The Record of Rusty Quinn

PROFESSOR SHORTY McCABE RELATES A MELODRAMATIC INCIDENT INVOLVING CIGARETTES, HEROISM AND RAGTIME MUSIC.

SAY, I ain't one of the kind to go around makin' a noise like a pickle, just because I don't happen to have the same talents that's been handed out to others. About all I got to show is a couple of punch distributors that's more or less educated, and a block that's set on some solid. Not much to get chesty over; but the combination has kept me from askin' for benefit performances, and as a rule I'm satisfied.

There's times, though, when I wish—say, don't go giving me the hee-haw on this—when I wish I could sing. Ah, I don't mean bein' no grand opera tenor, with a throat that has to be kept in cotton battin' and a reputation that needs chloride of lime. What would suit me would be just a plain, every day la-la-la outfit of pipes, that I could turn loose on coon songs when I was alone or out with a bunch in the moonlight. I'd like to be able to come in on a chorus now and then, without havin' the rest of the crowd turn on me and call for the hook.

What music I've got is the ingrowin' kind. When anybody starts up a real lively tune I can feel it throbbin' and bumpin' away in my head, like a blowfly in a milk bottle; but if ever I try unco-kin' one of my warbles, the people on the next block call in the children, and the truck drivers begin huntin' for the dry axle.

Now look at what bein' musical did for Rusty Quinn. Who's Rusty? Well, he ain't much of anybody. I used to wonder when I'd see him kickin' around under foot in different places, how it was he had the nerve to go on livin'. Useless! He appeared about as much good to the world as a pair of boxin' gloves would be to the armless wonder.

First I saw of Rusty was five or six years back when he was hangin' around my trainin' camp. He was a long, slab-sided, loose-jointed, freckled-up kid then, always wearin' a silly, good-natured grin on his homely face. About all the good you could say of Rusty was that he could play the mouth organ and be good natured, no matter how hard he was up against it.

If there was anything else he could do well, no one ever found it out, though he tried plenty of things. And he always had some great scheme rattlin' round in his nut, something that was goin' to win him the big stake. But it was a new scheme every other day, and, outside of grinnin' and playin' the mouth organ, all I ever noticed specially brilliant about him was the way he used cigarettes as a substitute for food. Long's he had a bag of fact'ry sweepin's and a book of rice papers he didn't mind how many meals he missed, and them long fingers of his was so well trained they could roll dope sticks while he slept.

Well, it had been a year or so since I'd run across him last, and if I'd thought about him at all, which I didn't, it would have been to guess what fin'lly finished him; when this affair out on Long Island was pulled off. The swells that owns country places along the south shore has a horse show about this time every year. As a rule they gets along without me bein' there to superintend; but last week I happens to be down that way, payin' a little call on Mr. Jarvis, an old reg'lar of mine, and in the afternoon he wants to know if I don't want to climb up on the coach with the rest of the gang and drive over to see the sport.

Now I ain't so much stuck on this four-in-hand business. It's jolty kind of ridin', anyway, and if the thing upsets you've got a long ways to fall; but I always likes takin' a look at a lot of good horses, so I plants myself up behind, alongside the gent that does the tara-tara-ta act on the copper funnel, and off we goes.

It ain't any of these common fair grounds horse shows, such as any one can buy a badge to. This is held on the private trottin' track at Windymere—you know, that big estate that's been leased by the Twombley-Cranes since they started makin' their splurge. And say, they know how to do things in shape, them folks. There's a big green and white striped tent set up for the judges at the home plate, and banked around that on either side was the traps and carts and bubbles of some of the crispest crackerjacks on Mrs. Astor's list. Course, there was a lot of people I knew; so as soon as our coach is backed into position I shins down from the perch and starts in to do the glad hand walk around.

That's what fetches me onto one of the side paths leadin' up towards the big house. I was takin' a short cut across the grass, when I sees a little procession comin' down through the shrubbery. First off it looks like some one was bein' helped into their coat, but then I notices that the husky chap behind was actin' more vigorous than polite. He has the other guy by the collar, and was givin' him the knee good and plenty, first shovin' him on a step or two, and then jerkin' him back solid. Loomin' up in the rear was a gent I spots right off for Mr. Twombley-Crane himself, and by the way he follows I takes it he's bossin' the job.

"Gee!" says I to myself, "here's some one gettin' the rough chuck-out for fair."

And then I has a glimpse of a freckly face and the silly grin. The party gettin' the run was Rusty Quinn. He's lookin' just as seedy as ever, being costumed in a faded blue jersey, an old pair of yellow ridin' pants, and leggins that don't match. The bouncer is a great, ham-fisted, ruddy-necked Britisher, a man twice the weight of Rusty, with a face shaped like a punkin. As he sees me slow up he snorts out somethin' ugly and gives Quinn an extra hard bang in the back with his knee. And that starts my temperature to risin' right off.

