



A splendid story of the Mexican Border, introducing Arizona Jim, "Bad" Phil Hicks, and "Left-Hand" Britton, three "pardners" who are feared and loved in all the Western States

THE FIRST CHAPTER

Three Visitors !

AGUADANTE, in New Mexico, is so close to the Mexican boundary that, it is said, people have to be careful when they go for an evening stroll, if they do not want to find themselves out of United States territory and in the land of revolutions. Meaning, of course, that if a man fires a bullet at another man in Aguadante, and misses him, the chances are a thousand to one that the bullet will drop on Mexican soil. Those who live there—the Americans, that is—aver that Mexico is "too darn close to be healthy."

When it isn't hot in Aguadante, it is very sultry. Rain falls about once in a very long while. Trees long since gave up the idea of flourishing thereabouts. Grass also got discouraged about the time the world began. Cactus abounds, rocks, and sand—plenty of sand, sunshine, and nervousness. That is all Aguadante can boast.

But even Aguadante gets visitors. Why such people ever hit the place can never be

adequately explained. Most people think it's the best sort of place to get out of. But oddly enough, visitors with quite peaceful intentions sometimes drift down that way because there is a railway station connected with the town. Other visitors, with anything but peaceful intentions, pay visits to Aguadante, as well—especially if there happens to be anything worth stealing in the place, as there sometimes is. But more of this sort of visitor anon.

There were three visitors who got off the train that coughed its way dejectedly up to the depot at Aguadante one day when the mercury in the thermometer outside the Casino was boiling. They were total strangers to the place, and the few manana-stricken people who were lounging on the raised platform of the depot eyed them with languid interest. Everybody at Aguadante, by the way, suffers from that fell disease known as manana. Manana is Spanish, and means "to-morrow." Nobody does anything to-day at Aguadante if to-morrow will do, and then they won't do it if they can dodge the job

These three visitors, however, did not seem to have the manana disease. They looked very sprightly as they alighted from the dust-grimed train and looked about them. And the citizens of Aguadante, after they had taken a second glance at the three, actually sat up and began to take some notice of them. For the appearance of all three was very noticeable.

The eldest man of the party was a dandy, from the top of his valuable Stetson hat, which he wore with a gay scarf round the crown, instead of the usual rattlesnake-skin band affected by cowboys; down, via a short velvet jacket, flowing black silk scarf, elaborate riding-breeches that couldn't have been made anywhere else but in London or Newmarket, to brown boots that would have made any crack polo-player weep with envy. This man was, however, a fellow who had never seen England in his life. Arizona was his birthplace; the whole of the Western States were his hunting-ground. By profession, he was an Indian agent, working for the Indian department at Washington. His hair was rather long and distinctly wavy. He had a short-clipped moustache; and he sported, of all things, a monocle. It was, perhaps, the monocle that caused the citizens of Aguadante to forget their manana and sit up to take notice of him.

"Tenderfoot, that," remarked the station agent, who was chewing an unlighted cigar. But there he was wrong. Tenderfoot! Why, this was Arizona Jim Carton, the best-loved and most-feared man, perhaps, in all the Western States more than a hundred miles north of the Mexican border! Tenderfoot! Perhaps it was as well for that station agent that Arizona Jim did not hear that comment.

Next in remarkableness of appearance to Arizona Jim was a tall, lanky, cadaverous individual who walked with both hands perpetually in a position to clutch out the heavy guns that slung and wobbled about his thighs. This man, too, had rather long hair, the most ferocious of scowls on his visage, and coal-black eyes that fairly sparkled as he cast them about the depot.

"Tough guy, that!" commented the

station agent. And had the "tough guy" heard that remark, he would have felt the proudest man in the world; for he was none other than "Bad" Phil Hicks, a very genuine cow-puncher who hadn't a streak of vice about him, but who fondly imagined himself to be the "baddest" man in forty-nine States and all the territories under U.S. jurisdiction.

The third of the party was just a tall, well-built, active-looking youngster of about eighteen, who had no particular characteristic save this: whereas he wore on his right hand a glove, his left hand was bare and tanned to the colour of old oak. Westerners know what that means. A gunman never wears a glove on his gun hand. So this was a left-handed gunman. Indeed, he was "Left-hand" Britton, British throughout, with nothing to do but go about the world looking for adventure and thrills. And so we have the three principal characters of this border story on the stage.

"Wal," Bad Phil Hicks remarked to his comrades, "I guess these bat-eyed ginks ain't never seen a reel bad man in all their say-so, jedgin' by the way they lamps us. Guess I'll hev to git my position established, pronto. I'm the baddest man ever! I'm so bad that—"

"Never mind that, Phil," laughed Arizona Jim. "Maybe, before we have finished with this part of the world, they'll know how bad you can be! Mexico's only a few yards away, and Monteflores' gang of bandits pesters this place, I know. Wait till there's a raid—"

Shots began to sound in the little frontier town even as Arizona Jim spoke. There was a very cannonade of them, accompanied by the angry yells of men, the stamp of horses' feet on sun-baked roads. And, hearing this, the loafers on the depot platform forgot their manana, pulled out huge guns, and, forgetting also the strangers, began to run at waddling gait away from the station and towards the cluster of adobe buildings that began a hundred yards away.

