

THE UNION JACK

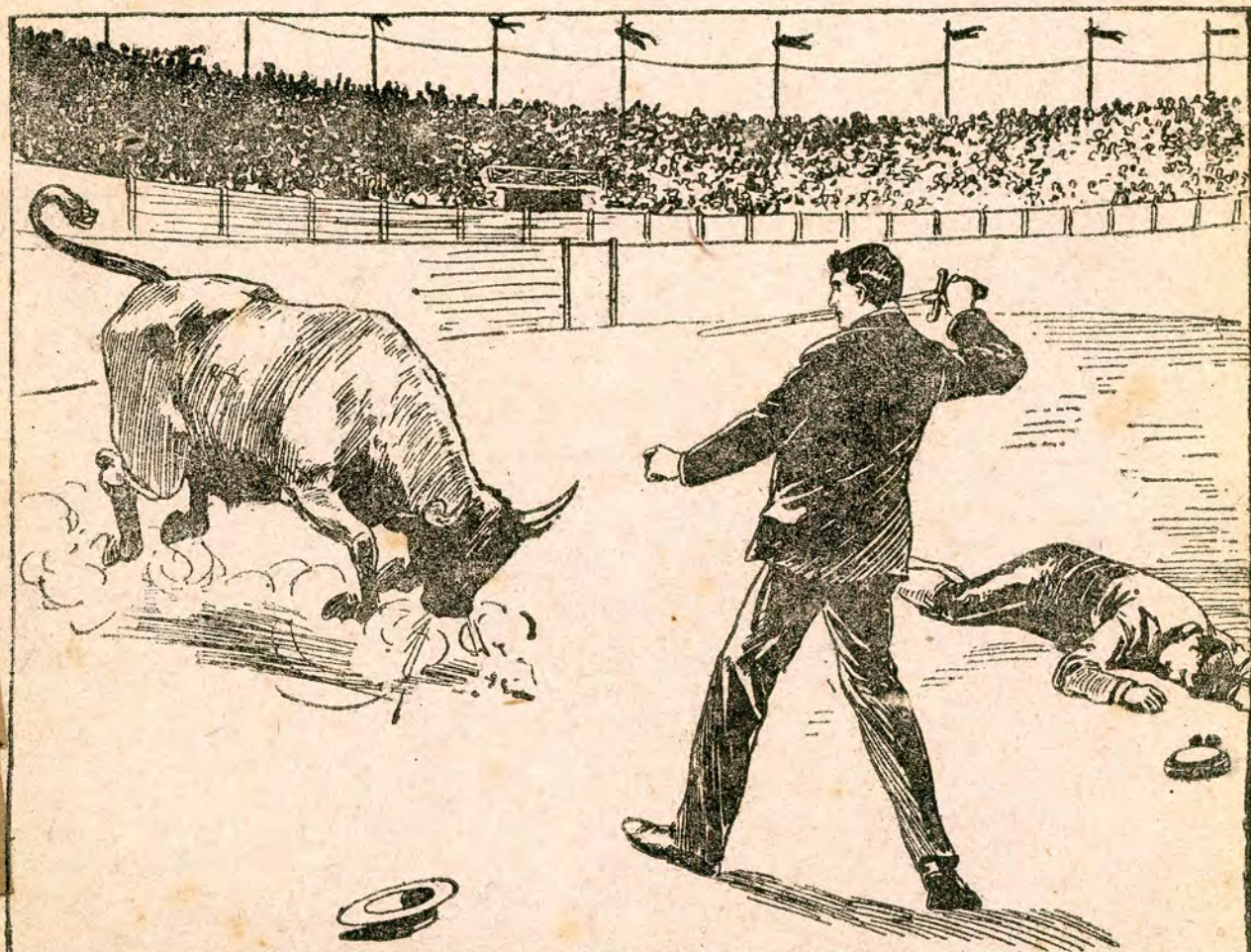
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RIVAL BULLFIGHTERS.

By S. CLARKE HOOK.



The brave young Briton sprang to his comrade's side, and seized the sword. A horrified murmur arose from the spectators as the bull charged with mighty fury at Fred Stanley.

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY.

No. 207.

THE SIGN OF THE SCARLET CROSS,

By CLAUD HEATHCOTE,

STARTS IN NEXT FRIDAYS "UNION JACK"

RIVAL BULLFIGHTERS.

A Complete Novel by S. CLARKE HOOK.

CHAPTER 1.

THE STRANGE GUEST—MIDNIGHT VOICES—A DEADLY PERIL—A FRIEND IN NEED—THE COMBAT IN THE PASS.

The sun had set behind the Spanish hills. The azure heavens were darkening over the land of the olive and the vine. From the vineyards the maidens trooped, and many a coquettish glance was cast at a young Briton, Fred Stanley, as he hurried along the sweet-scented lane. For he was a fine, handsome young fellow, and Spanish damsels know well how to use their eyes.

But swiftly on he went, past the vine-clad heights and clumps of dark-leaved cork-trees, until he reached a little inn. Here he stopped, and, addressing the landlord in Spanish, inquired if he could remain there for the night.

"Con mucho gusto, señor," replied mine host. "Be pleased to step this way. We have here another gentleman, who, like yourself, is a traveller. Senor Don Jaime Malo"—he added, addressing a Spaniard who was seated at supper—"here is a gentleman who, like yourself, desires to stay the night."

"I am pleased to meet you, sir," said Malo, rising. "A stranger in this part, I presume?"

"Yes," replied Fred. "I am travelling through your beautiful country on a matter of grave importance. I shall be glad of some supper, landlord, and a bottle of your claret."

For an instant Malo fixed his eyes upon the landlord's, then supper and the wine were quickly brought, and while Fred was discussing these, Malo tried in vain to discover the object of the young man's visit to the sunny south.

Fred invited Malo to join him with the wine, but, making an excuse, the Spaniard ordered a liqueur. Now, although Fred only drank two glasses of the claret, he had scarcely finished the second one when a strange drowsiness came over him. It was as much as he could do to keep his eyes open, and at last, notwithstanding the earliness of the hour, he asked the landlord to show him to his room.

Now, for the first time, the suspicion flashed through his mind that he had been drugged. There was no lock on the door, but as noiselessly as possibly he dragged a chest of drawers in front of it; then, without undressing, he threw himself upon the bed, and in a few moments fell into a heavy sleep.

It must have been nearly midnight when he started up from a troubled dream. He could hear two men talking in lowered voices, and one of these voices he recognised as Jaime Malo's. By the throbbing of his brain, Fred's suspicions that he had been drugged were now confirmed, and, stepping noiselessly across the room, he determined to discover the vile plot the smooth-tongued Spaniard was concocting.

By placing his ear against the thin wooden partition, Fred was able to catch the muttered words, spoken in a strange voice.

"Listen to me, Malo, Juan Losada stands in my path."

"A duel is easily arranged," replied Malo. "But perhaps you do not care to cross swords with Juan Losada?"

"Dare you insinuate that I fear him?"

"Dare I! En verdad! There is not one thing on earth that Jaime Malo fears to say or do! But enough of this. You want Juan Losada to disappear—never to be heard of again. The reward would be?"

"One thousand pesetas paid down."

"When shall the deed be done?"

"This very night! Listen! Within one hour from now this Juan Losada will come along the Chica Pass. He might fall down that height, then who would be the wiser? See, Malo, here are five hundred pesetas, the remainder shall be yours when the deed is—Hark! What is that? Maldito! I heard a movement in the next room. If that Englishman has overheard our conversation he shall die!"

"It could not be," replied Malo. "The landlord drugged him, for we meant to relieve him of his money. He will be sleeping. But we will make sure. Follow me."

Fred stepped quickly to the bed, and, throwing himself upon it, feigned sleep. The next moment he heard the miscreants in his room, though how they gained admission he was at a loss to understand. They certainly had not entered by the door.

A light was held close to his face.

"Hold this dagger over his breast!" whispered Malo. "Strike if he moves. But he will not. The drug is working. Ah! here we have his pocket-book."

"Is it safe to let him live, Malo?"

"To be sure! He has heard nothing. Come! I have an old score to settle with Juan Losada, and I want the remainder of the reward."

Fred ventured to open his eyes in time to see Malo disappear through a sliding-panel in the wooden partition, which he closed after him.



The next moment he heard the miscreants in his room. A light was held close to his face.

"I must stop that villainous deed at all risks!" muttered Fred. "It is well I did not carry my money in my pocket-book. The ruffians will find they have gained little for their pains."

Stepping to the window he cautiously opened it. The drop to the ground was not great, and when a few moments later he heard the front door closed, Fred climbed through the window and fell to the ground.

The night was very dark, but he was able to follow the two men, who presently separated, and Malo proceeded towards a range of mountains, at the foot of which he was joined by half a dozen armed men who, after a few hurried words with their leader, ascended the narrow defile along which their victim was to come.

Fred knew that his only chance of warning the traveller of his impending peril was to get past the gang, and, with this object, he clambered over the rugged ground to the right of the pass. He had proceeded a mile or more up the mountain side, when he ventured to glance down the defile. He could neither hear nor see the gang of ruffians, and trusting that he had got beyond them, he commenced to climb down the boulders. Having reached the defile in safety, he hurried along it. Presently he gained a sharp bend, and now on his right the rocks rose in a perpendicular wall, while to the left the ground fell away into a deep abyss, down which a false step in the darkness would have hurled him.

To proceed farther along that narrow ledge would be attended with the greatest peril; but knowing a man's life depended on it, Fred did not hesitate. He was feeling his way along the face of the rocks, when he heard approaching footsteps. A moment later a tall form appeared before him.

"Stop!" cried Fred, in Spanish. "Certainly, my friend!" replied a fearless voice. "I have you covered with my revolver. I know not how many of you there are, but I warn you some will go into the abyss."

"You mistake," said Fred. "I am a friend. An Englishman, travelling through your country. Is your name Juan Losada?"

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"It is, though I am surprised that you should know it."

"One, Jaime Malo, seeks your life! He is lying in wait yonder with a gang of ruffians to take it. I heard him plotting this with a stranger at the posada, and I came to warn you of your peril."

"Then, indeed you are a friend," replied the young Spaniard. "And a noble one to risk your life for a perfect stranger. Forgive me if I doubted you. Fierce bandits haunt this mountain side, and one is more likely to meet a foe than friend. Your name, senor?"

"Fred Stanley." "Senor Stanley, I am proud to grasp the hand of one so brave, and while life lasts I shall not forget your gallant action. This Jaime Malo is a bloodthirsty desperado. Many a cruel murder lies at his door. He is the leader of a gang of bandits who have set the soldiers at defiance. Their hair is in these mountains, and as yet no man has discovered it. Are you armed?"

"With a revolver, yes." "Good! But we two cannot face those odds. Will you do me the honour to come to my home?"

"I shall be delighted," replied Fred. "To tell you the truth, Senor Losada, I have had enough of that posada. Hark!"

"It is our enemies approaching," said Juan Losada calmly. "Well, let them come. They will find no mean foes to face them." Then, raising his voice, he shouted:

"Who comes there?" "Jaime Malo, at the head of his men," replied the bandit. "Surrender!"

"And I am Juan Losada, neither alone nor unarmed. Take one step round that bend, you murderous villain, and you will know I speak the truth."

The two young men stood side by side, with their revolvers levelled, waiting for the rush. For several moments there was an intense silence. Suddenly there was a flash of light. A ball whizzed past Fred's face, while a pistol-shot rang out.

Losada drew his comrade closer to the face of the rocks, and quickly returned the fire, and a cry of pain proved that his aim had taken effect.

Suddenly a fierce rush was made. One of the bandits fell before the heavy fire. Malo leapt over his body. Fred stepped forward, and, with clenched fist, struck the leader a blow in the face that hurled him backwards to the rocks. The furious rush was checked, and the gang dragged their fallen leader round the bend.

Several minutes elapsed before a fresh attack was made, and the two comrades were beginning to hope that the miscreants had drawn off, when a shot was fired from the height above, and, looking up, they saw some more of the gang against the dark sky-line.

"Our only chance is to attempt a descent into this abyss," said Losada. "It is fearfully perilous; but to remain here is certain death. Quick! I can hear men approaching down the pass."

The two men lowered themselves over the height, then commenced the terrible descent.

CHAPTER 2.

'TWIN LIFE AND DEATH—A FALSE STEP—THE ESCAPE—LOSADA'S HOME—THE GREAT BULL-FIGHT—THE SPANISH MATADOR.

Clinging to the rugged boulders, they clambered down, while they heard the shouts of their enemies above, although it was too dark to see them. Farther and farther into the awful depth the comrades went, while the bandits fired again and again, but owing to the darkness the shots were fired at random. Notwithstanding this, many of the balls came fearfully near.

Losada was a little in advance of Fred. He had got one arm round the stem of a broken tree, and was peering into the depth to find a safe footing. Fred was about to follow, when the little ledge on which he was standing suddenly gave way. With a thrill of horror he felt himself falling down the height. Juan Losada saw his comrade's peril. With all his strength he gripped him round the body, and to and fro they swung over the abyss.

"I shall drag you over!" panted Fred. "But that sinewy arm only tightened round him. Juan Losada would never release his hold. They would live or die together."

With almost incredible strength, Losada drew him up, and, bending down, fastened his teeth into Fred's coat-collar. The falling man seized the tree-trunk, and got his feet on to the narrow ledge which was just beneath it. And all the time the shots came pouring down, but the balls were only flattened against the jagged rocks.

"Can you see that boulder to the left there?" inquired Losada. "Well, swing yourself upon it, amigo mio. For Heaven's sake spring far enough! I will follow."

Taking his feet from the narrow ledge, Fred swung himself to and fro. To his horror he heard the stump crack ominously. The next moment he released his hold. There was an instant's fearful suspense, then he landed in safety on the huge boulder, and Losada was quickly by his side.

