

GOLD

By
**STEWART
EDWARD
WHITE**

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CHAPTER XIX. The Bully.

W^B gravitated naturally to the diggings, which were very much like those at Hangman's Gulch, except that they were rather more extensive and branched out more into the tributary ravines. The men working there were, many of them, of a much better type than those we had seen in town, though even here was a large element of rough looking, wild, reckless customers. We wandered about here and there, our hands in our pockets, a vast leisure filling our souls. With some of the more pleasant appearing miners we conversed. They told us that the diggings were rich, good "ounce a day" diggings. We saw a good many cradles in use. It was easy to tell the old timers from the riffraff of newcomers. A great many of the latter seemed to lack the steadiness of purpose characteristic of nearly all the first rush.

"My Lord, Johnny," I cried when we had reached the street, "that was fine! I didn't know you had it in you!"

"What a stupid, useless mess!" he cried. "The minute that fellow came into the room I saw we were let in for

"We've got to hustle now," they told us. "We can take a good rest when the rains stop work."

We noticed especially a marked change in demeanor among some of the groups. In the early part of the summer every man answered every man good naturedly, except he happened to have a next day's head or some other sort of a personal grudge. Now many compact little groups of men worked quite apart. When addressed they merely scowled or looked sullen, evidently quite unwilling to fraternize with the chance comer.

We sauntered along peering into the various buildings. The saloons were here more elaborate than at Hangman's, the gambling places larger and with some slight attempt at San Francisco splendor—that is to say, there were large gilt framed mirrors on the walls, nude pictures and in some cases a stage for musical performers. One of the three stores was devoted entirely to clothing and "notions," to us a new departure in specialization. We were sadly in need of garments, so we entered and were at once met by a very oily, suave specimen of the chosen people. When we had escaped from this robber's den we looked at each other in humorous dismay.

"Glad Yank don't need clothes, anyway," said Johnny.

We were, it will be remembered, out of provisions, so we entered also one of the general stores to lay in a small supply. The proprietor proved to be an old friend, Jones, the storekeeper at Hangman's.

"Which," said Johnny shrewdly, "is a sad commentary on the decline of the diggings at Hangman's."

Jones was evidently prosperous and doing business on a much larger scale than at the old place, for in his commodious building were quantities of goods displayed and many barrels and boxes still unopened. He did not recognize us, of course, and we had to await the completion of a tale he was telling a group perched on the counters and on the boxes.

We turned into the entrance of the hotel, to find ourselves in the well remembered long, low room where we had spent the evening a few months before. It was now furnished with a bar, the flimsy partitions had been knocked out, and evidently additions had been constructed beyond the various closed doors.

The man behind the bar looked vaguely familiar to me, but I could not place him.

"Where's the proprietor of this place?" I asked him.

He indicated a short, blowsy, truculent looking individual who was at the moment staring out the window.

"There used to be an Italian," I began.

The barkeeper uttered a short barking laugh as he turned to attend to a customer.

"He found the climate bad for his heart and sold out," said he.

On the wall opposite was posted a number of printed and written handbills. We stopped idly to examine them. They had in general to do with lost property, stolen horses and rewards for the apprehension of various individuals. One struck us in particular. It was issued by a citizens' committee of San Francisco and announced a general reward for the capture of any member of the "Hounds."

"Looks as if they're not tired of that gang down there," Johnny observed.

"They were ruling the roost when we left. Do you know, I saw one of those fellows this afternoon—perhaps you remember him—a man with a queer sort of blue scar over one cheekbone. I swear I saw him in San Francisco. There's our chance to make some money, Jim."

The proprietor of the hotel turned to look at Johnny curiously, and several of the loafers drinking at the bar glanced in the direction of his clear young voice. We went on reading and enjoying the notices, some of which were very quaint. Suddenly the door burst open to admit a big man followed closely by a motley rabble. The leader was a red faced, burly, whiskered individual, with a red beard and matted hair. As he turned I saw a star shaped blue scar above his cheekbone.

"Where's the blamed cur that is going to make some money out of arresting me?" he roared, swinging his huge form ostentatiously toward the center of the room.

completely at a loss. A row was evidently unavoidable, and the odds were against us. Almost at the instant the door

came open Johnny, without waiting for hostile demonstration, jerked his two revolvers from their holsters. With one bound he reached the center of the room and thrust the muzzles beneath the bully's nose. His black eyes were snapping.

"Shut up, you 'Hound!' " he said in a low, even voice. "I wouldn't condescend to make money out of your miserable carcass, except at a glue factory. And if you or your friends so much as wink an eyelid I'll put you in shape for it."