"A border raid, and as soon as we arrived," said Arizona Jim. "Monteflores' gang, too, for a wager!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER

The Raid!

"I'm sure goin' to show this town how bad Friday! This is jam! Whoop-ee! I'm going to howl! Ow-ow-ow-ool!" And he lugged his enormous guns out and began to run towards the town. Left-hand Britton,

with a slight smile on his handsome mouth, also pulled out a Colt's; and, Arizona Jim did the same thing. Side by side they ran along the dusty road, and soon almost overtook the more enervated citizens of Aguadante. The shooting grew more pronounced as they got nearer the buildings. From the windows of some of the houses men could be seen leaning, blazing away with their six-guns, while

the streets seemed alive with mounted men, dressed in wide-brimmed straw hats, gaudy sashes, and with dirty brown faces. These horsemen were riding about, blazing away with rifles and revolvers at all the figures they saw in the windows. And, here and there, could be seen bunches of men standing on the sidewalks, hands well up, with their guns lying on the road before them,

while mounted men menaced them with their weapons.

Those who rushed down from the depot soon became like the last-mentioned, for three horsemen rode up to them, sent one man flying from a blow dealt by a horse's shoulder, and got the rest disarmed and properly held up.

"Best keep out of this, boys," said Arizona Jim, and dodged behind a building. He watched several Mexican bandits gallop past the same building, without seeing them.

"I guess I know the motive for this raid. The bank! It's as we were told! Always is there a raid when there's something valuable in the town! Monteflores wants money to keep his gang going and working for the revolutionists."

This was shouted, for the rattle of the gun-fire was intense, although it gradually died down. For, as usual, the manana-stricken citizens of Aguadante had been taken quite by surprise. So long, perhaps, had they waited for the raid, that they had grown slack in their watch, with the result that it had come along, this time, whilst they were enjoying their necessary siesta.



"Now hear me!" grunted Bad Phil Hicks. "I'm going to be real bad from now on!" Then he crashed with the whole weight of his body against the door. It went with him—and the next moment they were in the thick of it (See Chapter 2)

"Guess it ain't my way to stop out of a chance to be real bad," grumbled Phil Hicks. "It's a fair old chance to do a bit o' wild-wolf howlin', this is—shore!"

"Just the same, keep down!" snapped Arizona Jim. "Keep under cover, and try and find the bank. I'll bet it's the bank they're after this time, because I know this was the date the bank was going to receive a big consignment of gold from the Olla Podrida mines, in Sonora."

Left-hand Britton did not demur against his leader's wishes. And, when the position was explained to him, Bad Phil Hicks quietened down considerably. After all, it was an understood thing that Arizona Jim should always be their leader. So they crouched down in whatever shelter they could find—and that was not much—and listened. Arizona Jim's hare-ears were generally infallible. He could locate sounds and understand them better than any Westerner that ever was. And, as the gunshots dribbled down gradually, as yells of wounded men filled the air, Arizona Jim looked in a certain direction.

"Bank's that way," he said. "Gosh! Pity we hadn't time to locate ourselves before this started. Train was late, anyway. Now, boys, I guess the greasers aren't figuring on us being here. So follow me!"

He led the way down what seemed to be a sort of back lane, leading to the rear quarters of the buildings whose fronts made up the main streets of Aguadante. Most of the buildings were houses, they saw; they had gardens of sorts behind them. But one place, that had nothing but a stretch of sandy ground at its rear, was the building that Arizona Jim became interested in. Inside here there was much shooting going on. They hopped over an adobe fence, and crept up, unseen, to certain windows set some six feet from the ground. These windows had bars set in the adobe, giving them an impression of strength that perhaps they did not possess, for the average man could kick a hole through a border adobe wall with his foot quite easily. Adobe is only sun-baked mud, anyway.

"This is the bank, I'll bet a hen," said

Arizona Jim. "Gosh!" he exclaimed, as a yell broke out, coming through the barred window. "Somebody's got it!"

Bad Phil Hicks, who was over six feet himself, reached up with both hands and seized the bottom-most of the iron bars. He swung on this, with the intention of hoisting himself upwards. The bar came away from the adobe wall as though it had been merely stuck there with blobs of sealing-wax. Disgruntled, the "bad" man looked at the inch-thick piece of round iron he held in his hand. Then he threw it away, took a leap upwards, and seized another bar, which came away equally easily in his hands. He did not drop that, though, but rested it on the window-sill, then, gripping the same sill with his big talons, hoisted himself up.

"Get through, man!" said Left-hand Britton eagerly. "Don't keep the whole show to yourself!"

"Some work's goin' on inside here!" said Bad Phil Hicks, and gripped the bar with one hand, while with the other he pulled a six-gun out of the holster into which he had thrust it. "Now's my time to howl, b'gosh!" And he slid forward into the building. Like a monkey, Left-hand Britton climbed up and shoved his way through the window, which, like many windows on the Mexican border, was unglazed. Arizona Jim was the last to climb.

