Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.

(Copyright, 1900, by F. A. Cummings.)

Five years before the outbreak of the Civil War, love of adventure, hatred of slavery and the desire to help my friend, George Wesner, led me, Charles Bradley, a civil engineer, of Attakapas County, Louisiana, to become an agent of the underground railroad. Wesner had been nursed through the smallpox by a young slave, Lucy, belonging to the Coverley plantation. He discovered facts which proved that Lucy was white and of good family. A secret love match followed, which progressed well until Coverley proposed to sell Lucy to his son, and refused to sell her to anyone else. Wesner became desperate. I agreed to help him steal Lucy, and went to New York to arrange with the anti-slavery society for the care of any slave we could bring North. We arranged our end of the underground railway, with my woodyard, several miles up the river, as the main station and hiding-place. At home we set up a general merchandise store to avoid suspicion. Wesner makes the first venture, and starts North with 10 of Coverley's slaves, including Lucy. The venture is successful. Wesner delivers the slaves to the agents in New York, and places Lucy in school at Andover. I take charge of the second raid. Disguised as a peddler, I see and arrange with some of the Raymond negroes for their escape. Dave, their leader, gathers 73 slaves together, and after great trouble and many narrow escapes we ship them North by sea along with a cargo of cotton. Our total profits on the cargo are $2000. In the following Spring we plan a third venture, and the Lanman plantation is our first objective. We collect another lot at the rendezvous, and Wesner takes them north to Cairo over the old route. Lucy is recognized by a Southerner in Massachusetts, and is betrayed. Meantime Pierce, a friend of Wesner's, hears of the warrant for Lucy's arrest, and he starts out to warn her. Pierce and Lucy are overtaken, and the Sheriff, Gregg, starts back to Louisiana with Lucy by train. Pierce telegraphs the agent at Cairo. Wesner is there, and, aided by the Cromwells, he boards the train at a station a few miles north, and rescues Lucy.

CHAPTER XXIV.—(Continued).

The deed was done—Coverly's Lucy was again a free woman. The road was smooth, the horses fresh and the day pleasant. The Cromwell boys grinned through the coloring on their faces, and looked like veritable darkies. This make-up was of no careless character, for their shoulders, neck and faces were stained perfectly. Long experience had rendered them adepts at disguises, and Lucy supposed them to be the genuine until one of them spoke to Wesner.

"Wasn't that a neat job, Wesner?"

Wesner assented, but the old man Cromwell was not so sanguine. "Don't crow, boys, until daylight. We've got to get this girl away from this station, for that Marshal isn't dead, and by night may hover around here with a posse from Cairo. These infernal shackles are as hard as flint; they are cast-steel.

"Try the lock-staple, father," said Hiram.

The lock-staple was tried, and, luckily, it was iron. The well-tempered file made short work of it and the shackles were removed.

In about two hours they were at Cromwell's. The horses were taken off, the water-colored paint washed from the wagon, disguises hidden, and the old farmhouse was simply an innocent dwelling.

Wesner kept on his disguise, as he intended to accompany Lucy to Charleston and meet Pierce. When the latter received Wesner's telegram he was a little surprised, and had about half a mind to keep on to Cairo, but, on reflection, came to the sensible conclusion to obey orders, especially as his previous acquaintance with Wesner led him to understand that the man was "in danger tried," so he dropped his own argument and to Charleston went, arriving there on the evening of the rescue.

Although not aware of the proceedings of the Cromwell party, he suspected they would be important factors in the affair, as he had once stopped at their place, and had some knowledge of their character and gameness, or, as he expressed it, "They were proper sandy."

He lingered around Charleston all that day, and began to feel somewhat impatient and a bit disappointed as two trains passed and no news.

As there were no others until next morning, he had no recourse but to spend the night at Charleston, and sleep if he could.

Next morning he was at the station, hoping that he might hear something from Wesner. Not wishing to ask questions, he could only listen for any gossip that was flying. But as there were neither people nor gossip, listening availed nothing.

CHAPTER XXV.

Gregg lay curled up on the car floor where he fell, and did not move when the train started. The passengers began to crowd around him. The car aisle was packed, and the air was suffocating. The conductor and train hands restored order as soon as possible and cleared the car, opening the doors at either end. With the strong draught of the fresh morning air from the prairie blowing over him, Gregg began to revive. Some good Samaritan among the passengers turned a modicum of brandy down his throat, and a couple of amateur surgeons stanched the blood and tied up the wounded arm.

The first movement he made when he realized where he was was to turn his eyes toward the place where Lucy had been seated. The wreck of the seat explained her absence. He looked at Shaughnessy. There was no fight in him. His injuries were not very grievous, but he was thoroughly frightened, and fear had completely paralyzed him.

As a realizing sense of life took possession of him, he began to shout and call on the conductor to stop the train.

Gregg began fumbling for his revolver.

"It's gone," he said. "Won't some of you shoot that cop; he is noisy enough now, but was dumb when wanted. Conductor, where is that girl?"

