

(CHAPTER XVI CONTINUED.)

To McCloud the news came, in spite of himself, as a blow. The results he had attained in building through the lower valley had given him a name among the engineers of the whole line. The splendid showing of the winter construction, on which he had depended to enable him to finish the whole work within the year, was by this news brought to naught. Those of the railroad men who said he could not deliver a completed line within the year could never be answered now. And there was some slight bitterness in the reflection that the very stumling-block to hold him back, to rob im of his chance for a reputation with men like Glover and should be the lands of Dickste Dunping.

He made no complaint. On the division he took hold with new energy and bent his faculties on the operating problems. At Marion's he saw Dicksie at intervals, and only to fall more hopelessly under her spell each time. She could be serious and she could be volatile and she could be something between which he could never quite make out. She could be serious with him when he was serious. and totally irresponsible the next minute with Marion. On the other hand, when McCloud attempted to be flippant, Dicksle could be confusingly grave. Once when he was bantering with her at Marion's she tried to say comething about her regret that comlications over the right of way hould have arisen; but McCloud made ight of it, and waved the matter aside As if he were a cavaller. Dicksie did not like it, but it was only that he was afraid she would realize he was a mere railroad superintendent with hopes of a record for promotion quite blasted. And as if this obstacle to a greater reputation were not enough, a willer enemy threatened in the spring to leave only shreds and patches of what he had already earned.

The Crawling Stone river is said to embody, historically, all of the deselts known to mountain streams. Below the Box Canvon it plows through great bed of yielding silt, its own leposit between the two imposing lines of bluffs that resist its wanderngs from side to side of the wide val-This fertile soil makes up the wich lands that are the envy of less fortunate regions in the Great Basin; but the Crawling Stone is not a river to give quiet title to one acre of its wn making. The toll of its centuries spreads beautifully green under the ne skies, and the unsuspecting settler, lulled into security by many years of the river's repose, settles on Its level bench land and lays out his long lines of possession; but the Sloux will tell you in their own talk that this men. I heard that a week ago." man is but a tenant at will; that in another time and at another place the ptranger will inherit his fields; and that the Crawling Stone always comes back for its own.

The winter had been an unusual one even in a land of winters. The season's fall of snow had not been above an average, but it had fallen in the spring and had been followed by excessively low temperatures throughout the mountains. June came again, but a strange June. The first rise of the Crawling Stone had not moved out the winter frost, and the stream lay bound from bank to bank, and for hunireds of miles, under three feet of ice. When June opened, backward and zold, there had been no spring. Heavy grosts lasting until the middle of the month gave sudden way to summer heat, and the Indians on the uppervalley reservation began moving back Creek after creek in the higher mountains, ice-bound for six months, burst without warning into flood. Soft winds struck with the sun and stripped the mountain walls of their snow. Rains set in on the desert, and far in the high northwest the Crawling Stone afting its four-foot cap of ice like a bed of feathers began rolling it end over end down the valley. In the Box, 40 feet of water struck the canyon walls and ice-floes were hurled like torpedoes against the granite spurs; the Crawling Stone was starting after its own.

When the river rose, the earlier talk of Dunning's men had been that the Crawling Stone would put an end to he 250 miles of track back to the holdings, and while the ranchers were like Whispering Smithlaughing, the river was flowing over the bench lands in the upper valley.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Crawling Stone Rise. So sudden was the onset of the river that the trained riders of the big panch were taken completely aback, and hundreds of head of Dunning catday and night, and the telephones up and down the valley rang incessantly with appeals from neighbor to neighor. Lance Dunning, calling out the erves of his vocabulary, swore trendously and directed the operations gainst the river. These seemed, ined, to consist mainly of hard riding and hard language on the part of everybody. Murray Sinclair, although a had sold his ranch on the Crawling Stone and was concentrating his holdings on the Frenchman, was everyat a point of danger and the last to

Crawling Stone, which kept alarming-

ly at work. from the main channel of the Crawling came back with form of a bench deposited by the receding waters of some earlier flood. among the willows that overspread it. system of work the efforts of the men at the Stone ranch were of no more consequence than if they had spent river. Twenty men riding in together to tell Lance Dunning that the river was washing out the tree claims above Mud lake made no perceptible difference in the event. Dicksie, though an inexperienced girl, saw with helpless clearness the fatility of it all.