From here the descent was far less perilous, nor had they so much to fear from the shots, as the bandits were not now firing in the right direction. In five minutes they had gained the bottom of the abyss, and Losada, who, in spite of the darkness, found his way with ease, led Fred to his home, which was situated some three miles from that spot.

It was a beautiful place, surrounded by well-kept grounds, and the house was furnished most luxuriantly.

In spite of the lateness of the hour, an elderly lady and two young and very beautiful girls were still up, awaiting the young owner's arrival.

One of these, Alicia by name, sprang forward to greet Juan; but, on seeing Fred, she drew back, and the colour mounted to her cheeks.

"This is a friend, Alicia," said Juan. "A friend who has saved my life at risk of his own. This is my mother, Senor Stanley, a countrywoman of your own, and who speaks your language a good deal better than I do. This is Inez, my sister, who breaks all the hearts of the young fellows round about."

"Don't talk so ridiculously, Juan," said Inez in English, as she fixed her blue eyes, which she had inherited from her mother, on the handsome young stranger. "If Mr. Stanley has saved your life, Juan, we all owe him a debt of gratitude that we never can repay. Tell us all about it, Juan. You had better speak in Spanish, so that Alicia can understand."

"Before Senor Losada makes a hero of me," said Fred, smiling, "I must first tell you that it was he who saved my life. I merely warned him of a danger."

"I am sorry to say my brother is always running into danger," replied Inez. "He is—"

Juan made a sign to check his beautiful sister. "Oh! Mustn't I tell?" she exclaimed. "Well, no wonder you are ashamed of it!"

Then Juan told his story, and the ladies cast many a glance of admiration at the stranger.

"I shall never forget your bravery, senor!" exclaimed Alicia, when bidding Fred good-night. "We may not meet again, but I shall always remember what we owe to you."

"Well, Fred," said Juan, when the ladies had retired—"I suppose I may call you by your Christian name?—we seem destined to become friends. You see, British blood flows in my veins. But for Inez's slight foreign accent, which my mother

says she has, you might take her for one of your country-women."

"Yes," replied Fred. "That golden hair and laughing blue eyes certainly show Saxon origin. And I think your glowing sun has but enhanced her beauty."

"A different type to Alicia. She has the flashing dark eyes of Spain, and the dark hair."

"Is she also your sister?"

"No!" replied Juan laughing, as he rolled a cigarette, and handed it to his friend. Then he quickly changed the conversation, and Fred had a better opportunity of observing him.

Juan Losada was a tall young man of splendid physique. Indeed, Fred already knew how strong he was. His eyes were dark and very brilliant, while his bronzed face was strikingly handsome. There was a reckless daring about it that at once won Fred's esteem.

"Now, can you give me any description of that man who incited Malo to take my life?" inquired Juan.

"I am sorry that I cannot. I never saw the villain!"

"I have my suspicions as to who he is," said Juan. "And I think I know his object. But we will speak about this some other time. To-morrow a great bullfight takes place. Would you like to see it?"

"Yes, Juan," replied Fred. "I want to discover something further concerning this Jaime Malo, and shall remain in this neighbourhood for some time."

"Then you shall visit the Plaza de los Toros to-morrow, and I can promise you plenty of excitement. Suppose we go to bed now. We have not many hours of sleep before us."

The following morning Alicia did not appear, though Inez and her mother were there. As soon as breakfast was finished, Juan drove his friend to the town.

Having directed Fred to the Plaza, and given him a ticket of admission to the best seats, Juan took his leave, saying that he had business to attend to; but promising to meet him after the fight was over.

Fred was somewhat surprised to see so many elegantly-dressed ladies amongst the spectators; but he was more surprised to see Alicia just in front of him. A tall, military-looking man was by her side. Directly this man spoke his voice caused Fred to start and look earnestly at him.

He was a handsome, middle-aged man of gentlemanly appearance; tall, and powerfully-built. But it was his voice that caused Fred so much surprise, for he was almost certain it was the voice of the man who had incited Malo to murder Juan Losada. Presently Fred heard Alicia address this man as Captain Romano.

But now the torreadores, mounted on wretched-looking horses, were entering the arena, a vast circular space surrounded by thick woodwork some six feet in height. Outside this was a narrow space, then another wooden partition of the same height as the inner one.

The last to ride into the ring was one who seemed to be a general favourite, for his name was shouted out by many of the spectators. His face was not a prepossessing one, nor was it improved by a terrible scar down the left side of it, doubtless received in some fierce encounter.

"Jose Benito! Brava! Jose Benito!"

Then every voice was hushed, for an enormous bull, goaded to fury by the darts and lances of the torreadores, leapt into the arena.

Bellowing fiercely, and pawing the earth, the furious brute glared round at its foes, and the men on foot flashed red flags before its eyes.

Singling out one of its tormentors, it charged, and Fred held his breath, making sure the man must be killed; but as the bull charged he leapt aside; and, riding past, the torreadores turned the enraged beast with their spears.

Suddenly it rushed at one of the men on foot. He sprang on one side, but the bull turned as quickly, and catching the man with lowered head, hurled him against the woodwork with terrible force. The torreador was badly hurt, but he was on his feet in an instant. The brute's bloodshot eyes were fixed upon him for an instant, then, lowering its head, it charged once more.

The man sprang aside, and, with a mighty crash, the infuriated bull dashed against the partition, splintering the massive beams with its huge horns.

Benito now rode up, and pricked the bull with his lance; then it turned its fury upon him. With lowered head it charged at his blindfolded horse; but the torreador wheeled round, and the bull dashed past.

The men tried to turn it with their flags and darts, but once again the maddened brute dashed at the daring rider. Benito tried to turn, but he was too late. The bull dashed into the wretched horse, which was hurled lifeless to the ground; then the bull tried to trample Benito beneath its hoofs. Thrice the fallen torreador rolled over, and the furious animal's horns tore up the ground at the spot where a moment before he had lain. In an instant he was on his feet, and as the bull charged at

him once more, he placed his hand on the barricade, and vaulted lightly over.

The maddened brute now charged at the horsemen indiscriminately. Two more horses went down before its mighty rushes. One of the torreadores was borne wounded and senseless from the arena. But this did not daunt the others.

Benito sprang into the ring once more, and goaded the bull into such a state of fury that even the torreadores refused to face it. Benito was one of the last in the arena, but even he seemed only too anxious to get out of it now.

With lowered head, the huge animal leapt at him. He tried to spring aside, but he was too late. The bull caught him, and, hurling him into the air, flung him sheer over the barricade, and several minutes elapsed before he recovered consciousness.

"Go in again, Benito!" cried some of the lower of the spectators. "Do you fear him? En verdad! You are not so brave as you would have us think."

But in spite of these jeers, Benito, who had had enough of it, absolutely refused to face the furious brute again.

"Let the matador enter!" he muttered fiercely. "And may the vicious beast gore him to death!"

"The matador is braver than you, Benito. El matador! Donde está la Espada?"

"Surely no man will be mad enough to enter that ring!" said Fred in Spanish.

"Will he not?" exclaimed a gentleman sitting next to him. "You are a stranger, sir, and do not know. The matador fears nothing. See! He comes! He comes!"

Fred sprang to his feet, with an exclamation of amazement and awe, for in that intrepid matador he recognised his comrade, Juan Losada.

Then Fred's eyes turned to Alicia, and he saw her face was white as death.

CHAPTER 3.

JUAN LOSADA'S RECKLESS BRAVERY—A TERRIBLE COMBAT—THE DEATH—THE RIVALS MEET—THE CHALLENGE—THE CHASTISEMENT.

As Juan Losada stepped into the arena, the cheering became vociferous. His name was shouted forth by a hundred voices. He was armed only with a sword, and with this weapon he had to kill the maddened bull with one stroke, if he would maintain his reputation for skill and daring.

To Fred it appeared little short of suicide; but the spectators seemed to be pretty confident.

"You will never make a matador, Benito!" cried one. "You would fear to enter the arena thus."

"When I have entered it unarmed!" exclaimed the torreador, turning fiercely on the speaker. "Juan Losada dare not go without his sword!"

Juan heard the taunt, and, smiling, scornfully dropped his weapon over the barricade. As he did so the enraged bull charged. It was almost upon him ere he moved swiftly aside, and the furious beast dashed past.

Fred heard Alicia utter a cry of terror, and he saw Captain Romano clench his teeth with jealous rage, while his dark eyes flashed.

Time after time the bull charged with increased fury, but Losada evaded every rush.

"He dare not be seated!" shouted Benito fiercely.

"Una silla agni!" cried Losada. "Bring me a chair!"

One was quickly handed over, and, taking it, he stepped into the centre of the arena.

There was another fierce rush, but Juan stepped aside, and struck the bull lightly as it passed him; then, placing the chair on the ground, he coolly seated himself upon it, and, crossing his leg, commenced to roll a cigarette.

For some moments the bull stood glaring at him, tearing up the earth with its hoof, and bellowing furiously. Then, with a mad rush, it sprang at the daring matador. Its lowered horns appeared to be almost touching him, when with one hand he flung the chair aside, and, springing to the other side, struck the brute a sounding blow with his open hand, while the plaudits that rang out were deafening.

But now Juan Losada did a thing that seemed utter madness. Picking up the chair, he seated himself upon it, with his back to the enraged bull, and actually lighted his cigarette.

Breathlessly the spectators watched the savage brute as it charged at the matador. Juan heard the thunder of its hoofs, but he did not spring aside until it almost touched him; then,

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while the bull was splintering the chair to atoms, Juan vaulted over the partition, regained his sword, and was back again in an instant.

Every voice was hushed, for the matador was about to perform his last daring feat.

The bull leapt into the air, and, with the fury of madness, dashed at Juan Losada. The very earth trembled beneath the thunder of the fierce beast's hoofs.

The sword was poised. The bull lowered its head; then the keen weapon was buried to the hilt at the back of the animal's neck, and it fell lifeless at the matador's feet.

The cheers were deafening. Gold and even jewels were flung into the arena. Ladies rose from their seats and waved their handkerchiefs to the valiant matador.

It was a scene such as Fred Stanley had never witnessed before, and never wanted to witness again. That the sport was cruel he could but feel; yet he remembered that these men risked their lives against a terrible foe; and after all it seemed to Fred less ignoble than shooting down and maiming hundreds of defenceless pigeons, or coursing a hare to its death. But he wondered greatly how women could witness such scenes.

A few minutes later Losada appeared amongst the spectators.

"Ah! señor el capitán!" he exclaimed, turning to Diego

Romano, who was still by Alicia's side, "you are quite a stranger. Allow me to introduce you to a friend of mine, Señor Don Federico Stanley, a gentleman whom, perhaps, you may have seen before. Don't you feel quite well, capitán?" added Juan, fixing his dark, piercing eyes on Romano. "Your face has turned quite white. Perhaps the bullfight was too much for your nerves; or perhaps you feared that I should meet my death, an event that doubtless you would deplore greatly?"

"Señor!" cried Romano fiercely, "your tone and language are offensive to me. I do not know whether you are intoxicated with success or wine, but—"

"Not with wine assuredly," replied Juan, smiling at Alicia, who had risen from her seat. "I have only taken one glass of claret this morning, and that was not drugged. May I ask whether you have lately had the misfortune to lose five hundred pesetas, Captain Romano?"

"I don't understand you!" retorted Romano, lowering his eyes.

"Pardon," exclaimed Juan, "I think you do."

"Señor!" cried the captain, "do you doubt my honour?"

"Indeed, no!" replied Juan. "I have no doubt concerning your—ha, ha!—your honour. As regards your courage—well, that has never been put to the test."

"Do you wish to test it, señor?" demanded Romano.

"Scarcely," replied Juan, smiling. "It is a matter of perfect indifference to me. May I ask you, Señor Stanley, whether this captain's voice is not familiar to you?"

"Yes, it is," replied Fred, stepping forward. "We have met before, if I am not mistaken, and in strange company?"

"I do not doubt that you keep such, señor!" retorted Romano. "But I do not! But enough of this! Dona Alicia, allow me to conduct you to your carriage."

"Pray let my friend have that honour, Dona Alicia," interposed Juan, standing in front of Romano. "It is a whim of mine that one so young and fair should confer that favour on a friend of mine—a friend who has saved my life."

Then Alicia took Fred's proffered arm and walked towards her carriage, while Romano turned his fury on Juan.

"Sir," he cried, "my friend shall wait upon you!"

"Pardon, I prefer not!" retorted Juan.

"Why? Why?" demanded the captain.

"Because I do not keep strange company," replied Juan, who was as calm as his opponent was furious.

"You refuse to meet me?"

"Yes; I refuse!"

"Then I tell you, before these gentlemen," shouted Romano, "that you are a cur and a paltry coward!"

"That is unfortunate, captain," retorted Juan, "because it will necessitate my convincing these gentlemen that I do not fear you. The reason that I will not meet you is because you are an ignoble villain, unworthy of the uniform you wear. But see, we will settle this dispute with my cane! It is a safer weapon for you than my sword."

Then Juan seized the captain by the back of the neck, and, notwithstanding his furious struggles, gave him a sound thrashing in the presence of hundreds of spectators.

When Juan released his foe Romano leapt to his feet, and a murderous light gleamed in his dark eyes. A knife flashed in his hand, and, springing forward, he raised his arm to plunge the deadly weapon into the matador's breast; but ere the blow descended, Juan gripped his wrist with a pressure that grew tighter and tighter until the knife fell harmlessly to the ground; then, seizing Romano round the body, Juan hurled him backwards over the seats.

Smiling scornfully at his vanquished foe, the matador raised his hat to the astonished spectators, and walked calmly away to join Alicia and Fred.

Furious with rage at the indignity he had suffered, and swearing to have a fearful vengeance, Diego Romano strode from the place, and he reached the street in time to see Alicia driven away, accompanied by Juan and Fred.

CHAPTER 4.

AN EVIL PLOT—THE SURPRISE—A RACE FOR LIFE—THE ROBBER'S CAVE—GUILLERMO—A BRUTAL ACTION.

