered the square man of the camp.

Silversmith smiled quietly at this concerted action.

"Do you make it twelve hundred?" he de- manded.

"You bet—a at a jump!" Tobias assurred.

"You've done it!"

"Say! I'm a match, and a hundred, and a hundred!" said Sukey. "I just tip the balance of my scales of confidence at fifteen hundred. My fifty hundred to your twenty-five on the hand.

"Yes! Show up!" and Tobias laid down the cards—here's the goods!"

Just as easy as to roll off a log, a Silver- smith said, laying down his hand—the ace, jack, nine, seven, six, five, four, three, and the ace. "Are you done,gentl?"

"Not they're not!" announced Mr. "Molly" Crocker. "We're going to get this bill with a full-thump of bills, and cart the boys wif ten dol- lar notes, here."

"If you don't, they'll lose it."

Silversmith stated, slamming his winnings in his capacious pockets. Remember, however, it's getting late, and I'll try not play more long enough for you to win back as much, as you've lost."

They started off. Success.

Game after game did the stranger lose, in suc- cession, until but a hundred of Silversmith's winnings was in the hands of the stranger.

All that he had lost he put up in paper, and now laid down a hundred-dollar note.

"My size! I'm tired of playing. Make it even sides."

The miners hesitated a moment, but finally consented, and the game was played again.

Silversmith then arose.

"Well, gent, I'm just as rich as I was before."

"Oh, no! We like paper as well as you!"

Tobias sneered. "We'll all drink with Tobias!"

"Yes, I could play another game with a profound bow, Mr. Sukey Silversmith, to your departure."

After he had gone, a slip of paper was found under where he sat—a elegantly epaulet, too.

No unschooled galoot had written it, plainly.

"The worst and most innocent of the enemies."

GLOOMY GALETS OF GH-THAR—These few lines is to inform you that I got ther. The fact of it is, when I left the game, I was back in the middle of the street. I had no greenbacks, and I got galoots the greenbacks. Private examination warned me that I could not make them available. I tried to get the money as usual, but I failed. I concluded to exchange with you. As GH-THAR grows older, and the rose of youth is waned, I find it is a great deal more to get dozens than to get rid of the rest. I am sending you this very letter. Atten- tion.

"Adieu, kithens, adieu!"

EVER YOUNG, SNEW.

SHE SILVERSMITH.

"Aesthetic Agent of the Avenue."

The greenhouse, where I lived, was empty of the Silversmith had taken away a "boodle that was good.

The "elbow " of GH-THAR howl.

They all joined hands in solemn rage, and swore that the next red-headed pilgrim who came to GH-THAR would:—

When he played a tale:—

CHAPTER I.

"THE GIANT GRIP."

"Well, bully partner—how are you?"

"Bully, like, for a Hottentot. I do. you yourself? and the second speaker seized the handy band of the first, and led him quietly into the kitchen, and said to, in a friendly manner, that the face of the other assume an expression of exquisite torture and had the presence of mind to cover his countenance complacently.

"How ye got cramps in the stomach, or rheumatism in yer arms. Ye can always find me in the kitchen, and I'll be in the kitchen in the area boxem uy yer pants."

"Get up, please, for the 'ny! Have you let. Ol! Shuff! ooo! I see my hand inter!"

"Get out! Can't a feller give ya a friendly glow—need ye know?"

"Get out! Oh! ooo-e! Don't know why—never seen ya before. Please let me go, mister."

He was led from the man's hand, with a dry sort of laugh.

The man's expression was pressed too fast, he observed, while the bullwacker gazed cold fully at his unfortunate hand, and shook his head complacently.

The scene was in the young and go-ahead mining metropolis of GH-THAR, Idaho, and it is a year ago. You will find the infor- mation in our prologue.

Upon the main street, in front of Molly Mag- nus, charged a little improved Punch Bowl, the two strangely contrasted individuals had met, the moonlight and the bullwhacker, and from, one balmy brilliantly moonlight night.

The larger of the twain, a roughly-dressed and aigned miner, stepped fairly in front of the other party, and put his hand with a strange leer, and the bullwhacker, and the miner had so promptly and effectively responded.

The miner-driver was a typical specimen of the miner that is, and the miner-driver had on his strength probably held an advantage over any one on the street, and he stepped along with it.

When in later there were few who cared to incur his displeasure, as he was counted on as an exceptionally "bad man."

The individual whom he accosted was evidently a new arrival, as the stage had re- cently ceased in, and the stranger carried a good sized visel in his left hand.

He was probably between twenty-four and twenty-eight, was of an ordinary figure, as men average, in propor- tions.

There was nothing particular about his form to denote that he was more than an everyday man, but he was in some doubts except that he wore one of the broad rim, slouch prairie hat that, in the eyes of the uninitiated colored, is the first component part of a Western scout.

He neither wore a belt, nor exposed weapons, and seems to a careless observation, a border brave, or a border hero: yet his prompt treatement of the miner-driver impressed those who had bethought them to believe that he was one of the frequently met traveling strangers that did not exhibit everything on the outside.

The man, who when you've a Mite a sickle to "ye've got the nuse into pen- mites!" the miner-driver grunting, feeling heartily, the fact that he was physically unable to get, for gracious sake! I thort my brick- book was wedged in the chuck, and if you a friendly grip would have thought still different, I said to the stranger repeated.

"We're assuming such was the case, how could I do any better than to the cordial boldness."

"Cordially! Terrifers of Texas! do what ye call cordlery, when ye can't do anything else! Lonesome yokel, I love a good- grown grizzly hunk as any."

"Well, you're satisfied now you did your duty and a merry twinkle under the arm-try!"

"Know yer. On course! Don't, an' what yer wuth you yer bally self, in a direc- ther same direction. I'm old-banged Kavikson, the toughest old hickory in GH-THAR. All I said was made by me howl!"
CHAPTER II.

VIRGIN.

Although Git-Thar was practically a red-hot mining-town, it was also a Mormon stronghold, and governed by the Latter Day Saints in more respects than one.

As the reader is probably aware, the Mormons have been colonizing rapidly in the Territory of Idaho for the last few years, and Git-Thar was one of the strongest settlements in its particular section.

Nestled down between the towering walls of a wild mountain gulch, where the very bowlders come down with their merchandise and gold, the place might have had a future of prosperity before it, had not (the camp not being inhabited by Mormons) a large colony of Mormons learned of the natural and unusual advantages of the site and swarmed down there.

At first the miners had tried to drive them off; but it was like driving away the grasshoppers.

The colony flourished.

Arrangements were finally made by which the miners were allowed to retain what claims and property they were already in possession of, providing they kept at their own side of the camp, strictly paid attention to their own business, and conformed to the laws of Mormon legislation in regard to the town.

As there was nothing else to do the miners consented.

The Mormons built their habitations at the southern end of the gulch, and completely isolated there; while the miners remained in the original portion of Git-Thar.

One of the firstResults was at the head of the Mormon clan, and he was ruler-in-chief of the town; he made the laws, and his deputies were everywhere.

General legislation was a dead letter, and the Gentiles were expected to do exactly as Elder Primmer and his mates told them.

As the tide of emigration began to swell the size of the mining-camp, it became evident that the little community lacked authority, since unless active measures were adopted; therefore it became necessary to multiply the Mormon police.
without really passing to consider how appro-
priate was the appellation. She was Jamison's jewel, and old Jephtha Jamison, who was a fisher- man in the family, gave her the name of the princess of a parent who had no other hope or hap-
INESS in life than her greatness.

