

THE THREE PARTNERS;

Or, The Big Strife on Heavy Tree Hill.

Written for The Evening Star, BY BRET HARTE.

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Chapter III—Continued From Last Saturday.

He was obliged to look up at her as she rose. Mrs. Horncastle was sitting erect, beautiful and dazzling as ever...

"I really think you are quite right," she said, rising also, "and, besides, you see, it will give me a chance to talk to her as you wish."

"To talk to her as I wished," echoed Barker, abstractedly.

"Yes, about Van Loo, you know," said Mrs. Horncastle, smiling.

"Oh, certainly, about Van Loo, of course," he returned, hurriedly.

"And then," said Mrs. Horncastle, brightly, "I'll tell her, Stacy," she interrupted herself hurriedly.

"Why, indeed?" said Barker, vaguely. Yet all this was so unlike his usual truthfulness that he slightly hesitated.

"Yes, about Van Loo, you know," said Mrs. Horncastle, smiling.

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with a swindling hypocrite. And from this room the only man in the world she ever cared for had gone forth bewildered, wronged and abused, and she knew how she could have kept and comforted him.

Chapter IV. When Philip Demorest left the stage coach at the Cross Roads he turned into the only wayside house...

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thought of it with a gravity he had not felt before. He wondered who had named it. There was no suggestion of the soft, sensuous elegance of the land he had left in those great heretics of nature before...

And now the buildings of the new settlement began to faintly appear. But the obscurity of the shadow and the equally disturbing uncertainty of the moonlight confused him in his attempts to recognize the old landmarks.

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thing new. But here he comes," he added, as a horseman dashed into the drive before him. "Quintus!"

And you, George's old boy," returned Demorest, swinging Barker's two hands backward and forward, "were holding a royal flush up yours in the shape of your conquests over the moonlight."

Then they fell upon the supper with the appetites of the past, and for some moments all talked eagerly and even noisily together, all at the same time, with a slow and stolid deliberation...

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their old attitudes, looking from the firelight to the distant bulk of Black Spur and back to the moonlight. "You know you and she always get along best without me," he said.

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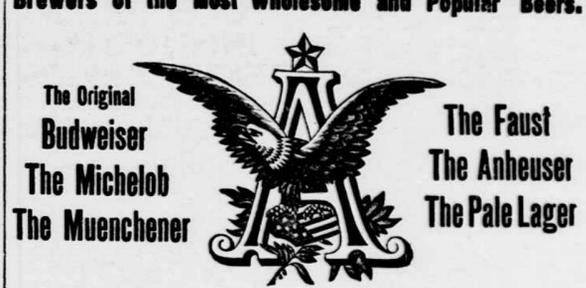
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