PAT KELLY'S SELF-DEFENCE.

AN EPISODE OF THE WAR OF THE CELT AGAINST THE LATINS.

The Dago Gang on the Railroad—New Fall of Napoleon—Kelly's Search for a Friend—Triumph of the Foreman of the Track Gang and Confusion of His Foes.

The row started in the upper yard at the headquarters of the division. The Dago gang was building a new pair of tracks for storage purposes. Kelly had his own track gang at work replacing ties on the west-bound main-line track. Young Malcolm of the roadmaster's office had the construction work in charge, and as soon as he turned his back for a moment the dago gang went its own way with characteristic intelligence. Kelly tried to set the men right by bawling at them and waving his arms. This led to epithets, more bawling and waving of arms, and finally to the severing of diplomatic relations. Kelly bunaed together several Latin heads, and threw Napoleon, the fat little leader, interpreter and father of the Dago gang, far down the bank. Then he saw Malcolm coming back and retreated to the main-line track to replace ties.

As a matter of fact, the first causes of the trouble were found in the original gang of Dago ties that went to work on the railroad. Kelly began by destroying people who put their trust in a leader without a physical test. He himself had fought his way to the foremanship of a track gang by main strength of arm and ability to hit, the same having been demonstrated at opportune times. He could not understand their sheepish meekness. Then they wore funny clothes and talked a lingo, but of all things inexplicable their lowly, born habit of minding their own business was the most exasperating. They lived apart, worked apart, drank apart and refused to fight with their fists. When the matter of foreign labor began to assume the proportions of an economic question, Kelly felt the fine gratification of having somehow been responsible for it. He continued to make it pleasant for the Dago gang whenever he found it in his power. It was a kind of holy war with him. Once he was the means of shipping their dinner pails, stowed away on top of an empty flat car, to the crushed stone quarry twenty miles up the road. Once again he almost precipitated a riot by carefully sending them out of the way of the monthly trip of the pay car. At another time he found the men huddled pale-faced about one of their number who had been struck by a passing engine. He worked over the bundle of grime and blood for an hour and with intelligence, the surgeon afterward said—and then carried it in his arms two miles to a farmhouse. To offset this deed, of which he was logically ashamed, he invented new forms of persecution.

Napoleon was dignified, always smoked a cumbersome pipe, and wore invariably a velvet coat. The first peculiarity was assailed, the second broken, and the third ruined when he descended the embankment. The battle took place about 5 o'clock in the afternoon. Napoleon took care of his wrath until the whistles in the car shops blew off work at 6. Then he gathered together about thirty of his retainers and started for the police court.

A brakeman on an outward bound freight train shouted the news to Kelly from the top of a box car. Kelly knew about police courts. The last time it was for a matter that, fortunately for him, interested the railroad officials, but he had been informed severally by his superior, the roadmaster and even by the old man himself that it must be the last time. He was worried. After supper he went back to look up Winters, the yardmaster, who had gone off duty at 4 and was still directing matters in the yard. Kelly never looked up Winters unless he was very drunk or in some other kind of trouble. The yardmaster looked him over, grinned cheerfully, and turned to bawl an order at some lanterns.

"Did ye see us?" Kelly asked finally.

"For purposes of a witness in the case of the people against Kelly," retorted Winters. "I did. I did then. But I doesn't attend it. What are you going to get up? An alibi? No, don't try that; better save it until a better time." His eyes twinkled in the light of a switch lamp. "Make it self-defence," he suggested.

Kelly grinned. "Wan o' thim aitiks is aisier," he said. "Leave me lay wid swear on it! Book they was said me in Ballyback all day."

"Two aitiks," returned the other. "Self-defence I mean. Think of it."

"Sure I think. Ay, the nerve avut—self-defence! Why, Winters, dhat is—"

"Have you no friends? Can't you get one of them to paint you a pair of eyes? Or maybe a cut across the cut would do?"

"Oh see, and this a good p'int, sure, a good p'int. If it was sunrise I'd straight bwud be afay. It's a long tothing w' seed th' rag wan was along, and too far yet for mixt joy time. Besides which, it wint take two quarts av Casey's best t' impiage modern th' iteration. An' thim, there's Mister Sibarlo—no boss, he's a gintleman, but I'm not a gintleman, he's. We understand each other, we do. When I fale it comin' on me I go t' him an' sez, 'When?' sez I. 'Tomorrow,' he sez. 'An' wen will ye be comin' back?' sez. 'Put it off for a wake. There's work t' do.' An' thin O do as he sez, an' come he's sober wen th' say O will. No, 'tain't for me t' go back on th' like o' him. Now, you, sure, wud ye, mebbe, dat wil war dat, like this?"

"I'm afraid not Kelly," sadly returned the yardmaster, who was five feet six and killed the last two men I hit and then I swore off."