Caught absolutely by surprise, the "Hound" stared fascinated into the pistol barrels, his jaw dropped, his face redder than ever, his eyes ridiculously protruding. I had recovered my wits and had backed against the bulletin board, a revolver in either hand, keeping an eye on the general company. Those who had burst in with the bully had stopped frozen in their tracks. The others were interested, but not particularly excited.

"I'm going to stay in this camp," Johnny advised crisply, "and I'm not going to be bothered by his bluffs like you. I warn you, and all like you, to let me alone and keep away from me. You stay in camp, or you can leave camp, just as you please, but I warn you that I shoot you next time I lay eyes on you. Now, about face! March!"

Johnny's voice had an edge of steel. The big man obeyed orders implicitly. He turned slowly and sneaked out the door. His followers shambled toward the bar. Johnny passed them rather contemptuously under the review of his snapping eyes, and they shambled a trifle faster. Then with elaborate nonchalance he sauntered out.

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fee with you boys," said he. We blew up the fire, scoured the frying pan, made ourselves food. Randall brought a pail of water. We all ate together, without much conversation, then lit our pipes and piled on dry wood to make a brighter friendship fire.

"Now, boys," said Randall, "I'm going to ask you some questions, and you can answer me or not, just as you please. Only I'll say it isn't just curiosity."

Johnny, who was studying him covertly from beneath the shadow of his hat, nodded briefly, but said nothing.

"How long have you been in the mines?"

"Since March."

"Since March?" echoed Randall as though a little bewildered at this reply. "Yet you never heard—What camp?"

Johnny studied awhile.

"Hangman's Gulch for six weeks," said he, "then just prospecting."

"Where?"

"I don't believe I'll answer that question," replied Johnny slowly.

"But somewhere back in the hills?" persisted Randall.

"Somewhere back in the hills," agreed Johnny.

"Seems to me—I broke in, but Johnny silenced me with a gesture. He was watching Randall intently and thinking hard.

"Then you have been out of it for three months or so. That explains it. Now, I don't mind telling you I came up here this evening to size you up. I heard about your row with Scarface Charley, and I wanted to see whether you were just another fighting desperado or an honest man. Well, I'm satisfied. I'm not going to ask you if you have much gold with you, for you wouldn't tell me, but if you have kept it with you. If you don't you'll lose it. Keep in the middle of the road and out of dark places. This is a tough camp, but there are a lot of us good men, too, and my business is to get us all to know each other. Things are getting bad, and we've got to get together. That's why I came up to see you. Are you handy with a gun?" he asked abruptly.

"Fair," said Johnny.

"You need to be. Let's see if you are. Stand up. Try to get the draw on me. Now!"

CHAPTER XX. Johnny Gets Pistol Lesson.

J^OHNNY reached for his pistol, but before his hand was fairly on the butt Randall had thrust the muzzle of a small revolver beneath his nose. His pale blue eyes had lit with concentration, his bleached eyebrows were drawn together. For an instant the thought flashed across my mind that this was a genuine holdup, and I am sure Johnny

"You'll be comin' alone," said the man, "or 'p'rhaps yore friend."

"My friend, as you call him, is simply a miner and has nothing to do with this," interrupted Johnny emphatically.

"I thank you, sir," said the spokesman, rising.

The other two, who had throughout said no word, followed his example.

"Do you know Danny Randall?" said Johnny as they moved off.

If he had presented his derringer under their noses they could not have stopped more suddenly. They stared at each other a moment.

"Is he a friend of yours?" inquired the spokesman after an uncertain moment.

"He likes fair play," said Johnny enigmatically.

The trio moved off in the direction of town.

"We don't know any more about Danny Randall than we did," observed Johnny, "but I tried a shot in the dark."

"Nevertheless," I told him, "I'm going to be there, and you want to make up your mind to just that."

"You will come, of course," agreed Johnny. "I suppose I cannot keep you from that. But Jim," he commanded earnestly, "you must swear to keep out of the row unless it develops into a general one, and you must swear not to speak to me or make any sign, no matter what happens. I must play a lone hand."

He was firm on this point, and in the end I gave my promise, to his evident relief.

"This is our visitors' day evidently," he observed. "Here come two more men. One of them is the doctor. I'd know that hat two miles."

"The other is our friend Danny Randall," said I.

Dr. Rankin greeted us with a cordiality I had not suspected in him. Randall nodded in his usual diffident fashion and sidled into the oak shadow, where he squatted on his heels.