They all stood for a moment side by side, in a small room fitted up as a bed-room. The managers of these wild western banks often sleep on the premises. There was a door facing them, and on the other side of this they could hear much shouting going on.

"Now, hear me!" grunted Bad Phil Hicks. "I'm goin' to be reel bad from now on, I'll tell the world."

He gave a howl like a devil-tormented wolf. Then he crashed with the whole weight of his body against the door. It went with him without checking him. And, a moment later, he was in the very thick of it, his gun spitting venomously, while his hefty window-bar flashed about his head.

For the main part of the bank seemed to be filled with straw-hatted Mexicans. Sprawling across the counter here was another man,

looking more dead than alive. And the Mexicans, startled, turned at once to face the impetuous "bad" man and his two comrades. But Phil Hicks gave them little time to realise that they had been attacked from the rear, as it were. His six shots brought down five men even as they fumbled for their weapons. Then the bar began to crack

Mexican skulls at an extraordinary rate, while, in the meantime, the guns of his comrades spoke steadily and with precision. Men dropped about the floor like so many flies, Spanish curses on their lips. One man—a youngish fellow with a huge hat and poncho wrapped about him—tried to make a fight of it, a gun in each hand. But, without the slightest regard for his own life, Bad Phil Hicks jumped at him and brought him to the floor with a smashing blow from his bar that left the man as limp as a corpse.

"The doors—shut 'em!" shouted Arizona Jim; and Left-hand Britton, blazing away with his gun, cleared a way to the portal. This had been standing wide open. And, even as he made to shut it, many men outside made a dash to force their way in. He got his sturdy shoulder to the woodwork,

thrust, and slammed it in their faces. The bolts were still serviceable, and these he shot. Then, panting, he turned back into the bank, to see what further good work he could do.

But the work inside was done. All the dozen men who had been inside were now lying about, some of them still, others groaning pitifully. And, like the wolf he

claimed to be, Bad Phil Hicks looked about him for fresh worlds to conquer.

"Best shoot from the windows," shouted Arizona Jim. "The rest aren't going to let this pass without a fight!" Which was quite true, as was proved the next moment.

Howling, the Mexican raiders outside began to fire through the unglazed and barred windows of the bank. Their bullets spattered about and did unmentionable havoc to the adobe walls.

But the three adventurers from further north kept out of the line of fire, though they sent deadly bullets hurtling in amongst the marauders.

This was a surprise that had a wonderful effect on both the Mexicans and the citizens of Aguadante who had been rendered harmless at the very outset of the raid. The Americans were quick to realise that something



One man tried to make a fight of it, a gun in each hand. But Bad Phil Hicks jumped at him and brought him to the floor with a smashing blow from his bar (See Chapter 2)

had happened to distract the attention of the men who had kept them held. They, or many of them did, regained their down-flung guns, so that, what with the hot fire Arizona Jim and his friends were sending out of the bank, and that the citizens were giving them from corners of buildings, the greasers—never very plucky men when fighting fairly—deemed discretion the better part of value, spurred their horses cruelly, and fled.

They were so close to Mexico, that they were home again before any American had time to find a horse and chase them. But there were many who had come who did not go back. Riderless horses galloped all about the town. Men lay in the streets, cursing or praying, according to the seriousness of their wounds. While, inside, Arizona Jim and the other two gave some attention to the casualties that had happened there.

Hankson, the young manager of the bank, was lying across his desk, his head bleeding. But he was not dead, as Arizona Jim soon found out. A dozen Mexicans were on the floor, and of these was the youngish man who had faced Arizona's party with two guns. His head was bleeding also, and he was quite unconscious, though not dead either. Some of the other greasers were quite dead, anyway; which was only right, seeing all the white people outside had not escaped this raid with their lives. Such is the penalty paid for living too close to the Mexican border, when revolution is the order of the day on the south side of the line.

"We'd best see if the doctor's left alive," said Arizona Jim. "I'm anxious to get Hankson pulled around, so he can tell us why he sent that hurry message up to us in Wyoming."

"Gosh, though," panted Phil Hicks, "Wasn't I bad jest then? I guess I ain't sorry that message come along. I dunno what we was sent for to do. But I'm right glad it gave me the chance."

Left-hand Britton had nothing much to say. Perhaps he wanted to know exactly why they had come down to this turbulent part of the United States. But there was a white man badly needing surgical aid, and he was able to give him some—of a rough, amateurish sort.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

The Marshal's Story

"DARNED decent of you to come down, Arizona," said Hankson wanly. "Guess, by all accounts, you came along just in time, and you saved my bank from getting robbed for the fourth time!"

"But you didn't send for me to come and save your bank this one time," said Arizona Jim. He was sitting by Hankson's bed now, and Bad Phil Hicks and Left-hand Britton were sitting near as well. "It was a queer message you sent, and we were lucky to have nothing particular to do at the moment."