"Couldn't tell, sir. Last time I saw her she was seated in a cart behind a pair of horses, and they were going north at the rate of 20 miles an hour. The cart was tied to them, I guess, as it was keeping close company. Who was the girl and who are you?"

"I," Gregg replied, "am a Deputy United States Marshal for the southern district of Louisiana, and that girl was a runaway nigger."

"You are right," said the conductor, "for if I ever saw a pair of horses run, that was the pair."

"You have your warrant all right," said Shaughnessy.

"Yes," replied Gregg.

"Then we'll have her again."

"Yes," said Gregg, "we will deputize you to catch her—you are such a hustler. Conductor, put him off at the next station. He may have the warrant. I'll never need another one. Won't I be laughed at when I get back! I won't go back without that girl. D—n that scoundrel who shot me! 'Run, Lucy, run!' I will know his voice again, if I ever hear it. He knows that girl, that chap does."

Meantime as Gregg was talking, the brakeman and one of the lady passengers were tying up his head, and at last, with the aid of some borrowed handkerchiefs, the blood was stanched and he sat up in the car. His head ached badly, and when he arrived at Cairo, he was obliged to take his bed and send for a surgeon, who took half a dozen stitches in the cut, and warned him that if he wished to avoid erysipelas he must lie still for at least one week. This Gregg ostensibly accepted as good advice, but he had his plans, which were to haunt that station the next day and track the wagon. The next morning he was in a raging fever.

Wesner had contemplated starting immediately with Lucy for Charleston, but the anxiety and excitement of the last few days had completely prostrated her, and it was near midnight when they drove out of Cromwell's yard. She was then quite weak.

About 10 o'clock next morning, as Pierce was lounging near the hotel, a gentleman, accompanied by an elderly lady, drove up to the station. As they bore no resemblance to the persons whom he expected, he barely noticed them. The gentleman accompanied the lady into the waiting-room, returned to the platform, and, taking his tobacco and paper from his pocket, commenced to roll a cigarette. Pierce saw him. One glance was enough. "Heavens, it's Wesner. "Sure, it is Wesner." He walked over to the platform; the cigarette was rolled and between his lips "No, it cannot be."

He stared him full in the face.

Just then the lady stepped to the door. "Mr. Pierce, I believe." Pierce knew the voice.

"This is Mr. Wesner, Mr. Pierce."

"Good God!" cried Pierce. "Let's get out of sight of people. This beats me."

Wesner smiled.

"Well, Lucy," said he, "I think you could go to New Orleans now with perfect safety. Even Gregg would not recognize you in that rig, so you will run no risk in returning to Andover."

"How long must she keep that rig on?" said Pierce.

"Until you get her to Waldbridge's place And, above all, don't let this affair be known outside of that house, if possible.

"But the station agent?"

"Will never dare tell for his life. His neighbors would hang him. He need not know she was rescued, unless he sees it in the papers, and then he will not know who it was. I would like to settle him, though."

"Well," said Pierce, "I will."

And 10 years after he did whip him nearly to death, and then told him who he was.

Lucy and Pierce arrived at the Waldbridge house without further trouble Thence she returned to Andover.

Wesner, still in disguise, went to Chicago, and made his debut there as George Wesner, came back to Cairo, and in a few days took a steamer for New Orleans.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The steamer Aurora was an old-fashioned, stern-wheel steamboat, the wheel modeled after the plan of an overshot mill wheel, and of immense circumference. She was one of the fastest stern-wheelers upon the river, a light draft boat, built for the Pittsburg trade and the canal at Louisville. The lower deck contained the engine and boilers. Abaft the boilers was a tier of bunks for the deck passengers and negro slaves in transit. These were on the port side, which was further ornamented by a ruinous old cook stove, upon which the unfortunate passengers were wont to fry their bacon and bake the everlasting cornbread of the South. Forward of the boilers was a place devoted to the storage of wood, the balance of the deck, together with the hold, was given over to freight. Above this mass of timber, dirt and machinery, was reared the saloon, where dwelt the cabin passengers and the officers of the boat. Above this was the pilot house, the whole structure being at least 30 feet from the water, and in boats of larger dimensions even 50 feet. Here was also stationed the helmsman, constantly alert to watch the shifting channels of the Mississippi.

The reader will remember that these were the halcyon days of the Southwest. The three great rivers, the Mississippi, Missouri and Ohio, poured forth the products of immense territory, while the Red River and Arkansas and scores of lesser streams bore upon their yellow waters countless steamers laden with cotton, sugar and other rich products of the Lower Mississippi.

Scores of unwieldy "broad horns" tied up at the levees, and the shriek of the steam whistle and howling music of the calliope resounded through the streets and along the river front of busy New Orleans. Slave property was buoyant, and 100-nigger planter was an every day occurrence. This was way back in the '50s. We shall never see the like again. Many is the silent tear shed by those who were there, for "the days before the war."