Terror seized Dicksie, She telephoned in her distress for Marion. begging her to come un before they should all be swent away; and Marion, Dickele had sent and started for the Crawling Stone.

At noon Marion arrived. The ranchall at the river. Purs stuck her head out of the hitchen window, and Dicksle ran out and threw herself into Marion's arms. Late news from the front had been the worst; the cutting above Mud lake had weakened the last barrier that held off the river, and

current at that point. Marion heard it all while cating a of luncheon. Dicksie, beset with anxiety. Marion. could not stay in the house. The man that had driven Marion over, saddled horses in the afternoon and the two women rode up above Mud lake, now become through rainfall and secpage from the river a long, shallow lagoon. For an hour they watched the shoveling and carrying of sand-bags, and rode toward the river to the very edge of the disappearing willows, where the bank was melting away before the undercut of the resistless current. They rude away with a common feeling-a conviction that the fight was a losing one, and that another day would see the ruin complete.

"Dickele," exclaimed Marion-they were riding to the house as she spoke "I'll rell you what we can do!" She hesitated a moment. "I will tell you what we can da! Are you plucky?" Dicksie looked at Marion pathet-

If you are plucky enough to do it, we can keep the river off yet. I have an idea. I will go, but you must come

"Marion, what do you mean? Don't you think I would go anywhere to save the ranch? I should like to know where you dare go in this country

that I dare not!" "Then ride with me over to the railroad camp by the new bridge. We will ask Mr. McCloud to bring some of his men over. He can stop the river; he

Dicksie caucht her breath, "Oh, Marion! that would do no good, even I could do it. Why, the railroad has been all swept away in the lower val-

"How do you know;

"So every one soon." "Who is every one?"

"Cousin Lance, Mr. Sinchir-all the

"Dicksie, don't believe it. You don't know these railroad men. They understand this kind of thing; cattlemen, you know, don't. If you will go with me we can get help. I feed fust as sure that those men can control the river as I do that I am looking at you -that is, if anybody can. The question is do you want to make the effort?"

They talked until they left the horses and entered the house. When they sat down. Dicksie put her hands to her face. "Oh, I wish you had said nothing about it! How can I go to him and ask for help now-after Cousin Lance has gone into court about the line and everything? And of course

my name is in it ali." "Dickste, don't raise specters that have nothing to do with the case. If we go to him and ask him for help he will give it to us if he can; if he can't, what harm is done? He has into the hills. Then came the rise. been up and down the river for three weeks, and he has an army of men camped over by the bridge. I know that, because Mr. Smith rode in from there a few days ago."

"What, Whispering Smith? Oh, if he is there I would not go for worlds!" "Pray, why not?" "Why, he is such an awful man!"

"That is absurd, Dicksic." Dicksie looked grave. "Marion, no man in this part of the country has a good word to say for Whispering Smith."

"Perhaps you have forgotten, Dicksie, that you live in a very rough part of the country," returned Marion, coolly. "No man that he has ever hunted down would have anything railroad pretensions by washing pleasant to say about him; nor would the friends of such a man be likely Peace river, where it had started. This to say a good word of him. There are much in the beginning was easy to many on the range, Dicksie, that have predict; but the railroad men had no respect for life or law or anything turned out in force to fight for their else, and they naturally hate a man

