LOT 104.

WRITTEN FOR THE EVENING STAR BY BERNARD E. J. CAPES.

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Mr. George George, house surgeon at the Brantham-by-the-Sea cottage hospital, had acquitted himself with impunity of a traditionally fatal enterprise—he had drawn with his lips the poison from a clogged tube in a case of diphtheria and had suffered no ill effects as a consequence. This was to stand remarkable, not for the act—which had infinite noble precedent—but for its sequel; yet, three days after the event, the young doctor would recall his deed with little else than a warmth of professional pride as over the successful conduct of a case.

But then, it is true, he had some engrossing personal matters to occupy that much of the attention he could spare from his patients, matters that were to reach their curious culminating point, during the course of his third day, in a contretemps that would appear to have been designed of Providence for the express acknowledgment of merit. Introductorily and essentially to the context, it may be premised that George George was young; that he was without money or substantial interest; that he had all the world to win.

His present post, his first, was just sufficiently remunerative to enable him to live unharassed of creditors. He had been fortunate in procuring it through the recommendation of a great uncle, who was also an inhabitant of Brantham and a trustee to the estates of the hospital itself; and under the aegis of this worthy the house surgeon had already passed the first of his year of office, when suddenly his patron and relative died.

Now, this, doubtless, was a matter for all decent regret; and it shall be said that the deceased's grand nephew was affecting no more than he felt (and that was honest measure, for he had had a liking for the old gentleman) when he was informed, to his utter astonishment, that his uncle had left him by will everything of which he had died possessed.

The shock was as genially stunning as is unexpected applause to an incipient orator; the reaction as depressing as might be the discovery on the part of such orator that he had been cried up ironically. For, so it appeared, George George had been bequeathed, in all inspiring phraseology, a heritage of—emptiness.

How this was so became at once apparent. The departed trustee had been a government pensioner. His income died with him. While he lived, this had either sufficed simply for his wants, or else he had been—and such was his reputation—a deplorable skinflint. Results, however, would not appear to substantiate the latter charge. No securities, no dividend warrants, no personal estate or hoarded capital were disinterred from chest or bureau after the most uncommon investigation. His pension, it appeared, had rounded off at either end the testator's financial position, and the disappointed legatee had at last to face his disillusionment and accept his inheritance for what it was worth. This was little enough, in all conscience—a trifle of money at the bank, the almost moribund leasehold of a house in Bridge street and the furniture and personal effects (all of indifferent value) therein contained. The unhappy doctor's momentary dreams of being able to realize his best ambition by purchasing a practice at the termination of his year of office were dissolved into thin air.

Now, it was no good starting a grievance against fate because his holiday mood had received a drenching, so to speak. It was not like him, moreover, to do so. He simply made the best of a disappointing job, and straightway put up to auction the whole of the household paraphernalia (which, in view of the near expiration of the lease, could be of no earthly use to him), with the object of converting it into at least an inconsiderable nucleus of capital.

Even here, however, disenchantment seemed to wait upon him. The day of the sale—conducted on the premises by Bull & Hacker—was chill and swampy; the attendance was poor; the bidding spiritless and inefficient.

The doctor—as before introduced, with the modest memory of his deed of heroism overclouded by present preoccupation—looked in during the course of the afternoon to see how matters were progressing. As to that, he was seized at once with a discomfortable conviction. The lots were being knocked down with as cheap a jocularity as if they were skittles in an alley. Several, while he waited, were sold for an "old song," and it was the barb in the sting to him, as always to the uninitiated, to observe in each that incongruous association of objects, presumably much better offered apart, that it is the irreverent humor of auctioneers to exhibit in their tabulating of the household gods.

Item: A coal scuttle, a scent fountain, two clothes horses and sundries (the latter inclusive, apparently, of a charwoman's bonnet, and a framed photograph of somebody's aunt, in a crinoline, standing by an Ionic pedestal), six shillings. Item: A camp washstand, three dish covers and a purdonium (which turned out to be nothing but the coal scuttle over again), two shillings. Item: Plaque, "The Wandering Jew" (a fanciful description evolved out of the fine genius of the auctioneer's clerk, inasmuch as the figure was obviously and even aggressively feminine—probably a Hecate), painted in a flower pot saucer by an amateur. But it fetched a good price, three and sixpence. Item: An ormolu and bronzed three-light gasalier.

At this point something of a brisk rally occurred in the bidding. It was at the instance of a stranger, who, upon the calling of the lot (104 was its number), swiftly detached himself from the gloom of the outer ring of bystanders and pushed his way to the front, with an evident eye to business. He was a man of a certain professional cast, strongly built, loud, in the style of those who are accustomed to appeal forcibly to audiences. His face was flaccid, like veal; his anointed curls, his eyebrows and the blot of hair on his under lip were of a Brunswick black. His portly form was encased in a long threadbare overcoat with a sham Astrakhan collar, and on his head he wore at a rakish angle a scrupulously groomed silk hat with a preposterous curl of brim.