The Greeks, the Athenians, to the people of Git-Thar's magic town. They had come to the camp, purchased the cage, and added it to the garrison of Greeks which now characterized the place.

He was a handsome young man, except when Virgie came to the store for such supplies as they needed, or to deliver little parcels of sewing for their own use. Upon the wicket gate a little tin sign announced—

"PLAIN SEWING NEATLY DONE."

Urial Knockemstiff had been the first to no-
tice the sign; he had gone straight to his ben-
ched his Sunday shirt in a dozen places, and

When Marcella, the driver of the barely

mule-driver had so excited the envy of the other

miners that there was henceforth a rivalry be-

 tween them how much could give the pretty

seamstress the most employment, and she was

never left without something to do.

That Virgie was the prettiest girl in the town

no one was prepared to deny, and although there

were scores of big-headed miners who admired her

distance, they could not summon up the requisite
courage to approach her on the sub-

ject. She was the daughter of the old cripple

which literally no suitors.

There was one young man, Val Vivian by

name, who greatly admired her, and he had

the chance to talk with her—the handsomest

man in Git-

Thar, this Vivian: a very Apollo in beauty and

grace. He had studied, he had education and polish of a thoroughbred

gentleman.

He was the relative of old Septimus Singleton, the

moneymaker and speculator of the rugged

mountain town.

How Vivian made out at the Rose Bower, as the

Jamison cabin was called, no one in Git-Thar expec-
ted, but the stories of his visit seemed to indicate that he was not regarded

with particular favor.

On the 2nd of June preceding the arrival

of Bollion Brett in the mining-town, Virgie

Jamison was busy in pruning some bushes in

the little yard in front of the cage, while her

father sat upon the porch, in his easy-chair,

watching her.

He was a man of fifty-and-fifty years, thin

of figure and evidently a long sufferer. One side

of his body was paralyzed from the shoulder
down, and he was to move about,

His face was pinched, his eyes sunken, and his

hair and beard as white as driven snow.

Then in his slumber he repeated the

same; they had been诊断 of course;

that he had once been a handsome man.

Both his attire and that of Virgie was new,

but what a difference! Virgie, sitting on the 

porch, dressed

"Come, child, you've toiled long enough in

the hot sun?" the old man called from the

porch.

"Yes, I'll speak straingly, sir? Jamison man-

aged to say. "You do not know what you

say, evidently. My daughter shall never go with

you; she'll speak, I promise you, sir."

"Oh! yes, she will? Primrose retorted, con-

fidingly, and then hastened to accompany me

without demur if she knows when she is well off.

"I'll not do anything of the kind, you miser-
able woman! I will accompany you, whatever

you take me for a fool, you miss your reckoning!

Leave our premises, sir, or it will be worse for

Primrose laughed grimly.

"Oh! I guess not, my beauty? he said, evi-

dently, when your results are so

bad.

"It is not likely, after having broken in a

down houses, I should be intimidated by a tame

woman and another. It is little you could

to say, to-day, when he paused at the gate.

Oh! nothing much, papa? and the little

fairy of a girl, who was standing waiting at

this was preferred to what you had to

say, to-day, when he paused at the gate.

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Chap. III.

SUKE SILVERSMITH AGAIN.

The words of the Mormon Elder caused a

greater expression of uneasiness to come upon

the face of Jephtha Jamison, while Virgie drew

back, terrified too much to give utterance to

protest.

"You speak strangely, sir? Jamison man-

aged to say. "You do not know what you

say, evidently. My daughter shall never go with

you; she'll speak, I promise you, sir."

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This is a simple text and does not require any further conversion. It is a natural representation of the text as it appears in the image.
think me hard-hearted, father, but I mean to stand firm, and not have our enemies at our own door to have to be shot down. So dismiss all thoughts of trouble from your mind, father, as I shall never have to have to fear it. You will be prepared to cope with it in a warlike manner that will totally conquer and demoralize your enemies.

"Good, by Jove! bravely spoken, or I'm a burro!" cried a hearty voice, and a stranger stepped out from behind a large cabinet and, evidently, had been playing a caviar-tropper.

"And my dear young lady, if you're not able to sit up alone in the right arm belonging to a big-hearted mountain Micah, who would be too glad of the honor to let one of his sons spend the night with a married girl, as the daughter who would not shrink from facing her father's frown.

Both Virgil and old Jethro started, and gazed at the speaker with curiosity not unmixed with apprehension.

He was a man of good figure, and in face rather prepossessing, his eyes being dark and magnetic, and his countenance eloquent. He had long, brown hair, which touched his shoulders, and all of a light-brown color.

He was initiated in a business suit, a slouch hat upon his head, and had the general appearance of a man who would be a formidable antagonist in a fight.

He wore no weapons in his belt, however, and did not in particular have the bearing of a borderist.

"As they saw him, old Jethro and Virgil could be rather favorably impressed with his appearance.

"We are very much obliged to you, I am sure, sir, and so do not hesitate to note that I shall need any assistance, sir," Virgil responded, answering the stranger's declaration.

"If you do, I shall be only too proud of the honor of espousing your cause," the stranger replied, "for I am a friend of the Mormon rascal's threats, and as I am on my way to Critt, I'll take the trouble to call upon you and give you such advice as will need to be given for your safety.

"Just look how he walked Knockenloft," suggested Cock-eyed Cal, who was noted as the second-best rough to the notorious Urchin himself.

"Pooh! phew! I'm too drunk to take care of my clothes, either!" Ira said.

"If ye' gon' to sink, why say so, and be done with it. Ye know the bootie we got skinned out of a man, an' he can't get it back again.

"Nobody's funkin' as I knows of," Magrill growled. "If it's bound to be a sheep-kill, no man can help it, and open the way, and we will help, when there's anything to do.

"If we k'n take their galoot alive they won't be no trouble to us. That's all I care about.

"Ye've got a live galoot that's went to the Giant Grip, with her beautiful ducky cubs.

"it is true, sir, that you are Suke SilverSmith, the largest and most powerful of the Giant Grip, with her beautiful ducky cubs.

"Dear lady, it affords me the greatest of pleasures to assure you that I am not the unwanted SilverSmith, never was that distinguished individual, nor do I ever expect to be. I have a large and growing family, although I am often dubbed the Giant Grip, and Bullion Bred—the former because I have a great many friends and enemies, the latter because I occasionally speculate in bullion. Hoping this information will be of service to those galoots seen spoiling for a skirmish and being chased by a large and important force. I am grateful for the services of a number of them as subjects to start a capital yard with.

"I shall be no fright. I warn you, William Tobias, if further molestation is offered this gentleman, you shall be discharged from my father's employ," said Tobias firmly.

"Now, sir, allow me to inform you that my daughter has the power to discharge you at any time she may see fit. The girl is a remarkable person, Tobias Singleton in person stepped into the room—a finely built, commanding figure, a genuine frontier woman, partly relieved by a heavy iron-gray beard.

Tobias shook back at the sight of the owner, who was still holding his hat, and gavins a boggles of stuff. Oh, they were the same old sort of red-jailed men and entered, the buzzing young mining-miners of Critt.

CHAPTER IV.

TOBIAS'S AVERSION

The wonderful strength exhibited by Bullion Bred in his prominent handling of Urchin Knockenloft caused a murmur of astonishment, sufficient to escape the spectators congregated within Schneider's grocery store.
arm, he left the grocery, and set off for the Singleton mansion, which was the most pretentious of the houses of the city. Tobias glared after the pair until he could no longer see them; then he burst into a coarse laugh.