"But Marion, he killed-" "I know. He killed a man named Williams a few years ago, while you were at school-one of the worst men that ever infested this country. Williams Cache is named after that man; he made the most beautiful spot in all these mountains a nest of thieves and murderers. But did you know that Williams shot down Gordon Smith's He were swept away before they could only brother, a trainmaster, in cold removed to points of safety. Fresh blood in front of the Wickiup at Medi-Blarms came with every hour of the cine Bend? No, you never heard that in this part of the country, did you? They had a cow-thief for sheriff then, and no officer in Medicine Bend would go after the murderer. He rode in and out of town as if he owned it, and no one dared say a word, and, mind you, Gordon Smith's brother had never walked up and shot him dead. Oh, this was a peaceful country a few years ago! Gordon Smith was right-of-way man in the mountains then. He buried his brother, and asked the officers

what they were going to do about get-

ing the murderer. They laughed at

Above the alfalfa lands on the long Dicksie-and didn't they laugh at him! bench north of the house the river, in He did not even know the trails, and showers broke across the valley. changing its course many years earit- imagine riding 200 miles in a bucker, had left a depression known as board to arrest a man in the moun-Mud lake. It had become separated tains! He was gone six weeks, and Williams' body Stone by a high, narrew barrier in the strapped to the buckboard behind him. He never told the story; all he said when he handed in his commisand added to by sandstorms sweeping sion and went back to his work was that the man was killed in a fair fight. Without an effective head or definite | Hate him! No wonder they hate him -the Williams Cache gang and all their friends on the range! Your cousin thinks it policy to placate that eletheir time in waving blankets at the ment, hoping that they won't steal your cattle if you are friendly with them. I know nothing about that, but I do know something about Whispering Smith. It will be a bad day for Williams Cache when they start him up again. But what has that to do with your trouble? He will not eat you up if you go to the camp, Dickste. You are just raising bogies."

They had moved to the front porch and Marion was sitting in the rocking turning the shop over to Katie Dan- chair. Dicksle stood with her back cing, got into the ranch-wagon that against one of the pillars and looked at her. As Marion finished Dickste turned and, with her hand on her forehead, looked in wretchedness of mind house was deserted, and the men were out on the valley. As far, in many directions, as the eye could reach the waters apread vellow in the flood of sunshine across the lowlands. There was a moment of silence. Dicksie turned her back on the alarming sight. "Marion, I can't do it!"

"Oh, yes, you can if you want to, every available man was fighting the Dicksie!" Dicksie looked at her with tearless eyes. "It is only a question being plucky enough," insisted

"Pluck has nothing to do with it!" exclaimed Dicksie, in fiery tones. "I should like to know why you are always talking about my not having courage! This isn't a question of courage. How can I go to a man that I talked to as I talked to him in your house and ask for help? How can I go to him after my cousin has threatened to kill him, and gone into court to prevent his coming on our land? Shouldn't I look beautiful asking help

Marion rocked with perfect com-"No, dear, you would not ook beautiful asking help, but you would look sensible. It is so easy to be beautiful and so hard to be sensible.

"You are just as horrid as you can be, Marion Sinclair!"

"I know that, too, dear. All I wanted to say is that you would look very sensible just now in asking help from Mr. McCloud."

"I don't care-I won't do it. I will never do it, not if every foot of the ranch tumbles into the river. I hope Nobody cares anything about me. I have no friends but thieves and

"Dicksie!" Marion rose "That is what you said."

"I did not. I am your friend. How dare you call me names?" demanded Marion, taking the petulant girl in her arms. "Don't you think I care anything about you? There are people in this country that you have never seen who know you and love you al. miles of the poor child! And they most as much as I do. Don't let any have been trying everywhere to get silly pride prevent your being sensible, bags, and you have all the bags, and ion drew her over to the settee, and she had her cry out. When it was over they changed the subject. Dicksie good. She and I talked it all over this round bridge and there are a within went to her room. It was a long time before she came down again, but Marion rocked in patience; she was resolved to let Dicksie fight it out her

When Dicksie came down, Marion stood at the foot of the stairs. The young mistress of Crawling Stone ranch descended step by step very slowly. "Marion," she said, simply, "I

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Marion caught her closely to her heart. "I knew you would go if I got you angry, dear. But you are so slow to anger. Mr. McCloud is just the same way. Mr. Smith says when he does get angry he can do anything. He is very like you in so many ways.' Dicksie was wiping her eyes. "Is

he, Marion? Well, what shall I wear?" "Just your riding-clothes, dear, and a smile. He won't know what you have on. It is you he will want to see. But I've been thinking of something else. What will your Cousin Lance say? Suppose he should object?"