Mr. Hacker, the junior partner, who officiated at the rostrum in all second-class affairs, and who might even have pleaded guilty to some little weaknesses of collusion in sales technically known as "knockouts," noted the newcomer with the tail of his eye and moistened his ferrety lips in foretaste of the blood his instinct told him he might expect to draw.

"For this excellent ormolu and bronze three-light gasalier," said he. "Now, gentlemen, name a price."

"Three bob," said a facetious broker.

"Four," snapped out the stranger.

"Five," "six," "seven," "eight," "nine," "ten," was run up rapidly in a monosyllabic duel. Then came a pause, the stranger having the last word.

"Ten shillings," said the auctioneer reproachfully; "this particularly elegant three-light ormolu gasalier going for ten shillin's! Come, gentlemen, isn't there one of you'll make an advance on the bid? Genuine ormolu and bronze and fit for a ducal drawing room!"

He looked from face to face, and poised his little mallet tentatively.

"Ten shillins'!" he repeated. His tone was that of a protesting incredulity. He might have been a convicted innocent hearing himself sentenced to ten years' penal servitude. One longed almost to assure this good man that he was only being made the victim of a hoax. Then he essayed humor, the humor of the rostrum, that, like that of the bench, sounds such a depressingly blank cartridge in the report.

"Why, the weights alone are worth the money! Take 'em off my mind, gentlemen. Come, say a sovereign. Won't any one go an advance on 10 shillin's? It's without reserve, gentlemen. There's no call for this extreme modesty."

He conned the blank faces once more, and shrugged his shoulders as if to repudiate all responsibility in so senseless a fiasco. The little hammer in his hand rose slowly like that of a clock about to strike—lingered on the fall in a quick inspiration.

"Take him on, Charley," whispered a neighbor broker to the other. "He's fly."

"One pound."

"One pound ten," said the stranger.

"Two pounds."

"Two pounds one."

There was a murmur of protest. The auctioneer bent over his desk courteously.

"The conditions of sale," he said, "above two pounds, no advance under two shillin's."

"Two pound ten, then," said the stranger.

The languid room woke to a sense of the humor of the situation.

"Three pounds," said the broker.

The stranger looked around defiantly.

"It's what I want," he said. "It'll soot my show, and I mean to have it."

There were cries of "Order! Order!" and the room echoed with a ripple of laughter over this fatuous admission.

"Four pound," said the stranger, immovably.

"It goes against my conscience," thought George George, "to profit by this victimizing of a fool."

He waited while they ran the fool up from six to ten pounds, and there, frightened, perhaps, by the magnitude of the issue, they let the joke lapse and chuckled themselves hoarse over the richness of the climax.

Ten pounds for a frame of indifferent old metal! It was an exhibition of tenacity all upon the insensate side.

The stranger seemed neither elated nor depressed by the result. He went and stood by his property until he could pay for and remove it, indifferently the cynosure of eyes that humored their own derision of him a little covertly, in that they were conscious of a certain truculence in the expression of those under the unspeakable hat brim.

The bidding, after this momentary effervescence of excitement, fell to a more dismal level of ineffectiveness than it had suffered hitherto. Very soon the person most interested in it tired of the reiteration of lame conclusions and returned to his work, more impressed than ever with the vanity of impulsive optimism. He busied himself over his cases and other matters for an hour or two, losing in occupation all but the shadowy memory of his disappointment, then went home for the cup of tea that is the solace to much heroic desperation. He had no living quarters at the hospital, but his dull lodgings were near at hand, and for them he made with a new distaste for their meanness that was half humor, half chagrin. His tiny sitting room was lapped in darkness, for the fire was sunk to a mere belated spark, and the gas was turned down in the insufferable chandelier. With his fingers on the cock, George dwelt a moment in retrospection on the queer little episode of the afternoon.

"Well," he thought, "it is ten pounds of eccentricity, at least, in my pocket."

His hand moved—the room leapt into light, and there before him on the hearth-rug were standing—man and gasalier—the actual subjects of his meditations.

He jumped, he couldn't help it, then in an instant, with a violent effort, forced his nerves under control.

"What, the ——!" he began—and stopped.

The stranger (placing his large hat on the table) bowed, with an expansive motion of his finger tips from his mouth, as if he were caressing outward the ends of a long mustache. Professionally this manner of salutation may be interpreted to signify the "blowing a kiss" to applause. Then he put one hand akimbo and waved the other grandiosely to the gasalier at his side.

"You're Dr. George?" said he.

"Certainly."