"Sep. Singleton needn't speak his health better than the hull United States," he grunted. "I don't believe he could, or that that damn man wouldn't die. He mayn't be so rich, her half so powerful, I guess. Ain't I don't keep a fire whether I works for him or not. When I don't work, Iclipse as the Union don't!"

Among the miners of Git-Thar there existed an order called the Self-Protecting Brotherhood, the Union, and the great and only William Tobias was president of it.

It was therefore decided that as nearly all of the miners belonged to the Union, the owners of the mines would force to pay good wages to secure the support of the miners in the Union. So the miners had no choice, owing to a scarcity of hands, but to accede to the demand.

"If the mine-owners it was feared to do anything to precipitate a strike, for it was pretty generally believed by them that Elder Pringle and his Mormon clan stood too ready to back the strikers, and encourage a labor revolt, hoping to get undisputed possession of the mine, and thus to drive out the Gentle element.

The words uttered by Tobias after the departure of the mine-owners were marked with favor by the miners in the grocery, for there was an audible murmur of approval.

"I don't believe there's no one can be liked as him, since he's made a corral out of the sweat of our brows!" Chuckled Cal added maliciously. "With such a man, he is, I declare to heaven that we can do as we like, a hale and hearty feller for the time, and better by far than any other feller I know of."

Bullion Bret had stood leaning idly against the counter, as if having no inclination whatever to purchase any articles. After having delivered himself of the last-quoted remark, Tobias once more fastened his menacing eyes upon the spectacles of the bullioner.

"I see ya ain't makin' no move to vamoose!" he growled, fiercely, "or you want grab a few more bars of gold, you wuss hog!"

"I don't see any reason why I shouldn't be unnecessarily expeditions. Bret replied coyly, "the gold's so high right now."

"Curs, you'd better move, or well show you the door. "Don't let us hang you up on ye so much as ter let yer escape!"

"I fail to see how you are compromising yourself this way, Mr. Bret," replied the spectacles, "I have not requested your Clemency. The fact of the matter is, my worthy Wahoo, yours to compare me to the gods, has driven me to the town of Git-Thar to stay—to become as permanently a fixture as the Plymouth Rock, upon which Jerusalem stood."

"Yes, if I could but thump ye on the nose! I was too busy to see, and I didn't propose to allow such an individual colonization as that which I have outlined. I'd pluck right in and fin out which is going to have his own way about it—you or I!"

With forced composure, back which might be a deadly tornado of passion, old Bullion Bret uttered the challenge, and no one who saw him could for an instant doubt that he was as confident and fearless as what he appeared.

Bill Tobias was not exactly a coward, as the term is understood, and he set out for the bullioner's quarters. He could brag of having killed his man, and old Uriah Knockenstiff was the only one in Git-Thar to do that."

"Take water up to the present time."

Nothing was now regarded the Giant Gripe with sullen hesitation, which showed that he was not quite sure but that he was afraid of the consequences.

"Moble ye think I'm afraid of ye?" double up his knotted fists and donnning a ferocious sneer.

"That's just what I do think precisely," Bret smiled, pleasantly. "I don't believe but what a good many of these Wahoos here are afraid of ye, if ye were to bristle up at ye and lash its taleb' a couple of times."

"Well, my name's Tobias roared, beside himself with rage. "Jest ye come out of O' doors, what bullets won't hurt nobody, an I'll fight ye with either pistols, knives or fists."

"Sold again, bully for I'm your lamb chop every time. Out into the street it is, and I'll make you stand up to the facts we will use, for I don't care to waste ammunition or dull my toothpick against your alligator hide!"

And then the anger of the giant, giving vent to the festering gage of the giant—into the main street of Git-Thar, Camp, where the whites were more used to the sight of bullion and bargains, might swathe all objects in a spell of yellow glory.

And Bill Tobias and the crowd brought up the rear.

CHAPTER V.
A VILLAINOUS COMPACT.

When the Giant Gripe and Tobias emerged from Schneider's grocery-store, the redoubtable Uriah Knockenstiff was nowhere to be seen; he had been waylaid and stoned and left to shift for himself.

"And as the aforesaid Uriah is to play a more or less important part in our drama, it behooves us, as the narrator, to hunt him up."

It was some minutes after landing in the street ere he recovered from the affects of the rough usage he had received at the hands of Bullion Bret. Being a character for whom the general public entertained but a small degree of love, no one paid any attention to him, and he was left to repair the damage as best he could.

He did recover at last, however, and managed to get upon his pins but little the worse for wear and in due time reached the Gentle element.

"No sooner did he regain his equilibrium, than his arm was clinched by an elderly femail of the ladies and my anti-color left him off as he made his way toward the Mormon quarters without stopping for ceremony.

"Smellier and meek as a lamb went the mule-driver, had death stared him fairly and grimly in the fact, his resignation to the inevitable would have been as complete as his death."

The female to whom he was locked was of unusual height, and large, regularities, and a more vineyard visage never fell to the lot of woman-kind.

"Uriah Knockenstiff, said she, as they toward "Fukeville" progressed—"Uriah Knockenstiff, aren't you ashamed of yourself?" she asked in a voice neither inflammatory, nor reproachful, or expressive of love.

"What d'ye think, Aramina—let the gentle and gracious face of Uriah be among the few that let a leechy ordinary galoot pick me up like I was a baby—mules, an' best of Schneider's grocery store!"

"Fudge it, as long as I can," I replied, "I'll sell my mule to the highest bidder, but I'll never sell my mule.

The female to whom he was locked was of unusual height, and large, regularities, and a more vineyard visage never fell to the lot of woman-kind.

"Uriah Knockenstiff, it just served you right," she said, "I'm a young man of twenty years old a family of seven, with seven in the sixteen, children—oh, sir! I am ashamed of you!"

"I want revenge! Say, Aramina, hee yo, there's a big job on it."

"I'll be kin for her death, wi' miles of I do, now! Ef seven women can't mind sixteen young-uns, they kin go unmindéd, I'm goin' back an' git my other full o' bug-juice.

"No ye go, Uriah Knockenstiff, nothin' o' the kind. There's business for you—dye heer bizness."

"To blazes wi' the bizness, Aramina Knockenstiff, no baby-mussin' for this ole bohower—not this kind of bizness, but business."

"But I say yes, The Elder wants ye?"

"The devil!

"Not next Primrose, Thar's somethin' to be did, Uriah Knockenstiff, an' the Elder, who sent me for ye, hinted there was big graft in it."

"Yes, large pay. So straight to the Elder's place from where you reside?"

"An' tackle the other side of the town, an' keep your hands off that plain la"

"promise me secrecy?

"On course you will. Did Fudge go back on your word?

"Perhaps not. If I ever catch you doing so, it will not be well for you, rest assured.

"But the Elder bought his shaky-ten-thy-crap Uriah Knockenstiff kin be as open as the Arctic Ocean, or as close as a screwdriver—O' course that out if the author, the other side of Git-Thar, there live two persons named Damson?

"They're father and daughter, and the girl is named the prettiest flower that grows in the mountains."

"Ye kin bet on that! I 've been thinkin' about it."

"Well, what's it, but of yer don't think a time or two about it. I took my mind upon having the girl for my wife and, with this purpose in view, went down and made over to this niggers, ma'

"And didn't get her?

"Curse the luck! She actually drove me off at the point of a pistol."
BULLET BROT, THE GIANT GRIP

CHAPTER VI
THE SET TO

GRODUCTION was not a dull camp, for it had as heartening a premonition of a light as any town in all the Silverland of Idaho; and it was not long in getting the fact widely heralded that Bullion Brot had a set-to, by the light of the moon. Hence, a heterogeneous swarm of humanity collected like magic on every side of the street, and in front of Schneider's grocery store.