"Object! I should like to see him object after losing the fight himself Marion laughed. "Well, do you think you can find the way down there for

"I can find any way anywhere within 100 miles of here."

On the 20th of June McCloud did have something of an army of men in the Crawling Stone valley. Of these, 250 were in the vicinity of the bridge, the abutments and piers of which were being put in just below the Dunning ranch. Near at hand Bill Dancing, with a big gang, had been for some time watching the ice and dynamiting the jams. McCloud brought in more men as the river continued to rise. The danger line on the gauges was at length submerged, and for three days the main-line construction camps had been robbed of men to guard the soft grades above and below the bridge. The new track up and down the valley had become a highway of escape from the flood, and the track patrols were met at every curve by cattle, horses, deer, welves and coyotes fleeing from the waste In all this water, and two lone giver is flowing into Squaw lake above

of waters that spread over the bot-Through the Dunning ranch the Crawling Stone river makes a far bend across the valley to the north and east. The extraordinary volume of water now pouring through the Box canyon exposed 10,000 acres of the ranch to the caprice of the river, and if at the point of its tremendous sweep to the north it should cut back into its old channel the change would wipe the entire body of ranch alfalfa lands fire for seats. off the face of the valley. With the heat of the lengthening June days a vast steam rose from the chill waters of the river, marking in ominous windings the channel of the main stream through a yellow sea which, ignoring

no defiance seemed to disturb the marshal's commission. When he got it either side. Late to the afternoon of lost once," she confessed in a low offer help. Isn't that true? Why, I he started for Williams Cache after the day that Dickste with Marien voice, "but we got out again." Williams in a buckboard-think of it, sought McCloud, a storm drifted down | eThe roads are all under water, the Topah Topah hills, and heavy though."

At nightfall the rain had passed and the mist lifted from the river. Above minutes past 12." the bluffs rolling patches of cloud obscured the face of the moon, but the distant thunder had ceased, and at back, Marion. I had no idea we had midnight the valley near the bridge been five hours coming five miles." lay in a stillness broken only by the hearse calls of the patrols and far-off megaphones. From the bridge camp, accomplished in crowling the flooded which lay on high ground near the grade, the distant lamps of the trackwalkers could be seen moving dimly.

Before the comp-fire in front of Me-Cloud's tent a proup of men, smcling and talking, ant or tay sprawled on in the water," he insisted, leaning fortarpaulius, drying themselves after the long day. Among them were the weather-beaten remnants of the old guard of the mountain workers, men drawing back who had fought the Spider Water with Glover. Bill Dancing, huge, lambering, awkward as a bear and usshifty, was talking, because with no apparent effort he could talk all abilit. and was a valuable man at keeping the camp awake. Bill Dancing talk d. and, after Sinclair's name had been dropped from the roll, ato and drank more than any two men on the division. A little apart, McCloud lay on a leather cabouse emission trying to get a nap.

The man sent to the bridge had turned back, and behind his lantern Dancing heard the trend of horses. He stood at one side of the camp-fire while the visitors rade up; they were women. Dancing stood dumb as they advanced buto the firelight. The one ahead spoke: "Mr., Daneing, don't you know me?" As she stopped her horse the light of the fire struck bor face. "Why, Mis' Sincloir!"

"Yes, and Miss Dunning is with me," returned Marion. Bill stautered. This is an awful place to got to: we have been nearly drowned, and we want to see Mr. McCloud.

McCloud, roused by Marion's voice, sorry we have disturbed you!" She looked careworn and a little forlorn, yet but a little considering the struggle she and Dicksie had made to reach the camp.

where Dicksle stood talking with Dancing about horses.