That night Diego Romano proceeded towards the posada, and, making a sign to the landlord, he was shown into the sitting-room, where Malo awaited him.

"So you failed?" exclaimed the captain.

"Carrambo! Yes," answered the bandit chief. "That accursed matador bears a charmed life. I would that I could meet him face to face. He shall die, I swear!"

"I hope so," retorted Romano, "seeing that I have paid you five hundred pesetas already. But listen, Malo. That friend was only feigning sleep. He knows I was in your presence, and he overheard our conversation. Losada and he will hunt you down. Your life depends upon their deaths. I would much like to know why this man Stanley is in this—"

"Stanley!" cried Malo, springing to his feet. "Is that his name?"

"Yes. Why do you ask?"

"Oh, nothing," replied Malo. "Only the name is familiar to me. Have you some scheme to suggest?"

"Yes," answered Romano, lowering his voice. "Another bullfight will shortly take place. Jose Benito, the torreador, hates this Juan Losada. Benito is in your power, and would aid you in the scheme.

"Go on."

"Order Jose Benito to file the matador's sword nearly through, close to the hilt, then Juan's death is certain. For the villain's conceit is such that he stands in front of the charging bull, and were his sword to snap, he would be at the fierce beast's mercy. I told you I would give you a further five hundred pesetas, but on that villain's death I will make it one thousand."

"I'll do it!" cried Malo. "His days are surely numbered, and I shall pay off an old score. Hark! What is that?"

"Men's voices," replied Romano, springing to his feet. "I believe that demon has tracked me here. Hide, Malo! The room above. Quick! It will not matter their finding me here, but it is death to you."

Jaime Malo sprang up the stairs as blows were dealt at the door, which the innkeeper had locked on Romano's entrance, and now the bandit drew a revolver and remained listening.

"Who's there?" demanded the landlord, making a sign to Malo to remain in hiding.

"I, Juan Losada. Open the door or I will burst it in."

"Señor, my house is closed for the night, and—"

"Open! open!" shouted Losada, dealing blows that made the door rattle, and split one of the panels from top to bottom. Then the landlord shot back the bolts, and Losada, Fred, and a number of torreadors entered the house.

"This is not lawful, señores," whined the innkeeper.

"Is it lawful to drug your guests and harbour murderers?" retorted Losada. "Ah, you miscreant," he added, flinging open the door of the room in which Romano was seated, "do not let that man leave. I will search the house."

"Maldito, you shall not search in vain!" shouted Malo, standing at the head of the stairs with a levelled revolver. "I am Jaime Malo."

"And I Juan Losada," replied the matador, springing up the stairs.

Twice Malo fired; then, without waiting to see if his shots had taken effect, he rushed into the room where Fred had slept, and drew the chest of drawers in front of the door. He heard Losada charge against it, and, knowing it must soon give way, he drew back the sliding panel, and, gaining the next room, closed the panel after him; then, climbing through the window, he dropped to the ground and ran swiftly towards the mountains, with the shouts of his pursuers ringing in his ears.

With wonderful speed, considering the rugged nature of the ground, Malo ascended the mountain side; but his pursuers were agile as he, and, although not knowing the ground so well, they pressed him closely.

A THRILLING DETECTIVE STORY NEXT FRIDAY.

April on which
the the
15th UNION JACK'S
is New
the Serial,
day "THE SIGN
OF THE
SCARLET
CROSS,"
starts.
—
DON'T
FORGET
IT.

The bandit chief emptied his revolver at the foremost of his pursuers, two of whom were wounded; but the brave fellows still maintained the chase, and it seemed at last that the outlaw would be captured.

Several shots were fired at him, but, owing to the darkness, they passed harmlessly by, and at last he reached a broad chasm which traversed the mountain side. Running along this for some distance, he gained some huge boulders which concealed him from his foes; then suddenly he crept over the side of the precipice on to a ledge of rocks a few feet beneath the brink.

Running along this narrow pathway for some distance, he came face to face with a man who, levelling a rifle at his breast, commanded him to halt.

"It is I, Jaime Malo!" panted the brigand.

"Bien, capitán," replied the sentry, who was one of his gang. "I see you have been chased; but they will not discover our secret cave."

"And if they do they will but come to their deaths," replied the chief fiercely. "Keep guard here; I will go to the cave."

Round a sharp bend a little further along appeared a narrow entrance to a large cavern. This was concealed by overhanging rocks, so that it would be invisible to anyone on the height above.

From this cage a narrow passage led to an inner cavern in which torches were burning, while seated round about were a number of brigands. Amongst them was a lad, who, seated in a corner away from the gang, remained listening to their conversation.

"I have been chased by that demon Juan Losada!" cried Malo. "He had many men with him, and even now he is not far distant. Now, hear me, my comrades. That fellow must die, as also must his English friend, who, I believe, has come to hunt us down! With regard to Losada, it is not easy to get at him; but that fellow, Captain Romano, has proposed a scheme to me that will surely bring Losada to his death. When this happens we shall receive a further thousand pesetas. But my vengeance shall not stop at the matador's death. He has a sister, the daughter of the man who once broke up our band, and by whose means so many of our comrades' lives were taken. To make my vengeance complete, I intend to carry her off, though there will be no reward for this."

"Except our captain's," laughed one of the villains. "Well, I have seen this Dona Inez, and can say that our captain has good taste. But about Losada's death?"

"Jose Benito, the torreador, is in our power, and must do what we command; besides, he hates Losada," continued Malo. "A message must be sent to him to file the matador's sword at the hilt, so that when the charging bull touches it, it will snap; then, I fancy, the matador will find the plaudits will be for El Toro. I intend to witness that fight. It will be Losada's last."

"But who shall take this message, captain? It is not safe for us to venture near the town just now."

"The lad Guillermo," answered Malo. "He knows where Benito lives. Where is that little villain? Come here, boy! Now, listen to me. You will take a certain message, which I shall write to the torreador Benito; and woe betide you if that message is not safely given."

"Oh, please send someone else!" answered the boy Guillermo. "Do not make me go. I could not—"

"Maldito!" exclaimed Malo fiercely. "Give me my whip; I'll teach the little hound to dispute my authority! Gag him! I don't think our foes could hear his cries, but we will be on the safe side."

The cruel order was obeyed, and while one of the gang held the wretched lad, Malo flogged him with utter brutality. When at last the ruffian desisted, and the gag was taken from Guillermo's mouth, the poor boy fell to the ground, moaning piteously.

"Now will you go?" demanded Malo fiercely.

"Yes," sobbed Guillermo.

"Oh, you will? That is well!" sneered the brigand chief.

"You will give the letter into Benito's hands. Should you fail or not return, we will hunt you down, and you know what

the consequences will be. Now, bring my supper. Those villains have gone astray, and it is well for them they have done so. I suppose Losada thinks that because his father once broke up our band he can do the same—but he never will. He shall feel the weight of my vengeance first!"

CHAPTER 5.

THE WARNING TO THE RESCUE—TOO LATE—A NOBLE ACTION—INEZ'S PERIL—A GALLANT RESCUE.

On the night preceding the great bullfight, Malo, disguised as a peasant, led the boy Guillermo to the town, and as the wretched lad made his way to Jose Benito's house, he knew that his every movement was being watched.

"Carambo! Tell your chief it shall be done!" cried the torreador, as he read the letter. "To-morrow the matador shall die, for he will meet the fiercest bull that ever entered the arena, and to face it unarmed means certain death. To-morrow, your captain and I will have revenge. Go back and tell him so."

Miserable at the vile action to which he had been a party, albeit against his will, Guillermo scarcely closed his eyes that night.

At break of day all the gang save one left the cave, and



Suddenly there was a flash of light; a ball whizzed past Fred's face. Losada quickly returned the fire.

then the bandit brought forth a bottle of brandy. Glass after glass he drank, and as the spirit fumes mounted to his head, he uttered oaths and threats that terrified the lad. At last the drunken bandit raised the bottle to his lips and drained its contents, then he fell back in a heavy sleep.

Guillermo knew the brigands would not be likely to return till night, and, even at risk of his life, determined to warn the matador of his peril.

He knew where his home was, and hurried towards it at his greatest speed. He was hesitating whether to knock at the door, when it was opened, and Inez stepped into the garden. In a few words Guillermo told her what had happened, and she at once ran in to beg Fred, who was still Losada's guest, to hasten to her brother's aid, while Guillermo fled back to the brigands' cave.

"Do not tell your mother of this," said Fred; "it will only needlessly alarm her. Will you have one of your brother's horses saddled, Dona Inez? Give me another of his swords. Not a moment must be lost."

A few moments later Fred was galloping towards the town, but ere he reached it he knew that the fight must be nearly

over. Springing from the panting horse, which he left in charge of a bystander, he gained admission to the plaza by means of the matador's pass, then a thrill of horror ran through him.

Standing fearlessly in the centre of the arena, Juan Losada faced an enormous bull, which, with lowered head, was charging at him. The next moment the brute was upon him. The matador's aim was true, but the weapon, scarcely piercing the thick hide, snapped at the hilt. The bull swerved, and Losada was hurled to the ground with terrible force.

Fortunately the brute passed over him, and Fred flung the fresh sword to the fallen matador. But Juan was stunned by the fall, and powerless to make a movement to save his life from a fresh attack.

Fred heard Alicia's shriek of terror, for she was amongst the spectators. He saw his helpless friend; then, bounding over the double barricade, the brave young Briton sprang to that comrade's side and seized the sword.

A horrified murmur arose from the spectators as the bull charged with mighty fury at Fred. With a steady nerve he awaited the awful rush; then, springing aside, plunged the weapon to the hilt into the fierce beast's breast, and as the monster fell to the earth in its death struggles, thunderous applause burst forth at the heroic action.

"My sword has been tampered with!" cried Juan, when he had somewhat recovered from the stunning fall.

"It has," replied Fred. "That villain Jose Benito, at Malo's instigation, filed it almost through."

"Then let the ruffian tremble when he meets me!" said Juan, "for I will surely avenge this villainy! Once more I owe my life to you, Fred. I am proud to own such a brave comrade."

Directly Jose Benito saw that his scheme had failed, and heard Fred's words of accusation, he fled in terror from the plaza; and it was well for him that he did so, for he would have received scant mercy at the infuriated spectators' hands.

Hurrying through the town, he made his way to the brigands' cave, to await Malo's arrival, for Benito did not dare to join the chief in the town, although he knew he was somewhere amongst the spectators.

The torreador had not proceeded far, however, when hurried footsteps behind caused him to turn in terror, but to his relief he discovered it was only the brigand chief.

"Once more that demon has escaped our grasp," exclaimed Malo. "But it makes little difference. I will have my vengeance first. Listen, Benito, I intend to carry off this girl Inez."

"When?"

"This very day. His house will be unprotected. But I need help. If you will help me I will reward you handsomely. The risk is not great. What say you?"

"I will do it," replied Benito. "I hate that Juan Losada. Come! we should lose no time, for he may be returning. Can you understand how that Englishman discovered what we had done?"

"No. He could only have guessed."

"It was no guess," replied Benito. "He knew, and that boy who brought the message must have told him."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Malo. "He could not have left the cave unless—Carrambo! if Dionisio has played me false I will have his life and Guillermo's! Ojala! that I had the villain here to question! But first, we will capture this girl."

Inez passed the day in an agony of suspense, and as the sun began to sink behind the hills, and no tidings came of her brother or the friend who had gone to his rescue, she left the house and walked down the lane along which she knew they would return.

She had reached a lonely spot, and was hesitating to go further, when Malo and the torreador stepped from behind some bushes.

"Buenas noches, senorita," said the brigand chief, stepping up to the terrified girl. Doubtless you have heard the name of Jaime Malo. It is seldom I make such a fair capture. No, no, my pretty bird! You are caught, and will soon be caged."

The ruffian had seized poor Inez's wrist, nor could she free herself from his powerful grip.

Again and again she cried for help, though there was little chance of her voice being heard at that lonely spot. Malo made a sign for Jose Benito to approach, but at that moment Inez heard the beat of a horse's hoofs, and she redoubled her cries for help. Nor were those cries unheard.

Fred had ridden back in advance of his friend to set Inez's fears at rest, and it was he who now came on the scene. He was carrying the sword with which he had saved his comrade's life.

Directly Malo caught sight of the horseman galloping towards him, he released the wrist of the terror-stricken girl, and, drawing a revolver, levelled it.

Twice he fired, and one of the balls grazed Fred's shoulder; then he lashed at the brigand with his sword, while Benito was hurled to the ground by the charging horse.

Directly Malo saw his accomplice fall he sprang into the bushes, firing as he fled. Fred leapt from his saddle, and, drawing a revolver, gave chase, as it was impossible to follow on horseback over the rugged ground; but he had not proceeded far when he lost sight of the brigand chief, who had little difficulty in effecting his escape amongst the dense undergrowth.

Fearful for Inez, Fred hastened back to the pathway; and now Benito sprang to his feet, and, drawing a long knife, faced his foe.

The torreador crouched like some fierce beast, then suddenly he leapt forward and struck with a movement as rapid as a tiger's. But Fred was no novice in the use of the sword. With an upward cut he met Benito's descending arm. The knife dropped to the ground, and the torreador's wounded arm fell helplessly to his side. Then Fred levelled his revolver at the villain's breast.

"Mercy!" gasped Benito. "Spare my life!"

"You would-be murderer!" replied Fred sternly. "If ever men deserved death, you and your cowardly accomplice are they!"

"Only spare my life," murmured Benito, "and I will place that coward who has deserted me in your power!"

"I make no compact with such as you!" answered Fred sternly. "If I spare your vile life it is because I cannot strike a disabled man, however great a villain he may be. Walk along that pathway in front of me. Attempt to escape, and you will meet your death! Thank heaven I came in time, Dona Inez," he added, in a lowered voice. "Your brave brother is safe. He wished me to ride on to tell you so."