Kelly limped away and walked into the night. His arrest, according to his knowledge of matters, would take place some time early the next morning. He had then several hours in which to prepare himself for the plea of self-defence. He walked thoughtfully down the tracks until he reached the outskirts of the town. The door of Casey's saloon, facing the tracks on a narrow street, stood invitingly open. Kelly hesitated, turning over in his mind his contract with Casey. It had been that Kelly was one of the few men who could take certain liberties with the law of the railroad which lies in regard to drinking. He was strong enough to know its modifications. Other men, less valuable in engineers' eyes, would long ago have gone the way of discharge.

There would be no harm in going into Casey's to look for a friend. Casey's was popular among the rails' aiters. It is said that once a man called for a drink at Casey's and fell lifeless on his way home. But that was because he was new to the stuff and because Casey didn't know that he had moved to the other end of the town.

Kelly stepped to the door, gradually inserted his face and was greeted with a howl. The next moment he stood looking at the bottom of an empty glass. During the next fifteen minutes he started for home eleven times. In the next hour he forgot that he had a home. At the end of an hour and a half he had forgotten the dago, forgotten Casey, forgotten everything, and was taking things quite easy in the way of one of his regular and semi-officially approved stretches. Toward midnight Casey's saloon and a football game had many points in common.

Then a man came in from an ill-fated scouting trip and said something to Kelly about Napoleon. Kelly sent him home by way of the window for telling a gentleman his pleasure. Then he straightened himself up at the end of the bar and made an oration. He was looking for a friend, he said. The crowd roared. Had he a friend? The crowd roared again. Then would his friend come out with him and fight with a fist? The crowd was silent.

The need of a friend who would furnish evidence for his defence in the coming trial weighed upon him. It led him down the long line of saloons on the narrow street facing the tracks and he left some of his retainers inert in every place. He was a remarkably active man for a man of his weight. An hour later he ran across an inoffensive freight brakeman on his way home. The brakeman was talking across the bar over a glass of beer. Except for the barkeeper, they were alone in the place.

Kelly fixed the brakeman with a malignant eye. "Ye're a liar an' a thief," he said accusingly. "Besides which, ye're a dago, a scab an' a Shanrald."

The brakeman was Irish also. He ruffled. "Why d'ye fight?" said Kelly.

The alleged fight was quick, direct, sure. The bartender dodged about and deftly removed everything movable. Kelly closed his eyes and waited for the world to smile. The result taught him that it did not have much of a reputation for humor. He had he known when to stop, but he hit out again and then he was arms gathered him in for a mighty squeeze that bent him over the bar and flattened him against the wall, from where he fell across a beer-in-the-slot machine and dragged it crashing on top of him to the floor.

"Attach," said Kelly. Then his arms suddenly fell to his sides. He looked at the prostrate brakeman. "Dat knew an' hevin' he knew out. I clane forgot! Wor hev I done, Mike dear, are ye kill entirely? Shure, O'Brien, me man! Me hittin' mark was a one in—I'm a gentleman an' I only frind O'Brien's friend. Are ye too sick t' drink wan wan now?"

The brakeman rolled to his feet. They took together, and Kelly told him the story of his deeds. The mention of Napoleon and his aitiks sent Kelly into his wrath anew. The thought of them filled him with incendiary ardor. He invited his new friend to come and partake of the undoing of the dago gang, and to revenge himself on those who were responsible for his own discomfort.

The brakeman declined, and Kelly set out alone. The dago gang lived in some hovels above the upper yard and Kelly went by way of the tracks. From time to time he stopped and filled his arms with coupling pins and rocks, and discarded them when he came across better weapons. It was a long, dangerous walk, but he somehow gained the upper yard, preserving his footing along the network of tracks by a miracle and escaping the slashing business of the yard by luck and instinct. In the upper yard the way was easier. He crept along in the dark, keeping close to a long train of freight.

Suddenly he ran into something. He tried to walk around it, but it followed him. He tried to push it away with his hand, and it remained. He struck it impatiently with his fist, and it hurt. Then he straightened himself up and looked about him.

What he saw sobered him at once and sent the drink and the mischief flying from his finger-tips. It was at the junction of the east-bound main line track and a series of storage tracks. Half an hour earlier a heavy train of freight had shot down the incline ahead of the express, run up the first pair of storage tracks and was locked in with set brakes. The storage track was on a grade and the long train began to slip back, an inch at a time, until it very slowly pushed the rear car, a heavily loaded box car, out over the switch and squarely across the main line track. The car stuck against the opposite rail, anchored with nearly all the weight of the train. The undisturbed switch-lamp was showing a white light up the track with a stupid serenity that was devilish.

Kelly burst out profanely at some careless brakeman, too eager to get home. He was surprised that nobody had yet discovered the obstruction. Turning away to look for the yardmaster or a switchman, and then he suddenly stopped and stared up the track. It was the shrill, treble hum and clatter of a swifely moving train. No freight train could make a noise like that. It was the express.

Kelly leaped against the heavy box car and smashed at it with his fist. A pile-driver would have had little more effect. He gasped, and snatched out another grab. The express was little more than half a mile distant, bearing at full speed down the opposite grade for a rush up the yard grade into the station. Kelly could see the operator leaning from the window of the signal tower half way between him and the coming express. The eye of the semaphore was calmly set at "safe." Kelly called it madly.