They are in desperate arralts up at the ranch," Marion went on, when Me-Cloud had assured her of her welcome. I don't see how they can save it. The in the alfalfa fields."

if it gets through there," mused Me-Cloud. "I wonder how the river is? to tell me his history, when some I've been asleep. O Bill!" he called to Dancing, "what water have you got?

"Twenty-eight six just now, sir, She's a-rising very, very slow, Mr. Mc-Cloud '

"So I am responsible for this invasion," continued Marion, caimly. "I've been up with Dichele at the ranch; she sent for me. Just think of it—no woman but old Pass within ten pive-" gated life de, adjusting h bees and deing just about as much our down to afternoon, and I told her I was com-ing over here to see you, and we stone on a tipe. No, this was neco started out together-and merciful goodness, such a time as we have

here!" exclaimed McCloud.

Dicksie came into the light as he hastened over. If she was ancertain in manner, he was not. He met her, laughing just enough to relieve the tension of which both for an Instant were conscious. She gave him her hand when he put his out, though he felt that it trembled a little. "Such a ride as you have had! Why did you not send me word? I would have come to yout" he exclaimed, throwing reproach into the words.

Dicksle raised her eyes. "I wanted to ask you whether you would sell no some grain suchs. Mr. McCloud, to use at the river, if you could spare

"Sacks? Why, of course, all you



"But How Did You Ever Get Here?"

want! But how did you ever get here? women! You have been in danger to-night, Indeed you have—don't tell me! And you are both wet; I know it. Your feet must be wet. Come to the fire. O Bill!" he called to Dancing, "what's can the matter with your wood? Let us my tent. I can't believe you have Durwing and her cousin want them, ridden here all the way from the ranch, two of you alone!" exclaimed McCloud, hastening boxes up to the

Marion laughed. "Dicksie can go anywhere! I couldn't have ridden from the house to the barns alone."

"Then tell me how you could do it?" demanded McClaud, devouring Dickste | last with his eyes.

"What time is it, please?" McCloud looked at his watch. "Two

Dicksie started, "Past 12? Oh, this is drendful! We must start right

McCloud looked at her, as if still unable to comprehend what she had bottoms. Her eyes fell back to the "What a blazat" she mumured Bre.

It's fine for to night, isn't her "I know you both must have been ward in front of Dickste to feel Mari-

as the driftwood snapped and roared,

"I'm not wer!" declared Marion,

'Noncense, you are wet as a rat! Tell rue," he asked, looking at Dicksie, about your trouble up at the bend. I on the ground when it rains." know something aloui It. Are the menthere to night? Given up, have they? Too bad! Do open your lackets and to the ope on the right. try to fry consistent, both of you, and I'll take a both at the river," Suppose I only say suppose-you

first take a look at me." The voice came from behind the group at the aren't any fire, and the three furned together, sort? Kni ely, my assistant, sleeps come from?"

had come from? Why don't you ask your cost, won't you, please? me whother I'm wort. And won't you sie Dunnfag, I am sure."

Morion with laughter hastened the are yet trying to do?" introductions

"And you are wet, of course," said McCloud, feeting Smith's shoulder, "No, only scaled. I have fallen into the river two or three times, and the last time a bit thinocerus of yours down the grade, a section forerann came forward. You were asleep," named Klein, was obliging enough to said she as he greated her, "I am so pull me out. Oh, no! I was not looking for you," he can on, answering McCloud's question; "not when bepulled my out. I was just looking for a farm or a ladder or supporthing. Klein, for a man nessed Small, is the bimpost Putchman I ever saw. me, Klein, I neised, after he had quit -'where did you not your pull? And how about your helalit? till your quandfather serve as a aromadier under old Producted William and was he kid river is starting to flow into the old haped? Till, don't feed my horse for channel and there's a big pond right a while. And Klein tried to light a

chan I had just taken from my pocket "It will play the deuce with things and given him-fancy! the Germani are a remarkable people-and sat down friend down the line began bawling through a mosaphone, and all that none Klein bud time to say was the e had had no suppor, nor dinner, no: of breakfast, and would be obliged for some by the bear he forwarded me And, in obstant Whitesch Smith looked cheerfully around at Marion, as McCloud, and last an longest of all of Districts Disputies.