"Then, doctor, I've took the liberty of bringing you a little present."

"But, my good sir—"

"Hush!" said the stranger; and he went to the door on tip-toe and carefully shut and locked it.

"It's absolutely plain," thought the dismayed practitioner, "I guessed it at the auction, and here's confirmation. This person is an escaped lunatic."

The stranger had returned to the rug and his property. An odd smile was on his face. He thrust one hand, Napoleonic, into the breast of his coat.

"Sir," he began.

"There's nothing for it, then, but to humor him," thought the doctor.

He advanced and dragged forward his old elbow chair—wintry as the evening, by token of its long-vanished spring—from its corner by the fire.

"Sit down," said he.

"No, sir," said the stranger, promptly, "sooner in the presence of royhalty than in yours!"

"O!" exclaimed the other, in a helpless voice.

"I were scurvy tempted," said the visitor. "I were scurvy tempted; I'll own up fair. It's fortun' against the apple of my eye, says I; and thank God the man in me rose to the occasion, and the apple wins."

Mr. George recovered his decision and his professional manner. "That'll do," he said. "Now, my good fellow, come to the point and state your business."

"Immediately his hands were seized in an emotional grasp.

"I could kiss 'em!" cried the stranger; "s'elp me, I could kiss 'em and cry!"

The doctor wrenched himself free, so roughly that the man staggered.

"Give me a moment, sir," pleaded the latter.

He passed the back of his hand across his eyes. To George's astonishment these swam with unmistakable tears.

"I'll come to the point," murmured the visitor. Then he gulped, produced a crimson bandanna, blew his nose sonorously, and spoke up over a cushion of handkerchief:

"I'm own dad," said he, "to little Jemmy Montagu as is down with the dipthiery."

With the words the doctor's fog of indignant bewilderment began to dissipate. A little flush came to his cheek.

"Why didn't you say so before?" he protested. "Well, the boy's mending."

"Thanks to you, sir—thanks to the noblest act as ever merited a father's gratitood and the applause of a full house of saints."

"Pooh!" said George.

"Ah!" said the man, gasping and wiping his eyes. "Him was as was good to do it is good to say pooh to it, no doubt. I've been told the facts, sir. You saved my lad's life at the risk of your own. I say, God bless you for it, and I say He's blessed me, too, by showin' me how to rise and reward you out of the pit of my own temptation."

"I want no reward," said the doctor, rather sharply. "But it will be something of one to me to hear your adequate explanation of why you have not hitherto, to my knowledge, been near the hospital since your boy was brought to it."

"Could I help it, sir? I must move on and keep the pot a bilin'. I swear I never guessed at Jemmy's danger. I come back here the moment I were free. S'help me, you dunno what it is to tumble for a livin' and your heart burstin' with anxiety."

"To tumble? You are a mountebank, then?"

"I'm a hacrobat, sir! a street hacrobat, else I might never have been put in the way to reward Jemmy's benefactor."

"I have told you I want no reward. You can't understand that, in a case like this, success is its own."

The acrobat shook his head.

"It's your individual lawful property," he said. "I'm only the unworthy instrument under providence, whose ways is past telling. To think that you should be the heir to that very identical house I've had my heye on a six-month. It were no chance, I'll swear, but a dispensation as learned me the truth at the last moment."

He turned to the gasalier.

"Here it is," he went on. "I brought it down in a cab the moment I could lay hands on it. Now, look!"

The young doctor, still in two minds as to his visitor's sanity, advanced no further protest, but stood dumbly watching. From the ancient lumber the acrobat detached one of the three bulky ormolu weights that lay upon the rug at the end of their chains. He raised it in his hands.

"Heavy, ain't it?" said he; and, placing it on the table, unhooked and deposited its two companions by its side.

"Now," said he, "if this don't answer to my expectations, I'm——"

Too suddenly flurried to finish the sentence, he seized a weight and held it between his knees, with the action of one drawing a recalcitrant cork from a bottle.

"Ah!" he cried, triumphantly, and came erect, rapidly unscrewing a sort of stopper from the crown of the thing.

And then a "wonder came to light," for before George George's astonished eyes a clinking rain of gold pieces fell and scattered from a hollow vessel upon the table.

"Good!" chuckled the acrobat. "And now for the other two!"