His eyes fell upon the switch lamp, and he sprang upon it and began to wrestle with all his strength. He grasped it with both arms and pulled until his back cracked and the veins in his throat and forehead seemed about to burst. It finally gave way with a snap and flung him on his back. He crawled to his feet, breathing deep, and hurried up the track, waving the red side of the lamp at the train. The thing was well within thirty rounds, and the superintendent now has the two broken pieces in his office to show to people when he tells the story.

The express came to a grinding stop within fifty feet of the obstruction. An angry engineer stepped down and found a sweating, red-veeled Irishman with the top of a broken switch in his arms. The engineer swore. The Irishman grinned and pointed down the track.

"Is t' President av this railroad on board t' thrain?" he shouted. "Because, if he is I want t' see him most partic'lar. Tell him it's Pat Kelly. O, I want a gold watch, wid some fergit-me-nits and bein' sassiges carved on t' back av it, an' readin' sumpin' loike this: 'T' Mister Pat Kelly, fer bein' a dim hero an' savin' t' expriss.' Is he there, now?"

The engineer stood looking from Kelly to the sagging end of the loaded freight car. He wiped his face.

"Pat Kelly," he said quietly. "You're a drunken, good-for-nothin' son o' an Irishman, and you got the undeservin' luck of a hunch-backed canal mule. So have I."

"Call me Mister Pat Kelly, fer bein' a"—

"Yer nothing yeh want to be. You're all right. The next time I take dinner with the President of the road, in his private car, with rear-ends and wine, I will speak to him of my friend, Pat Kelly."

"Are you a frind o' mine, O'm in trouble, O'am. Baste me in t' eye, for some evidence. But furrst, lay me hands, furrst lay me hands."

The engineer turned and told the conductor, who sent out a flag and scrambled for the nearest signal tower. Kelly put his arms around the engineer's neck and told him some thing about a fight and his search for a friend. Some men came out of the Pullmans with cars on their heads and cigars in their mouths, and Kelly, still carrying the glaring top of a switch in his arms, slunk off home.

The express went over to the next division half an hour late, and the conductor and engineer stopped to tell the story—some of it—to the chief despatcher. The Superintendent heard of it early the next morning and asked no questions when Kelly was called out for him to go half. The old man had a talk with Napoleon, and the latter was somehow appeased. The case of the people against Kelly went by default, the expenses of the case being principally a new and still more cumbersome one pipe for Napoleon.

"O, am I to be a witnesse? I lose." Kelly winked to Winters that afternoon. "Did ye see t' papers this mornin'? Howly smoke! 'A hero av t' rail.' 'He saved t' expriss.' 'T' lookt-hness av it wud scald yeh. But be t' same token O'll make meself square wid t' bar little rat av a Napoleon and his dago gang for their pious intintions. Remember!"

A LUNATIC FIFTY YEARS AGO.

Adventure of a Merchant in the Days When Insane People Were Chained Up.

Within the memory of people now living lunatics and weak-minded people in country districts were confined in the houses of their relatives, sometimes chained to the wall. A story involving a case of this kind fifty years ago is related by a New York merchant.

He made his start in life by traveling through the country districts of Pennsylvania taking orders for and delivering goods of various kinds from the cities. He is now over 70 years of age.

"The fine af ernoon," he said, "I called at a farmhouse to look for orders for goods from stores in Philadelphia and knocked at the door. A voice said 'come in,' and I pressed the latch and found myself in the kitchen of the house. I was confronted by a strange-looking man, unkempt and unshorn, who came forward from a place partitioned off from the rest of the kitchen, which looked like a stall of some kind. He told me that the master of the house was not in and that he was the only person there just then. I had no idea that I was talking to a lunatic, as the man seemed perfectly rational in spite of his strange appearance, and before I started to go out I asked for a drink of water.

"Certainly, said the man, 'but if you have no objection to cream you can have it.'

"I accepted the proposal with thanks, and the man said: 'Come inside and mind the dairy, it is in that half above the door and you are taller than I.' Without suspecting anything I handed him the key, remarking that it was a very small one. He instantly thought I took over a man to whom he was secured to the wall and released himself by unscrewing the padlock in less time than it takes me to tell it. I had previously noticed that he kept his hands behind his back while he talked. Then I realized that I was in the presence of a madman. I began to back to the door, but he caught my arm saying, 'Come with me for the cream.'

"I first thought of breaking away, but on second thoughts decided that it was safer to humor him a little, as, as well as he was secured, he could hardly follow me with him to the dairy, the door of which was open. Then he filled a tray with cream and desired me to drink it. I drank half of it and made a move to get away, but his grasp tightened, and muttering something about cream not being sour enough, he brought me back to the kitchen, where he stirred some kind of meal into the cream and handing me a spoon told me to sup it. I hesitated, when he seized a cudgel, which I suppose had been provided to keep him in subjection and holding it up menacingly, said: 'Sup it.'