"lift you came from ourous wet shift a wild after bor this You are sending wet," observe

"But you started out together; who a dangers for a fine in sec.
where did you leave her?"
"There she stands the other side of the fire. O Dicksie!"
"Why did you not tell the she was around the could not be a given in the could be a given in the c

were not at the mech all a "Oh, Bohn web birth" word Starte

Two interested in the way on that the ray parties to their it, remains who ever it valent he, which was enough to the their that the ray has been it had read their than their than the ray of you want in plain them. if my business to sen non who mult has business to see them. It's very couple, but these people the make a mystery of it. Good worm me season than riches, and more be prized than the gold-in my in ment-so I rode after them." Marion put her hand for a most on his coas sleeves; he tooked at Diel she with another laugh and spoke i

her herate, he dared not you town Muriou; "Cloring back to obtain do you Edokale auswered quite in cornert "Why the year come, it at it taken bull the night to me here we will take a might and a balv at leas-

get back." "We came to look Mr. McCloud for come grain seeks-you know, the have nothing to work with at the ranch," said Marien; "and he said wmight have some and we are to retfor them in the morning."

"I see. But we may as well to plainly." Swith hooled at Dicksh You are as brave and as game as girl can be, I know, or you couldn save done this. Sacks full of sand, with the boys at the ranch to handle them, would do no more good to morrow at the bend than bladders. The the pame might check things yet if they're there by daylight. else, and nothing else on God's earth

There was silence before the fire have a fire, won't you?-one worth McCloud broke it: "I can put the 100 while; and build another in front of men there at daylight, Gordon, if Miss sand McClould. Marion surang to her feet, "Oh, will you do that, Mr. McCloud?"

McCloud looked at Dicksia. "If they are wanted." Dielisie tried to lack at the fire. "We have hardly deserved help from Mr.

McCloud at the ranch," she said at He put out his hand. "I must object.

would walk 100 miles to return the Mer to her. Perhaps your cousin would object" he suggested, turning saked. to Lickstor "but no, I think we can to do? You two can't go back toalght, that is certain."

"We must." "Then you will have to go in boats," said Whispering Smith. But the hill road?"

"There is five feet of water across it in half a dozen places. I swam my horse through, so I ought to know." "It is all back-water, of course, Miss Dunning," explained McCloud. "Not

dangerous." But moist," suggested Whispering Smith, "especially in the dark."

McCloud locked at Marion. "Then let's be sensible," he said. "You and Miss Dunning can have my tent." "Is this where you stay?" asked Dietode.

"Four of an sleep in the cots, when we can, and an indefinite number ite "Which is your bed?"

"I usually sleep there." He pointed

"I throught no. It has the blanker folded finck so neatly, just as if there were shoots under it. I'll bet there

'I'm out think this is a summer re By heaven, Gordon Smith!" ex- there, but of course we are never both claimed McCloud. "Where did you in bed at the same time; he's down the green containt. It's a sort of con-Whispering Smith stood in the gloom time is conformance, you know." in patience. Whe po do I look as if I Cloud booked at Dickste. "Take off

introduce me-last this is Miss Dick draw a clear from the foot of the cot. While coing Smith was trying to and Marken stond watching, "What

> "that this over to the table for a 99-011 T "Billy man! why don't you move the

Include was taking off her coat How invited it all is!" she smiled. 'And ther is where you stay?"