Inez tried to speak, but Fred did not hear her words. For a moment her eyes met his, and a great joy filled his heart.

Leading the horse they proceeded towards Losada's home, and Benito's wounded arm having been bound up, he was made a prisoner in one of the cellars. Then Inez told her mother what had happened.

CHAPTER 6.

THE SENTENCE OF DEATH—THE PRISONER'S RELEASE—ATTACKING THE BRIGANDS' CAVE—GUILLERMO'S HISTORY—THE MATADOR'S SECRET.

It was nearly midnight ere Malo ventured near his lair. He glanced round and saw that the drunken brigand whom he had left in charge and Guillermo were there.

"Did you leave the cave to-day, Dionisio?" the chief demanded, in a voice tremulous with the passion he strove to conceal.

"No; that I did not!"

"I think you have been drinking again. You are half drunk now."

"I merely took a little aguardiente, capitan."

"Just so," retorted Malo. "And while you slept your drunken sleep that boy went out. Is it not so, Guillermo?"

"Yes," replied the lad, lowering his eyes before the chief's fierce gaze.

"And you warned that Englishman about the sword?" said Malo. "Speak, you little demon! Bah! it is not necessary for you to speak. I see the answer in your face."

"Dionisio," the chief added, taking down a loaded rifle.

"you have been false to your trust, and that falseness is likely to cost the lives of some of us. You are dangerous. Sooner or later you will bring the soldiers upon us. That shall not be. It is a moonlight night. You will find your way along the pass."

"Mercy!" cried the wretched man, trembling at the expression he saw in his chief's eyes. "Have mercy!"

"Go!" replied Malo.

"It shall be the last time, I swear!" murmured the brigand.

"I swear it shall!" cried Malo. "Go!"

The wretched man slowly left the cave. Malo followed, cocking his rifle as he went. The brigand had not taken many steps along the narrow pathway when he turned.

Malo's rifle was levelled at him. The report of the rifle rang out. Dionisio staggered backwards, then, falling over the precipice, his cry of terror and despair echoed round the crags.

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chapters of
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"Now, listen to me, boy," said Malo, unmoved by the awful deed he had just committed. "You have proved yourself a traitor."

"I could not let the matador be killed," murmured the lad. "You have certainly saved his life for the time being," continued the brigand chief, "but it is at the cost of your own life."

"Don't kill me!" cried the terrified boy. "Pray, don't take my life!"

"You shall live—till to-morrow morning," said the ruffian. "At break of day you will be hurled over the precipice. Now go and prepare our supper."

As soon as the terrified boy had got the meal, Malo bound his legs and arms, and left him lying in the corner of the cavern.

Juan Losada did not return home until late that night, and when he had listened to Inez's story he, accompanied by Fred, went into the cellar where Benito was confined.

"You pitiful scoundrel!" exclaimed the matador. "Are you not content with attempting my life, but you must try to harm an innocent girl. Far from ever having wronged you, Jose Benito, I have befriended you. When you were in wait I was not deaf to your pleading. Yet you turn on me like the vicious beast you are. You miserable cur! You would bite the hand that has fed you!"

"Curse you! I hate you!" hissed Benito.

"Yes, you coward!" cried Juan. "You hate me for no cause but jealousy!"

"You would not dare to speak thus were I free," said Benito. "You fear me."

"Fear you!" exclaimed Juan. "Ha, ha! That is too amusing. See!" he added, stepping towards the torreador and severing his bonds. "Now you are free; but verdaderamente! I do not feel the fear. Go, you contemptible coward! Get out of my sight! But I warn you, beware how you show your face in this part, for if the people once lay hands on you, your death is certain!"

"Have you acted rightly, Juan?" inquired Fred, as Benito slunk away. "Would it not have been wiser to hand the villain over to justice?"

"I did not wish Inez's name to be dragged into the affair," replied Juan. "Jose Benito is a dangerous tool, but without Malo he will be harmless. Besides, he is badly wounded. I fancy he will leave this part, for woe betide him if he falls into the hands of the populace. Now, Fred, I have got such information as I believe will enable me to track Jaime Malo to his lair. As I was leaving the Plaza de los Toros to-day, a peasant brought in news that he had seen a number of men climbing on to a ledge of rocks which he supposed led to their lurking-place. To-night, this man has promised to lead my torreadores and myself to the spot."

"Then, Juan, I shall come with you," said Fred. "I mean to be one of the party to punish that ruffian's villainy."

"Bien, amigo mio!" replied Juan. "You will run much danger, but— Well, I think neither you nor I will fear to face it. Not a word of this to my mother or Inez. We will start in one hour from now. I have arranged to meet my torreadores on the mountain side."

When the two friends reached the appointed spot, the torreadores fully armed were there awaiting them. The moon had risen, but from time to time heavy clouds obscured its light. However, the peasant easily found his way to the spot where, on a previous occasion, Juan had lost sight of the brigand chief, and, looking over the height, the matador saw the narrow ledge beneath.

Directing his followers to maintain absolute silence, Juan lowered himself on to the pathway; Fred was the next to follow, then came the rest. There was a heavy wind blowing, and this concealed the slight sound which they made.

Juan had not proceeded far, when against the face of the rocks he saw the sentry's form. The man's back was towards him. The brigand was evidently trying to listen to the conversation of those in the cave. Motioning to Fred to remain still, Juan crept towards his foe. He knew that were the brigand to give the alarm, the result would be disastrous to the torreadores. A volley fired into their midst along that perilous pathway would inevitably prove fatal.

Suddenly Juan leapt upon the sentry. With one hand he gripped his neck, with the other he held his sword at his heart.

"Utter a sound, and you die!" he said, in a low, stern voice.

"Mercy!" gasped the sentry, clutching the sword which was pricking his breast.

"Silence, then!" replied Juan. "Throw your weapons down! Quick!"

The terrified man obeyed the stern command, then the matador forced him down against the rocks, and ordered him to lie there at pain of death; and now Juan and his comrades passed silently on. They reached the cave, and stood at the

entrance of the inner one with weapons levelled at the brigand band.

"Surrender!" cried Juan.

Malo sprang to his feet, and, dashing out the light, fired. Then shots and the clash of steel rang out. The brigands fought like fierce beasts at bay. Into the blackness pistols and rifles flashed, while the oaths and cries of the wounded were terrible. For several minutes the dreadful conflict raged; then the brigands, completely taken by surprise, flung down their weapons, and begged for the mercy which they themselves never showed.

"Strike a light, then!" ordered Juan, withdrawing his men

into the outer cave. "Remember, if there is a sign of treachery, we shall fire on you. Now, come forth, one by one."

At first the ruffians hesitated, but at sight of Juan's levelled revolver they presently obeyed, and as each man came out he was seized and bound with cords the torreadores had brought for the purpose.

Juan and Fred scanned each fierce face as the brigands came forth; but Malo the chief was not amongst them.

The two friends entered the inner cave, and, glancing round, saw the lad Guillermo lying on the floor.

"Did you come to warn me of my danger?" inquired Juan, severing his bonds.

"Yes! They are going to kill me for it," replied Guillermo.

"Have no fear," said the matador. "The miscreants are all captured. All save Malo the chief. Was he in the cave?"

"Yes."

"Then it is very strange how he can have escaped!" exclaimed Juan, holding a torch above his head, and looking round the place.

Meantime, Fred had stepped up to Guillermo, and looked earnestly in his face.

"How did you come here amongst these brigands?" inquired Fred eagerly.

"Malo brought me here many years ago."

"What is your name besides Guillermo?"

"They have never told me. They only said that perhaps one day I should be set free if some money was paid; but if I attempted to escape I should be killed. I was riding in a carriage with an old man, when it was stopped, I think, by Malo, and some shots were fired. The old man said he was taking me to my father, who lived in some foreign country, and who was very ill."

"Do you understand what I am saying now?" inquired Fred, addressing the boy in English.

"Yes. I came from England; but it is many years ago."

"Did the old man call you Willie?"

"Yes; but these men always call me Guillermo."

"It is the Spanish for William," answered Fred. "That is your real name. That old man you were travelling with was your uncle, and doubtless he met his death at these miscreants' hands. I was travelling in foreign lands in those days, Willie, seeking a fortune at the goldfields. I received a letter from my father—it was the last he ever wrote—telling me that you had mysteriously disappeared, and imploring me never to give up the search until I had found you. For years my search was in vain, but I had gained wealth at the goldfields, and was able to continue the search. At last I traced you to this country."

"But who are you?" inquired Willie, looking earnestly in the young man's handsome face.

"I am your brother, Fred Stanley. Thank Heaven, I never gave up hope!"

"You are right, Fred!" cried Juan, grasping Willie's hand. "The likeness between you is striking. He has your eyes, and the same bold heart. I owe my life to you two, and that debt of gratitude shall never be forgotten."

"I may soon put your words to the test, Juan," said Fred, smiling.

"Then it is as I hoped," replied the matador. "I think I can guess your secret, and now you shall know mine. Alicia is my wife. I have kept this secret, for between you and me, my popularity as a matador would not be so great were it known that I was married. However, Alicia and Inez have made me promise never to enter the Plaza de los Toros again, and I shall keep my word. But we will speak of this later on. First we must hand our prisoners over to justice. Jaime Malo has in some mysterious way made his escape, but I have hopes yet of catching the ruffian."

And as day was breaking the brigand band were safely lodged

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The report of Malo's rifle rang out, and Dioniso staggered backwards and fell over the precipice

in gaol; then Fred and his little brother accompanied Juan to his home.

After a good rest that night, Juan, without mentioning his destination to anyone, proceeded towards the brigand's cave in the hope of capturing Jaime Malo, who he believed would in all probability seek shelter there to secure any treasure that might be concealed.

CHAPTER 7.

A FIGHT IN THE DARK—JUAN LOSADA AND THE BRIGAND CHIEF MEET FACE TO FACE.

Jose Benito, when released by Losada, had spent the night on which the brigands were captured on the mountain side, and all the next day he remained in concealment; then, as night came on, and he felt the pangs of hunger, he determined to seek the brigand's cave, knowing he would obtain food and shelter there.

It was raining when he reached the spot, while the night was intensely dark, and, believing this to be the reason why the sentry was not at his usual post, Benito groped his way cautiously along the narrow pathway. Presently his foot struck against something, and, bending down, he found it was a loaded revolver, which one of the brigands had dropped.

For some moments Benito remained listening, and hearing no sound, he crept into the cave. The darkness in the inner cavern which he entered was intense, nor had he any means of obtaining a light. But he knew the place well, and also where the brigands' hoard was concealed. A sudden thought occurred to him. Why should he not obtain possession of this, and fly from the country. This thought made him forget his hunger and the pain of his wound.

"I am your comrade, Jose Benito," he said aloud. "Is any one here?"

No answer came, and the miscreant groped his way to the further corner of the cavern. Feeling about he removed a heavy boulder, then his trembling hands touched the jewels which the gang had stolen and concealed there, awaiting an opportunity to dispose of them.

He had filled his pockets with the valuables, when a slight movement at his back sent a thrill of terror through his cowardly heart.

"You traitor!" cried a voice, which, to his horror, he recognised as Jaime Malo's, the brigand chief. "Not content with having brought those villains on my track, you would rob me of

my hoard. Your time has come, Jose Benito. You shall never leave this cave alive."

"Beware! I am armed!" cried the ruffian fiercely. "It was not I who revealed your hiding-place. Indeed, I know nothing about it, Malo."

"Mentiro!" hissed the chief. "Let that repay your villainy!"

A red flash darted towards the cringing wretch, a bullet grazed his cheek, and as the pistol-shot burst forth, Benito uttered a cry of terror. But he returned the shot. Then in terrible suspense he waited for some sound to guide his aim.

Three more shots were fired at him, one of which wounded him badly; then, knowing the brigand chief would only have one more shot, and determined that he should not have an opportunity of reloading, Benito fired again.

A terrible cry was followed by a heavy fall.

"You have killed me!" gasped Malo, in a feeble voice.

Benito sprang towards the exit to the cave, then he was seized by the throat. Malo, who had only feigned to be wounded, fired his last shot, and his accomplice fell lifeless at his feet.

Quickly striking a light, the brigand chief, without the slightest sign of compunction, commenced to search the pockets of the wretched man.

Suddenly Malo started up. Footsteps sounded outside. The brigand sprang to a narrow opening where, on a previous occasion, he had concealed himself, and tried to close the slab of stone which swung to on a pivot hinge; but before he could do so, Juan Losada had seized him.

Malo tried to draw his knife, for his revolver was empty; but Juan gripped him round the body with a strength that nearly crushed his ribs. There was a fierce struggle, then the brigand chief was hurled to the rocky floor with a force that almost stunned him, and before he could rise Juan's knee was on his heaving breast.

Drawing some cord from his pocket, the young matador bound his captor's arms behind his back, while Malo was so dazed that he was only able to offer the feeblest resistance.

"Listen to me, Juan Losada!" he panted. "I have treasure that would make you immensely rich. Release me, and let me go free, then this wealth is yours!"

"You miserable wretch!" replied Juan. "Do you think I would touch your ill-gotten hoard, except to return it to the rightful owners; and not for all the gold in the world would I leave such a vicious wretch as you to prey on your fellow-creatures! Robber and murderer, your hour has come! Make the best of the few days of life that remain to you to repent for your life of crime. Come!"

"To where?"

"To the gaol, and thence to your death!"

At first Malo refused to move, but Juan took down the whip with which poor Willie had so often been chastised, and with this the matador drove his captive to the gaol; while the news that the brigand chief had been captured spread swiftly through the town.

Captain Diego Romano was one of the first to hear this—to him—startling news, and he at once hastened to the gaol.

"Glad to see you, capitán," exclaimed the governor. "We shall want a file of your men shortly. The brigands' trial will be held in private. Merely a matter of form, you know. Their sentence is already passed. They are to be shot—a far more merciful death than they gave some of their victims."