"I made an attempt to eat the stuff and after a few mouthfuls said I had enough. He raised the cudgel again and ordered me to finish it. A very forcible argument it took, too.

"'If you bring me more cream I can finish it,' I said, without daring to look round at the door as he was watching me.

"The madman was taken off his guard and went back to the dairy for the cream. Immediately darting out and the lunatic hearing me open the door, came after me with the cudgel. It was now a race for life with me. I can use my legs, too, when defending I use my breath in shouting for help, but after I had gone about a quarter of a mile I saw that the lunatic was gaining on me. No sooner could I see a house by the road and though I kept my wits about me I could not find any time to think of any way of leading on my pursuer. When he was within about twenty yards of me I saw he was found to overtake me, and I gave a cry for help, and at the moment several men appeared. They came in time to intercept the madman. One of them hatchetted to be his brother and the madman cowered and dropped the cudgel as the sight of the latter. The mother also came to me for his carelessness and invited me to turn back to the house and get some refreshment, but I had enough of it and declined the invitation. After that while I continued in the business I was always chary of entering a house where there was only a single servant."

Reason for Doubt.

From the Chicago Evening Post.

"Did you sever your connection with the firm or were you discharged?" asked the friend.

The man out of a job gave a few minutes to thought before answering.

"I'm a little uncertain about that, he said at last.

"Uncertain?"

"Yes. Of course, I know that office boys are discharged and general managers sever their connections, but I can't be sure that I was high enough up to sever my connection, and I don't like to think I was low enough down to be discharged. Perhaps you'd better make it that the firm and I disagreed."

NINETY-NINE'S TREASURE.

A DEAD PIRATE'S GOLD AND GEMS UP IN THE CATSKILLS.

Jenny Lind's Mad Lover, Boots Van Steenburgh, Knew Where the Cave Was and Forgot It, Says Tradition—Plaint of Uncle Peter De Witt as to His Lost Rights.

The plaint of Uncle Peter De Witt of Ulster county isn't so much that Boots Van Steenburgh should have died as that he should have died and grievously disappointed him. Boots Van Steenburgh was of Saugerties and an old man when he died, but fifty years ago he was young and dashing and had money. He came to New York to hear Jenny Lind sing at her first concert at Castle Garden, and fell madly in love with her. He followed her everywhere about the country where her singing tour led her, and sent her jewels and other gifts, which she as persistently returned. His passion at last destroyed his mental balance, and all the remainder of his life he was a wanderer about the Catskill region.

While he was following the Swedish singer about the country his fellow dwellers among his native hills wondered long how he came to have the money that enabled him to travel so and to purchase the diamonds and other valuable presents he sent Jenny Lind. They came to the conclusion that both the money and the jewels were from the long-hunted-for stores in Ninety-nine's cave, a cave that tradition located somewhere in the wild Shawangunk Mountains near Port Hickson or Port Ben, or perhaps Fort Ewen. At any rate, wherever the treasure might be, nothing was more certain in the mountaineer mind than that Boots Van Steenburgh had in some way discovered it and was drawing upon its rich deposits for the means by which he hoped to dazzle the great Swedish songstress and to win her. This belief was made the more certain to the mountaineers by the fact that Boots Van Steenburgh had ancestors named Depew, among them one Benny Depew; and Benny Depew was the only dweller in the Catskills who ever saw the inside of Ninety-nine's cave, except Ninety-nine himself. When Van Steenburgh returned to the Catskills after Jenny Lind had sailed away from America the charge was made against him that he had found the treasure cave. He did not deny it, but he would not reveal the location to any soul; and after years of deferred hope that he would reveal it people at last made up their minds that he had forgotten where it was himself and that he could not reveal it if he would. While Boots Van Steenburgh declared positively that he hadn't forgotten it, nobody believed him except Uncle Peter De Witt.

"It was terrible negligent o' Boots," as Uncle Peter will tell you any day you may meet him, either at Kerbankson, Fly Mountain, Port Ben, or wherever else he may happen to be in that legendary region, if you will listen to his plaint. "It was terrible negligent and disatory o' Boots, puttin' off takin' me to Ninety-nine's cave the way he did. Procrasternation wasn't only the thief o' time in this case. It was the thief of a whole lot o' goods that'd be comin' in about now and helpin' me along with things I'd laid out to do. Boots oughtn't to 'a done it, but then what kin you expect of a man that ain't only in love, but that's been in the same old love for fifty year and better? Come to think it all over, it don't seem that I ought to blame Boots much; only, why in the name of all that's glorious didn't he die first and fall in love afterward? That'd 'a saved me a lot o' disappointment, and I could 'a' gone to Boots's funeral with pleasure.

"Now, you see, the Depews—but, before we come to that, I want to tell you how I said to Boots, maybe two or three months after he got home from chasin' Jenny Lin' 'round the country.

"'Boots,' I said, 'how could you 'a' got the funds?'