In these days the earth had no resting place for the poker-playing gambler equal to the Mississippi steamer. On these boats he made his home, and the constant stream of travel furnished plenty of unsophisticated victims, with more money than wit, from whom he could "strip the cuticle," and it was usually thoroughly done. Upon this trip the Aurora appeared to have outdone herself. Wesner sauntered about the boat, but saw no man whose face he recognized or whose acquaintance he could claim. Among the deck passengers was a guant looking individual, who attracted Wesner's attention and excited his sympathy. Fever and ague were written upon every lineament of his sallow features and shone in his hollow eyes. A poor, ill-dressed, haggard, querulous-looking woman accompanied him. Gathered about them were their family, three big deerhounds. Their household utensils and furniture—three deerskin-bottomed chairs, wash basin, frying pan and kettle, were piled beside them. A couple of gray blankets occupied one of the bunks, and the man's rifle, powder and tobacco pouch lay on them. His hunting knife was stuck in his belt; this he wore. A tin dipper and teapot completed their outfit.

Wesner accosted them.

"Yes, they were poor; had the shakes in Tennessee, went into Kentucky, couldn't get shut of them ther, and were going back to Tennessee. Had buried their two children in Kentuck, and were plum discouraged—'Jes llefs die as not'—wished he was a nigger and belonged to some good man."

Wesner's ready hand dove into his pocket and extended a $20 gold piece.

"Here," said he, giving it to the woman, "keep this for time of need," and giving the man $5 more, told them to go on board the next wharfboat and get what eatables they wanted. Neither of them spoke, but they looked their gratitude.

The woman was mixing hoecake in the washbasin, this culinary feat being accomplished, she transferred it to the frying pan and baked it over the stove. This was their supper. The remnants were given to the hounds, who licked the pan clean. This cleared away the table; the work was done. Nothing could be more economical or convenient, and it required no very extensive knowledge of housekeeping.

By this time the lamps were lighted and the poker game was in full blast. Seated around the table were three men; one a big, brawny chap, coarse, but shrewd looking, the other two Wesner had noticed quite particularly before. That they were gamblers was evident, but he also thought they were doing a little business in the color line. These two, Wesner saw at a glance, were skinning the other chap, who about every five minutes would repeat: "I am a flatboat boy, and never played poker before."

Wesner caught his eye. There was a twinkle that caused him to watch the game. It was Flatboat's deal. He took the cards, laid them carefully on the table, whipped a 15-inch bowie from his bootleg and at one stroke cut the corner of the pack through and scattered them on the floor. "Now, Mr. Clerk, another pack, if you please; here is your money." He tossed the clerk a dollar as he bought the pack.

"Once around gentlemen, is enough; I never play poker, my eyesight is poor and I can't see marked cards. What yer do? Bet $20 do yer? I'll raise yer $20; $100. Here's another. Let's see yer keerds. Three queens—a bluff—I thought so. Straight flush mine. I'll take that pile," and he raked it in, remarking: "I'm a poor flatboatman, and don't play poker; but am a liberal cuss, and when I do play use new cards every hand round. What! Don't want to continue the game? I thought so," and the proposed victim arose from the table $500 ahead.

The chagrined gamblers adjourned to the upper deck. Wesner was there, smoking his evening cigarette. The two gamblers seated themselves next to him and began conversation. At the first words George was all attention, for their conversation was in the Acadian French dialect and stamped them as from the Attakapas country.

Wesner listened, for he was as well acquainted with that idiom as with his own language. One of them addressed him in Acadian. Wesner gave no heed, but continued to look at the scenery.

"Our friend is deaf," the other said in French.

Still Wesner kept the same uninterested, indifferent look, and watched the shores, as though his whole life depended upon not missing sight of even one cottonwood tree. "I do not know these men," he thought; "but evidently they are from west of the Teche. They may know me; if they do not I shall not introduce myself, as I do not want to make any steamboat acquaintances, especially such as speak Acadian. I will watch them, for they may be negro traders, as well as gamblers." Wesner possessed perfect control of himself, and stolically listened to the conversation, which they at first carried on in a low tone, but as they became interested in their own plans, and were sure that their only hearer did not understand them, their caution was forgotten, and they discussed their business freely.

As Wesner had surmised, they were negro traders, and also gamblers. The trading business they kept in the background, because the little business they carried on would have undoubtedly caused them serious trouble, should it become generally known, for their stock was usually stolen in Kentucky and run south to some boat landing on the Mississippi, and from thence taken to the New Orleans market and sold. A very common form of crime was this at that time.

Wesner listened with fierce earnestness, alert to catch every word that dropped from their lips.

"Heavens," thought he, "what consummate scoundrels! Why, I am virtue itself beside these men, and I am, under the law, a thief, for I steal niggers, and, gentlemen, I will steal yours."

The thought flashed over him that it would be a fine thing to rob the robbers and make off with their plunder.

About 100 miles below was a wood yard-knows as Atkins'. Here the Aurora always wooded up, and as there was a good landing, she received passengers and freight. This Wesner knew, as he had often been up and down on the same boat. The country for a number of miles back from the river and beyond was very thinly inhabited and mostly with a poor class of whites. They made a few bales of cotton, and Atkins' was their usual shipping point. They were not suspected of being too honest, and eked out a precarious subsistence by hauling wood for Atkins' yard.