"I—wrote," said Hankson, slowly, "to ask you to try and help me. You're always ready to help a fellow." Which was true. By hobby, Arizona was a helper of lame dogs over stiles; and his two comrades were his very enthusiastic lieutenants. "So, in desperation, I sent for you to come and look into a fine old mystery. Of course, there are troops and secret service men working about here—but they can't find out how Monteflores' gang always happen to know just when this bank gets a fresh consignment of gold in. But a fresh lot came in first thing this morning, and, by ten o'clock, along comes Monteflores' gang to raid the town and rob the bank. Four times it's happened, in as many weeks, and the chiefs of my bank are getting—well, nasty about it!"

"They can't blame you, though," said Arizona Jim soothingly. "A man managing a bank in a place like this can't be made responsible for his charge! It's up to the soldiers and Rangers."

"They're always nicely out of the way when the raids come off," said Hankson. "But I'll tell you something, which I thought was a secret, until I found out the bank knew it. Monteflores, the leader of this gang of bandits, isn't a Mexican at all, but as good an American as you and I! And, worse, he's a relation of mine!"

"Well," said Arizona Jim. "That's bad luck, certainly. But it's not your fault that you have a kinsman who's an American citizen turned yellow."

"He's only a step-brother," said Hankson,

"and I don't own him. But, at the same time, the bank's got the notion; somebody's told 'em about my step-brother, William, and—well, the bank, lately, have been hinting that I'm in league with him—understand? Not that they can prove anything. But I sent for you, knowing the marvel you are for rooting out mysteries, to see if you could help me. I don't want to get on the bad side of the bank. It's my job, and—"



Arizona Jim unbolted the portal, and a man came lurching inside. "Watch your bank!" he roared. "Monteflores has escaped, and he'll bring his bandits to lift the gold!" (See Chapter 3)

"I think you needn't worry," said Arizona Jim soothingly, for Hankson was getting quite feverish, what with his scalp-wound and his excitement. "We've captured Monteflores. He was in the bank—a youngish fellow in a poncho and with two guns. He was recognised by the town marshal as soon as he was handed over. He's in jail now, well under control."

"Then you've done all I wanted you to do!"

cried the bank manager. "Without Monteflores—or my step-brother—those peons would never have the pluck to make such barefaced daylight raids, not even on a border town! I'll never be able to thank you enough!"

"Wal," Bad Phil Hicks chimed in, "I guess I'm right glad if we hev managed to help ye, Mister Hankson, but—wal, it's a plumb disappointment to know as I've only had a chanceet to be bad for about ten minutes."

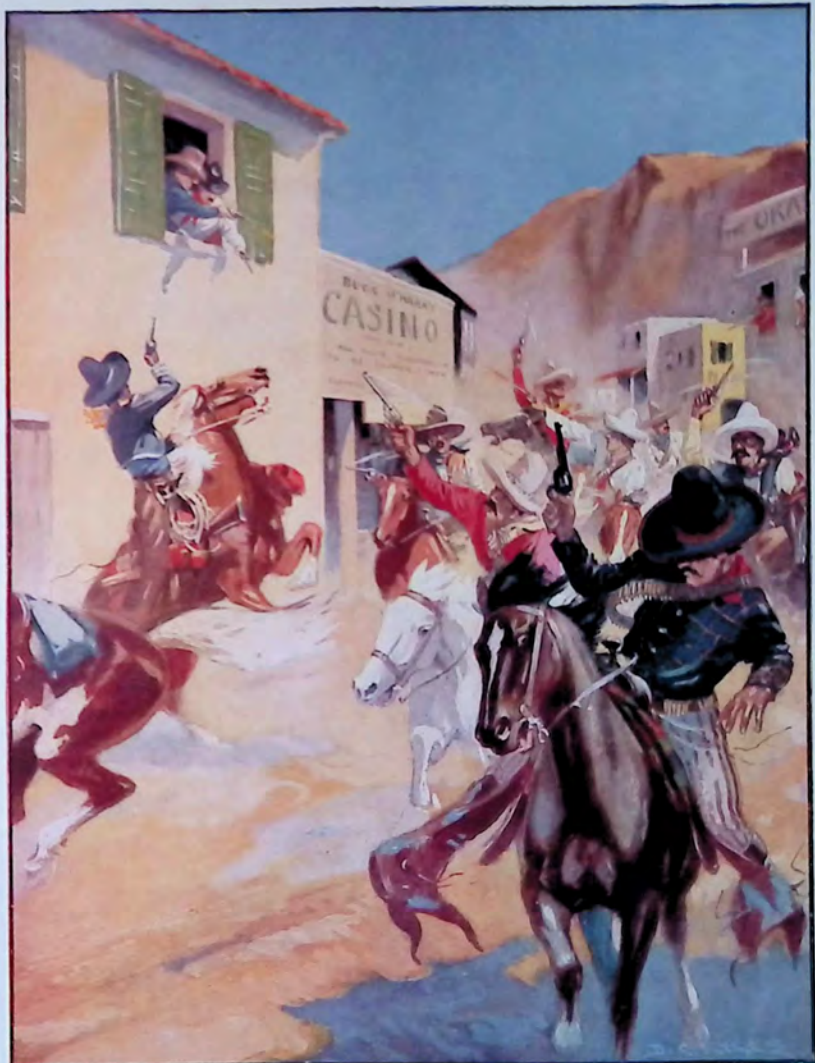
Guess I was lookin' forward to a prolonged period o' right-down badness, here in new country. But my luck never was great. And he sighed deeply.