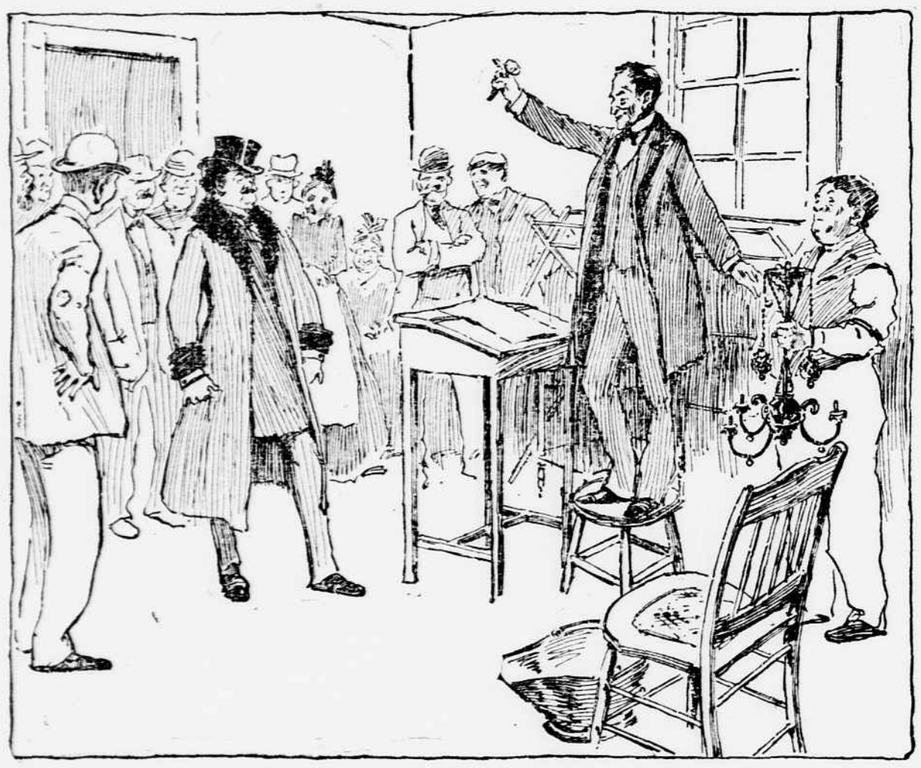
"Nine hundred and seventy-five pounds," said Mr. Montagu, looking up breathlessly from a swift calculation. "All yours, sir, every penny of it, by will. Oh, I've learned the facts, and it's not a proportion of what you deserve."

"Tell me how you knew," said George George, speaking as if in a dream.

"That's explained in a sentence," answered the acrobat, stoutly. "Top balancing is part of my business. D'ye know what that means? No? Listen to this, then: My mate holds a pole perpendicular from a pocket in his belt, and up it I goes and balances. I sees a-many things in course through fust-floor winders—things not always meant for me. That was the case in the present instance. We was comin' down Bridge street last July in the dog days, and stopped outside your uncle's house. The sash was up, for air. I see the old man shut into his room, gloatin' over his wealth, and I see the secret of his hidin' place. It were an instantaneous pictur', revealed to me in a flash; then the old screw made me out sudden, and rushed, with a hoath, and snatched down the blind. It struck a rare impression on me. I thought of it for months. When Jemmy was a-tumbling with all his little soul put into it: 'Ah, my lad!' I'd cogitate; 'if I could be present at the sale o' that old lick-penny's effects some day I don't doubt I could leave ye a fortun'.' The fancy so dwelt with me that somehow I've made out my season ever since in the neighborhood of this here watering place; and that's how my boy come to your horspital. It's a fact, sir; and now hear the end. This very mornin', hurryin' back from a week's tower on my way to visit Jemmy, I passed the house that had been so long in my thoughts, and see the sale of its effects advertised for 1 o'clock. It caught me by the throat like a shower bath. 'By gum!' says I, 'now or never;' and I went in, took stock of the very article—standin' there, sure enough, as innocent as emptiness—and felt myself a made man. Then I come on to the horspital and learned the truth of everything. It was common talk this of your barren windfall. Jemmy himself knew all about it, and told me he did. Very well, 'Mr. Montagu,' thinks I. 'You're either a devil or a human, and you've got to prove yourself.' Have I done so, sir? But, after all, it ain't much puttin' you in the way of your own in exchange for Jemmy's life."

Upon minute investigation there seemed to evolve itself, from obscure documentary evidence, a hint that George George's great-uncle had contemplated, amidst vain procrastination, the drawing up of a clue to the treasure's hiding place for the ultimate benefit of his inheritor. Whether or no this were the case, two indisputable claims followed the discovery—the living young man's to the property; the dead miser's to a no longer disputed character for parsimony.

As for Mr. Montagu, beyond a reluctant consent to receive back the £10 ventured by him in the service of Jemmy's benefactor, he steadfastly and persistently declined to accept for his probity any part, great or little, of the disinterred gold. And in this resolve we must hold him right.



THE LANGUID ROOM WOKE TO A SENSE OF THE HUMOR OF THE SITUATION.

SOME QUAINT EPITAPHS.

Old-Time Verses Still to Be Seen in a Connecticut Cemetery.