In the conversation, the strangers mentioned this landing. Wesner, stoical as ever, continued to puff away at his cigarette and listened. He learned there would be at Atkins' yard, under the charge of "Muhl Babbage," a local desperado, five negroes, three men and two women, all stolen from Kentucky, by these plausible scoundrels, run into the woods and secreted by Babbage, and kept until the excitement incident to their disappearance had subsided, and on this trip of the Aurora they were to be taken on.

"Oh, for one hour of Bradley," thought George; "one little hour out of the day, and these chaps might have all they could get out of the other 23. But, gentlemen, I must have your niggers, and that means fight. They are going back to Kentucky, if not farther; meantime, as this wagon won't get to Atkins' before 8 o'clock tomorrow morning, and not then if the dog sets in, I will retire to my stateroom and sleep a little," and, throwing his cigarette overboard, he sauntered to his room and prepared to rest.

Wesner was well armed and always prepared for action. This was before metallic cartridges had come into general use. The revolver was a plenteous and useful article, but few, except the old-fashioned percussion cap Colt patent were used. Wesner owned a pair of the latest make, metallic cartridge, caliber .38, and could shoot with lightning-like rapidity, and a precision perfectly wonderful.

On one of these he had filed the dog so that hauling back the hammer revolved the chamber, but the dog did not catch the trigger. With his thumb on the hammer he could empty every chamber in 10 seconds, and put each bullet into a foot circle at 20 yards. It was before hip-pocket days, but his gun was at his waistband, not in a case or pocket to foul and give his opponent the first shot, but tied with a string that a quick jerk would break.

Examining his weapons thoroughly and ascertaining that they were in working order, he threw off his clothes and lay down to rest, not even thinking of the morrow, for he wanted rest before action.

Morning came, and as the night before gave promise, it was dark and foggy. Wesner found the steamer with steam down, tied alongside the east bank of the river. Asking the pilot their whereabouts, he ascertained that they were about 75 miles below Memphis, and 25 from Atkins' landing.

At first he thought he would tell the captain of the boat the story, but on further consideration gave it up as impolitic, for the words of the two gamblers would probably have as much weight as his.

At the breakfast table he designedly seated himself opposite the gamblers, whom he found by the boat register were booked as M. C. Jules, and his comrade simply as J. Somes. Somes was evidently the leader. Although younger in appearance, Jules was the larger. He had a look about him calculated to create mistrust, and always in conversation he kept watch of his companion. Somes, on the contrary, had a frank, honest look, was a little nervous in his movements, but not noticeably so. Both were tastefully dressed and spoke English without the French accent. They had been playing cards nearly all night, and were considerably jaded. Ordinarily, they would have kept their rooms until dinner, but this morning they had business on hand. Although they did not expect any interruption, they were a little anxious for fear Babbage might have missed connections, in which which case they would have to return to Memphis and await another down-river boat. This would be awkward for them, as it might provoke questions and arouse suspicions.

Somes had informed the captain that they expected some negroes, recently purchased, to be brought on board at Atkins, and as this was no unusual occurrence, and he supposed the men to be legitimate traders, no more notice was taken of it.

After breakfast, as the fog showed signs of lifting, the furnace was filled and steam raised so that the boat could be readily handled. She began to feel her way slowly along the river, while the fog was yet so dense that it was impenetrable a boat's length beyond her stern. The bell rang continually, and at short intervals the grum sound of the steam whistle echoed through the trees and bushes that hung dripping over the river bank. There was imminent danger of running down some drifting flatboat, as such craft were numerous, or colliding with an upbound steamer. The river was fearfully high and the current four miles an hour. The rush of the current, however, was partially counterbalanced by the backward motion of the wheels of the steamer, so that probably a speed of three miles was all she was moving under.

Suddenly, as the boat, still hugging the eastern bank, rounded a bend in the river, there loomed up a black, misshapen mass, an undefined mixture of fog and steamboat, from which broke forth a succession of such shrieks as nothing but a Mississippi steamer whistle could give. In an instant the breakfast table was deserted, and the excited passengers rushed out of the saloon just in time to see the steamer Vidalia, not more than 20 feet from the Aurora. It was close, but, thanks to the caution of both captains, the danger was past, and they slowly drifted by each other, not three feet apart.

The Vidalia was crowded with passengers and loaded to the guards with freight. A collision would inevitably have sunk her with a fearful loss of passengers, as there are few chances of rescue from the swift, muddy current of the Lower Mississippi.

Soon after the fog lifted sufficiently to enable the steamer to make a fair rate of speed, and about 10 o'clock she drew near Atkins' landing. The pilot ran her stem against the bank, and, as she would stay there some time, let her stern swing gradually with the current, until she lay alongside, with her bow pointing up river, and her guards hugging the shore.

Somes and Jules stood on the upper deck, watching the shore and occasionally exchanging a few words. Wesner passed down the stairs to the freight deck, and when the boat touched the shore stepped on the bank. He had matured his plan and was ready for action. He knew he was alone, but now the devil in him was aroused, for, huddled beside a large pile of cordwood were five of the most forlorn, starved-looking negroes he had ever seen, and he had seen many.