"Now, mind you! Boots had quite a lot o' money of his own in them days, speakin' o' money for home use, but nothin' like enough, accordin' to my idee, to gallivant like he did, busin' wine and diamonds and keepin' of it up. So that's why I said to him:

"'Boots,' said I, 'how could you 'a' got the funds?'

"The minute I said that, I know'd that Boots suspicioned that I had an idee, 'cause he looked at me and give a wink.

"'Boots,' I said, 'it's Ninety-nine's cave!'

"And Boots jest kind o' started up for a second, as if he might be wonderin' how I could 'a' got the idee, and then he give another wink. Then I know'd I was right.

"'Boots!' I said, 'it was handed down from Benny, o' course?'

"But Boots merely give another wink. Because, leln' as the De Witts and the Depews, and the De this and the De that, and the Van Steenburghs and the Van Ittens, and the Van this and the Van that, was all mixed in by relation, and as I was a De Witt that had a peddlegree running back to the time when the first one of the family came straylin' over here from Holland, and didn't know no better than to spell his name Dewitt—well, no more than the Depews did in spellin' their name De-p-e-w-s, I didn't see why I wasn't in the line o' heirship to the secret o' Ninety-nine's cave as much as Boots Van Steenburgh was, and so I sot out to get my rights.

"'Boots,' I said, 'it was handed down from Benny, o' course?'

"But Boots he only give another wink. Then I know'd though. And I said to myself right then and there, that Boots Van Steenburgh had found Ninety-nine's cave some day or I'd know the reason why.

"Of course you've heard all about Ninety-nine and his cave? No? That's amazin'! There won't be no point in telin' you how Boots Van Steenburgh give me reason for bein' disappointed unless you do know about Ninety-nine and his cave, but I s'pose everybody know'd that, the way folks from all points o' the compass has been lookin' for that cave ever sence I kin remember. Then I guess I'd better tell you about 'em. Never heard o' 'em, eh? That's amazin'!

"Some says that Ninety-nine was an Injun, and some says he was a Spanish. It's too late in the day and generation to say which one of them sailors he actually was, or whether he was a pirate bad enough to say who he called Ninety-nine instead of an even One Hundred. It don't make no sort o' difference neither, so far as I kin see. The important plot is that Ninety-nine was here and here about wunst on a time, and that he had this here cave, o' his'n. There's proof now alive, and I've heard 'em, that had fathers that remembered hearin' their fathers say that they remembered hearin' tell about Ninety-nine comin' down from somewhere in the mountains, now here and now there, and not savin' a word till he had called for rum.

"'Gimme rum!' he used to holler. 'Gimme rum!'

"I s'pose that in them days that was about the easiest call to answer in the affirmative that anybody could make, and consequently whenever Ninety-nine came down out o' the mountains and made it, he got what he called for, and got it quick. Them must 'a' been good old times, in a way. I'm pretty sorry I missed 'em, and the ayes wouldn't never have to be out of your tongue was hangin' out. But in the days when Ninety-nine used to come down and make it, I'd 'a' had he got what he called for, right off the nail.

"'Gimme rum!' Ninety-nine used to call. 'Gimme rum!'

"He was tremendous fond o' rum, Ninety-nine was, and after he had got loaded up pretty fair with it and had drunk up all that rum was gone, he had a way o' haulin' out a handful o' gold and silver money and scattering it 'round promiscuous, and takin' out beads o' diamonds from one pocket and strings o' pearls from another pocket and strings o' rubies from another one, and all sorts o' glittery jewels from other pockets, and jest drivin' folks crazy with the sights of 'em. Then he'd grin the most aggravat'n kind and fantalize folks by saying:

"'Bushels and bushels more where these come from! Ninety-nine's cave is full of 'em! Gimme rum!'

"When Ninety-nine got all the rum into him he could carry, he'd get up and pull out two big pistols, one in each hand, and say:

"'I'm goin' to the lessons my family now! If anybody wants to follier me he kin, but he won't never come back agin!'

"So nobody never followed him, and consequently we couldn't find out where his cave was, with all its heaps o' money and bright jewels shinin'.

"There never was but one man that Ninety-nine ever took any kind o' a shine to, and that was Benny Depew.

"Benny Depew, as Ninety-nine used to declare, 'is the only real gentleman I know. He kin drink as much rum as I kin, and I don't know but a hooter or two more!'

"Now, then! There was a compliment for you, and Benny Depew appreciated it, and was always actin' for the chance to do serve it, for the Depews always was ambitious folks, and likewise wildin' to college. Accordin' to what I've heard my father say, there was a good deal to lawin' goin' on, to and fro and betwixt and between folks in the early days, and most everybody was shy o' strangers comin' amongst 'em, for fear that ther was servin' summonses or warrants. One time a stranger dropped in at Kerbankson, and goin' to the tavern, where quite a passil o' the boys was sittin', he said:

"'Come!' said he, 'Have somethin', boys!'

"He hadn't got the words out of his mouth yit before a big, tall, strappin' feller was on his feet and up to the bar 'fore any o' the rest had started.