The setting sun, burnishing the golden dome of Hartford's capitol and throwing the angel on the apex as a silhouette against the sky, made the whispering old elms cast their lengthening shadows across the grass of Hartford's oldest churchyard, where

"Each in his narrow cell forever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep."

On several occasions I had gazed from my hotel-room window, overlooking the peaceful scene, and longed for a space of time to tread the "hallowed ground." This evening the time was to spare. Passing up "Gold street," a complete lucus a non lucendo, as shown by the shabby, broken-down houses, on one of which was the legend, "Lodgings, 10 cents," I turned the corner and came upon the front of the church. Essaying entrance into the churchyard on one side the way was barred by a pretentious and forbidding iron fence. But on the other side entrance was gained by a breach in a brick wall. To the right was the church; to the left the ruined buildings on Gold street. The place, the hour, the view, brought to mind the scene in Bleak House, in which Joe pilots Lady Dedlock, in the "gownd and wale," to the old cemetery where her lost lover sleeps. As I entered the place of rest, where the gloom of twilight was beginning to quietly steal amid the silent tombs, a black cat came softly leaping about from stone to stone—the superstitious might think a familiar of some one long gone, for it has been many years since this intra-mural graveyard has been used.

Interest and curiosity both were aroused at the falling stones and the quaint epitaphs, messages from the long-forgotten dead. Some were special to the one interred; others were addressed to the indifferent passer-by.

A bereaved widower, in his effort to find a rhyme for his wife's maiden name, leaves it to be inferred that her remains will stay, though he should go on his travels, thus:

"Here Lies Intered
Ye Body of Mrs Sarah
Joy Wife of Mr
John Joy Who De
parted This Life
March 10th 1764 in ye
34th Year of her Age.
Tho I should Go
To Foreign Land
Here Lies my Dear
Once Southerland
But we shall meet
In God I trust
At ye Resurrection
Of ye Just."

Another epitaph informs us that the deceased was a mother who was buried in 1772, "with 10 of her children by her side who all Died Soon After they ware Born." This must have been the veritable "old woman who lived in a shoe, she had so many children she did not know what to do."

Another epitaph, the oldest in the cemetery, of "Captain Thomas Bull, who died Oct. 1684," and who was "well sick, dead in one hour's space. Engrave the remembrance of death on thine heart whenas thou dost see how swiftly Hours Depart."

Another, dated 1757, is:

"May faithful Angels guard thy mouldering Dust
Until the general Meeting of the Just
Then rise Triumphant from the dark Abode
To Realms of Light, to Love and Praise thy God."

One of the date of 1763:

"Death is a debt
to Nature Due
which I have paid
& So Must You."

One of the date of 1777:

"Time was like you I life possessed
And time shall be when you will rest."

Another, of the date of 1783:

"Behold my Friend as you pass by
as you are now, so once was I
as I am now so you must be
Prepare for Death and follow me."

But the gem of the collection was an epitaph above the grave of a young married man of twenty-nine years, who was drowned at sea:

"Drowned in the glory of his years
And left his mate
to drown herself in tears."

Leaving the old churchyard and its silent tenants, next morning I sped to Saybrook, at the mouth of the Connecticut river, to await a Shore Line train. Saybrook was the original location of Yale College, and near the river brink stood an old fort. Its first commander was Col. Fenwick. His wife, Lady Fenwick in her own right, was the first white woman to die in Connecticut. She was buried on the edge of the fort in 1648.

But time passed on; the railroad, that destroyer of the antique and annihilator of the past, came to Saybrook. The fort was demolished to make way for a round house. Lady Fenwick's grave was desecrated. Her remains, consisting of the larger bones and her plaited hair in a wonderful state of preservation, were removed to the old cemetery on the hill, and above them placed the old tombstones, a semi-oval slab upon several vertical supports, with the inscription: "Lady Fenwick, 1648."

In this cemetery are many old gravestones with inscriptions nearly obliterated. One in ood state of preservation is this:

"Here Lyeth the Body of the Revd
Mr. Azariah Mather Born at
Windsor August 29th, 1685. Expired in
Saybrook Febry 11, 1736, Aetatis suae 52.
He was a faithful minister
a generall scholar an eminent
Christian a very great sufferer
But now in glory a triumpher.
He many weeks felt Death's attacks
But fervent prayers kept him Back
His faith and patience was to try
& learn us how to Live and Die
Haveing the wings of faith and Love
& Feathers of an holy Dove
he bids this wretched world adieu
& swiftly up to Heaven flew
Disturb not then his Precious Dust
Witn censors that are most unjust."

If the deceased had been a "generall scholar" it is safe to affirm that he did not write his own epitaph; and yet, standing in this old-time graveyard with the dust of the forgotten forefathers moldering around, the man of today must overlook the faults and errors of composition in the epitaph and consider only that old-world spirit which looked up through the mist of death and saw the clear light of the hereafter. S.