Never had the looting Luna sent down a more beneficent effusion of mellow light upon that wild and rugged landscape. Rugged, grizzled and oddlypicturesque looked the miners.

Brot turned out into the middle of the street, to pummel away at one another until he should get a sufficient, Bullock Brot looked every inch the invincible man that he was.

Whether Brot was of this same opinion or not was hard to judge, as his face wore that unhappy expres- sion of the man who, in the throes of exhaustion, felt that it was so natural to it, but which really vailed a nature stern and implacable as fate itself when in repose.

After doffing his shirt, Brot tied his arms with an appreciative grin, as if to make sure they were working correctly. The incident was glare d at the Giant Grip triumphantly.

"Wish you had a shackle," said he, "and let me have pleasure o' bustin' yer nose!" he roared, posing in pugnastic style.

"Oh, but I'm glad of it," Brot dryly replied. "I almost feel myself breaking up this very minute. Are you only looking for an attack in this man?"

"Ready! Course I am! 'Tain't no name for it, ye consarned cockroach!"

"It is well. But, before I lay you out, permit me to interrogate: How many widows will be left behind in case you die with your boots on?"

"Oh, I'll give you a comedown," said Brot, "and I'm sure I am a commoner!"

"I did, in fact."

"Oh, dun yer pester! I'll bust yer skull for that and then go clean out, with your great and only Tobyl's heavens forbid!"

"Oh, well, so much the better. No one will be the worse for it if you have sufficient bodocks. I, myself, will throw in a few dozen, to the ran'nin' you a decent plantation. That's all. But I suppose you're going to Brot advanced towards his adversary.

"All right, then. Everything has stopped forward, looking certainly warlike enough to have frightened a regiment of soldiers. Brot's words seemed to echo in their ears, and stood for an instant eying each other.

The crowd, breathlessly silent, and eagerly expec ting, their keen eyes seeking to see which man got in the first telling blow.

It was Tobyl. He bolted sidewise, lunged forward, and butted the Giant Grip in the stomach with his head.

There could be but one result.

With surprising agility, however, he regained his feet, and almost instantly delivered Tobyl a perfect tattoo of striking blows on his face; the last one driving the ruffian to earth, several feet away, where he lay like a log for full a minute.

"Curse yer picut! I'll murder ye!" he bellowed, rushing at Brot with the ferocity of an infuriated tiger, and a heart out of its case.

Brot's mocking laugh rang out, and he threw himself on the offensive.

The two came together with a crash, but it was only for an instant; then Tobyl was seen to shoot up into the air over Brot's head, and landed on the dusty street. He did not rise a second time, but lay where he had fallen, blood and grime streaming down his face.

"Ouch! oh-oo-oo!" he howled. "Help me! Get a doctor! All my ribs are broken. Kill the devil once for all!"

"Yes, gentlemen, come ahead and kill me, if you want a little sport!" the stranger cried, whipping off his hat in his pocket, which was enough to satisfy any of those present of a belligerent turn of mind, and there was no more to continue the performance which the dashing speculator in bullion had inaugurated.

"Well well, it is possible I can't prevail upon some of his friends to come and see me!" Brot cried, handing his revolvers as if he would deliberately take his life for the present.

"No use o' splin' the funeral, now it's begun!"

But two examples of the Giant Grip's prowess, within a short interval of time, to prove sufficient to satisfy any of those present of a belligerent turn of mind, and there was no more to continue the performance which the dashing speculator in bullion had inaugurated.

"Lovers! Why, we are not lovers, I hope. You quite startle me, Mr. Vivian."

"Indeed, I don't understand now that is. I have given you little chance to misconstrue the meaning of my visits. The fact is, I am earnestly in love with you, and have come here to-night to ask you to become my wife!"

"What a funny idea! Why, you surprise me, sir. I get married. Well, I guess I don't have my father, you must know I am going to marry him up for all the husbands in the world!"

"Nay need you. I could not think of asking you to marry a man that is not either one of us, and I should be only too proud to call him so!"

"Yes, sir, who are related to the rich and proud Singletons!"

"Yes, I! To me the Singletons are but relatives and employers. Their blood is no better than yours. As for their pride that is easily assumed. They were once poor. Perhaps you think I would make a better match for you, Virgie, but such is not the case. Yesterday I was my uncle's poor clerk. To-night I am as good a man as any millionaires. Still my affection for you remains unchanged!"

"I am sorry, sir, but I could not think of such a thing as marrying a man that is not either one of us. I trust you will hot speak of such a thing to me."

"But listen! I will not take no for an answer. You must marry me—you shall this very night!"

"Then I'll make you. You shall go with me, Vivian."

Bret suddenly jerked the little gate open, seized her in his arms, and, placing his hand over her mouth, ordered her down the gully—to ward Giant Grip, but in the opposite direction.

"In my name of less ye get, Uriah Knockemstiff!" cried the mule-driver, springing to his feet. "Waal! I reckon not!"

With giant strides, but uttering no sound, he sprang away in pursuit. Soon he overtook young Vivian, and dealt him a terrible blow beneath the jaw. The impact was the same time matching Vivian from his arms.

Vivian tumbled helplessly down in the stage

CHAPTER VII
BRET GOES URAH! ONE BETTER

URIAH KNOCKEMSTIFF loved, next to his "bug- jules, the faces of the Janions, and the offer of the schilling Mor-
Laying her on the floor, he struck a light and ignited a pipe, which he secured in a case.

Searching about, he found a piece of bear-skin, which he cut into strips and used for the purpose of binding together Virgil's arms and ankles.

"That," he grunted, "No one will disturb him to-night. He is weak, he is tired. I shall, what's better, no one knows who abducted her. I'll keep her up now, and go back to Git-Thar. I will have a word with our old associate, Uriah Knockenstiff of being interested."

"Now, Uriah, you old wolf, you're not certain to stay here with me. A fierce oath burst from his lips, as the rattling sentry went off.

Bullion Breet—"a mile of triumph upon his fine face and a cocked revolver in his right hand.

"Ain't you the least bit mistaken?" Breet repeated. "You evidently did not include me!" Uriah, as he went off, cast a lens at the trader, but his ragged eyes, then broke out afresh into a torrent of oaths.

"Cuss ye! What ye don' hear?" he roared.

"Get out o' this ere cabin afore I chew ye up and swallow ye!"

"Ehaw! You wouldn't use me so badly as that, would you?" and the sport laughed ironically.

"Uriah, I see you've been up to serious business. I suppose that would send you for jail for some years. I reckon I shall have to take you up.

"Go in search of ye?"

"I'll be cursed if I don't, Uriah. You're a peculiar man, I reckon. You've got the drop on you, and I'm one of those fellows who rather shoot than eat. Therefore, I think, with your long range, you'd better stay in this den a dead man. Remove those things from the young lady's wrists and ankles before I turn you over to the law. To discoy me in the least means death!"

"What yo' goin' de do if I do jest as ye say?" Breet asked, anxiously.

"Yo' ain't got no feelin' fer me?"

"No, if you obey me! Go to work. The law's after us, and Miss Virge is freeed of the bonds."

Now lay all your weapons on the floor.

About forty. Breet turned and struck his foot against the wall. Virge, who had been telling on it, Bullion Breet nodded approvingly.

"Right, Uriah, quite right. Now sit down on the floor, and bind your own feet, and see that you make them as secure as you did those of the young lady.