"So," said Arizona Jim, rising to his feet and patting the wounded bank manager on the shoulder. "as Monteflores is under arrest. I think you may lie quietly for a bit. We'll see your gold is shipped on the next east-bound train. And we might as well spend a bit of time trying to find who the traitor is who has kept Monteflores posted as to the doings of the bank. And don't be so grateful, Hankson. It's a hobby of ours travelling about and straightening matters like this out—or trying to."

"An' bein' bad, besides," said Phil Hicks. "An' Left-Hand here makes it a pastime workin' at these jobs to try an' forget he's a lord in his own old country!"

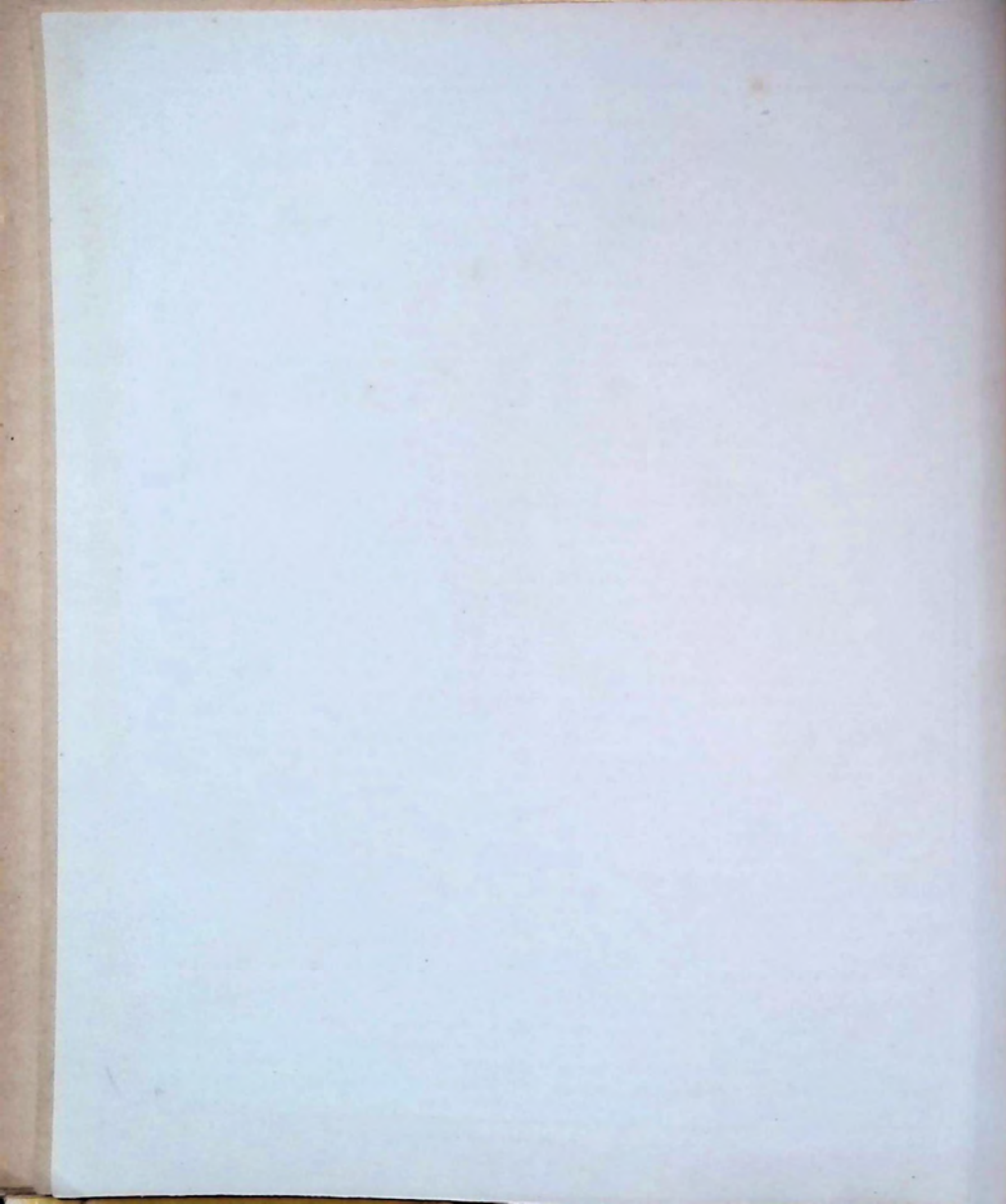
"Well," laughed Left-Hand Britton, "seeing you two chaps were responsible for my getting the title, it's up to you to help me live down the disgrace and forget it!"