"I should like to see this brigand chief," said Romano. "Can you leave me alone in the cell with him? I may be able to obtain a full confession."

"Certainly! Come this way. He is securely chained, but I will lock you in for, say, ten minutes. Here is a lantern."

"So you have come?" muttered Malo, who was chained to a large iron ring in the wall. "It is well for you that you have done so. If I die, your death, Diego Romano, will shortly follow. I have letters from you which will suffice to incriminate you. Before I die I will reveal where these are hidden, and prove how you have connived at my escape and shared the plunder."

"What would you have me do?" inquired Romano, in a low voice.

"Set me at liberty."

"Impossible! It does not rest with me. It is only through influence with the governor that I obtained admission to-night. Why should you try to harm me?"

"For vengeance!"

"I have never harmed you."

"Because you dared not. You were in my power, as were all the rest of my tools."

"Listen, Malo. Your trial will take place to-morrow," said Romano. "You and your followers will be sentenced to be shot. My men will be told off for the execution. Now I will give them orders not to fire at you. Pretend to fall with the rest, then trust to me to effect your escape."

"Do you take me for a fool, Diego Romano?" exclaimed Malo. "Don't I know that your orders would be to put a

bullet through my heart, so that you might escape my revenge?"

"Hush! the warder is coming," whispered Romano.

"Let him come. I am reckless. Unless you release me before the trial you shall share my fate."

"I will try," replied Romano, motioning for silence.

In a state of terror the captain made his way back to his rooms. Only one course was open to him—to fly from the country.

"What is it, fellow?" he demanded, as his orderly entered the room.

"Senor el capitan," replied the man, saluting, as he carefully closed the door. "You directed me to discover more about that lady, Dona Alicia. You did not even know her name, now I have discovered it. She is the Senora Alicia Losada."

"What! Speak, fellow!"

"She is the matador's bride."

"You lie! You hound, you lie!"

"Es verdad, capitan. To-morrow early she is to be driven to her husband's home, and he is to meet her halfway. The carriage is already hired. The driver is a friend of mine."

"Escucha! Is that man to be depended on?"

"Yes; unless anyone bribes him."

"Give him these hundred pesetas," said Romano. "You take his place as driver. You know where the two roads cross? Just this side there is a clump of trees. Stop there. I shall be in hiding, and shall enter the carriage. Then you will take the road that leads away from Losada's home, and I will instruct you how to proceed."

"And my reward, capitan?"

"Another hundred pesetas. Two hundred if we get clear away. Here are fifty as an earnest."

Early the following morning the beautiful Alicia entered the carriage which was waiting at her door, and, never dreaming of harm, was driven swiftly along the country road.

They had reached the spot which Romano had indicated, when the driver, pretending something had gone wrong with one of the horses, dismounted. At that moment Romano sprang from the side of the road, and jumped into the carriage.

Alicia uttered a cry of terror, but the villain took no heed of this.

"Quick!" he shouted to the driver, who was scrambling into his seat. "That demon Losada is upon us!"

The man turned to look, and, running along the lane at their utmost speed, appeared the matador and his comrade Fred.

Romano, who was armed with a rifle, levelled it at the man whom he hated, and fired. Terrified at the shot, the horses plunged forward, the driver missed his footing and fell to the ground, and as the horses dashed forward, the wheel passed over the driver's legs.

Romano leant over to try and grasp the reins, and, as he did so, Alicia sprang from the carriage to fall into a clump of bushes at the side of the narrow roadway; and by the time that her husband had reached the spot, she had risen to her feet unharmed.

Meantime the carriage was dashing on at a terrible speed, and swaying from side to side. Romano could not grasp the reins, and even if he had been able to do so, he could never have checked the furious pace of the terrified horses. On, on they tore, and a cold perspiration broke out upon Diego Romano's brow. Further on, the road skirted the brink of an awful precipice. What might his fate be when the maddened, plunging horses reached that dangerous spot! Again he essayed to clutch the reins, and, failing in this, he set up a loud shrieking for help, which served only to increase the terror of the horses.

Fred Stanley ran for some distance in pursuit of the runaway team, but, fleet of foot as he was, he could not overtake the swiftly-moving carriage.

A few mornings later the warders entered Jaime Malo's dreary dungeon, and led the brigand chief into the prison yard,



The toreador crouched like some fierce beast; then suddenly he leapt forward and struck with a movement as rapid as a tiger's.

where the rest of his miserable confederates were drawn up in line; some cringing and moaning, others fierce and defiant. Among these latter was Jaime Malo. His fierce face was deathly white, but by no other sign did he show the terror he must have felt.

Presently the tramp of feet was heard. The officer's stern commands rang out. Steadily the soldiers drew up in line in front of the wretched criminals.

"Ready! Present! Fire!"

Two volleys burst forth, and all was over.

CHAPTER 8.

THE WOOING OF INEZ—AN UNEXPECTED ATTACK BY DIEGO ROMANO—THE BRIGAND'S LAST THREAT FULFILLED—CONCLUSION.

The summer sun was pouring his golden light upon the flower-clad earth. The air was sweet with rich perfume. With lowered eyes Inez stood before Fred Stanley, listening to his earnest words.

Suddenly her beautiful eyes were raised, she was clasped in his arms, her lips met his, and Inez's tale of love was told.

But in a moment more a look of startled fear leapt into her lovely eyes. Uttering a low cry, she pushed Fred quickly to one side.

Just in the nick of time!

A man with his hand upraised, and in that hand a long knife that glittered in the sunlight, had crept stealthily forward to where the lovers stood. Had Inez acted less promptly the knife would have been sheathed in Stanley's heart. As it was, the would-be murderer leapt backward with an oath, and then made off at top speed, but not before his intended victim had recognised him.

"Captain Romano!" cried Fred. Then, with a hurried word to Inez to await his return, he dashed after the traitorous captain. What could the latter's object have been in thus treacherously seeking his life? Time would show. For the present, Fred's sole idea was to overtake the murderous Spaniard and see that he was brought to justice, not only for

his attempt to murder, but also for his treatment of Juan Losada's wife.

"Stop, or I fire!" he cried, as the captain cleared a clump of bushes and started at top pace along a stretch of open ground beyond. And Fred drew out a revolver.

A derisive laugh was the only answer. But the captain's flight was destined to be cut short in a manner little expected by him or his pursuer. From a road directly ahead of them came the sound of the measured tread of a body of men—evidently soldiers or police on the march.

As if he had received a sudden violent blow, the captain halted and staggered backward. Then he turned and made a sudden retreat towards cur hero, his eyes blazing with a madman's fury.

"They have come to arrest me!" he cried fiercely—"me, Captain Diego Romano! My letters to Malo the brigand have been found and all is discovered! Stand aside, Englishman, or caramba, my knife will not fail me a second time!"

"Stop!" cried Fred Stanley, levelling his revolver. "Come an inch nearer and I fire! So, now tell me, why did you attack me just now?"

At sight of Fred's revolver and his set, stern face, Romano began to whine and whimper like the coward he truly was.

"I wanted only to overpower you, in order to change clothes with you, senor, and so escape the hounds who are now upon my track. Hark! they come! Let me pass, senor, for the love of Heaven!"

The armed police were indeed near at hand. Their leader was within a few paces of the fugitive captain as Romano spoke.

A shudder ran through the traitor's frame as he looked around him and saw that every avenue of escape was closed. Rapidly—so rapidly that Fred had no time to stop him—he drew out his knife and plunged it to the hilt in his guilty heart. And thus he died before the eyes of the officers of justice come to arrest him—a coward to the last.

A startled cry from behind recalled Fred to thoughts of Inez. The girl had followed him, alarmed at his long delay. Tenderly the young Briton led her away from the distressing sight—away to a new and happier life.

THE END.

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WRITE THE NAME OF THE COUNTRY UNDER EACH FIGURE.



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Readers who are trying for our prizes in this competition may now pin their sets of pictures together, enclose them in an envelope, and address them to—

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31..... 32..... 33.....



34..... 35..... 36.....

"The Sign of the Scarlet Cross,"

By CLAUD HEATHCOTE,
Starts in Next Friday's "UNION JACK."



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INTRODUCTION.

Will Wynn escapes from the clutches of Sleuth Slymer and Dicky Neave, and reaches the Temple of Matchless Mirth. On hearing Will's story, the mob go in search of the two kidnappers. They tar and feather Neave; Slymer escapes.

Grix, out of revenge, fires Spangler's Circus, which is burnt to the ground.

CHAPTER 20.**WILL WYNN AND PAT FLANNIGAN ENCOUNTER THE POET AND THE PAINTER.**

When Will awoke, to find himself cosily tucked away in bed, it was well past midday. The others had departed for the fair; but the professor had not wished to disturb him, and had left a message that he was to follow or not as he felt inclined. In spite of the disturbance of the night before, most of the shows and booths were in working order again. Hundreds thronged round the blackened and charred spot where once had been Spangler's Circus.

Will still felt tired, and was so stiff that it was painful to move. But he was not the sort of lad to shirk work, and he quickly dressed himself with the intention of going to the temple. He was just about to leave, when there was a knock at the door, and he heard a voice, Irish in accent, inquiring for him. Hurrying down, he found Pat Flannigan below.

"I heard ye were safe!" cried Pat; "but I wanted to see ye wid my own eyes to make shure. And, faith, I'm sartin now!"

Will welcomed him heartily, and again thanked him for his past assistance.

"And how are things at the Beetle and Whistle?" he asked.

Pat's eyes twinkled.

"Shure, an' it's more like a china-shop after a bull's been inside than anything else I can think of. And Dicky Neave's at the police-station, and will be charged for snakin' ye—that is, as soon as they've scraped him clane of tar and feathers. They daren't bring him up before the magistrates till he's claned a bit, lest he should scare them out of their minds. That's about all, savin' that I've left the Beetle and Whistle for ever and a day!"

"You have, Pat? And what are you going to do about the future?"

"Sure I don't know! But no more Beetle and Whistle for me!"

And Pat, a look of perplexity on his face, vigorously scratched his flaming locks.

"Look here, Pat, you come along with me to Professor Romah. He's a little short of hands at present. He wants someone behind the curtain to lend a hand in the mechanical changes, work the scenery, look to the lights, and so on. Now how would you like to take on the work. It is work, too, let me tell you!"

Pat's face went as red as his hair at the prospect.

"Oh, bejabbers, but it's too grand to think of!" he said. "Me, perhaps, rolling up the curtain, and making thunder and lightning, and magic mystery!"

And Pat's face—he had led a dog's life in the past—became one huge grin of delight.

Byron Jones, the poet, had, like everyone else, heard of the Witty One's return. He was inwardly greatly annoyed thereat. For, in spite of his recent ignominious failure, he had still intended to pay his attentions to Ada when Sharp and Tommy Perch were not in the near neighbourhood. But when he heard of Will's return, he deemed it wiser to give the fair a wide berth.

Fast and thick as recent adventures had crowded upon Will, he had not forgotten Byron Jones, and moreover, since his escape, Ada had told him of how the poet and his friend the painter had further molested her. Naturally he was more indignant than ever.

Now, Byron Jones did not know where Professor Romah lodged, otherwise, perhaps, he would not have been sauntering down that particular street, his arm languidly linked in that of Angelo Simpkins.

"Quite a common little gutter snipe!" he was saying, as he puffed away at a cigarette. Five of them a-penny, and a coloured picture thrown in. "Angelo, I trust I shall not meet him. To chastise him would be to lower my dignity!"

The door of one of the houses opened, and Will Wynn, followed by Pat Flannigan, stepped into the street.

"Oh, bejabbers!" said Pat, in a low voice; "but what in the name of the sun is this coming towards us? Begorra! but they ought to be taken home and slapped for making such Guy Fawkes's of themselves!"

Then he noticed that Will's face had lightened up in a curious sort of way.

"What, d'ye know them? I'm trustin' I've said nothing offensive about friends of yours!"

"Not friends," said Will; "but I'm going to have a word with one of them. Don't you go, Pat; I may want you to see fair play!"

When Byron Jones saw who it was advancing towards him he had changed colour. But it was impossible to avoid Will, and he determined to brazen matters out as best he could. Tilting his nose in the air, and with a look of supreme contempt, he walked straight on, and would have passed him. But Will stopped dead in front of him, while Pat Flannigan found himself face to face with Angelo Simpkins.

"I'm glad to meet you again," said Will quietly. "I was unable to meet you behind the circus-tent, but we can fix upon some place now, perhaps. I'm all the more anxious because you've been ungentlemanly enough to again interfere with Lanetta."

"And maybe," said Pat, "ye'll be after loikin' to attempt to tread on the tail of my coat!"

"You rude person," said Angelo Simpkins, "I don't know what you mean. Come, Byron, don't let us bandy words with this ruffian!"

Pat took a backward step, again alluded to the tails of his coat, and began to turn up the cuffs of his sleeve. But Will stopped him.

"No, Pat, this is nothing to do with you. It's my business!"

"Pish!" said Byron Jones, "let me pass. I do not fight with persons beneath me!"

Will's eyes flashed indignantly.

"Then let me tell you that you are a coward!"

"And it's myself that seconds that remark!" chimed in Pat, renewing his attentions to the cuffs of his sleeves.

Byron Jones was not endowed with overmuch courage; but after Will's remark it was impossible to get out of fighting. He had turned white with rage.

"THE SIGN OF THE SCARLET CROSS" Begins in Next Friday's
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"Very well, you vulgar little brute, I know a place where we sha'n't be interrupted."

Byron Jones and his friend went first; Pat and Will followed them.

"D'ye think ye can lick him?" whispered Pat.

Will eyed the back of his opponent. Byron Jones might be lanky and loosely put together, but he was older, and half a head taller than Will.

"I don't know, Pat; I shall do my best. And if he does lick me, there'll be no disgrace in being licked by a fellow bigger than myself."

"And if he does, why, it's wid me he'll have to settle up afterwards."