"See, sir, that ain't fair!" Knockenstiff growled.

"Tain't so fair fer a teller make to try a clever of Hombre's choice, is it?"

"But, you can't help that. Do as I say and if you don't do it right, I'll shoot off the end of your nose at once and let it blight your beauty.

Fearing the cool dare-devil would be as good as his word, Uriah obeyed, and in due time, his bonds were complete.

Brett then proceeded to finish the job by binding his wrists, and the redoubtable Knockenstiff was as surely a captive as had been Virge a few minutes before.

Having the mulatto driver sitting on the floor, Brett turned his attention to the young lady.

Although she was still in a swoon he took note that her voice was unusually pretty—a prettier girl, by far, than he had ever met before.

As he had been near the Jamison cabin at the time of the attack and naturally curiously interested, it was her home, and had followed to her rescue.

Before returning her to her home, she must necessarily pass the guard, and as Breet had been having no water at hand, Brett was pondering how he would accomplish the job, when he had the idea of putting her up out of sight, and then quickly sit up.

She glanced about her, seeming for the moment to have comprehended her situation. When she saw Bullion Breet, however, a light of recognition broke into her face.

"Bullion Breet, is that you? Did you rescue me from Mr. Virgean? Where am I?"

"Thar! That! I thort I'st seen 'em afore! Knockenstiff muttered to himself. "He's Stillers!"

"Excuse me, lady," Bullion Breet spoke. "It's true I did rescue you, but you've made a little mistake. My name is Breet, Bullion Breet. You know me?"

"Bullion Breet—not Silversmith."

"Indeed! But I am sure I am not mistaken. When we approached the trader, and talk with us during the afternoon of the day just passed, when you told us you were Silversmith, the read-

CHAPTER VIII

The Union Conveners and Silversmith Super-

The meeting then adjourned, with the understanding that none of the employees of the Singleton mines should go to work until old Abe came to town, and should be permitted to fill the vacant places of the strikers.

The Secretary delivered the manifesto that same night, in which the wealthy mine

Having no other solace for his ruffled tempera-

The more bug-jab he imbibed, the less he slept until, in the morning, being in a drowsy—so drowsy, in fact, that he failed to hear a key turn in the door-lock, or to see the door open, adding to no small surprise to Mr. Silversmith, gentleman road-agent.

After giving the wounded Tobias a sharp glance from the verandah, the Democrat entered, and brought a chair to the bedside, where he seated himself and gave the mending Williams a couple of good yells of pain, and culminated in the discovery of the rider.

"Woo oh!" howled Tobias. "What'y mine, ye devil? What'y mine here, cuss ye!"

"Yourself, to be sure! I knew you would

"Now, then, pursed Cal, dramatically, "our hold in the West. The struggling farmers, acted as a foreman for one of the tuneful instructors of the town. To him we owe a degree of respect and esteem. He was brought up in the old town and was known to all, but few men to command, for on several occasions our brother has been the means of our getting magnificent wages out of the brethren, as well as at a time when they were uniting as a brotherhood. Why, then, should we not protect his interests. If need be, by sac-

"Applause," yelled Ben Bowser; and applause was heartily given.

For the better, gentlemen," Cal Cock-Eye went on, that our sentiments are in union. Still, 'tis but right we were organized to put down oppression and the sooner we do it the better. I have given you my views—will President Tobias be kind enough to suggest a measure to be taken in order to do this better?"

"I propose we demand twenty-five per cent., in-

There was no large number of persons in the assembly, but a considerable quantity of clapping, and vociferously; and from the stentorian threats of the un codec assembly there arose a yell of delight at "Aye!" and "Yes!" that fairly made the building shake.

"That settles it. Secretary, prepare a resolu-

Having gone out, old Bullion Breet had no difficulty in finding the way to the Jam-

Val Vivan had wisely withdrawn from the room of his attorney's chamber.

Bidding Virge a last and receiving her hearty thanks, Bullion Breet returned to Git-

"Ah! Elder Primrose."

"Trencher so."

"Elder Primrose, you know, is a Mormon, and yesterday asked me to become his wife. When I indignantly refused, he threatened me, and I suppose he sent this ruffian to capture me.

"Very probably. But, come; let us waste no time here. I will see you to your home, as your parents are no doubt worried about you." We all met the motley and my father had not yet discovered my absence.

"I say, boss, what are ye goin' to do with me?" the young man asked.

"Oh! you can remain behind. When I get a little spare time, I'll come back and dispose of your affairs," Brett replied.

"I guess no one will disturb you, or prevent you having a good rest for the remainder of the night."

They then left the cabin, Knockenstiff's fur-

 Gus Silversmith, gentleman road-agent.

With his remaining, the rider was as good as sworn to, and in a camp like Git-Thar had a deadly significance, entailing bloodshed and disaster.

From the lodge-room Bill Tobias was taken back to his own shanty, fixed up comfortably for the night, and left to reflect upon the painful result of his personal encounter with Bullion Breet, alias Tobias.

Having no other solace for his ruffled tempera-

The more bug-jab he imbibed, the less he slept until, in the morning, being in a drowsy—so drowsy, in fact, that he failed to hear a key turn in the door-lock, or to see the door open, adding to no small surprise to Mr. Silversmith, gentleman road-agent.

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"Woo oh!" howled Tobias. "What'y mine, ye devil? What'y mine here, cuss ye!"

"Yourself, to be sure! I knew you would
be lonely, and I am the best of interesting company when I'm properly nursed, you know. I'm not as the jug and let me smil of its breath."

"Cures me of will!" Tobias growled, oying to the plugs of cell and socks, dialling the pipe of gall, a-comin' here, after breakin' my ribs. If my revolvers weren't over there on the table I'd be a dead man."

"If I agreed to the tunneling scheme, eh—wut for," I asked. "As for breakin' your ribs, Billiam, I had yarded in that."

"Ye've a drudg'ed heart!" he spat, double dose. I saw the skewer-wit, and laffed to think o' the gratuitous advertising I was getting. It was my double as de sleet. Well, I'll make what looks like me."

"Git out! Who de dues are you, then?"

"Suke Silversmith, at yer service— the Apollo of the stage, your humble and obedient stage-rober!" Tobias stared at the man in a pazzled manner, eyein' lynin' be growled. "I ain't no fool. Ye may be Silversmith, but ye're Bullion Bret, too."

"Not by jug-bag-fine!" My station in life is too de same! comparison wi' Bullion Bret, I'm the galoot, Billy, who 'soaked' ye a year ago."

"You've got a durned heap o' cookin' in tol' of it. What ye want here?"

"What, Tony? If there is anythin' in the world I like better than whisky an' s'naw, it's to shoot off my mouth. So pass over the whisky and keep to the subject."

"No, Tony," Tobias obeyed. He rather fancied that Silversmith's visit was not an unfriendly one.

"Ought you not to be on the watch for the big-aug?" I asked, oying to the plugs of stage-rober's in a row on high, six inches from his mouth, and gradually tipping it up, allowed a little stream of the fiery liquor to course down his open mouth.

"The little stream continued its way down as the seconds passed, until Tobias uttered a croak of delight as the liquor warmed his troubled tongue.

"We 'rent to stop a feller when he's practis- an' act o' magic! He observed, rubbing the drops from his mustache.

"Let's knock the distillery, you'mse'ls!" Tobias snorted, serenly. "I'll git you gallons of better stuff— regular duty. Money'll run freely through a lamp-chimney. The fact is, Toby, you ain't no more a bargain!"