It was pretty late at night while all this



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A MEXICAN BORDER RAID



talk was going on. Hankson had been a long time recovering from the blows he had received from the border raiders. Everything in Aguadante was still now, for the citizens, having cooled down from their excitement, and feeling safe in the knowledge that they would not be raided again for some time, had gone to bed; though they had all been ordered by the town marshal, one Eph Burbage, to be ready should the greasers make any attempt to rush the gaol and so rescue the captured Monteflores. However, the manana had fallen on these worthy citizens again, and, it is to be feared, they did not attach much importance to Burbage's warning. After all, that was the marshal's business, not theirs. Their duty was to carry on in Aguadante under most enervating conditions, and to leave everything that could be left till—manana.

"We'd best sleep here on the bank premises, to be on the safe side," said Arizona Jim, as Hankson wearily closed his eyes. "One never knows what might happen in the night. We'll get that gold shipped on the train that goes through early in the morning—seven o'clock. We'll toss up who takes first turn at keeping awake."

"Seems to me," said Bad Phil Hicks, "this is another o' the town marshal's responsibilities. How-so, as ye says so—"

The silence outside was split suddenly by six revolver shots that boomed out on the heavy air. At once the three adventurers came to their feet, feeling for their guns. Bad Phil Hicks began to howl in his joyous excitement.

"They come again!" he roared. "Oh, whoopee!"

The citizens of Aguadante opened their windows, and the night became very lively with the shots they sent booming out into the street. For two minutes it sounded like another pitched battle going on; then the firing died down, and things became comparatively quiet again, though those inside the bank could hear the shouts of many startled men. Yet, above the shouts of these they heard a very raucous voice.

"Quit shootin', ye fools! It's me blazed away—me, the town marshal! Monteflores has escaped!"

"Gosh!" exclaimed Arizona Jim. "I thought he was locked up securely, and the marshal was going to sleep in the gaol himself. The man was handcuffed, wounded though he was!"

There came a loud banging at the door of the bank. Arizona Jim unbolted the portal, and a man came lurching inside. It was Eph Burbage, and he had a bandage tied around his head. In his hand he held a revolver.

"Watch yer bank!" the man roared. "Monteflores has escaped, an' the chances are a thousand to one he'll bring his bandits back to lift the gold, as he knows it's here yet!"

Then he sank down into a chair and laid a hand to his head, groaning deeply.

"How will he know? And how did he escape?" asked Arizona Jim sharply. "He was hog-tied firmly enough when I saw you put him away."

"Say," the sheriff said—he was a blusterer always, anyway—"who the Sam Hill air you, and—"

"I'm Arizona Jim Carton," said the Indian agent. His cool eyes, one of them behind a monocle, surveyed the marshal closely. "Say," he said, "you've had a biff on the dome, old man. Let me see—"

The marshal put a hand to stave him off.

"I jest went into his cell before I thought I'd leave him for the night," said Eph, "when he picked up a water-jug that was there an' jest brained me with it. His hands was fastened in front of him. I don't remember anythin' more till I woke up lyin' on the floor o' the cell, an' then Monteflores had gone. Guess he found the key of the handcuffs on me, an' unlocked hisself. Oh, my head!"

"And about what time would that be?" asked Arizona Jim.

"Leven o'clock, exact," said the marshal.

"It's one o'clock now, so he's been gone two hours," said Arizona Jim. "Well, marshal, I suppose you'll have to do a bit of explaining to get over this?"

"I'll explain that all right to the sheriff," said Burbage. "I'm only human."

"Well," said Arizona Jim, "let's see what he did to your head."



"Going to let 'em do it?" asked Bad Phil Hicks. "Yes—if he doesn't tell me something I want to know!" said Arizona Jim. And he walked quickly after the angry mob (See Chapter 4)

"Nix," said the marshal. He came to his feet as he spoke, rocked on them for a moment, then began to walk out of the bank. By this time many of the citizens were clustered outside, shouting anxious questions. "Best tell the boys——"

And then Arizona Jim did a strange thing. He stepped after the marshal soft-footedly, reached out a hand, seized the knot of the handkerchief bandage that encircled the officer's head, and jerked it off roughly.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

Arizona Sees It Through!

BURBAGE wheeled sharply and fished out his revolver. But before he spoke, before almost he got the weapon out, Left-hand Britton, admitted to be the quickest on the draw in several Western States, had drawn with his left hand and had the man covered.

"Get your hands up, marshal!" the

Britisher said clearly. "I guess Arizona's got a reason for what he does!"

And so grim-eyed did the left-handed young gunman look that Marshal Burbage dropped his revolver and held up his hands.

"Well, Arizona, and what's the idea?"

Arizona Jim was examining the handkerchief he had torn away from the marshal's head, and he was chuckling softly to himself.

"Not a sign of blood on it," he said. "Now, let's have a look at the wound, marshal!" And he stepped forward, grasped Burbage roughly by the shaggy hair of him, and jerked his head down so that he could examine that, also. "And not a cut or a bruise on it," he went on. "Oh, Burbage, how could you tell such lies?"

Burbage at that, however, brought a knee up swiftly, reckless of the gun Left-hand Britton kept levelled at him, and his knee got Arizona Jim fairly in the stomach, sending the Indian agent back, gasping.

And, with the speed of light, the marshal turned again towards the door.