"About this Scarface Charley," he said abruptly, "I hear he's issued his def, and you've taken him up. Do you know anything about this sort of thing?"

"Not a bit," admitted Johnny frankly. "Is it a duel, and are you gentlemen here to act as my seconds?"

said Johnny. The rest of the day and of several days following we spent in putting up our tent, ditching it, arranging our cooking affairs, building rough seats and generally making ourselves comfortable. We stretched these things out to cover as long a space of time as possible, for we secretly dreaded facing the resumption of the old grind and postponed it as long as we could. A good deal of the time we spent at Yank's bedside, generally sitting silent and constrained, to the mutual discomfort of all three of us, I am sure. At odd intervals we practiced conscientiously and solemnly at the "draw."

We would stand facing each other, the nipples of our revolvers uncapped, and would at the given word see who could cover the other first. We took turns at giving the word. At first we were not far apart, but Johnny quickly passed me in skill. I am always somewhat clumsy, but my friend was naturally quick and keen at all games of skill or dexterity. He was the sort of man who could bowl or play pool or billiards or anything else rather better than the average accustomed player the first time he tried. He turned card tricks deftly. At the end of our three days' loafing he caught me at the end of his pistol so regularly that there ceased to be any contest in it. I never did get the sleeve trick; but, then, I never succeeded in fooling the merest infant with any of my attempts atlegerdemain. Johnny could flip that little derringer out with a twist of his supple wrist as neatly as a snake-darts a time he practiced it, over and over, as regularly as well oiled machinery.

"But that proves nothing as to how it would work out in real action," said Johnny thoughtfully.

The afternoon of the third day while we were resting from the heat beneath the shade of our tree we were approached by three men.

"Howdy, boys?" said the first. "We hain't seen you around camp lately and thought maybe you'd flew."

"We are still here," replied Johnny, with smooth politeness. "As you see, we have been fixing our quarters to stay here."

"Scarface Charley is here, too," observed the spokesman, "and he wanted me to tell you that he is going to be at the Bella Union at 8 this evening, and he wants to know will he see you, and to come heeled."

"Thank you, gentlemen," replied Johnny quietly. "If by accident you should happen to see the desperado in question—who, I assume, can be in no way your friend—I hope you will tell him that I, too, will be at the Bella Union at 8 o'clock, and that I will come heeled."

"You'll be comin' alone," said the man, "or 'p'rhaps yore friend."

"My friend, as you call him, is simply a miner and has nothing to do with this," interrupted Johnny emphatically.

"I thank you, sir," said the spokesman, rising.

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"It is not," stated the downright doctor. "It's a barroom murder, and you cannot get around it, and I, for one, don't try. But now you're in for it and you've got to go through with it."

"I intend to," said Johnny.

"It's not precisely that," objected Danny Randall, "for, d'ye see, he's sent you warning."

"It's about all the warning you'll get," shouted the doctor.

"I'd pot him through the window with a shotgun first chance I got," stated the doctor. "That sort of a ruffian is just like a mad dog."

"Of course you would, doctor," said Randall, with just the faintest suspicion of sarcasm in his voice. "Well, I guess we'll be toddling."

But I wanted some information, and I meant to have it.

"Who is this Scarface Charley?" I asked.

"Got me," replied Randall. "You fellows seemed to recognize him. Only he's one of the gang undoubtedly."

"The gang?"

"Oh, the general run of hangers-on! Nobody knows how they live, but every one suspects. Some of them work, but not many. There are a heap of disappearances that no one knows anything about, and every once in awhile a man is found drowned and floating—floating, mind you!"

"What of that?" I asked. "Drowned bodies usually float."

"There's no miner in these diggings but has gold enough in his belt to sink him. If a man doats he's been robbed, and you can tie to that reasoning. And the fellows are all well mounted and given to mysterious disappearances."

"In other words," broke in the doctor, "they are an organized band of cutthroats and highway robbers making this honest camp a headquarters?"

(To be Continued.)

OLD JAPANESE STONE IMAGE

Figure of Yakushi Buddha Made 2,100 Years Ago Found in Japan Village.

An ancient and ownerless edifice, standing in a village called Shikishima in Shiki district, Nara Prefecture, has been found to contain a number of rare artistic treasures in the shape of antique Buddhist images.

"The discovery of these rarities, one of which is believed to be the oldest of the kind in Japan," says the Herald of Asia, "is due to Mr. Sekino, doctor of engineering; Mr. Matano, chief of the imperial museum at Tokyo, and Mr. Niino of the Nara Art gallery. They are of opinion that the towering edifice is none other than a temple called the Seki-ji, which was built in the Nara period (710-794 A. D.). The stone image, the central figure, as it were, of the edifice, represents the Yakushi Buddha, and is four feet in height, more than three feet in breadth and three-fifths to seven-tenths of a foot in thickness.