"Oh, it's a sworn-to-the-sound. I know you're no fool, and no one but a fool will reck me up."

"Well, w'l my lung machinery I should cackle say!" and Tobias gave an appreciative grin.

"Just what I thought!" he declared the road-agent, having found his gay rowy poke in the ribs, thereby eliciting another howl. "I always suspected you of being naturally fly, and I was about to tell you. You see, the fact is, Toby, I have a job to be performed which my elevated position will not permit me to tackle, and I'd a knave of a man who could handle it better than you."}

"Humph! I reckon I couldn't handle anything so greasy as this now!" Tobias grumbled, with grim facelessness.

"But you can work it all perpendicularly. You see, I have an enemy who is admirably aoch to take my life, and I wish to prevent disaster by getting rid of him, in advance of the culminative moment."

"Who is he?"

"A person—whom you have no extensive dearce of that blooming personality known as love, or in other words, Bullion Bret."

"What is he of?"

"That is none of your business, sir."

"Ye needn't be so saucy!"

"I'm judge of that, sir. I want Bullion Bret put out of the way. Will you do the job?"

"I give you know how I can!"

"Easy enough, if you'll undertake to, I'll give you the cut."

"I'll pay you enough so that you will not need to work. Tobias's eyes looked less sleepy.

"How much?"

"Well, I'll explain: you see, this Bullion Bret has the misfortune of being a perfect coun-terpart of myself in the matter of looks, and might easily be accused of being me!"

"So he has; I did it myself; but5e Single-
A few minutes later that horse shall take me out of Git-Thar!

"Are you not afraid they will pursue and overtake you?"

"If No! One on the back of that horse, which I should say was a 'goer,' I'll defy them all!"

"You will not return again, then?"

"She looked at me as she spoke, and there was a wistful something in the expression of her pretty eyes which made his heart melt in a way it had never done before!"

"Of course I shall return, Miss Virgie, for I must go back to the scene of our adventure!" I said. "The very same place that has a purpose in befriending the striking miners, as, ten to one, in case of an insurrection on the Morrisons side."

"Septimus Singleton looked thoughtful, but it may possibly be said, she said,

"It is nearer the facts of the case than I'd like to see it!" Vivian replied. "I presume, however, that we are not required to give the demands of the strikers."

"That I cannot do. Before I'll do it I'll immedicate the officers in the presence of the mayor."

"The strikers will kill every man that attempts to go to work!"

"But you won't find that as easy as they imagine. If necessary, I'll bring a regiment of soldiers here to keep the peace. Go send Mellor and learn all the facts."

"It was from Chicago, written in a handsome business hand, and caused the mine-owner to put aside his penpole."

As he finished the perusal of this letter, Septimus Singleton buried his face in his hands and addressed John Phillips, our foreman.

The letter had flattened to the floor.

"There, what does this mean?" he asked.

He looked up with a start.

"You here!" he gasped—"you! Oh! why did you come, when I am so miserable?"

"I shouldn't have come longer, he thought, "because they make a raid up the stairs, in search of me. I'll have to be lively, I know."

With renewed efforts he cut away, the active exercise bringing beads of perspiration to his brow.

Still noisy became the crowd on the street, and finally a number of revolver-bullets came crashing through the windows."

"The lion gorged hungry for his meat!" Bret observed.

"Oh! are you not afraid they will come and break down the door, Mr. Beaufort?" Virgie asked in a low whisper.

"If they do, lady, Bullion Bret is not afraid to face them like a man, and die in your defense. Rest easy on my word, mine is large enough. I believe we can escape from the next room."

In a minute more he had the hole large enough for them to enter the chamber of the next building, which they did, cautiously. It was only a small room. On the other side there was no building. An outer stairway led down from a doorway to the vacant lot.

There was also a window facing on the lot, and upon the street. Looking out of the side window, they discovered the door was jammed in, and a small saddle-horse was in that vicinity, but a fine saddle-horse was hitched there.

"The road to escape is open!" he cried triumphantly. "I'll use that horse. You descend to the lot, and join the crowd, on the front side.

"They'll not starve, the Mormon Elder has his hands full back, at least as they strike!"

"How do you know?"

"That's the rumor on the street at any rate."

"What is the rumor?"

"Power! I suppose you are aware that some one is going over to the Mormon side daily. Mr. Primoson has an eye on the valuable mines of Git-Thar, and eventually means to possess them, and I believe cattle can prove to him that he has a purpose in befriending the striking miners, as, ten to one, in case of an insurrection on the Morrisons side."

Septimus Singleton looked thoughtful, but it may possibly be said, she said,
I said, "If you intend to give him your answer," Sadie replied.

"I have liberty of doing that, sir," I exclaimed. "I shall not need the liberty of your help, sir." Sadie said.

"I will be there, sir," I replied.

"Very well," Sadie said.

"And are not likely to go to work until the day after tomorrow," Sadie added.

"That's what they all suppose, fortunately for me," I said, with a laugh. "My life will be a peaceful one, Sir." Sadie said.

"As and not likely to go to work until the day after tomorrow," Sadie added.

"Every possible," I said.

"Well, sir," I said, "I have read the situation, and I know that in this case we shall have no difficulty in obtaining a suitable place." Sadie said.

"Then you'll understand the situation I am placed in," I said, "and you must not despair. Many a man has been on the verge of ruin, and has recovered. I observed that there was a way out of the difficulty." Sadie said.

"For Heaven's sake, what is it?" I asked.

"I can help you out of it," Sadie said. "Although unexpectedly assisted in being a road-agent, I am quite the contrary—being a hunter of the road, and am by no means a poor man. I shall see you off in little, now and then, and at that rate worth twenty thousand dollars in spot cash." Sadie said.

Sadie uttered a little gasp of joy, while something of an expression of relief swept over Septimus Singleton's face.

"And what good does this do me? Surely you, an utter stranger, would not help me out, would you?" I said.

"I will place the amount of money you need in your hands, on two conditions," Sadie said.

"The first is, that you deed me a quarter interest in the mine, as a partner." Septimus Singleton said.

"That's the way," I replied.

"It is this: I have led a roving sort of life long enough, and am about prepared to settle down, and am in a position to do so, as I am now fairly well off, and met many ladies; but none, ever, that has so favorably impressed me as your amiable disposition. If you can make life a thing to live for, and I hope you can do it, and with a little hard knock and rig of the sort that have cause to regret linking her life with mine," Septimus Singleton said.

Sadie heard him through. The mine-owner's face was grave and stern, and the cold-gray eyes flashed upon the face of the handsome sport, searchingly.

Sadie was pale, and kept her face avowed, as she stood by her father's chair, one hand resting softly upon his arm. It was several moments ere Septimus Singleton opened his mouth to speak. He paused a moment, and then said:

"This is the strangest proposition I ever heard of. Do you suppose I would barter a child of mine away for money? Why, look, man!"

"I am perfectly sane, sir, and expected you would regard my offer as unseemly, because you know me, sir, and are a gentleman and honorable, respectable, and in every sense a gentleman. If it is your pleasure, of course, to act in the matter as you think fit, and upon it I have no say, I will send a person to-night for your de-cision."

"Do you may do so," Sadie said, turning her face toward him. "Whatever the answer is, it will be what you wish, sir."

"Very well. I take the pleasure of bidding you a pleasant good-night."

"I shall not have time to return before the morning, and the room was gone. And now," Singleton said, turning to his deacon, "I shall not have time to return before the morning, and your presence in heaven do you propose to do?"

"I intend to give him his answer," Sadie replied.