Having passed out of the town, the quartette entered a field by the roadside. A few moments later, Will and Byron Jones, coats and waistcoats stripped off, shirt-sleeves upturned, faced one another.

Will, remembering Jim Butler's encounter with Joe Grix, determined to adopt similar tactics.

The poet, who was looking singularly uneasy, had struck an exaggerated attitude of self-defence. Will began to circle round him, with the purpose of drawing his attack.

Then the poet closed his eyes, rushed forward to where he had seen Will last standing, and slogged out blindly—to batter space, and nothing more. The next moment he had opened his eyes with a roar of pain. Will had got one home on his nose, and was well away again. But, unfortunately, owing to his mishaps of the day before, he was still very stiff, and could not move with his usual agility. When Byron Jones, with a screech, bore down upon him, he dodged, but was not quite quick enough; the poet locked his arms and legs round him, and the next instant the pair of them were rolling over on the ground.

"Go it, Byron!" cried the painter.

Pat was dancing, in his excitement, an Irish reel, and was shouting out incoherent encouragement to Will.

Another turn, and Will was underneath, and the poet sitting on his chest.

"Let him get up, you varmint!" shouted Pat; "that's not fightin'!"

But the poet had got the momentary advantage, and cared nothing for fair-play. With one hand he clutched Will's throat; he drew back the other to hit him in the face.

"Stop that!" roared Pat.

"Let 'em fight it out!" shrieked Angelo Simpkins.

Pat had rushed forward to interfere. Angelo Simpkins had rushed forward to prevent him interfering. They met mid-way.

But Byron Jones did not get his cowardly blow home. Even as his clenched fist descended, Will, with a tremendous effort, gave a sudden jerk, and the poet went flying over his head. Both of them were on their feet again at almost precisely the same moment. And Will, his eyes ablaze with indignation, made straight for the poet, and set about in a truly workman-like style.

But, in the meantime, a second fight had started. Pat Flannigan was pummelling the painter for all he was worth. A smack in the eye, and Angelo Simpkins had had more than enough. He had even less grit in him than his companion. Turning tail, he bolted madly across the field, Pat after him.

"Wait till I get to ye!" he shouted. "I'll tache ye, I'll larn ye, ye miserable spalpeen of a coward!"

The painter only quickened his pace, his heart filled with terror. Before him was a low, thick-set hedge. He took a flying leap, and cleared it. Then there was a splash. He had not realised that there was a pond on the other side till he found himself up to his neck in icy-cold water.

Pat, forewarned by the splash, had not followed him. He thrust his red head over the hedge, and grinned down at the painter. Then his grin widened as an ominous bellow came from the field, and from out a herd of cattle grazing there emerged a thick-set, powerful-looking bull that, attracted by the splash, evidently intended to find out what had happened. Reaching the edge of the pond, the animal lashed its tail and bellowed again. Whether it was the presence of the shivering painter in the pond or Pat's carroty head that annoyed him cannot be said, but the bull was in no amiable mood.

"I'll lave ye for a while," said Pat, "and come back again in ten minutes' toime and see how ye're gettin' on!"

When Pat returned to Will, he found the boy-clown standing over Byron Jones, who was on his knees, utterly beaten, and a sad spectacle to behold.

"Now, you understand," Will was saying, "don't you ever attempt to annoy the Gipsy Queen again. And when you get home, write a letter to her apologising for your conduct."

"Yes!" whimpered Byron Jones, mopping his nose, "an ode of contrition in blank verse!"

"Never mind the blank verse. Come, Pat, let's be getting back. Hallo! what's become of the other fellow?"

Pat winked.

"He's coolin' himself in a pond on the other side of the hedge. And I'm thinkin' we'll leave him there!"

Then the two lads, leaving the field, made their way back towards the market-place. As they were walking along a cab drove past them. Will got a momentary glance of its occupants. He gave a sudden start—almost of terror.

"What's amiss?" asked Pat in astonishment.

Will had turned pale. As the cab had passed he had caught a glimpse of the cruel, bird-like features of Mr. Copples, Ada Graham's guardian.

"Quick!" he cried, "we must get back at once!"

"What had brought Copples to Nottingham?" was the question that rushed through Will's brain as he neared the market-place, Pat Flannigan at his heels.

As a matter of fact, Copples, always suspicious, was not altogether satisfied with the way in which Sleuth Slymer had been conducting his business. He had not as yet heard of Will's return, and Slymer's invention that Will had been kidnapped by some powerful individuals who knew something about his origin had filled him with uneasiness. He had determined to see for himself how matters were shaping. Moreover, Slymer had thrown out some vague hints that he knew something of the whereabouts of Ada Graham. The old miser was shrewd; if Slymer had obtained tidings of his ward, it must have been at Nottingham. This was an additional reason for him to visit the place. Thanks to the cab, he reached the market-place some time before Will.

Almost the first thing he heard was the news of Will's escape. He grimly chuckled. If the lad fell into his hands, he would not escape so easily. He was thinking of that strange room in his house, the room with the graven cabinet, into which Dan Dugger, the murderous hireling, had entered, never to leave.

Copples made his way towards the Temple of Magic Mirth. He stared at the little group on the platform, but the Witty One was not there. Then he went round to the side-show, where stood Tommy Perch the orator proclaiming the marvellous powers of Lanetta, the gipsy queen.

"Hi, hi, hi! Young and old, dark and fair, false and faithful ones, step this way! Did a black cat cross your path? Then consult Lanetta, and she'll tell you what it means. Sixpence only! Think of that! For the miserable, contemptible sum of sixpence it is possible to obtain a glimpse into the future. You there, sir, don't miss this opportunity!"

And the orator appealed to the miser Copples. Slowly he dived his hands into his pockets and grudgingly counted out sixpennyworth of coppers. Then he passed into the little tent.

Ada was sitting at her little table, the cards spread out before her. She glanced up. A little cry of terror escaped her lips as her eyes fell on the miser's evil, bird-like face. His appearance had been so sudden, so unexpected.

And that cry had betrayed her.

Copples fixed his cruel eyes upon her with the cold, fascinating stare of a serpent. Then, creeping up to her, clutched her wrist in his talon-like grip. So malignant was his look of triumph that Ada's tongue clove to the roof of her mouth. She was too terrified now even to cry out.

"So I've found you at last!" he hissed. "Masquerading as Lanetta, degrading yourself and your name by associating with vulgar show-people. This is the way you show your gratitude for all my kindness to you. The first time I saw you your dusky skin and dyed hair deceived me, but this time it's no good, Ada Graham, and when I go out of this tent you go with me. Don't give me any trouble, or I shall be obliged to call in the police. I am your guardian."

Ada shuddered. She felt she was powerless. He was legally within his rights. She must go back to that horrible, lonely house, where she had lived in perpetual terror, watched and spied upon by the horrible old creature who still gripped her wrist, and by his cunning servant, Joe Swilley.

Will had reached the show. Instinctively he hurried towards Ada's tent.

"Anyone inside?" he asked Tommy Perch.

"Yes, an old boy, who looks like a mixture of a tomat and a crow!"

That was enough. Will knew that Copples was within. He entered, followed by Pat Flannigan. Copples turned sharply round.

"Get out!" he croaked. "I don't want any interference." He glared at Will as if he would have liked to have murdered him then and there. "And take care, young man, take care. You've been a party to this vile plot to abduct a ward in Chancery, and the law may have something to say to you!"

Will's heart sank within him. He felt that he could do nothing. The law was on Copples' side.

He looked at Ada's white and scared face. The very sight of it made him feel desperate. Could nothing be done to keep her out of that horrible old man's clutches. For a moment he felt tempted to rush out of the tent, summon together some of his friends, and bodily carry her off. And yet to do so might only

cause more harm than good. It cut him to the quick to see Ada's eyes bent appealingly upon him.

Meantime, Tommy Perch, overcome with curiosity, had thrust his head into the tent, and had heard enough to deem it wise to fetch Professor Romah.

"I shall bring an action against all of you!" cried Copples, when the professor entered; "I shall get heavy damages out of you. My ward returns with me now. You're all a pack of rascals!"

"Look here," said Professor Romah, "just you moderate your language, or I'll run the risk of a forty-bob fine for assault, and punch your head for you!"

Copples snarled like an angry animal, but did not indulge in any more insulting remarks.

"Put on your hat and cloak," he said to Ada; "you don't stay here another minute!"

And he glared round at the others with a malicious grin of triumph, knowing well that they could not interfere.

Ada burst into tears. In a moment Will had sprung to her side. Pat Flannigan, not knowing exactly what everything was about, but nevertheless determined to stand by Will, edged alongside him.

"Cheer up, Ada," said Will, taking her hands in his own; "and if he"—with a glance at Copples—"is cruel and unkind to you, perhaps the law, about which he talks so much, will be able to give you protection. He may be your guardian, but the law does not give a guardian the right to ill-treat his ward!"

"Hold your tongue!" snapped Copples furiously, "you little ragamuffin, who earn coppers by rolling on your back in dirty sawdust—hold your tongue!"

Will fired up.

"All right, Mr. Copples; it may not be high art, but I'd rather earn my little bit that way than do the dirty tricks that some folk are capable of!"

"Saints and glory!" chimed in Pat, feeling bound to support Will, "and I'm wid ye in that sentiment."

The miser was too enraged to speak. Rushing to the entrance of the tent, he waited till a policeman, who was moving in his direction, drew near, and beckoned him. The moment Copples had turned his back, Will quickly whispered:

"Ada, my dear, you'll have to go. I'm so awfully sorry. But cheer up. I shall find a way to see you and write to you. Leave it to me."

He could say no more. The policeman entered the tent. Copples drew out certain documents, and showed them to him.

"That seems right enough," said the constable, pretending to look as if he thoroughly understood them. "You're the gal's guardian, and if any of these people interfere with you, I'll run some of 'em in, and run 'em in sharp too!"

"Thank you, my friend," said Copples, with another triumphant grin, and rubbing his talony hands together; "would you further oblige me by summoning a cab. I wish to get away without any unnecessary scenes!"

The miser thrust his arm through Ada's, and gripped her so tightly that she almost screamed with pain. While he was waiting for the cab to come, Madame Romah, leaving the pay-box to take care of itself, rushed into the tent. One glance at Copples, and she realised the situation.

"Ugh! you old rat!" she cried hysterically, "I've pulled your nose once, and I'll pull it again!"

And she would have done so had not Professor Romah firmly laid hold of his better-half. Violence could not mend matters. Whereupon madame, woman-like, added to the general confusion by going off into a violent fit of hysterics.

A moment later Copples hurried Ada out of the tent, barely giving her time to wring the hands of her friends.

"Good-bye!—good-bye, Will!" she sobbed.

"I've got her in my power again!" muttered Copples beneath his breath, as the cab rattled away towards the station; "but that cursed boy-clown still lives! What if he knew that the girl's wealth rightfully belonged to him. But he must never know. He must never live to know! And if Sleuth Slymer fails me and hangs fire, I'll see what I can do for myself. And yet he seems to bear a charmed life!"

How little Ada dreamed, as she watched the horrible old man's lips moving as he muttered to himself, of the black villainy that was being concocted in his distorted brain.

Gold, gold, gold! What were human lives compared to the gold he loved and worshipped!

We left Sleuth Slymer and Joe Grix in a little public-house outside Nottingham on the point of discussing business. Sleuth Slymer's plan to keep Will a prisoner had failed, and he had made up his mind to no longer beat about the bush, but to endeavour to earn the £1,000 Copples had promised him for his death. And that was the business he wished to discuss with Joe Grix. He knew that Grix was burning for revenge; that he hated Will with all the savage ferocity of his nature. Once Will was out of the way the detective did not care what became

of Grix. If he found his way into the hangman's hands, so much the better.

For the greater portion of the day the two scoundrels sat in the bar, drinking and talking in low whispers. In the evening they went out together.

"You can trust me," whispered Grix, his voice thick with drink; "but it won't be safe for me to try on here. When the Temple leaves Nottingham, it's going to tour through some of the small villages, to fill in the time between now and Oxford Fair. It's then I'll get my chance. I'll follow 'em—and I'll do it. There'll be no bungling, trust me!"

CHAPTER 21.

HOW WILL FOUND HIMSELF IN THE MYSTERIOUS ROOM IN COPPLES' HOUSE.

A long file of waggons and caravans was slowly wending its way along a dirty high-road. The Temple of Matchless Mirh had been taken down and packed up, and was being conveyed to its next destination. Before leaving Nottingham, a gigantic benefit had been given at one of the theatres for Lord Theodore Spangler, and a substantial sum realised. It was believed that before long Spangler's Circus would rise again, phoenix-like, from its ashes. Professor Romah had agreed to take Pat Flannigan into his service, much to the Irish lad's delight.

The whole company, from the professor down to the sagacious Sharp, had been cast into deep gloom by the loss of Ada Graham. As for Will, he had not known a moment's peace since Copples had carried her off. His mind was filled with anxious forebodings.

He and Pat, preferring to walk, were bringing up the rear of the procession of waggons.

"Pat," said Will, who had been wrapped in deep reflection, "I've got an idea. We're not due at Bexham till three days. I'm going to ask the professor to let me take three days off. I must go to Oldham. I must see Ada. And I want you to come with me!"

Pat's eyes sparkled. Will had told him all about Ada and her guardian, and he scented a possible adventure.

"You see, we're going to pass through Dornton; there's a station there, and we could take the train."

Pat thrust his hands into his pockets with a rather rueful expression.

"And who's to be paying for the tickets? Shure, an' it's only holes in my pockets that I've got!"

Will laughed.

"All right, Pat, don't you worry yourself. I've got money enough for both of us."

Professor Romah somewhat reluctantly gave his consent; but he himself was exceedingly anxious about Ada, and he had every confidence in Will's shrewdness.

"Be careful, lad," he said; "don't break the law in any way, because you've got a cunning old rascal to deal with in Copples. And mind, you've got to be at Bexham in time for the opening of the Temple. Good-bye, Will, and good-luck to you!"