Many birds form their sounds without opening their bills. The pigeon is a well-known instance of this. Its cooing can be distinctly heard, although it does not open its bill. The call is formed internally in the throat and chest, and is only rendered audible by resonance. Similar ways may be observed in many birds and other animals. The clear, loud call of the cuckoo, according to one naturalist, is the resonance of a note formed in the bird. The whirring of the snipe, which betrays the approach of the bird to the hunter, is an act of ventriloquism. Even the nightingale has certain notes which are produced internally, and which are audible while the bill is closed.

Water is a very good transmitter of sound. A scientist by the name of Calladon made some experiments on Lake Geneva, Switzerland, to demonstrate the power of sound to travel a long way in water. A clock was made to strike under the water, and was heard to a distance of twelve miles. In a second experiment the striking of a clock was heard to a distance of twenty-seven.

Mamma—"Dear me, Nellie! How have you torn that great hole in your pinafore? It wasn't there this morning."

Nellie—"Where do you suppose it was, then, mammie, dear?"—Punch.

by Joel Chandler Harris

PART X.

Hodo Gets His Blood Up.

Old Scar-Face would have had quite a shivery feeling if he had known that the wailing cry he heard was the voice of Mr. Collingsworth's Music, telling the rest of the hounds that she had discovered the drag of a fox. Although Joe Maxwell, with Buster John behind him, and Hodo trotting in a dignified way at his horse's heels, had gone directly into the public road by way of the gate near the spring, the rest of the huntsmen, led by the White-Haired Master, went through the gin house lot. The dogs, delighted to be free once more, and enthusiastic over the prospect of a chase, went galloping about the place, nosing in every corner; not because they expected to find the scent of a fox thereabouts, but because it is their nature.

It fell to the lot of Music to pass near the spot where Old Scar-Face had caught the hen the night before. A few feathers were lying scattered about. These Music investigated, and immediately her nose made an important discovery. A fox had passed that way! Whereupon she lifted up her voice to warn the whole pack. Some responded, while others thought it was a piece of folly, and went trotting along about their business. But Music persisted.

Mr. Collingsworth stopped his horse and listened. "That's the fox as sure as the world," said he.

"Pooh!" cried Mr. Dennis, contemptuously; "you've been training your dogs with a catskin. Call the silly creature off, or you will have all the dogs going at full cry after a neighborhood tomcat."

Just then Mr. Dennis' Ruth put in. "What did I tell you?" he insisted. If there's a fox within a radius of five miles this chase of a tomcat will scare him out of the country."

"Wait!" said Mr. Kilpatrick; "I hear Whalebone trying to whimper, and I know mighty well he's not interested in cats."

The rain had taken a good deal of the snap out of the drag, Joe Maxwell explained to Buster John afterward, but the hounds knew their business. They flung themselves about, trying to hit upon a fresher scent, but finally worked back to the gin house, from the gin house to the road, and along the road to the bars. They worked very quietly. Music's warning wails had not been repeated, but she, as well as the rest, knuckled down to business, working with occasional whines and half barks.

Joe Maxwell and Buster John had already arrived at the bars that opened into the sedge field. When Hodo saw that all the rest of the hounds were coming in his direction he lost his dignity so far as to examine the ground near the bars.

"If that fox was fool enough to go down to the barn during the night he's fool enough to stay in this field until he heard Music bark awhile ago. If that's so, he'll never run ahead of the dogs any more." This was Joe Maxwell's conclusion.

Old Fountain, somewhat belated (for his going had not been decided on till the last moment) came galloping up, riding a mule, dismounted and flung down the bars. Somehow it seemed to Buster John that flinging down the bars had brought daylight, for as the last one fell he looked about him and everything was plainly visible. He could see the rest of the hunters coming along the lane that led from the gin house lot, and he could see Hodo cantering rapidly toward the pine thicket, where he had seen Old Scar-Face.

"When he's up, where does he run?" Joe Maxwell asked Fountain.

"Straight to'rds de p'int er woods 'cross yander, an' den he b'ars ter de lef', allers ter de lef'."

At this instant Hodo gave a fierce challenge, to which Joe Maxwell responded with a cheerful halloo that brought all the dogs into the field with their heads up. The clouds had now blown away from the east, and the level beams of the rising sun fell upon the tops of the pines.

"Name er de Lord! Look at dat dog!" exclaimed Old Fountain. Hodo had issued from the clump of pines and was now leaping in the air above the level of the sedge and running wildly about. The rest of the dogs were even more excited. They ran around, giving tongue and acting as if the fox was right under their noses. But Hodo suddenly ceased his antics, challenged twice and was away, followed by the whole pack, their voices rhyming and chiming in the crisp morning air. Involuntarily Buster John squeezed Joe Maxwell as hard as he could. He was deliriously happy.