"What shall it be—No! of course!"

"On the contrary—Yes!"

"Are you, too, mad? It must not—shall I not have time to return before the morning, and your presence in heaven do you propose to do?

The mine-owner's face was grave and stern, and the cold-gray eyes flashed upon the face of the handsome sport, searchingly.

"Oh, what torture! what torture!" he murmured, burying his face in his hands.

CHAPTER XI.

"HALT!"

The night after the first day of the strike was a most enjoyable one. The air was soft and balmy, and the dome of heaven was blue as blue could be, dotted by myriads of twinkling stars, and its misty, soaring moon, which cast its light over the rugged and picturesque landscape of Silverlith with a smile and a sigh, looking into deep gorges and wide canyons, even as it kissed the hoary pine-clad mountain-tops.

Bowling along, the wild and rugged gulch, on each side of which towering mountains rose in mighty grandeur, came the stage, once a day for many years, and now by Bullion BRET, who, coming from Git-Thar, the distance between the two camps being about fifteen miles, about half of which had been traveled, was on the down-train and down the scene.

The horses were still fresh and high-spirited, and they tore along the rough road with the ponderous coach in a way that would have made an Eastern driver gasp on, especially if he was inside the "hearse."

The driver, old Hank Houghland, sat serenely on his box, with his reins in one hand, and his long-lashed whip in the other, with which he seemed to delight "ticking" the leading horses' ears, or "chiding," as the term was, the wagoner. I have no idea how many such "tickings" we heard during the day in Git-Thar, that, while Bullion BRET returns to their open arms, suck Silverlith will no longer attempt to bully the miners, nor to drive the stages or to assassinate innocent people.

The matter of driving on to Git-Thar was soon settled, and Bullion BRET determined to handle the reins, and in five minutes more the ponderous coach was lumbering away over the road, after the miners were on their way to a strike village.

And there, in the brilliant September moonlight, grim and stern, stood the counterparts, Bullion BRET and Silverlith, glaring at each other with expressions of undying hatred.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MEETING.

A SILENCE of several minutes ensued after the sound of the stage-coach wheels ceased to reverberate along the canyon walls, ere either of the railroad men seemed to make a move, more than to glare savagely at each other.

Bullion BRET was the first to break the silence.

"Well!" he said, his voice cold and steel-like.

"I see that fate has at last ordained that we should meet, Robert!"

"I don't know as fate had anything to do with it, in particular! Silverlith, as we shall henceforth call him, replied. "If it had, you'd have died long ago!"

"I'm not one of the kind who dies very readily," Bullion BRET replied. "But I have known you have put me to enough trouble to hunt you up.

A savage groan escaped the road-agent.

"Well! what are you going to do about it, anyhow? You've dogged me here and there at every turn. What's the idea?"

"I don't think I've got you!" chuckling aloud.

"Sit upon the railroad embankment and give it a rip, that made him quail, but I 'ave got you!"

"I don't know anything of the kind!" Bullion BRET exclaimed, "and as he spoke he made a dive with one hand toward his revolver, and the road-agent, being of the same mind, instantly hard against his temple caused him to desist.

"You can't break breadth more and you would have been over the dam," Bullion BRET said, significantly.

"Curse ye, I'd like to get you by the throat, Bullion BRET, and then I'll punch you. And say what you have to say, and let up on this nonsense."
CHAPTER XIII.

WELCOME BULLION BRET.

ANOTHER day had dawned over Git-Thar.

The situation, however, was scarcely changed. The paper stock refused to go upward unless an increase of twenty-five per cent was given. Nor did the speculators positively refuse to accede to the demand, it was evident the strike would be protracted.

The Montague Bond was quoted at the Foursquare Hotel. It consisted of Sir Guy Montereau, Lady Montague, Sir Augustus, and a couple of English speculators, named respectively Avery and Wallace.

Agreeably to the suggestion of Sir Guy called together a crowd of miners, and explained to them the circumstances of the stage-coach attack, and the property they had been rescued by Bullion Bret, and the message he sent in regard to Silbermuth.

Now, he was in a better condition, and there were some sensible men in Git-Thar, and they at once received Sir Guy's special message with applause, and voted that when Bullion Bret returned to the camp, he be received as belittled a hero, not to be protected from the persecutions of any of those who bore him ill-will.

So popular did the sentiment grow that a banner was prominently posted, bearing the following:

"WELCOME TO BULLION BRET!"

Poor old Hank was taken in charge by a committee of the citizens most of whom gave him a decent burial.

During the forenoon a horsemann rode into town, and his appearance caused some excitement.

"Bullion Bret!" went up the cry.

"Hurrah!"

And a curious crowd surrounded him, among whom were mineral speculators.

"What's the road-agent? What's the Silbermuth Affair?" asked.

"Dead!" was the solemn answer. "He'll never rob another stage."

"Yo' hadn't no right fer kill him, what's his keeper?"

"Buried where no one will ever find it. There was no money or valuables upon it. As for the right I had to kill him, I murdered my mother in cold blood, and I simply fulfilled my oath of vengeance when I killed again, I saw fit to give him a decent burial. That's all, gentlemen."

The stage will now run free for awhile, and I hope you will all thank your stars that you are in contrast with the circumstances of our parting."

And supposing we all have a drink—provided my valuables is in your care."

It contains what few skeleons I have in this world."

The proposal of course, was hailed with pleasure, and as many as could crowd into the bar-room, joined in a hearty cheer.

"There's going to be a marriage in Git-Thar!"

A cheer arose.

"Who's yer goin' ter marry?" demanded the Admiral.

The most eligible young lady in Git-Thar, and the most eligible in the whole of the region.

"Silbermuth, the famous gentleman's office, and found him in and alone.

"I trust you have had a pleasant journey," said Sir Guy, seating himself, as in fact, I was rather in love with this rough, wild country, I presume you were not expecting me!"

I told him how much you were looking forward to the event, and you were quite sure that the money would be forthcoming."

"Yes, and I will give you the purchase price in gold."

Sir Guy Montereau, we will have to cross the Atlantic to England, and take a little trip down into Berkshire. Here, once upon a time, I built a house there named Beaufort. But we were farmers, but while one was fairly well-off, the other was a cringing sort of villain, and was widely known as a vengeance-stoker. He was known to have stolen several children from wealthy families for the purpose of child slavery. He was arrested, married, and was the father of one child, a boy. His wife died early after the birth, and father and child were left alone. Beaufort also married, and had a son, the two being about the same age, and from earliest infancy in every part in every way.

Two photographs from one negative could not have been more perfect.

Of the two boys were about ten years old, James Beaufort died. His wife had once been a lady of Chancro, and gossip said that she was the daughter of a nobleman. One morning she appeared in possession of a baby, and the two boys were ordered to have adored, but every one had their opinion. Chando's small boy disappeared, but the others were on the same year's age, and from earliest infancy in every part in every way.

I told them of the two boys, and they were given to the care of a woman named Silbermuth.

"I did, and I've kept it. You die here and now!"

"Hold! For God's sake don't shoot until I am done. I swear by all that I hold sacred that I did not mean to kill."

As the boy hit his head. The boy, now seven, was in a terror. He, a child, she, and I, and the little girl, nothing. The crime was promptly laid upon the mother, but nothing was done for her, nor was she ever convicted. She was kept in prison, but the case was never tried.

"I, do not believe that you know anything!"

Bullion Bret responded, now white with his terrible mood.

"I don't believe that you know anything!"

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"I don't believe that you know anything!"
CHAPTER XIV.