"Bad I'm goin' to be now!" yelled Phil Hicks.

He gave a jump after the marshal, got his arms around the man's neck, gave a twist, and sent Burbage thudding to the floor. Then he picked him up again and dashed him down again.

"That'll do, Phil," said Arizona Jim, recovering himself. "Don't kill him. But I think we've found out who was Monteflores' informant. The marshal never was knocked out at all; it's all a fake! This marshal released the bandit chief hours ago, and tried to get away with his baby yarn about a broken head! Say, marshal, got any more handcuffs on you?"

He felt in the man's pockets. Sure enough, he found a pair of bracelets. These he snapped on the struggling man's wrists.

"Now your own cell for you," he said, "and if you don't come quietly, I'll shout out to the town what I've found out about you. Then the town'll sure lynch you! So you've been helping Monteflores in his raids, have you? And don't think to make any trouble about my actions, marshal! I'm Arizona Jim, and my powers are greater than yours—greater than your sheriff's, if it comes to that!"

"Ye'll never prove it! It's all lies!" shouted the marshal.

"Thought you shouted the alarm rather robustly, considering you had just come round after being laid out two hours!" smiled the Indian agent. "Say, I've come down here to look into a mystery that wouldn't have been any mystery at all, if the people around here hadn't got the manana so badly their brains had dripped through their left ears! Now, son, I'm going to ask you something else. First, though, remember who I am. I'm Arizona Jim Carton, and I have methods of my own. I've weighed you up to the last ounce. You're a crook and a traitor! You're helping the Mexicans to make their raids and get away with them. Three times this bank has been robbed by them, just because they knew exactly the psychological moment

to come for the gold. And who told 'em? Why, you!"

"It's a lie; prove it!" blustered the marshal. "Gosh, I'll have you jailed for this, whoever ye are! I'm a respected man in these yer parts!"

"Oh, are you?" said Arizona Jim. "Well, then, we'll find out exactly. Hold him, you fellows!"

Bad Phil Hicks and Left-hand Britton seized the man. Arizona Jim went to the door of the bank again, opened it, and stood on the threshold. There were many men about now, and when they saw the shadowy figure of the Indian agent, they at once began to ask him what news the marshal had to give.

"Plenty!" answered Arizona Jim. "He's a crook!" Say, are you going to believe me or not? Listen here, boys, and I'll tell you why you've been having these raids. Your marshal's the man who's been helping the raiders. I'm Arizona Jim Carton, and maybe, you've never heard of me before—but you can believe me, boys! And it was he who let Monteflores escape to-night. Did any of you see Burbage with a bandage on his head?"

"Shore!" answered several in his audience. Many of them seemed incredulous. "We seen that all right."

"Well, see how bad his wounds are!" said Arizona Jim. "Boys, bring him along here!"

"With pleasure!" roared Bad Phil Hicks, and rushed the man on the threshold of the bank. Arizona Jim shot out his hands, grasped the marshal, and gave him a thrust that sent him staggering amongst the citizens. And now, it must be admitted, these people of Aguadante had forgotten their manana, and they were as alert and energetic as anybody in Wyoming or any other cold State.

They seized the shouting marshal. Some of them, being more impressionable than the others, were inclined to be rough from the start. But the clear voice of Arizona Jim warned them to be gentle. Wiser men of the party set to work to examine Burbage's head, and, like Arizona Jim, found no trace of wound or bruise there.

It doesn't take much to inflame a Western

mob. And the nerves of these men of Aguadante had been on edge for a long time, owing to their close proximity to the Mexican border.

"Lynch him!" yelled several. And they grabbed Burbage roughly and began to rush him down the street. Burbage, a shrieking coward now, tried in vain to resist.

"Goin' to let 'em do it?" asked Bad Phil Hicks, putting on a ferocious expression to cover the misgivings that were his.

"Yes—if he doesn't tell me something I

Arizona Jim intervened, and so sharp was his voice that the almost hysterical mob stopped their yells to listen to him. Arizona Jim could always command his fellow-men.

"Before we go on with it," said the Indian agent, "I want to ask the man something. If he doesn't answer satisfactorily, you can carry on with the good work!"

His eyes gleamed now as he stared at the traitor, the man who had so sadly betrayed his trust.

"Where do you go to when you want to tell



"Put up your hands—all of you!" shouted Arizona Jim. "The real law's going to handle this case—not lynch law!" And the prisoners were marched up to the Bank (See Chapter 4)

want to know," said Arizona Jim. "Come on, boys," and he walked quickly after the angry mob and the shrieking Burbage. His comrades walked with him.

The mob halted under a telegraph pole in the main street of the town. They have telegraphs in Aguadante, of course. And somebody was not slow about producing a rope, which was tossed over one of the insulator arms. The noose that was formed was about to be placed about the shrieking marshal's neck, and many men light-heartedly seized the other end, ready to haul. At this point,

Monteflores the news of Aguadante?" he asked.

"Oh, to the—to the Toro Valley!" gasped the wretch.

He brought up his manacled hands, and loosened the noose about his neck.