He felt a pang, however, when he saw the rest of the hunters galloping helter-skelter after the dogs, while he and Joe Maxwell were ambling along in a direction that seemed gradually to lead away from them. Butterfly, however, was running toward a hill in which the sedge field culminated, and from this point a wide expanse of country lay under the eye.

Joe Maxwell looked at his watch and found that only five minutes had passed since Hodo had led the hunt away from the clump of pines near which old Scar-Face made his home. The young man gave Butterfly his head, and in a few moments had reached the top of the hill, which, though not high, was the highest point for many miles. The sun, shining at their backs, threw a flood of yellow light on the hunt. Buster John could see his grandfather, tall and straight, riding after the hounds, flanked on either side by the rest of the huntsmen, while Old Fountain brought up the rear, belaboring his mount with a brush broken from some convenient tree.

The dogs could be heard, but they were not in sight. They were running through the point of woods to which Old Fountain had referred. While Buster John was looking at the hunters Joe Maxwell ran his eye along the horizon to the left and caught sight of the fox going as swiftly as the shadow of a flying bird. He tried to show this swiftly moving shadow to Buster John, and finally succeeded, and then it vanished.

"Great goodness!" exclaimed Maxwell, gleefully, "he must have stopped to catch a rat. What is he thinking about? He won't last forty minutes."

"Why, he's a mile or more ahead of the dogs," said Buster John.

"A mile and a quarter," admitted Maxwell, measuring the distance with his eye. "Wait till I send word to Hodo."

Prompt as an echo a black shadow hurled itself from the woods and went careering across the open country. Joe Maxwell raised himself in his stirrups, placed both hands to his mouth, and uttered three short, sharp, shrill yells that cut through the air like a whip lash. Hodo answered with a roar and seemed to grow smaller. Certainly he increased his speed. The rest of the dogs, headed by Whalebone, Ruth and Music, were by this time well out of the woods, and the hunters, who were not far away, cheered them on. They were running beautifully, and Joe Maxwell could afford to say so.

"They'll not be far away when the end comes," he remarked. "And if that old fox has any grit in him, he'll be caught somewhere between this hill and the point of woods the dogs came out of."

"Why, he's running away from here," cried Buster John.

"Of course," said Joe Maxwell, "and before many minutes have passed he'll discover that he can't play the old game. Of course, if this isn't the old fox we're after we'll never see the dogs catch him. They'll be coming back presently, and we'll have to see if there's any hair between their teeth. If it is the old fox, he'll run away till he hears Hodo close at hand, and then he'll get scared and try to reach home again."

"The rest are following the dogs," said Buster John, ruefully, as he saw them galloping in the sunlight.

"And you are sorry you're not with 'em," suggested Joe Maxwell. "Well, they'll see no more of the race than we have seen, even if we're after the wrong fox. If we are after the right one, we'll probably have him ready for their inspection by the time they get back. But we're not going to stand here," he said, reassuringly. "We are going to gallop over there and be ready to put Hodo right at his heels when he comes back."

This they did. In fact, as Butterfly was chafing at the bit, Joe Maxwell let him have his head on the firm Bermuda turf, and he went flying along in a way that thrilled Buster John. A mile of this sort of traveling was enough to satisfy Butterfly's ambition for awhile, and he was willing to stand quietly when his rider finally drew rein.

The dogs could be heard running far away, their voices borne back on the morning breeze like the echoes of melodious complainings. Joe Maxwell looked at his watch again. The hunt had been going on twenty minutes.

"That's the right fox," said the young fellow, "and he's pretty game, or he would have made his double before this."

Finally the dogs went out of hearing altogether, and Buster John took advantage of that fact to follow with his finger on Maxwell's leg the entire outline of the triple loop by means of which old Scar-Face had been in the habit of throwing his pursuers off.

"If he had an hour's start," said Maxwell, "this would have been a pretty performance, but he's had his work cut out for him this morning. Maybe he was making one of his loops beyond the point of woods yonder. Yes, sir! That's just what he was up to! The dogs came out of the woods not twenty-five yards from where they went in."

"Suppose the dogs have caught him?" suggested Buster John, who was all for action.

"No; they're coming back," replied Maxwell.

"I don't hear them," said Buster John.

"Nor I," Maxwell admitted; "but Butterfly does."

And sure enough the thin and sensitive ears of the horse pointed forward, and he was listening intently. Presently a murmuring, singing sound was heard, like the humming of bees. It grew louder by degrees, and seemed to be coming nearer and nearer.