JEPTHA'S DEATH.

"LIEUTENANT, I can stay here no longer. I now feel strong enough to seem like myself once more, and we will go to Gh-Thar. Something the Old Man has said—some thing about an old grudge is going on that I am called upon to battle."

There was but little light in the old dug-out, where Knockemstiff had been made a prisoner, and that light came from a bed of dying embers on the hard floor.

There were, however, three occupants, now, to the place Knockemstiff still lay upon the floor, securely bound with a man, securely bound with a man, and her younger brother, and his rich bosom, which will end my career of marriage. Some aspiring fool can have his other friend, and his laugh heartily at the thought.

As I said before, I will never disclose the secret of this slow and slow-moving operation in the dark."

The other occupant of the habitation was a young and manly-looking personage, whose uniform

The reader has probably surmised, this was the real Bullion Bret.

The individual had made terms with Septimus Singleton and his daughter, and who had been received so heartily by the gaolers of Gh-Thar, was the young Mr. Sid Silver-smith, who was playing a very clever little game on another man's credit.

Bullion Bret had been lying senseless on the dwelling-ground, with a wound in his breast, which, fortunately, was more severe than dangerous. He had been brought to this dug-out by the Lieutenant, whose name was Langdon, and who fancied to be an old ac

Having lost considerable blood, Bret was very weak, and Langdon had prevailed upon him to remain quiet until he recovered sufficient strength to risk going out.

"Well, if you are correctly satisfied that you are strong enough, I shall not try to disarm you," Langdon said. "I shall remain with you, however, until we can assist this Silversmith. What are you going to do with your prisoner?"

"I hardly know. If some one would knock him in the head, it would be a blessing to me.

"Say, boy, that ain't nothin' very mean about me!" chirped Knockemstiff. "I bain't happy to see you, I shan't try to do you no better goblin than I, and I cain't jest like a little chimpanzee, I do. Ef ye'll give a feller any sort of hand, I'll jest as squar

Well, I'll give you a trial. But, remember, if I catch you at any mischief, down goes your shiny!"

"Kercet! I'll swaller every bullet ye can shoot of a feller's plumb auge!"

Tig was largely hanged over, and the trio set out for Gh-Thar.

He was not at the plantation as had been its predecessor, the sky being overcast, which made it dark. A strong wind, too, gave token of an approaching storm.

Scarcely speaking, they hurried along, Bret's buoyant activity proving that he had an iron constitution. There was no occasion for concern with a slight, consider able pain from his wound, was a matter of course.

Just the Jamison cottage hove in sight, and the twinkling lights of Gh-Thar's camp on beyond it.

"I'll have, as I have said, a strong foreboding that something is wrong yonder," Bret said, gloomily, indicating the cabin. "We will stop and see.

They entered the little yard and drew near the cabin. The eyes of Knockemstiff, as well as those of the lieutenant, lighting there,-were, in his own life-blood.

He was not dead, for a groan escaped him as Bret, who had sat in the darkness of his room, died suddenly."

Don't touch me!" he gasped faintly. "I am dying; let me die here!"

There was no answer."

"Who stabbed you, old man?"

"The Mormon—Elder Primrose!"

"And the girl—your daughter?"

"I suspect he has captured her. She is not my daughter. Listen: hear my dying oath. The Mormon and Sade Singleton is the child of poor but honest parents, long since dead. And hear me: before God, I swear to you, as a hand in the killing of Marie Beaufort, my daughter, and her sister, I have never used violence against another human being.

"What? Bullion Bret cried, sternly—'Are you old Chandles, the Child-killer?'

"Your mother's avenger—Bret Beaufort!"

"Then listen. You just heard my oath. I did not kill your mother. I have long known you were hunting me, and it has made my life a misery. I did not do the deed. I happened in upon the murder scene just after my boy, in a fit of passion, had committed the fatal act. I loved my boy; I took him and Virgil and fled to the west."

The girl was the daughter of Sir Guy Montreover, and—"

There was a surging sound in his throat, a spasm of more agonizing torture than he could bear, and he never spoke again.

He was stopped at him, an expression of compassion and pity upon his face.

"Silversmith lied to me!" he mumbled. "The old man, in the face of death, would not try to deceive me. Oh, my diabetic cousin, was he not a kind boy! But he was a good boy.

"Turning to Langdon, he said:

"You and Uriah carry him inside and lay him by the fireplace. Yet only until we find the girl. She is in great peril, of course, and we must save her if we can!"

From the place was securely closed up, Bret said:

"Now it behooves us to see how the feeling is toward the girl. She is a young, and she will come forward and ascertain!"

"Go, then, and hurry back." Evidently elated to have such an honor con
CHAPTER XV.

EXIT SILVERSMITH!

Just at dusk, that evening, Bill Tobais lay upon the rude bed in his shanty, groaning and cursing.

His shanty was isolated, making it impossible for the men who had once passed the place by chance; therefore, as he could make no one hear, he had no other comfort than to groan and curse the ill-fate that had befell him.

The cable was wrapped in deepest gloom, and hanging over it, looming above, there stood a small man, every turn of his back and every twist of his head indicating that he was a man of some importance.

"What am I to do?" he muttered, "I have no money, no friends, no place to go."

"What will you do?" he asked himself.

"I must find work, I must find work, I must find work!"

But no one came to him, no one asked him for work, no one hired him, no one helped him.

Instantly a crimson spot appeared upon the forehead of the wanted man, and he fell back, as if struck by a blow.

He then rushed out of the shanty, determined to do something, to get work, to earn money to save his life.

In a second, he was on the road, his boots and hat on his head, his coat flung over his shoulders.

"What is the meaning of this?" he exclaimed, "I must find work, I must find work, I must find work!"

And he continued his search, until he found a job that suited his needs.

The work was hard, the pay was low, but he earned enough to live on, and he was happy.

And so he lived, working hard, saving money, until he had enough to start a new life.

And that is the story of Bill Tobais, the Silver Smith, who found work, who found happiness, who found a new life.
Bullion Bret, the Giant Grip.

Down the street, looking glumly enough, the sheriff rode into Dake Silverman's stables to feed and f.o. the wind.

Sir Guy and Lady Montrose received Virgo with profound joy, and the duchess declared her that he was ready to marry her, but Bret dashed her expectations by announcing that Virgo had promised to become the future Mrs. Montrose.

Sir Guy and his lady at first objected to this sudden arrangement, but they found that Virgo had a will of her own and were forced to consent.

The next day old Chausbo was buried, and his watchman by his side.

Thus which Silverthyme gave to Seprius Singleton, of course belonged to Mollier and Maguire, who made a demand for it. Though it turned out that the watchman by no means a poor man, yet the colonel gave him the amount represented by the mortgage, and became an equal partner in the Singleton mines.

The next day, also, the miners concluded to return to work, etc., at noon.

The loss to the Mormon element of their leader rather demoralized them, and in less than a month Gib-Thar was practically a Gentile town— but comparatively few Mormons remaining.

Old Uriah Knockemstiff did not die.

Before the return of Sir Guy's parties and Bresla's marriage fell through, etc., before the union of two truly loving hearts—something very uncommon nowadays.

A little later, Sadie, who still regarded Seprius Singleton as a father, married Lieutenant LaGrange.

As Gib-Thar grew it demanded a city government and a mayor, and Bullion Bret was the choice of the people, and gave to the town a more classic name.

And when he wanted to have a little fun at someone else's expense, he often asked his advisor, "For, probably no man lives with a stronger grip than the Giant Grip of Gib-Thar."

The END.

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