From the dirty and unkempt rags that partially covered them the moisture from the fog dripped in big drops. The women had evidently been crying, and the men, shackled together, stood mute and sullen. They were travel-stained, looked weary, and were well plastered with yellow mud. Beside them stood Babbage. At sight of him Wesner was a little disconcerted, for he recognized in him the stranger I had wounded the night we run off the Fillmore's cargo. Then he was not known as Muhl Babbage, but he probably had a new alias whenever necessary, to avoid the Sheriff.

Taking in the situation, Wesner approached Babbage and looked him over as if he meditated purchasing him. The man appeared ill at ease, and glanced at the steamer.

"Those negroes for sale?" inquired Wesner.

"They ain't mine, stranger," (Just here Babbage caught sight of Somes.) "There's the gentlemen as owns 'em," he replied, and leaving his charge he walked toward the boat.

Wesner hurriedly asked one of the negroes, "Did this man buy you?"

"No," was the answer.

"Whom do you belong to?"

"James Wilson, Floyd County, Kentucky."

This was spoken low and quick. Wesner sauntered toward the steamer. Somes and Jules had changed their position and were standing at the head of the gangway plank, ready to walk ashore. The captain of the Aurora was leaning over the rail on the main deck, and the mate, radiating between the woodpile and the steamer, alternately praised the deckhands, who were lugging wood on board, or cursed them vigorously because they loaded light and were slow. Others of the crew were loading a few cotton bales at the side plank, and, with shouting, swearing and running, business was lively.

As Somes stepped ashore, Wesner drew back perhaps 20 feet and first spoke to him:

"Where did you steal those niggers?"

Somes started, stared around and did not at first comprehend who spoke to him. Then came the question, loud and distinct:

"Whose niggers are those, and where did you steal them?"

Somes reached for his pistol. Instantly Wesner had him covered.

"Wink, and you are a dead man."

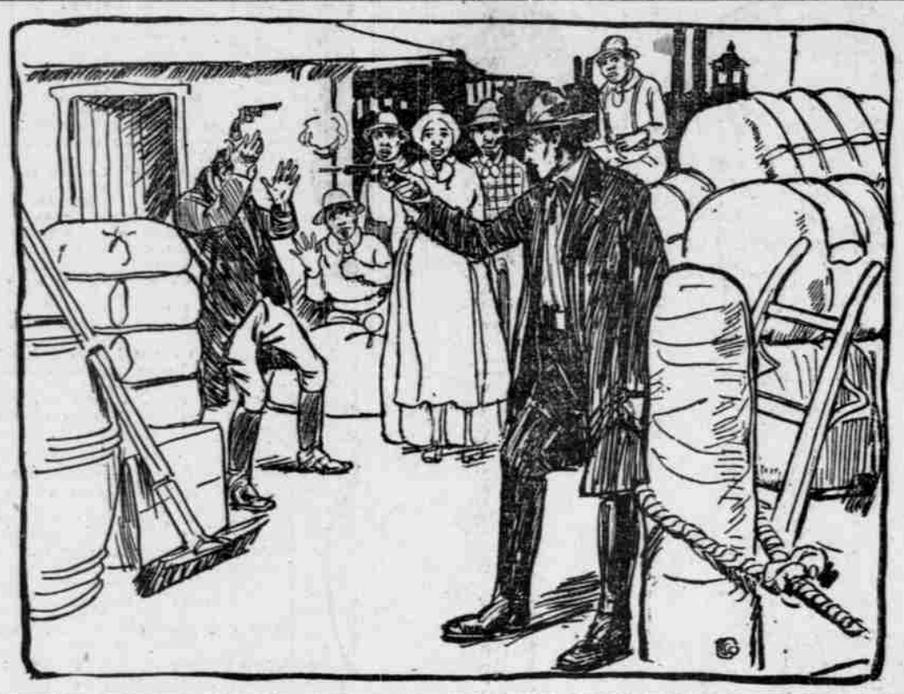
"Captain," cried Wesner, "those two men are negro thieves. Those negroes, standing there, were stolen from James Wilson, Floyd County, Kentucky. They are taking them to New Orleans to market."

"You lie," interrupted Somes.

Wesner eyed him steadily and replied in Acadian.

"Mon dieu," exclaimed Somes, "why did I talk?"

Jules now joined Somes, and at Wesner's remark drew his pistol. Instantly shifting his aim from Somes to Jules, Wesner fired. Somes sprang back to the steamer, drawing his own pistol as he ran; Wesner sent a bullet after him, striking his arm near the elbow. The two shots were in quick succession.



WITHOUT CHANGING POSITION, WESNER SENT TWO SHOTS AND BABBAGE STRUCK THE GROUND.

Babbage, who appeared like one dazed, cried out as Jules was hit: "By God, the man shoots with his gun lock filed—who is he?"

Wesner, with his eyes still fixed upon Somes, and keeping him under the muzzle of his pistol, continued to talk to the captain of the Aurora.

"Captain, these two men, Jules and Somes, have stolen these negroes Babbage brought them from Kentucky."