"Why don't you hit him with a maul, you bloomin' aitch eater?" says I. "Hey, Rusty! what you been up to now?"

"Your friend's been happre-ended a-sneak thievin', that's w'at!" growls out the beef chewer.

"G'wan!" says I. "I wouldn't believe the likes of you under oath. Rusty, how about it?"

Quinn he gives me one of them batty grins of his and spreads out his hands. "Honest, Shorty," says he, "I was only after a handful of Turkish cigarettes from the smokin' room. I wouldn't touched another thing, cross m' heart, I wouldn't!"

"'Ear 'im!" says the Britisher. "And 'im caught prowlin' through the 'ouse!" With that he gives Rusty a shake that must have loosened his back teeth, and prods him on once more.

"Ah, say," says I, "you ain't got no call to break his back, even if he was prowlin'. Cut it out, you big mucker, or—"

Say, I shouldn't have done it, seein' where I was; but the ugly look on his mug as he lifts his knee again seems to pull the trigger of my right arm, and I swings in one on that punkin head like I was choppin' wood. He drops Rusty and comes at me with a rush, windmill fashion, and I'm so happy for the next two minutes, givin' him what he needs, that I've mussed up his countenance a lot before I sends in the one that finds the soft spot on his jaw and lands him on the grass.

"Here, here!" shouts Mr. Twombley-Crane, comin' up just as his man does the back shoulder fall. "Why, McCabe, what does this mean?"

"Nothin' much," says I, "except that I ain't in love with your particular way of speedin' the partin' guest."

"Guest!" says he, flushin' up. "The fellow was caught prowling. Besides, by what right do you question my method of getting rid of a sneak thief?"

"Oh, I don't stop for rights in a case of this kind," says I. "I just naturally butts in. It happens to know that Rusty here ain't any more of a thief than I am. If you've got a charge to make, though, I'll see that he's in court when—"

"I don't care to bother with the police," says he. "I merely want the fellow kicked off the place."

"Sorry to interfere with your plans," says I; "but he's been kicked enough. I'll lead him off, though, and guarantee he don't come back, if that'll do?"

We both simmered down after he agrees to that proposition. The beef-eater picks himself up and limps back to the house, while I escorts Rusty as far as the gates, givin' him some good advice on the way down. Seems he'd been workin' as stable helper at Windymere for a couple of weeks, his latest dream bein' that he was cut out for a jockey; but he'd run out of dope sticks and knowin' they was scattered around reckless in the house, he'd just walked in lookin' for some.

"Which shows you've lost what little sense you ever had," says I. "Now, here's two whole dollars, Rusty. Go off somewheres and smoke yourself to death. Nobody'll miss you."

Rusty, he just grins and moseys down the road, while I goes back to see the show, feelin' about as much to home, after that run in, as a stray pup in church.

It was about an hour later, and they'd got through the programme as far as the youngsters' pony cart class, to be followed by an exhibit of fancy farm teams. Well, the kids was gettin' ready to drive into the ring. There was a bunch of 'em, mostly young girls all togged out in pink and white, drivin' dinky Shetlands in wicker carts covered with daisies and ribbons. In the lead was little Miss Gladys, that the Twombley-Cranes think more of than they do their whole bank account. The rigs was to turn into the main driveway, ready toturn into the track as soon as the way was cleared, and it sure was a sight worth seein'.

I was standin' up on the coach, takin' it in, when all of a sudden there comes a rumblin', thunderin' sound from out near the gates, and folks begins askin' each other what's happened. They didn't have to wait long for the answer; for before anyone can open their mouths around the curve comes a cloud of dust, and out dashes a pair of big grays with one of them heavy blue and yellow farm wagons rattlin' behind. It was easy to guess what's up then. One of the farm teams has been scared.

Next thing that was clear was that there wa'n't any driver on the wagon and that them crazy horses was headed straight for that snarl of pony carts. There wa'n't any yellin' done. I guess most everybody's throat was too choked up. I know mine was. I only hears one sound above the bang and rattle of them hoofs and wheels. That was a kind of a groan, and I looked down to see Mr. Twombley-Crane standin' up in the seat of a tourin' car, his face the color of a wax candle, and such a look in his eyes as I ain't anxious to see on any man again.

Next minute he'd jumped. But it wa'n't any use. He was too far away and there was too big a crowd to get through. Even if he could have got there soon enough, he couldn't have stopped them crazy brutes any more'n he could have blocked a cannon ball.