"'Thankyar!' said the stranger, speakin' to the big, tall, strappin' feller. 'I wasn't acquainted here, and I wasn't quite sure, but here's the summons for you, Mr. Depew!'

"The summons servers were great readers o' human nature in them days, I've heard my father say, but the Depews was always to the front.

"'Yes, sir,' Ninety-nine used to declare; 'Benny Depew is the only real gentleman I know!' Consequently, him and Benny got closer than peas in a pod, and one time, when Ninety-nine came down out o' the hills and called for rum, Benny leln' there a warrint for him, and owlin' for it so often that even Benny was beginnin' to get enough, Ninety-nine got surprisin' gracious.

"'Benny,' said he, 'I don't s'pose you'd give a hooter o' rum to save my enemy?'

"'That sort o' depends,' said Benny. 'Jest this here minute I'd give a gallon o' rum to see it. To-morrow mornin' I have my doubts if I'd give a hooter to see it. A hooter in the mornin' is worth a good deal, Ninety-nine, especially the way I'm goin' to be apt to look at things to-morrow mornin', for instance, said Benny.

"Ninety-nine he laughed and said: 'To-morr'w you go with me and I'll show you my cave, Benny,' said he.

"'Begin' said he I go, but when next mornin' come Ninety-nine's rum had quit talkin' and he wanted to back out.

"'I was only jokin,' he said to Benny.

"'But Benny wouldn't have it, and hung to Ninety-nine so that he had to give in and take Benny along with him. Folks never expected to see Benny agin, for their idee was that Ninety-nine would jest take him somewheres up in the mountains and use one o' them big bowie-knifes on him. But folks was wrong. Two days after Ninety-nine and Benny went away together Benny come dragg'n' himself back, long toward night. He looked as if he might 'a been seen' ghosts, he was so pale and haggard, and his clothes was tattered and his feet was sore. Not a word would Benny say till he had drunk a whole bottle o' rum to get his nerves back. Then he told 'em a story. Ninety-nine walked him into the mountains, he said, pretty much all o' one day, and then they came to the shore of a big pond. Then Ninety-nine blindfolded Benny and walked him sort o' twisty like, till by and by he know'd that they was underground or deep in the rocks somewhere. Ninety-nine took Benny that way for mor'n an hour. Then he took the blindfold off o' Benny.

"'There I was, standin' in a big cave, all lit by as much as a hun'red candles,' said Benny, 'and what I see made me blinder than I was with the blindfold on, it dazzled my eyes so. I jest couldn't stand it. Leln' on the floor was covered with green and red and yellow carpets that I sank into most ankle deep, and all around, in nicks and notches in the rocks was marble statues setch as I had never heard the likes on. Piled here and there and everywhere was heaps o' gold and silver, jest as I might pile up rumpkins in a field. Big strings o' diff'rent thing-hung from the walls, and I had to blink my eyes when I looked at 'em. There was kags full o' shinin' jewels, and Ninety-nine stood by his lone down in one o' them kags and brought up a fistful o' things out of it, and when he let 'em drop back in ag'in they looked like a streak o' flashin fire! Them was di'mon's, Ninety-nine said.

"'And the kags that owned 'em wunst,' said he, 'all had to wait in the plank, Benny, and their bones is washin' to and fro, I s'pose, down to the bottom o' the sea, salt sea.'

"'Ninety-nine,' I said, 'you don't mean to tell me!'

"'That's jest what I mean to tell you, Benny, said Ninety-nine. "Pirates!" said he. "And I'm the last one o' 'em that's livin', and all these glitterin' gems and clinkin' coin, et cettery, is mine."

"Then Benny took to shiverin' and shakin', and Ninety-nine put the blinders on him ag'in and led him forth. He tramped Benny till night fell, and a good while into the night, then halted him. Benny didn't do nothin' but shake and shiver all the rest o' the night, and when day broke he found himself on one o' the highest peaks of the Shawangunks, overlookin' the Mamakating Valley, and Ninety-nine was gone. It took Benny all the rest o' the day to get home, but he marked the way, and he never forg't the pond, and to his dyin' day he declared he could find it an' git straight to Ninety-nine's cave, but he wouldn't do it 'cause the treasure was pirate's stealin's, and he didn't care to have it on his conscience. Ninety-nine wasn't never seen agin, but there ain't no kind o' doubt that his skeleton is layin' there amongst all them glitterin' diadems and shinin' coin.

"So, when Boots Van Steenburgh come back from chasin' Jenny Lin' around the country, I didn't make no bones o' savin' to him:

"'Boots,' said I, 'how could you 'a' got the funds?'

"And from the way Boots acted I know'd that he suspicioned that I had an idee, and he give a wink.

"'Boots,' said I, 'it's Ninety-nine's cave!'

"Then Boots give another wink, and I know'd I was right.

"'Boots,' said I, 'it was handed down from Benny, o' course?'