Babbage was standing about 30 feet from Wesner, but at the first shot he ran back to the negroes to protect them. He showed no inclination to take part in the fray. At the mention of his own name, he seemed to realize that he was a factor in the scrimmage. He knew very well that Judge Lynch held court on both banks of the Mississippi, and negro stealing was a hanging crime. He was a ready man with his gun, and without a moment's hesitation, he fired at Wesner, whose side was exposed to his aim. The bullet ploughed through Wesner's shoulder, making a deep flesh wound. Without changing position, Wesner sent to shots in exchange, in such rapid succession that Babbage struck the ground, with two caliber 38s in his body.

Somes was no coward and a fair shot. He had fled to the forward part of the upper deck. It was crowded with passengers, who had rushed out at the first fire. He could not shoot from there, but the shooting of Babbage had created a diversion in his favor. Knowing that if Wesner lived, he was a doomed man, and having no appetite for prison life or the noose, he broke from the crowd and ran to the after part of the deck, some 40 feet from where Wesner stood.

When clear of the crowd, he halted and raised his weapon. Wesner had not lowered his, and as Somes halted, fired. The ball shattered Somes' arm, and his weapon fell into the river.

"I am done," was all he said, and sank on the deck.

Wesner stepped up to the captain.

"Captain, as there is no Sheriff here, I demand you to arrest me, take these niggers to the next landing, take care of them and send them to their masters. As for these villians, if they live they can be tried and hanged. I expect that scoundrel (pointing to Babbage) is dead—he is the best one, however."

The whole affair, from the first shot until the last, had not occupied more than three minutes, and by that time, especially as the danger was over, the passengers began to recover from their panic, and the gentlemen gathered around Wesner, who explained to them why he had mistrusted these men, and also that he had understood their conversation although in Acadian, and had determined to rescue the negroes.

"Now, gentlemen, I am your prisoner. Turn me over to the first Sheriff, if you wish, or bring these men to trial."

Men on the Mississippi were not arrested in those heroic days for deeds like this, and George was the lion of the day

Somes and Jules were tried and sent to Baton Rouge, where they perished when the prison was burned.

The negroes were sent back to Floyd County, but never got there, for Wesner left the boat at the next landing, went back to Memphis, intercepted them and in 40 days from the day of the fight they were safe in Canada, and the money for them was in our hands.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Our next venture was without incident worthy relating. I went through with eight, taking only one canoe. It was late in July before we started The weather was very dry, the water low, and it was difficult to get the canoe through some of the shoal places.

While in New York Entwissle read me portions of a letter from Shreveport. La., In that letter the writer denounced the institution of slavery very bitterly, and urged an organized system of raids similar to the one we were pursuing. He was a Southern man, and spoke of the mysterious disappearance of the negroes from Attakapas, but doubted that they had gone North. His theory was that they were stolen, and sold in Cuba, slaves at that time bringing very good prices there. In this theory he was not alone. I had heard the same theory advanced before, and had encouraged it all I dared. Entwissle's idea was for me to go home by way of Shreveport, find the writer of the letters, and see what chance there was of successful operation. This letter was unsigned, and the only clew to its author was to direct to box 91, Shreveport, La. "This," I replied, "admits of two conclusions. It is either a 'simon pure' letter, or the man who penned it suspects that your anti-slavery society is the instigator of these raids. If the last, he will wait for your answer. If the former, and he is in earnest, you will hear from him again. Meantime, write him that you are not doing business that way. I will get ready to start about the time you should receive your answer."

Entwisle wrote as I requested, and in about 10 days received an answer. It was very philanthropic. The writer deplored the existence of the institution, and his abuse of the slaveholder was as vituperative as ungrammatical, and was too zealous to be genuine.

I suggested to Entwisle that I get a few days' start toward Shreveport, and that he write to box 91, inclosing his letter in a fancy envelope, so I could detect it at a glance in the box.

He did as I desired. I immediately proceeded to Shreveport, disguised as a drummer selling goods for a big patent medicine concern in New York. Entwisle had made the arrangements, and if I sold any goods they were to forward them and also acknowledge me as their agent, for I never knowingly left any holes for suspicion. Entwisle was to write me by the same mail that carried the letters to box 91.

I had been in Shreveport a few days and had really sold quite a bill of goods to the drug store, and had seen the proprietor of box 91. The mail at that time arrived daily by steamer, and generally about 3 o'clock P. M., and as I was always on the lookout for the mailboat, I never missed being at the postoffice and watching my man.

He was a difficult piece of humanity to pronounce upon, and my opinion was divided as to his being a Methodist preacher on circuit or a gambler on a vacation. I finally decided he was a "pasteboard" banker. His countenance was pleasant, yet he had a cool, determined look about him that showed he was no child to deal with, and I was fully aware that I must proceed with caution if I would ascertain his object and views without exciting suspicion. There were boxes in the postoffice in Shreveport numbered up to 150. These boxes had glass fronts, and letters could be plainly seen from the hall, but as they were usually put into the boxes flat, it was difficult to see the address.