I feels sick and faint in the pit of my stomach, and the one thing I wants to do most just then is to shut my eyes. But I couldn't. I couldn't look anywhere but at that pair of tearin' horses and them bread iron wheels. And that's why I has a good view of something that jumps out of the bushes, lands in a heap in the wagon, and then scrambles toward the front seat as quick as a cat. I see the red hair and the blue jersey, and that's enough. I knows it's that useless Rusty Quinn ployin' the fool. Now, if he'd had a pair of arms like Jeffries, maybe there'd been some hope of his pullin' down them horses inside the couple of hundred feet there was between their front toe calks and where little Miss Gladys was sittin' rooted to the cushions of her pony cart. But Rusty's muscle development is about equal to that of a 14-year-old boy, and it looks like he's goin' to do more harm than good when he grabs the reins from around the whip socket. But he stands up, plants his feet wide, and settles back for the pull.

Almost before anyone sees his game, he's done the trick. There's a smash that sounds like a buildin' fallin' down, a crackin' and splinterin' of oak wood and iron, a rattlin' of trace chains, a couple of soggy thumps,— and when the dust settles down we sees a gray horse rollin' feet up on either side of a big maple, and at the foot of the tree all that's left of that yellow and blue wagon. Rusty had put what strength he had into one rein at just the right time, and the pole had struck the trunk square in the middle.

For a minute or so there was a grand hurrah, with mothers and fathers rushin' to grab their youngsters out of the carts and hug 'em; which you couldn't blame 'em for doin' either. As for me, I drops off the back of the coach and makes a bee line for that wreck, so I'm among the first dozen to get there. I'm in time to shove my shoulder under the capsized wagon body and hold it up.

Well, there ain't any use goin' into details. What we took from under there didn't look much like a human bein' for it was as limp and shapeless as a bag of old rags. But the light haired young feller that said he was a medical student guessed there might be some life left. He wa'n't sure. He held his ear down, and after he'd listened for a minute he said maybe something could be done. So we laid it on one of the side boards and lugged it up to the house, while some one jumps into a 60-horse-power car and starts for a sure enough doctor.

It was durin' the next ten minutes, when the young student was cuttin' off the blue jersey and the ridin' pants, and pokin' and feelin' around, that Mr. Twombley-Crane gets the facts of the story. He didn't have much to say; but, knowin' what I did, and seein' how he looked, I could easy frame up what was on his mind. He gives orders that whatever was wanted should be handed out, and he was standin' by holdin' the brandy flask himself when them washed out blue eyes of Rusty's flickers open for the first time.

"I—I forgot my—mouth organ," says Rusty. "I wouldn't of come back—but for that."

It wa'n't much more'n a whisper, and it was a shaky one at that. So was Mr. Twombley-Crane's voice kind of shaky when he tells him he thanks the Lord he did come back. And then Rusty goes off in another faint.

Next a real doctor shows up, and he chases us all out while him and the student has a confab. In five minutes or so we gets the verdict. The doctor says Rusty is damaged pretty bad. Things have happened to his ribs and spine which ought to have ended him on the spot. As it is, he may hold out another hour, though in the shape he's in he don't see how he can. But if he could hold out that long the doctor knows of an A-1 sawbones who could mend him up if anyone could.

"Then telephone for him at once, and do your best meanwhile," says Mr. Twombley-Crane.

By that time everyone on the place knows about Rusty and his stunt. The front rooms was full of people standin' around whisperin' soft to each other and lookin' solemn,—swell, high-toned folks that half an hour before hardly knew such specimens as Rusty existed. But when the word is passed 'around that probably he's all in, they takes it just as hard as if he was one of their own kind. When it comes to takin' the long jump, though, we're all pretty much on the same grade, ain't we?

I begun to see where I hadn't any business slain' up Rusty like I had, and was workin' up a heavy feelin' in my chest, when the doctor comes out and asks if there's such a party as Shorty McCabe present. I knew what was comin'. Rusty has got his eyes open again and is callin' for me.

I finds him half propped up with pillows on a shiny mahogany table, his face all screwed up from the hurt inside, and the freckles showin' up on his dead white skin like peach stains on a tablecloth.

"They say I'm all to the bad, Shorty," says he, tryin' to spring that grin of his.

"Aw, cut it out!" says I. "You tell 'em they got another guess. You're too tough and rugged to go under so easy."

"Think so?" says he, real eager, his eyes lightin' up.

"Sure thing!" says I. Say, I put all the ginger and cheerfulness I could fake up into that lie. And it seems to do him a heap of good. When I asks him if there's anything he wants, he makes another crack at his grin, and says:

"A paper pipe would taste good about now."

"Let him have it," says the doc. So the student digs out his cigarette case and we helps Rusty light up.

"Ain't there somethin' more, Rusty?" says I. "You know the house is yours."

"Well," says he, after a few puffs, "if this is to be a long wait, a little music would help. There's a piano over in the corner."