When It rains," answered McCloud. "Let the base your hat, too." "My limit is a sight, I know. We ode and rooms and up gullies into the

"And through lakes-oh, I know! I and ever the how you ever got here num, navway. But if you want a out have one. Knisely is a reat smell, he's just from school, and as propert of things. I'll rob his bag." Dan't disturb Mr. Knisely's bag for

the world! clim um are not taking off your hat. You so to have something on your

trilite! "He is me to get it off my mind, will you please

"If you will let me." "Tell me how to thank you for your concresity. I came all the way over sere to night to ask you for just the ielp you have offered, and I could not -it stuck in my threat. But that wasn't what was on my mind. Tell me what you thought when I acted so dreadfully at Marion's."

"I dbin't deserve anything better ofter placing myself in such a fool osition. Why don't you ask me what thought the day you acted so beauiffully at Crawling Stone ranch? I thought that the finest thing I ever

I seemed to be, which is just as ad: I am coing to start the 'phones oing, it's up to me to make good, on heav, in about four hours with a ot of men and material. Aren't you coing to take off your hat?-and your

A votes called the superintendent una through the tent door. "Mr. Mc

What is it. Pill?" "Twenty-cight and nine-tenths on

ie mange, sir." McCloud looked at his companions I told you so. Up three-tenths. Thank on, 2011; I'll be with you in a minute fell Cherry to come and take away he supper things, will you? That is bout all the water we shall get tolight, I think, It's all we want, dided McCloud, glancing at his watch. I'm going to take a look at the river-We shall be quiet now around here un-Il half-past three, and if you, Marion, nd Miss Dunning will take the tent on can have two hours' rest before to much. Bill Dancing will guard on against intrusion, and if you want

CHAPTER XIX.

o while ring twice."

A Talk with Whispering Smith. When Whispering Smith had folwed McCloud from the tent, Dicksie trued to Marion and caught her hand. is this the terrible man I have heard tout?" she murniured. hought him ferocious! But is he as illiesa as they say, Marion?"

Marion laughed-a troubled little

ugh of surprise and sadness. "Dear,

isn't pittless at all. He has uneasant things to do, and does them. c is the man on whom the railroad des to repress the lawlessness that was our in the mountains at times ed interferes with the operating of e road. It frightens people away, ad prevents others from coming in settle. Railroads want law and nder. Robbery and murders don't the business for rallroads. They deand on settlers for developing 8 ountry, don't you know; otherwise her would have no traffic, not to peak of wanting their trains and men t slone. When Mr. Bucks underook to open up this country to setthats he needed a man of patience there how. A hundred men that know and endurance and with courage and skill in dealing with lawless men, and no man has ever succeeded so well as this terrible man you have heard about. He is terrible, my dear, to lawless men, not to any one else. He is terrible in resource and in daring, but not in anything else I know of, and I knew him when he was a boy and wore a pink worsted scarf when he went shating."

"I should like to have seen that scarf," said Dicksie, reflectively. She rose and looked around the tent. In a few minutes she made Marion lie down on one of the cots. Then she walked to the front of the tent, opened the flap, and looked out.

coat, raised the door-flap, and walked noiselessly from the tent and up be hind him. "Alone in the rain?"

She had expected to see him start manage that. Now what are we going at her voice, but he did not, though he rose and turned around.



"Alone in the Rain?"

now." he answered as he offered her his box with a smile.

"Are you taking your hat off for me in the rain? Put it on again!" she insisted with a little tone of command, and she was conscious of gratification when he obeyed amiably.

"I won't take your box unless you can find another!" she said. "Oh, you have another! I came out to tell you what a dreadful man I thought you were, and to apologize."

"Never mind apologizing. Lots of people think worse than that of me and don't apologize. I'm sorry I have no shelter to offer you, except to sit

on this side and take the rain." "Why should you take the rain for "You are a woman."