At length my patience was rewarded, and I caught the address, "Mr. Alvin Beatham, Shreveport." Now, Mr. Beatham, who are you? My curiosity was soon satisfied, for I found Mr. Beatham was a small planter, sometimes a slave-hunter, something of a gambler, and at present deputy Sheriff for the Shreveport district. My next move was to make his acquaintance, for I had no doubt that he scented the Attakapas business through the shooting at White River, or else from rumors or information from below. How to ascertain more was another thing. I could stay there but a few days without attracting notice, especially if I loafed around the postoffice.

I was on the hotel books as J. P. Macomber, and letters were, of course, directed to that name. Envelopes that I received were all O. K., my drug house ad, on the face, all honest and square.

One day I saw Beatham talking to a stranger, a tall, solid-looking chap in the neighborhood of 40 years of age. Not liking his looks, I came to the conclusion that that infernal White River affair had been exploded and would ruin us should we be suspected. I knew George was making up another lot for the same route, and about ready to start. Mason and Obed were both in Attakapas. How many negroes they had hidden away I did not know, but I must get word to George before they were off. Not daring to risk a letter, my only course was to go to New Iberia.

Next day I took the steamer. On the way down I remembered that it was necessary for George to visit New Orleans before leaving for the North, and as it would cause me but little delay, concluded to go there also. I usually stopped at a small hotel in Lafayette, and George at the St. Charles. As my object was to see him, I went to the St. Charles.

As I left the carriage to my great surprise and joy he was standing on the hotel steps watching the newcomers, and smoking.

"Glad to see you, Charlie, but what evil omen sent you? Did you know I was here?"

"No, I didn't," I replied, "but as I wanted to see you I came."

"Come up to my room—no, book your name first, get another room, then come to mine, No. 147, second floor."

"I'll be there in a few minutes," I replied. I booked my name, ordered my luggage, sent to my room, and, after washing and combing my hair, called at 147. George was there waiting.

"Come," he cried, "out with it. Let's know the worst; you look anxious and uneasy."

I told him the story.

"Then, there's two," said he. "It's just as you say, Charlie; it is the White River affair. I was afraid of it, and always knew I did wrong not to have killed the whole of them. They would have murdered me and sold the negroes. We'll start tomorrow for Shreveport. They know, probably, that the party was from below. There is quite a stir yet among those same negroes."

"Did you ever find who the parties were with whom you fought?"

"Never! How could I when I could ask no questions, and such affairs are never published?"

Next day, taking a Red-River steamer, in due time we were in Shreveport, walking toward the postoffice. Beatham and the stranger were coming toward the office from an opposite direction, busily talking, and not noticing the surroundings. There wae no one in the office corridor but ourselves. I saw them, and said to George: "There they go. Let's walk down the street, meet them and take one gool look so we will know when the next time."

Wesner looked up. "Heavens, I know one this time. That's Gregg, the Marshal from whom I stole Lucy. I had the same rig on then I have now"; and he bolted out of the opposite door, disappearing around the corner. I did not move, and there was no time for explanation.

Wesner's stay in Shreveport was very brief, being limited to the time occupied in traveling from the postoffice to the steamboat landing.

(To be continued.)

Poisonous Fruit Syrup.

Chemist Hummell, of the State Dairy and Food Department, says the St. Paul (Minn.) Dispatch, found that strawberries, sold for the purpose of supplying "pure fruit" flavor for ice cream and ice cream soda, had been colored with coal tar or aniline dye. The can containing the sample was sent to the department by a local firm, which said that it had received numerous complaints from its customers that ice cream soda made from the contents made them ill. The complaints all came from those who used the strawberry flavor. A can of these berries became broken, and employes who ate some of them became ill almost immediately.

A chemical analysis revealed the coloring matter which had caused the illness. The strawberries were put up by a Cleveland firm especially for the ice cream soda trade. The berries had been cooked, which gave them a dark color. To restore the bright red, dye was used for coloring.

THE PALATIAL
OREGONIAN BUILDING

Not a dark office in the building; absolutely fireproof; electric lights and artesian water; perfect sanitation and thorough ventilation. Elevators run day and night.