"But Boots he only give another wink. I know'd I was right, though, and I sot out to get justice for I was jest as much in the line o' Benny as Boots was, and by and by Boots he promised to take me to Ninety-nine's cave some day and let me in on shares, though he wasn't drawin' on it no more as I could see, leln' no use for any, and he might jest as well 'a' took me to it and give me title to the whole heap as to promise me only a share in it. But he kep' puttin' that off, even, and every time I'd run across him and want to know when he was goin' to take me to Ninety-nine's cave and let me make a draft on some o' my share o' the goods he'd only jest give a wink and say that we'd take a trip over that way some these days. And that's the way it kep' on for years and years, till at last I lost every mite o' patience I had, and I sot out to Boots Van Steenburgh and I said to him:

"'Boots,' I said, 'I'm tired o' waitin' for my share in Ninety-nine's cave!' Now, if you don't set me in on it right now, I'll have the law on you for traverin' and appertin' to my property, or sumethin' o' that sort!' I said.

"'But, as true as I tell you, Boots only jest give a wink! Then he see I wasn't to be fooled no more and he said:

"'I'm interested in some along this war next Friday, Peter,' said he. 'Then I'll let you in on all I know about Ninety-nine's cave.'

"'All right,' said I, feelin' joyful. 'I'm tired o' this dilatory business and perprasternation,' said I, 'and I won't put up with it no more.'

"Boots he give another wink and went away. Next Friday come along, but no Boots Van Steenburgh come with it. Then I was just boppin' I went down to where Boots was, the last time I heard of him, with fire in my eye.

"'Where's Boots Van Steenburgh?' I said. 'He promised to come and see me on Friday. Why didn't he come?'

"'Well,' they said, 'the chief and leadin' reason that he didn't come, we s'pose, is that he was dead.'

"Boots Van Steenburgh had gone and died on me, and disappointed me the most outrageous kind! I never would 'a thought o' Boots, with all that clinkin' coin and them flashin' jewels layin' hid in Ninety-nine's cave, which it isn't nowan's likely now that any livin' soul will ever see!"

Which is the plaint of Uncle Peter De Witt of Ulster county, as you will find any day you may meet him in that legendary region and listen to him talk.

AROUND GANSEVOORT MARKET.

Some Things Likely to Engage the Attention of One Who Is a Stranger There.

Many curious things are offered by venders in the city's streets; there is at least one place in the city where curiosities are offered by venders daily, and that is at Gansevoort Market, the gathering place of the market gardeners and farmers who come in from the immediate surrounding territory with vegetables and other farm and garden produce.

Here hundreds of horses with their drivers and owners are assembled daily, and here may be found venders of curry combs and horse brushes and other stable requisites, and men selling trifles and halters and that sort of thing, and men selling whips. A man likely to catch the eye of a stranger in the market is the horseshoer, who goes about doing such work as can be done without a fire; as, for instance, the replacing of a shoe that has been cast. A farmer whose horse should cast a shoe on the way to the city would pick it up and throw it into the wagon and have it replaced when he got to the market; and a city driver, coming to the market for supplies to be carried to the store whence he came, would in similar circumstances do the same. Among so many horses the horseshoer finds practically constant occupation.

There are men here who make a business of watering horses, and find in this, in summer, at least, a fairly profitable employment; and in the neighborhood there are men that make a business of supplying the canvas covers for farmers' wagons.

There are various ways of attracting attention to things offered for sale, as by putting samples in a show window or on the sidewalk. A way that is perhaps peculiar to the place may be seen here at Gansevoort Market. The market occupies an uncovered area some acres in extent, through which run several parallel streets, divided by sidewalks, along which the purchaser afoot may walk. The wagons bringing the produce here, practically all of the familiar market garden type, are provided with a folding carriage top over the seat, which may be raised for the protection of the driver from sun or rain if needed. This top now and then is made use of for the purpose of the display. It is raised, and upon the top of it is placed a generous sample of some article to which it is desired to call attention. In this elevated and comparatively conspicuous place it is likely to be seen across an intervening space by anybody who may be looking perhaps for that particular thing.

SMALL BOYS HARD TO KILL.

SOME OF THEIR ESCAPES RELATED BY CONTRACTORS.

One Who Was Buried Alive and Might Have Supplied a Mystery—Another Who Got the Spanking He Deserved—Cigarette Party in a Dynamite Box—Fun with a Boiler.

Several contractors and builders got to talking the other day about peculiar accidents and remarkable escapes from death or injury which they had observed in their work.

"One of the most singular accidents I ever witnessed," said an old contractor, "occurred on a piece of work I was doing up in the Bronx a couple of years ago. I had the contract for laying a large water main and had the street opened up for several blocks. We had laid the pipe, which was a large one, and had begun to fill up the trench. The pipe did not rest upon the bottom of the trench, but each joint was placed upon a brick and cement foundation, and under the pipe, between joints, there was a space of about eight inches between it and the bottom of the trench. About 10 o'clock in the morning I went to a drug store a few blocks down the street to get a cigar. As I entered the drug store I saw a little boy about 6 years old running upon the pile of dirt alongside the trench. He was a bright little fellow, well dressed, with long flaxen curls about his head, and was having a good time kicking the dirt and stones into the trench. I spoke to him and cautioned him about the danger of falling in the trench and getting hurt. He stopped an instant, laughed and ran on. He had gone only a few feet when he stumbled and rolled down the pile of dirt into the trench. I was provoked that he should be there, and fully expecting him to scramble up again, went into the drug store.