"But a stranger to you." "Only in a way." Dicksic gazed for a moment at the fire. "You won't think me abrupt, will you?" she said, turning to him, "but, as truly as I live, I cannot account for at all Your hair is all right. This is you, Mr. Smith. I guess at the ranch we don't know what goes on in the world. Everything I see of you con-

tradicts everything I have heard of you "You haven't seen much of me yet, you know, and you may have heard much better accounts of me than I deserve. Still, it isn't surprising you can't account for me; in fact, it would be surprising if you could. Nebody pretends to do that. You must not be shocked if I can't even account for myself. Do you know what a derelict is? A ship that has been abandoned

but never wholly sinks." "Please don't make fun of me! How did you happen to come into the mountains? I do want to understand

things better." "Why, you are in real earnest, aren't you? But I am not making fun of you. Do you know President Bucks? No? Too bad! He's a very handsome old bachelor. And he is one of those men who get all sorts of men to do all sorts of things for them. You know, building and operating railroads in this part of the country is no joke. The mountains are filled with men that don't care for God, man, or the devil. Sometimes they furnish their own ammunition to fight with and don't bother the railroad for years; at such times the railroad leaves them alone. For my part, I never quarrel with a man that doesn't quarrel with the road. Then comes a time when they get after us, shooting our men or robbing our agents or stopping our trains. Of course we have to get busy then. A few years ago they worried Bucks till they nearly turned his hair gray. At that unfortunate time I happened into his office with a letter of introduction from his closest Chicago friend, Willis Howard, prince of good men, the man that made the Palmer house famous-yes. Now I had come out here, Miss Dunning-

almost said Miss Dicksie, because I hear it so much-" "I should be greatly set up to hear you call me Dicksie. And I have wondered a thousand times about your name. Dare I ask-why do they call you Whispering Smith? You don't

whisper." He laughed with abundance of goodhumor. "That is a ridiculous accident, and it all came about when I lived in Chicago. Do you know anything about the infernal climate there? Well, in Chicago I used to lose my voice whenever I caught a cold-sometimes for weeks tegether. So they began calling me Whispering Smith, and I've never been able to shake the name. Odd, isn't it? But I came out to go into the real estate business. I was looking for some gold-bearing farm lands where I could raise quarts, don't you know, and such things-yes. don't mind telling you this, though I

wouldn't tell it to everybody—"
"Certainly not," assented Dicksie, drawing her skirt around to sit in closer confidence. "I wanted to get rich quick," mur-

mured Whispering Smith, confidentially. "Almost criminal, wasn't it?"

"I wanted to have evening clothes." "And for once in my life two pairs

of suspenders—a modest ambition, but a gnawing one. Would you believe it? Before I left Bucks' office he had bired me for a railroad man. When he asked me what I could do, and I admitted a little experience in handling real estate, he brought his fist down on the table and swore I should be his rightof-way man."

"How about the mining?" Whispering Smith waved his hand in something of the proud manner in which Bucks could wave his presi-dential hand. "My business, Bucks said, need not interfere with that, not in the least; he said that I could do all the mining I wanted to, and I have done all the mining I wanted to. But here is the singular thing that happened: I opened up my office and had nothing to do; they didn't seem to want any right of way just then. I kept getting my check every month. and wasn't doing a hand's turn but rid-

Whispering Smith was sitting be ride away from the slipping acres him. He made no protest, except to the usual landmarks of trees and Dickele looked at the first wreck I ever had on this de fore the first wreck I ever had on this de fore the first wreck I ever had on this de fore the first wreck I ever had on this de fore the first wreck I ever had on this de fore the first wreck I ever had on this de fore the first wreck I ever had on this de fore the first wreck I ever had on this de fore the first wreck I ever had on this de fore the first wreck I ever had on this de fore the first wreck I ever had on this de fore the first wreck I ever had on this de fore the first wreck I ever had on this de fore the first wreck I ever had on this de fore the first wreck I ever had on this de fore the first wreck I ever had on this de fore the first wreck I ever had on this de fore the first wreck I ever had on this de fore the first wreck I ever had on this de fore the first wreck I ever had on this de fore the first wreck I ever had on this de fore the first wreck I ever had on this de fore the first wreck I ever had on this de fore the first wreck I ever had on this de fore the first wreck I ever had on this de fore the first wreck I ever had on this de fore the first wreck I ever had on this de fore the first wreck I ever had on the first wreck