	Rooms.
ALDRICH, S. W., General Contractor	610
ANDERSON, GUSTAV, Attorney-at-Law	612
ASSOCIATED PRESS; E. L. Powell, Mgr.	306
AUSTEN, F. C., Manager for Oregon and Washington Bankers' Life Association, of Des Moines, Ia.	502-503
BANKERS' LIFE ASSOCIATION, OF DES MOINES, IA.; F. C. Austen, Manager	502-503
BEALS, EDWARD A., Forecast Official U. S. Weather Bureau	610
BENJAMIN, R. W., Dentist	314
BINSWANGER, DR. O. S., Phys. & Sur.	410-411
BROOKE, DR. J. M., Phys. & Surg.	708-709
BROWN, MYRA, M. D.	313-314
BRUERE, DR. G. E., Physician	412-413-414
BUSTEED, RICHARD, Agent Wilson & McCallay Tobacco Co.	602-603
CAUKIN, G. E., District Agent Travelers' Insurance Co.	718
CARDWELL, DR. J. R.	506
CARROLL, W. T., Special Agent Mutual Reserve Fund Life Ass'n.	604
COLUMBIA TELEPHONE COMPANY	604-605-606-607-613-614-615
CORNELIUS, C. W., Phys. and Surgeon	306
COVER, F. C., Cashier Equitable Life	306
COLLIER, P. F., Publisher; S. P. McGuire, Manager	415-416
DAY, J. G. & I. N.	318
DAVIS, NAPOLEON, President Columbia Telephone Co.	607
DICKSON, DR. J. F., Physician	713-714
DRAKE, DR. H. B., Physician	512-513-514
DWYER, JOE. F., Tobacco	402
EDITORIAL ROOMS	Eighth floor
EQUITABLE LIFE ASSURANCE SOCIETY; L. Samuel, Manager; F. C. Cover, Cashier	306
EVENING TELEGRAM	325 Alder street
FENTON, J. D., Physician and Surgeon	509-510
FENTON, DR. HICKS C., Eye and Ear	511
FENTON, MATTHEW P., Dentist	509
FIDELITY MUTUAL LIFE ASSOCIATION; E. C. Stark, Manager	601
GALVANI, W. H., Engineer and Draughtsman	608
GAVIN, A., President Oregon Camera Club	214-215-216-217
GEARY, DR. EDWARD P., Physician and Surgeon	212-213
GEBBIE PUB. CO., Ltd., Fine Art Publishers; M. C. McGreevy, Mgr.	515
GIESY, A. J., Physician and Surgeon	709-710
GODDARD, E. C. & CO., Footwear	Ground floor, 129 Sixth street
GOLDMAN, WILLIAM, Manager Manhattan Life Insurance Co. of New York	209-210
GRANT, FRANK S., Attorney-at-Law	617
HAMMAM BATHS, King & Compton, Props.	308
HAMMOND, A. B.	316
HEIDINGER, GEO. A. & CO., Pianos and Organs	133 Sixth street
HOLLISTER, DR. O. C., Phys. & Sur.	504-505
IDLEMAN, C. M., Attorney-at-Law	416-17-18
JOHNSON, W. C.	315-316-317
KADY, MARK T., Supervisor of Agents Mutual Reserve Fund Life Ass'n.	604-605
LAMONT, JOHN, Vice-President and General Manager Columbia Telephone Co.	606
LITTLEFIELD, H. R., Phys. and Surgeon	206
MACRUM, W. S., Sec. Oregon Camera Club	214
MACKAY, DR. A. E., Phys. and Surg.	711-712
MAXWELL, DR. W. E., Phys. & Surg.	701-2-3
McCOY, NEWTON, Attorney-at-Law	715
McFADEN, MISS IDA E., Stenographer	201
McGINN, HENRY E., Attorney-at-Law	311-312
McKELL, T. J., Manufacturers' Representative	309
METT, HENRY	218
MILLER, DR. HERBERT C., Dentist and Oral Surgeon	608-609
MOSSMAN, DR. E. P., Dentist	312-313-314
MANHATTAN LIFE INSURANCE CO., of New York; W. Goldman, Manager	209-210
MUTUAL RESERVE FUND LIFE ASS'N; Mark T. Kady, Supervisor of Agents	604-605
McELROY, DR. J. G., Phys. & Sur.	701-702-703
McFARLAND, E. B., Secretary Columbia Telephone Co.	606
McGUIRE, S. P., Manager P. F. Collier, Publisher	415-416
McKIM, MAURICE, Attorney-at-Law	506
MILLER & ROWE, Real Estate, Timber and Farming Lands a Specialty	709
MUTUAL LIFE INCURANCE CO., of New York; Wm. S. Pond, State Mgr.	404-405-406
NICHOLAS, HORACE B., Attorney-at-Law	712
NILES, M. L., Cashier Manhattan Life Insurance Co., of New York	209
OREGON INFIRMARY OF OSTEOPATHY; Dr. L. B. Smith, Osteopath	405-406
OREGON CAMERA CLUB	214-215-216-217
POND, WM. S., State Manager Mutual Life Ins. Co. of New York	404-405-406
PORTLAND PRESS CLUB	501
PORTLAND EYE AN EAR INFIRMARY, Ground floor, 133 Sixth street	
PORTLAND MINING & TRUST CO.; J. H. Marshall, Manager	518
QUIMBY, L. P. W., Game and Forestry Warden	716-717
ROSENDALE, O. M., Metallurgist and Mining Engineer	515-516
REED & MALCOLM, Opticians	133 Sixth street
REED, F. C., Fish Commissioner	407
RYAN, J. B., Attorney-at-Law	417
SAMUEL, L., Manager Equitable Life	306
SHERWOOD, J. W., Deputy Supreme Commander, K. O. T. M.	517
SMITH, Dr. L. B., Osteopath	405-406
SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION	500
STARK, E. C., Executive Special, Fidelity Mutual Life Association of Phila., Pa.	601
STUART, DELL, Attorney-at-Law	617-618
STOLTE, DR. CHAS. E., Dentist	704-705
SURGEON OF THE S. P. RY. AND N. P. TERMINAL CO.	708