Will and Pat, having said good-bye to all the company, took train from Dornton to Oldham.

"Now, look here, Pat," said Will, his face already flushed with excitement at the prospect of seeing Ada, "we'll start out for Copples's house after dark. I know the way about the house, because I've been in it before. I mean to see Ada, even if I have to break into the place!"

"Shure, an' I'm wid ye! I don't mind committing burglary so long as ye don't stale anything!"

The two lads waited till dusk before setting out for Copples's house. When they drew near the dismal-looking building, no lights were shining out from the heavily-shuttered windows. A ghostly silence hung over the place, and Will's heart sank to think of Ada practically a prisoner within. It looked gloomy and dismal enough to break her spirit.

It will be remembered how, earlier in the story, Will, under the compulsion of Dan Dugger, had been forced to enter into the house. At all risks he meant to enter it again.

Silently he beckoned Pat to follow him, and led the way round to the blank wall, up which ran a leaden pipe to the roof.

"Now, Pat," he whispered, "I'm going up that pipe; there's an opening near the roof that leads into an empty and disused part of the house. If I've any luck, I may find Ada without being discovered, do you see?"

"Shure, but ye're bound to be discovered. It isn't as if it was late, and folk in bed. It's too risky!"

Pat scratched his head; then gave an exclamation as if some brilliant idea had flashed across his mind.

"There are no houses about, nor policemen?" he asked.

"No," whispered Will; "it's a lonely spot."

"Well, then, I fancy I know how to draw the men out o' the house while ye're cloimbin' in. Ye never heard me imitate a couple of cats fightin'? Though it's myself as shouldn't say it, it's wonderfully true to Nature! I'll slip round to the front,

and, faith, I'll make such a dismal squalling it'll be bound to fetch 'em out. And I'll lead 'em a dance, or my name isn't Patrick McCarthy Flannigan!"

"Thank you, Pat; even if it doesn't succeed, there's no harm trying. And look here. If by to-morrow morning I haven't come out of the house, go to the police. Tell them straightforwardly what has happened. It is a queer place. Not that I'm afraid"—the brave little fellow drew himself to his full height—"but I believe if I did fall into old Copples' clutches he'd be capable of doing anything!"

The two lads gripped hands. Then Pat stole round to the front of the house. It was surrounded by a high, forbidding-looking wall, a small gate led into it. Some little distance away was a small wood. It was quite dark.

Crouching down close to the gate, Pat proceeded to give a truly wonderful imitation of two tom cats fighting. Hideous squallings and meows filled the air, so shrill that they penetrated into the room where sat the miser Copples, gloomily meditating over his schemes.

It so happened that Joe Swilley and his wife had gone into Oldham that day, and had not yet returned.

Ada Graham, looking white and ill, was sitting in the same room, ever and again casting looks of ill-concealed terror at her guardian, as he muttered and mumbled to himself.

At first Copples took no notice of the cat-like noises that floated into the room; then, after a while, an exclamation of annoyance escaped his lips.

Still the noises continued.

He sprang to his feet, and began to hop about the room in a state of bad-tempered irritability.

At last he could stand it no longer. Snatching down an old-fashioned blunderbuss that hung on the wall, he rushed out of the room.

"I'll murder those cats!" he croaked ferociously; "they're somewhere in the front of the house. I'll murder them!"

Reaching the front door, he opened it quietly, and crept along the weedy path that led to the door in the wall. But, silent as he was, Pat heard him. It was time to retire. He glanced behind him. Some little distance away was a clump of bushes. Pat made for it, little dreaming that the man who was opening the door in the wall was armed with a blunderbuss, loaded with buckshot. His one object was to give Will as much time as possible. The wood was now close behind him.

The door had opened. Copples, gripping his blunderbuss, and breathing horrible vows of vengeance against everything of a feline nature, passed out. He could see no signs of cats.

Ah! he pricked up his ears. A faint meow had come from behind a bush that was just dimly discernible through the darkness.

He waited. Another meow followed, seemingly a little farther off. Then he raised the blunderbuss and fired straight into the bush.

Immediately afterwards he rushed forward and searched the bush in the hopes of finding a feline corpse. But he was dis-

appointed, and the next moment he stamped the ground with rage.

From the wood beyond had come another faint meow!

But we must return for a while to Ada, left alone in the room. Her head had sunk on to her hands, when suddenly a creaking sound reached her ears. She glanced up. Was it her guardian returning?

The next moment the door was cautiously pushed open.

A wild cry of delight escaped her lips. She sprang forward with outstretched arms. For there, standing in the doorway, his clothes torn, and his face begrimed, was Witty Will Wynn!

"Ada!"

"Will!"

And in her joy she flung herself into his arms.

"Thank Heaven I've found you, and know that you are all right!" cried Will; "I've been so afraid for you. Tell me you're all right?"

"Yes, Will, yes! But it's horrible here! Take me away again! Oh, take me away!"

Before Will could reply, a loud report rang out.

"What's that?" he cried, staggering back.

"My guardian. He went out just now with his blunderbuss. Some cats have been annoying him."

Pat had been successful, then. But Will had gone white. Had anything happened to the Irish lad?

"Ada, it wasn't a cat. It was Pat, who has come here with me. He made those noises to draw off Copples, so that I might get a chance of seeing you!"

"Oh, I do hope he hasn't killed him!"

"I must go back and see!" whispered Will hoarsely. "Look here, Ada, when everybody is in bed to-night, get dressed, and come down into this room. I know a way of getting into the house. I'll meet you. You shall not remain here. Once free, we must find you some place of concealment."

"Quick! go, Will!"

Ada had caught the sound of returning footsteps.

"All right. Remember! At one o'clock to-night!"

Will darted out of the room. The house was unlighted. He rushed up the stairs down which he had descended. He was only just in time to avoid Copples. Fortunately the thick carpets deadened his footsteps, and he had, on entering the house, taken the precaution to remove his boots.

"Hallo!" he whispered, "I've made a mistake. I've come down the wrong passage."

He had entered into a room filled with antique furniture; in the centre was a strangely graven cabinet. A dim light shone from the ceiling.

He had hurried well into the room before he realised he had made a mistake. He turned round to beat a retreat. As he did so the door closed to with a click, and the light went out!

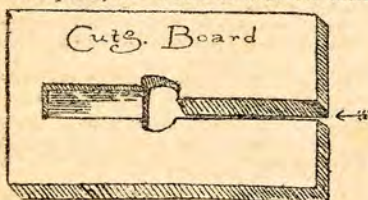
(To be continued in next Friday's UNION JACK.)

Don't Forget that our New Serial.
"THE SIGN OF THE SCARLET CROSS,"
Begins Next Week.

How to Make Money in Spare Time.

Having already touched slightly on the subject of lucrative fretworking in wood, I propose, before pursuing that part of the work further, to give a little information on the kindred subject of metal fretting.

I know, from long experience, that a good many boys will take fright at the mere suggestion of metal working of any description, so I would at once set their



minds at rest by saying that fretworking metal is as easy, if not easier, than fretworking wood, provided that a little ordinary precaution is taken, and a little preparation is made.

In the first place it will be necessary to prepare a cutting-block on slightly different lines to that which is ordinarily used. It will be seen on reference

to the illustration that the V-shaped opening gives place to a straight, narrow opening (see arrow) not more than half an inch to three-quarters of an inch wide; this opening ends in a semi-circular or stirrup-shaped opening in the centre of the board, which, by the way, I should have said is six or eight inches wide, a foot long, and one inch in thickness. Beyond the half-round opening a shallow groove is cut sufficiently wide, deep, and long to take the top arm of the clamp which is used to hold the cutting-board to the table, so that the surface of the cutting-board presents a perfectly even and level surface.

The other necessities are: a drill for boring holes in the metal—this may be procured for 9d.—and some fret-saws made specially for metal piercing, which cost 3d. per dozen. With these, and of course the saw frame and a little drop of sweet oil, we are ready to start on the operation.

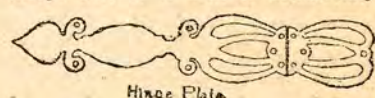
The metals most usually used for such purposes are brass and copper, which is purchased by the pound in thin sheets. Brass costs 10d. per pound, copper 1s.; but zinc can also be used with advantage, as it is much cheaper, and it will take a

nice polish that goes well when used in connection with such woods as dark oak, walnut, or the popular stained-green cabinet-work.

But whatever metal is used the mode of procedure is the same. The tracing of the pattern prepared is stuck down on the metal in the ordinary way.

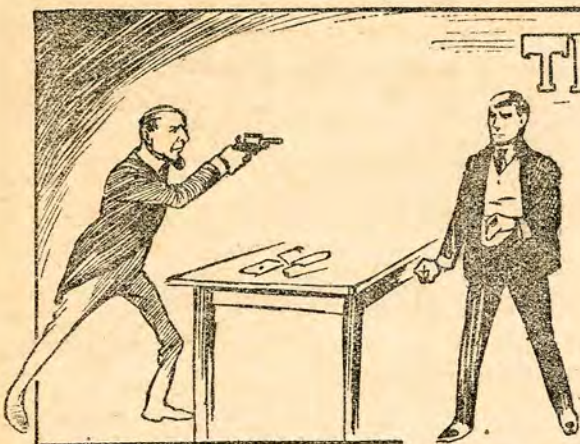
Now bore all the holes that are necessary, both for the screws and the interstices of the pattern, with the drill.

The operation of sawing can now be commenced, and it is performed in exactly the same manner as wood-cutting, except that it is well to occasionally



damp the finger with oil and touch the sawblade with it, for the purpose of rendering the work easier and preserving the temper of the saw.

The hinge-plate which I give as an illustration for our first lesson is ornamental only, and is used in conjunction with ordinary hinges. These plates are extensively used for fancy cabinet-work,



THE HIDDEN THREE

By MARK DARRAN.

I was sitting in my rooms one bleak day in December, pondering over all and everything, when I heard a knock at my door, and my servant brought in a letter.

I seized it eagerly, for it was addressed in my oldest chum's handwriting to myself, Richard Trueman. Tearing it open, I quickly scanned the contents. Judge of my dismay when I read the following:

"Dear Dick,—I am writing to ask you to do a great favour for me. Strange as it may seem, I am going to fight a duel. I was grossly insulted—it matters not how—two nights ago, and I, in a fit of madness, challenged the man to fight—so fight I must. Everything has been arranged, we fight with pistols; not in the ordinary one-shot-each style, but only one shot between us. My antagonist is a 'lick-creation Yank,' so he has chosen for weapons, cards and a pistol.

"Each of us will have three cards dealt us. We shall then each in turn show a card, and the winner—that is, the one who has the highest cards, has the shot. In order that the noise of the shot may not be heard, we have arranged to meet at a deserted farmhouse some miles from any town. If you would help me, be at the farmhouse at 10 p.m. to-morrow. I enclose full particulars for reaching there.

"For the sake of our friendship, do not fail me.

"HARRY."

A duel at the end of the nineteenth century sounded too improbable, yet I knew Harry Vincent was no practical joker. A steady, hard-working, but perhaps slightly hot-headed man fighting a duel. Well, I, of course, must go.

It was a dark night on which I left the little station of Torord, to walk the four odd miles to my destination. Several times I lost my way; but at last, a little before ten, a black structure loomed up out of the darkness. Not a light could I see, but on going nearer I saw that every window was barred by a thick shutter, but under the front door crept a thin streak of light. So the others had evidently arrived, and I hurriedly knocked on the door; quickly it was opened, and before me stood my chum Harry.

Without a word he beckoned me to enter, and, having carefully fastened the door, led me into a small room.

"Dick!" he cried, turning to me, "I know you are about to plead with me to give up this affair, but, Dick, I can't. Honour is at stake, and it must be satisfied."

His face was deadly pale, but there was not a sign of the coward about him. So reluctantly I had to give in, and act as his second in this foolhardy affair.

After a few words concerning the disposal of his property in case he fell, we entered the main room of the farm where the duel was to take place. It was already occupied by two men, both good specimens of the American bully. As I entered they both rose, and Harry introduced me in a few words:

"Gentlemen," he said, "this is my friend Richard Trueman, who will act for me in this little affair. These, Harry," he said, "are Mr. Silas Phryer and Mr. George Highbet. We will now, with your permission, proceed."

All this was delivered by Harry in a clear, even voice. It appeared that Silas Phryer was the antagonist, and George Highbet his second.

Without another word from anyone we moved over to a large deal table in the middle of the room, and seated ourselves at the four sides, Harry and Phryer facing each other.

Still in silence, Highbet produced from his pocket a pack of cards and a single-barrel pistol. Pushing these over to me, he asked me to examine them to see that all was fair.

Although the cards appeared right enough to me, yet I con-

sidered it my duty to, if possible, supply the cards myself, so, rising from my chair, I addressed the rest of the company:

"Gentlemen, I think that in an affair of this kind it is only right that either second should have the chance of supplying the instruments of death in this case—cards. I would therefore propose that we—that is, Mr. Highbet and myself—toss for the privilege of supplying the cards and dealing."

Reluctantly the two Americans assented, and we proceeded to toss. Up spun the coin into the air, and as it touched the floor my foot closed over it. In a trembling voice Highbet called "Heads!" Wrong; it was tails!

I was so nervous now that I could not speak. I drew from my pocket a pack of cards, slowly dealt out three to each man, and replaced the pack on the table.

With feverish haste Harry turned up his first card, and I saw with dismay that it was a two.

Slowly his antagonist turned over his—five. One trick to him. This time, more nervously than before, Harry turned his card. As he did so my knees would hardly support me I was so filled with apprehension. It was an ace. Oh! how I thanked Heaven for it, and laughed out loud in maniacal glee.

With a curse the American flung down his card. The score was one all. A deadly silence filled the room, save for the pant, pant of our pent-up breath. When would this awful strain be over? Why didn't Harry play?