It was probably made some 2,100 years ago, in the era of Hakuho, and is the oldest stone image in Japan, says a report from a Nichi-Nichi correspondent. The head man of the district is now trying to have it included among the national treasures. There are also in the edifice a wooden image of the Jizo Buddha and several other figures of antique appearance.

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WANTED

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THE HAT SHOP

HOW EDITOR COINED WORD

The "Gerrymander" Was Born in Massachusetts and is Credited to Maj. Benjamin Russell.

It was an early American newspaper editor who made the word "gerrymander." He was Maj. Benjamin Russell of the Massachusetts Centinel, which he and his partner, Warden, founded in 1784. He was a fighting man, and the Centinel was no tame journal, but whacked blithely and cared not where the chips fell, says the Merchants Lines O-Type News.

In 1811 the Massachusetts legislature under Governor Gerry made a neat new division of districts for congress elections. The most insidious and ingenious arrangement of districts was the one for the county of Essex. With great glee Russell took a map of the county and colored the districts to show the heinousness of the device.

Gilbert Stuart, the famous painter, saw the map, and suggested that the apportionment looked like a reptile. He made a few marks on it with his pencil and said: "There! it's a salamander!"

Russell jumped up, laughing. "Salamander!" he shouted, looking at the hideous figure: "Gerrymander!"

An engraving of the "gerrymander" was made and hawked through the state. Thus was born what probably is one of the most constantly used of all manufactured words.

HOW RUSSELL GOT NICKNAME

Lord John Was Called "The Widow's Mite" Because of His Short Stature.

Lord John Russell's diminutive stature earned him other nicknames besides the inevitable "Johnny." The neatest is the one recorded by Creevey, which was bestowed by some wag upon him when he married the widow of the second Lord Ribblesdale—"the Widow's Mite."

John Russell was a frail and delicate child from the first, but his physique cannot have been helped by the hardship of his school days. He had to be taken away from Westminster because he could not stand the fagging and unwholesome food. And before that came a private school at Sunbury, where, as he recalled in later life, he found the mutton fat so intolerable that he dropped it under the table. But the master, a clergyman, made him sweep it up off the dusty floor and eat it, dirt and all.—London Chronicle.

STERILIZED PENCILS.

In many public schools children are supplied with pencils which are distributed and collected each day. It has been felt that infectious diseases might easily be communicated from one child to another by the pencils. For boys and girls have a habit of chewing or sucking the ends of their pencils, and the germs of the many diseases that lurk in the mouth are thus transferred to the soft wood. This might any of the affections of the throat, nose and lungs, to say nothing of the more serious diseases that manifest themselves in sores of the mouth, be transmitted.

It is to safeguard against this that E. S. Mathias has patented a sterilizer for pencils. These are put in a rack, their points being immersed in formalin gas, which kills all the germs.

Rich Languages.

In extent, the Spanish vocabulary is far inferior to the English, though in richness of tone or expression the Spanish is ahead of the English language. It is claimed that the pure Castilian is the most musical of languages, the Italian not excepted.

A Hero to His Wife.

"A man who is happily married has an enthusiastic audience of one, and that ain't so bad," says old Uncle Pen-y-wise.

No Foundation.

A bold, unsubdued citizen went to a new boarding house, and as he had always met his obligations promptly, he had become notably outspoken. On his second day the hostess asked: "Why don't you say a blessing, Mr. Golden?" He looked over the table and said gloomily: "I'd like to know what for?"



Where's the blamed cur that is going to make some money out of arresting me?" he roared.



Randall Had Thrust the Muzzle of a Small Revolver Beneath His Nose.

a row; so I went at it quick before he had got organized. He didn't expect that. He thought he'd have to work us into it."

"It certainly got him," said I.

"But it just starts us all wrong here," complained Johnny. "We are marked men."

We went out to see Yank with the full intention of spending the evening and cheering him up. He was dozing, restless, waking and sleeping by fits and starts. We sat around in the awkward fashion peculiar to very young boys in the skedroom, and then, to our vast relief, were shoved out by Senora Morena. With her we held a whispered conversation outside, and completed satisfactory arrangements for Yank's keep. She was a chuckling, easy-going, motherly sort of creature, and we were very lucky to have her. Then we returned in the gathering dusk to our camp under the trees across the way.

A man rose from a seat against a tree trunk.

"Good evening, stranger," said he.