"He's due here pretty soon, if he's on schedule time," said Joe Maxwell, in a low voice. "Keep perfectly still. Don't move. I want you to see how Hodo manages this sort of thing."

As the dogs topped a distant hill their voices sounded like a clash of cymbals, with full brass band accompaniment. They seemed to be nearer than they really were.

"Yonder he comes," said Buster John, under his breath. He had his hand on Joe Maxwell's arm, and he indicated the position of Old Scar-Face with his thumb.

The old fox was running bravely. He showed none of the usual symptoms of defeat or even fatigue. His brush was well up, and he was going very nimbly and rapidly. He soon disappeared, and the music of the pack died away as the dogs descended into the depression below the hill. Then came the sharp, eager cry of Hodo, close at hand. The watchers saw him come over a fence 100 yards away, like a bird, and he ran toward them with head up and tail down. Evidently his blood was up.

He swept by some distance from the point where the fox had passed and Buster John declared that he was not on the track at all. Joe Maxwell made no reply, but gave to Hodo the signal which told the dog that the fox was not far away. Again, as before, the dog increased his speed, bearing closer to the drag, and this time Joe Maxwell, with Buster John behind him, rode rapidly in a parallel direction.

"I give him five more minutes," said Hodo's master; "but he's certainly a game old fox.

Faster and faster went Butterfly for several hundred yards, and then suddenly drew rein. The valley before them afforded a plain view, except for a ditch which ran through the middle. The dampness there had attracted a growth of alders, brambles and such weeds and shrubbery as thrive where the ground is wet. On either side of this ditch there was a clear space of Bermuda turf, dotted here and there with small pine brushes. On the further side of this ditch Hodo was running. Suddenly he turned, crossed the ditch and came flying back, while Joe Maxwell rode toward him as fast as Butterfly could go. Again Hodo crossed the ditch, and as he did so Old Scar-Face came out on the opposite side and went careering across the open field. In a series of wild yells Joe Maxwell gave Hodo the view halloo, and in another moment the dog had been across the ditch again, and had Old Scar-Face in plain view.

HODO CAREERING ACROSS THE OPEN COUNTRY.

It is safe to say that never in the course of his life will Buster John ever experience such sensations as he then had, or behold such another spectacle as was there enacted before his eyes. He could only vaguely remember that he heard the cry of dogs behind him, and that the voice of Hodo sounded like a deep and continuous murmur. Within the course of fifty yards the dog overran the fox and turned and caught him before Old Scar-Face could get himself under way again.

And the funny part of it was that all the other dogs were up in time to give the dead fox a good shaking before he got cold.

When the hunters came up Mr. Collingsworth pretended to believe that Music had killed the fox, and Buster John was astonished to see that Joe Maxwell claimed nothing for Hodo. Mr. Dennis insisted that Rowan or Ruth was the guilty party, while Mr. Kilpatrick declared that if killing foxes was a hanging crime he wouldn't give a well, "this would have been a pretty performance, but he's had his work cut out for him this morning. Maybe he was making one of his loops beyond the point of woods yonder. Yes, sir! That's just what he was up to! The dogs came out of the woods not twenty-five yards from where they went in."

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The Old Fox Was Running Bravely.

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"I believe you," cried Mr. Collingsworth. "That dog of yours is a freak, Maxwell; there'll never be another like him. Of course, we'll have dogs that can catch red foxes; this pack here can do it any day in the week, but we'll never see another dog with the 'go' in him that your dog's got. Why, he's venomous. Back yonder he crashed through a briar patch just like he'd been shot out of a cannon, and his nose—well, he don't have to run on the drag at all, much less put his head to the ground. I never saw anything like it in my life. There ain't a fox in the world that can stand up before him fifty minutes. Look at him! The other dogs are tired out, and he's walking around as fresh as a daisy. No, sir! we'll never see his like again."

"What's your opinion, Fountain?" asked the White-haired Master.

Fountain shook his head and dismounted from his mule, under pretense of fixing a buckle or strap.

"Well, sah," he said with fervor, "I has seed dogs in my time; I has seed dem what dey said could run, an' I has seed dem what I b'lieved could run, but not befo' dis day has deze eyes seed a dog what could reely run. Onless, suh, twuz dem ar greyhoun's what b'long ter Marse Billy Ross. Dem dogs has got de body an' de legs, but dey

Hodo Catches Old Scar Face.

ain't got de head an' de win' er dish yer Hodo. Give um a mile dash in open groun' an' maybe dey could git dar 'fo' dish yer dog, but when it come ter brush an' briar and canebrake, dey wouldn't show up nowhar close ter dat dog dar. Yes—yes, suh! —ef you'd 'a' seed what I seed you'd 'a' rubbed yo' eyes like I did."

"What did you see, Fountain?" inquired the White-haired Master.

"Well, suh, a breff of win' will t