"Mind you," said Arizona Jim, "if you're lying, we'll soon know, because we're going after him right away, and if you lie, you'll get strung up. Tell the truth, and you'll be saved that!"

"What—!" began Burbage. "These fellers—"

"You'd let him off if he helped you to capture Monteflores again, wouldn't you?" said Arizona Jim, to the crowd.

At which there seemed to be some demur. The hotter-blooded doubted whether they would. The older, soberer men said they'd think about it.

"It's true that's where I go!" yelled Burbage; then proved himself incapable of being true even to the other side. "But he ain't thar now, Arizona! Say, if I tell ye where to find him, will ye let me get clear o' this?"

"We'll see you don't hang, but I'll have to let the Governor know about it, so he can deal with you himself," said Arizona Jim. "Well, where is he?"

Burbage hesitated a moment. A man gave an impatient twitch at the rope. He choked.

"Hidin' in the cellar o' my house," he said at length. "It's true, boys!"

"Then some of you go and see!" said Arizona Jim. "Hustle, now!"

There was a wild yell. Most of the lynchers broke away and made a dash for a certain house, set at the extreme end of the main street of Aguadante. Three minutes later they returned, bustling amongst them the erect form of Monteflores, as the renegade American was known as then. But there was nothing cringing and cowardly about this leader of the bandits. His head was bandaged, for Bad Phil Hicks had struck him shrewdly. But his lips were closed, and he glared about those who held him. He may have been a bandit, may have turned "yellow" for personal gain; but he was what Burbage never could have been: he was a man, and proved it then.

"We'll string him up instead!" yelled the mob.

"No, you won't!" roared Arizona Jim, and his gun was in his hand as he spoke. So, too, were the guns of Bad Phil Hicks and Left-hand Britton. "Drop him, there, you!"

Deep growls broke out. Men clapped their hands to their hips as well. But the three friends had the mob well covered before any of them could draw a gun.

"Put your hands up—all of you!" shouted Arizona Jim. "The real law's going to

handle this case—not lynch law! Phil, Left-hand! Take these two to the bank!"

He menaced the lynchers with his revolver so fiercely that the men drew back, snarling, perhaps, in their disappointment. He fired at a man who tried to defy him, and sent the fellow cowering back with a bitter sear on his arm. The effect of that shot was salutary.

"C'mon!" said Bad Phil Hicks, grabbing Monteflores by the scruff of the neck, pressing the muzzle of a gun against his ear. "Ye're in the hands of a right bad man now—much worse'n you ever could be!"

Left-hand Britton took charge of the handcuffed marshal. And so between the ranks of the foiled citizens, they marched their prisoners up to the bank. On the threshold of that building, Arizona Jim, eye and gun still alert, once more addressed the citizens.

"When you've cooled down," he remarked, "you'll realise that we've not done so badly to-night. We've got the two most dangerous men in hand. You'll find, I guess, that there won't be any more border raids for a bit, because those peons are cowards without a leader. And when you've got a new marshal here, you ought to enjoy a spell of peace. And the United States will punish these two fitly enough."

He slammed the door in the crowd's faces then, and the two prisoners were dragged inside, thrust into the bank's vault, where they were both locked in so securely that escape would be quite impossible for them.

"We came down here," said Arizona Jim, "expecting to find a long, tough job ahead of us. Well, these jobs are all the better for being brought off quickly."

"Jest the same," said Bad Phil Hicks, "it don't give a feller much chance to be reel bad, when things ends up so tame as this."

"You'll have plenty of other chances, in plenty of other places," the Indian agent laughed. "Anyway, I'll bet Hankson's satisfied!"

And Hankson was.

"I don't know how you manage these things Arizona," he said, gratefully. "But you do."

"By using a little gumption, I guess," said Arizona Jim.

THE END.

Early Rising

By Lord Moulverer
(The Stocker of the Greyfriars Farmhouse)



WHEN frost is on the window-pane,
And cold winds whistle through the dorm,
It's nice to fall asleep again
Beneath the blankets, snug and warm.
But soon we start up with a yell
When Gosling rings the rising-bell !

"It's seven o'clock !" Bob Cherry cries ;
And promptly tumbles out of bed.
It seems a shocking hour to rise ;
It's more like two a.m. instead.
We dare not snatch another spell
When Gosling rings the rising-bell !

No sounds of snoring fill the air ;
No fellows chatter in their sleep.
There's hustle, bustle everywhere
As from our cosy beds we leap.
Harsh, jangling sounds—we know them well
When Gosling rings the rising-bell !

I'd love to lie in bed all day,
And have my meals brought up to me.
Hot rolls and coffee, on a tray—
How jolly ripping it would be !
Such blissful dreams I must dispel
When Gosling rings the rising-bell !

The winds of winter freeze our bones ;
Our noses are of strawberry hue.
On every side we hear deep groans,
Save from the energetic few
Whose lively spirits none can quell
When Gosling rings the rising-bell !

It's fine to fall asleep at night
And dream delightful dreams—perhaps !
But all such dreams are put to flight
By noises just like thunder-claps.
My mournful feelings, who can tell,
When Gosling rings the rising-bell ?