Ah! at last he played. Thank Heaven, a king; surely he was safe now? I could even see him mercifully pardoning his adversary. But there was still a chance of loss—still a chance. Beads of perspiration were rolling down the American's face, his hands trembled so that for some time he could not touch his card. At last, by a supreme effort, he did so, turning so that we could not see it. For a moment awful fear was depicted on his face, but suddenly it changed to one of triumph, and he turned the card so that we could see.

Good heavens! he held in his hand an ace. With a frantic movement he darted for the pistol, for a minute I was paralysed. There stood Harry pale as death, but calm. All this time my eyes were riveted on the card of doom. Why, what was that? Over his fingers, which were on the face of the card, appeared a second card. Then in a flash I saw it all. It was a three, and his fingers covered the two other pips.

The American's pistol was now levelled, but in a moment I had my own from my pocket, and had fired at the hand of the would-be assassin.

With a curse of rage he let the pistol fall to the floor, at the same time releasing the fatal card, which fluttered to the floor. There it lay, the three of hearts.

Still covering the two cowering wretches I aroused Harry from the kind of stupor in which he stood. Seeing the true state of affairs, it was all I could do to keep him from his cowardly assailants. Then, turning to the Americans, he said, in his clear, ringing voice:

"You curs! you see that you have failed. That being so, I shall not soil my hands by contact with you. But I have to warn you that if you say but one word, or dare to cast discredit on my name, and I will publish to the world your infamy. Go!"

Like whipped curs the men slunk from the house, and Harry and myself followed shortly afterwards, Harry bearing the "Hidden Three."

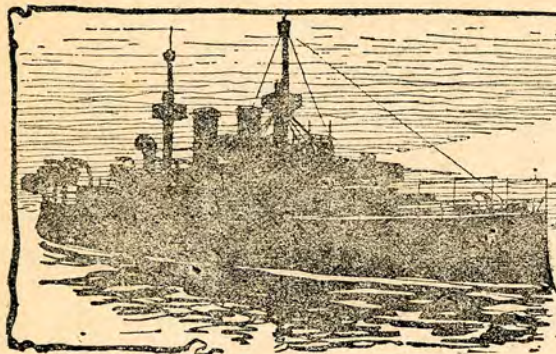
It was some years before I learnt the real cause of the fight, and when I did so it was quite by accident.

I had accepted an invitation to stay at what I supposed were his new diggings, for he had changed his address.

Great was my surprise when I found on arriving at my destination that he was no longer a bachelor. For some time I had no chance of seeing him alone, and indeed there was no need, for there, in his drawing-room, hung the three of hearts, framed and glazed. What better explanation did I want? Indeed none!

THE END.

SEE THE NEXT PAGE.



FROM THE QUARTERDECK.

The Editor's Chat with his Readers.

As you know, our grand new serial story,
"THE SIGN OF THE SCARLET CROSS,"

commences in next week's number of the UNION JACK.

Please do not forget it, or let your friends forget it either. It is one of the very best of the many popular stories which have emanated from Mr. Claud Heathcote's pen. My staff are all delighted with it, and I feel quite sure you will share their feelings when you read it.

It is not like a great many serials—very good for the first few chapters, and then tailing off tremendously.

It gets stronger and better every week. Mr. Heathcote is no novice, and he has put his best work into "The Sign of the Scarlet Cross."

You will do me a great favour by showing your chums this number. By so doing you will please both them and me.

The long, complete story in next week's number is one of the Sexton Blake stories, which have proved so popular in this paper.

"4, Tait Street, Easter Road, Edinburgh.

"Dear Old Skipper,—I beg to give you a word of warning about always using 'English' and 'England' in your stories. I have got about six new readers since your Christmas Number came out, and when I ask them their opinion of the UNION JACK, they say it's splendid; but the words 'Scotch,' 'Irish,' and 'Welsh' are so seldom used that they think it is not at all fair.—Yours,
"A SCOTCH READER."

You are too thin-skinned, "Scotch Reader." When the average person says "England," or "English," he almost always refers to the British Isles and Ireland. Nevertheless, I will avoid "England" and "English," and write "Briton" and "British" in future; that will include you all. If any of you catch me napping, write and tell me.

"Rex" (Chelsea) asks me if I will send him some specimen copies of the UNION JACK for him to give to his friends. Certainly, "Rex," I shall be very pleased. Thanks for your help. If any other reader wishes to do his editor a good turn, he should follow "Rex's" example. I am always glad of willing helpers.

Before you can join the "Hindustani" or the "Britannia," which are the official training ships, "Midshipmite," you will have to be examined, physically and mentally, by the Naval authorities.

The first step is to be nominated by someone in power. If you know no one in the Navy, write to the First Lord of the Admiralty and he will nominate you.

You must be between 13½ and 15 years of age, or you will not be accepted.

The examination you will be set is a not extraordinarily difficult one, dealing with the three R's, Euclid and Algebra, French, and Scripture.

If you pass this, you will have to go before the doctor, and satisfy him that you are physically fit for the work you wish to undertake.

You will be promoted to a ship in the Royal Navy directly a vacancy occurs.

The position of sub-lieutenant is often attained at the age of nineteen.

You should advertise your wants in one of the daily papers, T. Ferguson.

A Welsh reader asks me how the leek came to be adopted as the emblem of gallant little Wales.

Here is one antiquarian's belief: "On March 1, 640, the Saxons, being about to attack the Britons, put leeks in their caps, in order that if dispersed they might be known to each other; but the Britons, having gained the victory, transferred the leeks to their own caps as signals of triumph."

The Harleian MS., No. 1977, however, written by a Welshman of the time of James I., contains the following passage:

"I like the leek above all herbs and flowers;
When first we wore the same, the field was ours.
The leek is white and green, whereby is meant
That Britons are both stout and eminent:
Next to the lion and the unicorn,
The leek's the fairest emblem that is worn."

Now, the inference to be drawn from these lines is that the leek was assumed upon, or immediately after, the battle of Bosworth Field, which was won by Henry VII., who had many Welshmen (his countrymen) in his army, and whose yeomen guard was composed of Welshmen; and this inference is derived from the fact that the Tudor colours were white and green; and, as may be seen in several heraldic MSS., formed the field on which the English, French, and Irish arms were placed.

On page 10 you will find the final set of pictures in my competition.

Hurry up and post me your sets at once. There is no need to wait until the 18th of April; by so doing you only help delay the appearance of the result.

Above all, don't be so foolish as some of the competitors in my last competition were, and fail to send your name and address.

The winners' names cannot be announced for several weeks after the 18th, as, apart from the fact that it will take a week or two of hard work to judge the entries, this paper is printed weeks before it is on sale in the newsagents' shops.

I am trying to please my impatient readers, however.

If you look at page 10, you will see that I am offering to post a list of the winners' names, as soon as the said winners are found, to anyone who sends me three penny stamps. I only charge this to pay for my clerk's trouble.

The latest method of identifying prisoners I know, J. Jameston—that introduced into France by M. Alphonse Bertillon, and which is now successfully practised, not only in the chief French prisons, but in Russia and Japan as well—is the exact measurement of the prisoner on his arrival at the gaol. His waist, the length and width of the hand, the left middle finger, the left foot, the outstretched arms, the three other fingers of the left hand, the left arm from the elbow to the wrist, and the length and width of the ear are measured, and the colour of the eyes and any particularities are noted down. A photograph is also immediately taken, and by these means the many mistakes which have been made by trusting to a photographer only are avoided.

*Yours sincere friend,
The Skipper*

"THE SIGN OF THE SCARLET CROSS,"

By CLAUD HEATHCOTE, Author of "Roy Royal,"
"Dick Danvers," &c.,

Begins in Next Friday's "UNION JACK,"

CHEQUES FOR CLEVER WORKERS

Thousands of Pounds to be paid away to the Public by Cheques on our Bankers.

To Purchasers of Forks solving the following:

1. EMOSDNAH SI TAHT EMOSDNAH SEOD.
2. A YNNEP DEVAS SI A YNNEP DENRAE.
3. YTISSECEEN SI EHT REHTOM FO NOITNEVNI.

A Cheque will be sent to every purchaser of our wonderful Nickel Silver Forks who solves **ONE PROVERB**, besides an offer whereby a £2 Silver Watch can be obtained **FOR NOTHING**.

A larger Cheque to every purchaser who solves **TWO PROVERBS**, besides an offer, &c.

For **THREE PROVERBS** a still larger Cheque, &c.

DIRECTIONS.—Re-arrange to represent well-known Proverbs as many of the above lines as you can, and enclose with it 4/6 for one half-dozen Forks, or 8/6 for a dozen. The Forks are full-size Table Forks, and we guarantee them fully equal in wear and appearance to solid Sterling Silver Hall-marked, as they are actually manufactured from Solid English Nickel Silver. Also enclose a stamped, directed envelope for us to post you your cheque if correct.

If it takes £5,000 to pay the Prize we will pay it cheerfully. All depends on the number of successful contestants, and the number of cheques and the amounts of each which we must send, according to our promise in this advertisement. There is no chance, no lottery. Each successful contestant will receive a sure and certain CASH PRIZE by cheque, as well as the Free Silver Watch offer mentioned above.

This offer is good for 35 days from the date of this paper. The cheques for the Prizes will be forwarded immediately, with the Forks ordered, in due turn as received.

The Result of our last Prize Distribution was as follows:

A Cheque for £40 was posted to J. A. Turner, Esq. (son of the Premier of British Columbia), 46, Queen Victoria Street, London, E.C.

A Cheque for £20 was posted to Charles Bailey, Imperial Hotel, Hammersmith; and eighteen other cheques from £10 to £1 each.—Address

WATCHMAKERS' ALLIANCE, LTD.,

184, OXFORD STREET, LONDON.

Incorporated according to Act of Parliament.

Capital £90,000; Reserve Fund, £7,500.

A WATCH FOR NOTHING

We are going to give away 1,000 Silver Watches to advertise our Catalogue and our Jewellery. This is no catch, but perfectly genuine. Read our conditions, and then go in and win.

C * B * Y * S * C * C * *
T * * * L * S * V * C * * O *
R * * N * * E * S * C * C * *

The words, when filled in, represent the names of three largely advertised articles of food.

DIRECTIONS.

Fill in the missing letters to the above words, and send the answer to us. If correct, we undertake to send you a Solid Silver Watch, a good timekeeper, usually sold by us at £2 2s. Our conditions are that you send us a stamped addressed envelope for us to write and tell you if you are correct; and if you should win the Watch, you purchase one of our Real Silver Chains, as per our offer, which we will send you. Write at once, as by delay you may lose the chance.

To convince you of our offer being genuine, we send herewith copies of a few Testimonials which we are daily receiving.

The originals can be seen at our depot on application.

West End, London, 1897.

Gentlemen,—I received the Watch and Albert safely, and am exceedingly pleased with same. I have shown it to my friends, all of whom are astonished to find it such a genuine bargain; one of my friends wishes to know if he could obtain one in the same manner, or has the time expired. With sincere thanks, I remain, yours truly,
Mr. Chown.

19, Dean Street, Lisle, 1897.

Dear Sir,—I received the Watch and Chain on Tuesday last, and I am very pleased with them; the Watch is keeping good time.—Yours truly, Miss E. Swett.

The Polly, 48, Thornton Street, Hertford, November 1st, 1897.

Dear Sir,—I received your Watch and Chain quite safe, and was very well pleased with them; and many thanks for your kindness for sending me one of your catalogues; and perhaps I will have the pleasure of giving you another order before long. I remain yours truly,
Miss E. Gavan.

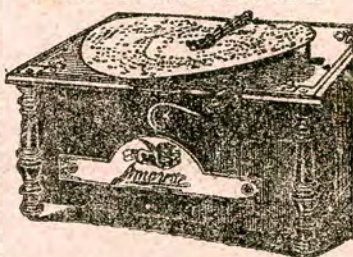
New Brunswick, Durham, November 2nd, 1897.

Dear Sir,—Just a line to say that I received the Watch and Chain which you sent me, and was highly pleased with them. I have shown the Catalogue to many of my friends.—Yours respectfully,
Miss Adameson.

P. GRAHAM & CO.,
Wholesale & Retail Jewellers,
277, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.

PHENOMENAL SUCCESS.

Thousands Sold
in a
Few Months.
Size,
13in. by 10½in.
by 8in.
Weight, 12lb.



To any person who cuts out this advertisement and sends it to us at once, we hereby guarantee to send, carriage paid, for 20s. only, the

ROYAL AMORETTE

equal in every respect to the four-guinea organs advertised elsewhere. The **ROYAL AMORETTE** is in a handsome black and gold case, has 16 indestructible steel reeds, and will play not dozens, but hundreds of tunes. We sent one to the Editor of "Fashion Novelties" for his inspection, and he replied: "Herewith please find 20s. for the **ROYAL AMORETTE** you sent me for approval. I shall purchase several for Christmas presents, and cannot understand how they can be made for the price. It is the best home musical instrument I have ever seen."

The advantage of the **ROYAL AMORETTE** is that it can be played by children of any age. It will play hymns, polkas, and all the popular tunes of the day. We will pay carriage throughout any portion of the British Islands, but for foreign countries postage for twelve pounds' weight must be sent.

The small picture above gives a very small notion of the instrument, which is large, handsome, and melodious. Do not confuse the Royal Amorette with any other advertised instrument. It is the only one of its kind in the world, and if you are disappointed with it we will cheerfully return the 20s. on receipt of the Royal Amorette, if returned at once.

The Royal Amorette, including 6 (six) metal tunes and packed in a strong wooden box, will be sent only to the readers of the Union Jack who, in addition to forwarding 20s., cut out this advertisement. Remit by Postal Order to

THE SAXON TRADING COMPANY,
84, Oxford Street, London, W.

Just the thing for the long winter evenings for Dances or Parties. We sell extra Tunes, six for 4s., or 12 for 7s. 6d., Carriage Paid. New list of tunes ready.
9/4/98