"I remained in the drug store about ten minutes, and coming out, was going to the trench to see if the boy was there, but before I reached it I saw, as I supposed, the same little boy brushing off his clothes about half a block away. I dismissed the matter from my mind and went up the street to where the men were filling in. In a short time I thought of the incident again, and try as I would I could not dismiss it, though I was sure I had seen the boy brushing off his clothes unharmed. The men were rapidly filling in the trench and had reached the spot where the little boy had fallen. After they had partly covered the pipe, I could not feel easy about the boy's fate, and spoke to the foreman about it. He only laughed at me and assured me that the kid was not there.

"In order to satisfy myself I determined to have the dirt removed and see if by any remote possibility I had been mistaken about seeing him brushing off his clothes when I left the drug store.

"I ordered the filling in stopped and told the men to remove the dirt from the pipe at this point. They hadn't been at work ten minutes when one of them unearthed a little white hand and a flaxen curl of hair. In a few moments we had all the dirt removed, and there the boy lay lengthwise under the pipe, insensible and almost dead. We carried him to the drug store, where a physician restored him to consciousness. We questioned him when he had regained consciousness and he told us that when he fell into the trench he hit his head on the pipe and remembered nothing afterward. Here was a case where there came very nearly being a mysterious disappearance. We learned afterward that he had run away from home and when last seen by any one who knew him was several blocks from where the accident occurred. Nobody saw him fall but myself. And, furthermore, in all probability I would never have heard or read of his disappearance, as the next day I went aboard a yacht with some friends and for three weeks was out of the reach of newspapers. Had I not stopped the work and began the search the mystery would never have been cleared up.

"That reminds me, said another contractor, "of a case of nearly a similar character. I was laying a big water main. We had completed the job and were filling up the trench. Where the pipe ended we were obliged to put a board covering over the end, as work on the next section had not been started and probably would not be for some time. We had filled in the entire trench and placed the big board covering over the end and had partly filled up the hole with dirt when, we heard a few cry from the pipe. The workmen were frightened for a moment. Finally the foreman recovered presence of mind enough to order them to remove the dirt and boards and see what was in the pipe. When they had done so out crawled about as thoroughly frightened a boy as I ever saw. He said he had crawled into the pipe in the afternoon to hide from his companions and had fallen asleep and was only awakened by the noise of the dirt and stones falling against the boards covering on the end of the pipe. His mother had passed along about the time. When she learned what had occurred she set down her market basket, picked up a lath and treated us to an exhibition of how a boy should be properly spanked. She did the job in artistic style and when she concluded for want of breath that boy had the fact impressed upon his mind that a man in a big water main was against the rules of the family."

"Three small boys, said another member, "gave a scare and had a record just summer as I ever had in my life, and if I had caught any one of the three I would have administered a spanking which would have been up to all the contract requirements of a well-regulated family. I had been doing a piece of work uptown near a large open lot, and the small boys of the neighborhood used to bother us by interfering with the drills and other tools when the workmen were not about. One rainy morning about a week before the Fourth of July the crowd had been annoying the watchman by firing off firecrackers about the place. As the men were not working on account of the rain the boys had been having a gay time, and about 11 o'clock I came up to the place to prepare to set the men to work at 1 o'clock, as it looked like clearing up. I found the watchman drunk in the front room of a saloon and after I had berated him for his negligence we proceeded toward the place.

"To our horror we saw the lid of the large box where our dynamite was stored partly open and propped up with a stick, and from out the box were coming little puffs of smoke. We ran for our lives until we had reached a safe distance and awaited the outcome. As there were four pounds of dynamite and about fifty pounds of black powder stored in that box, neither of us would have gone near it for any amount of money. Our first thought was that those boys had set fire to some rubbish in the box with their firecrackers. We warned every one who came near and did all we could to avoid an accident. After waiting about ten minutes in breathless expectation of a terrific explosion, we saw three youngsters stick up their heads and peep out, each one with a cigarette in his mouth. We made a run for those youngsters, and they jumped and scampered away. If the watchman had been sober and I had been about 125 pounds lighter and twenty-five years younger we might have caught those little scamps, but beer, age and avoirdupois were against us and they got away.

"I also had my trouble with boys and careless watchmen, said another member of the party. "Early last summer I had a job up in the Bronx, and as I had been away from the place all one day, I took a drive up there with my wife that evening about 8 o'clock. When I got in sight of the place I saw about dirty half-grown boys about the engine and derrick. The boiler was blowing off steam at a fearful rate and the derrick was tugging away with a two-ton rock twenty feet in the air. The whole scene, in the dusky shadows of last