I looks at the doc, and shakes my head. He shakes back.

"I used to play a few hymns," says the student.

"Forget 'em, then," says Rusty. "A hymn would finish me, sure. What I'd like is somethin' lively."

"Doc.," says I, "would it hurt?"

"Couldn't," says he. Also he whispers that he'd use chloroform, only Rusty's heart's too bad, and if he wants ragtime to deal it out.

"Wish I could," says I; "but maybe I can find some one who can."

With that I slips out and hunts up Mrs. Twombley-Crane, explainin' the case to her.

"Why, certainly," says she. "Where is Effie? I'll send her in right away."

She's a real damson plum, Effie is; one of the cute, fluffy haired kind, about 18. She comes in lookin' scared and sober; but when she's had a look at Rusty, and he's tried his grin on her, and said how he'd like to hear somebody tear off somethin' that would remind him of Broadway, she braces right up.

"I know," says she.

And say, she did know! She has us whirl the baby grand around so's she can glance over the top at Rusty, tosses her lace handkerchief into one corner of the keyboard, pushes back her sleeves until the elbow dimples show, and the next thing we know she's teasin' the tumpety-tum out of the ivories like a professor.

She opens up with a piece you hear all the kids whistlin'—something with a swing and a rattle to it. I don't know what. But it brings Rusty up on his elbow and sets him to keepin' time with the cigarette. Then she slides off into "Poor John!" and Rusty calls out for her to sing it, if she can. Can she? Why, she's got one of them sterling-silver voices, that makes Vesta Victoria's warblin' sound like blowin' a fish horn, and before she's half through the first verse Rusty has joined in.

"Come on!" says he, as they strikes the chorus. "Everybody!"

Say, the doc. was right there with the goods. He roars her out like a good one; and the student chap wa'n't far behind, either. You know how it goes—

John, he took me round to see his moth-er,
his moth-er, his moth-er!
And while he introduced us to each oth-er—

Eh? Well, maybe that ain't just the way it goes; but I can think the tune right. That was what I was up against then. I knew I couldn't make my voice behave, so all I does is go through the motions with my mouth and tap the time out with my foot. But I sure did ache to jump in and help Rusty out.

It was a great concert. She gives us all them classic things, like "The Bird on Nellie's Hat," "Waiting at the Church," "No Wedding Bells for Me," and so on; her fingers just dancin', and her head noddin' to Rusty, and her eyes kind of encouragin' him to keep his grip.

Twice, though, he has to quit, as the pain twists him; and the last time, when he flops back on the pillows, we thought he'd passed in for good. But in a minute or so he's up again, callin' for more. Say, maybe you think Miss Effie didn't have some grit of her own, to sit there bangin' out songs like that, expectin' every minute to see him keel over. But she stays with it, and we was right in the middle of that chorus that goes—

In old New York, in old New York,
The peach crop's always fine—

when the foldin' doors was slid back, and in comes the big surgeon gent we'd been waitin' for. You should have seen the look on him too, as he sizes up them three singin', and Rusty there on the table, a cigarette twisted up in his fingers, fightin' down a spasm.

"What blasted idiocy is this?" he growls.

"New kind of pain-killer, doc.," says I. "Tell you all about it later. What you want to do now is get busy."

Well, that's the whole of it. He knew his book, that bone repairer did. He worked four hours steady, puttin' back into place the parts of Rusty that had got skewgeed; but when he rolls down his sleeves and quits he leaves a man that's almost as good as ever, barrin' a few months to let the pieces grow together.

I was out to see Rusty yesterday, and he's doin' fine. He's plannin', when he gets around again, to take the purse that was made up for him and invest it in airship stock.

"And if ever I make a million dollars, Shorty," says he, "I'm goin' to hand over half of it to that gent that sewed me up."

"Good!" says I. "And if I was you I'd chuck the other half at the song writers."

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ON GOVERNMENT ORDERS..

TRUE TALES OF THE SECRET SERVICE

BY AN EX-OPERATIVE.....

EDITED BY WM. J. BACON.

THE AFFAIR OF THE PANAMA HAT

"YES, I did promise to tell you how I got this wound," replied Captain Dickson, when I recalled his mention, in a former reminiscence, of the ugly scar on the back of his neck.

"It happened when I was young in the service, and it was due to my ambition and foolhardiness, a combination that is dangerous in any one's system. The adventure came near costing me my life. I have always connected that affair with a Panama hat. A Panama hat got me into trouble and got me out again, in the end saving my life."

"The Chinese exclusion act has given a lot of trouble to the Government in one way and another, but the consequence I am most familiar with is the smuggling of coolies into this country through Mexico and Canada. Coolie labor is cheap, and it is a profitable job to slip a bevy of them across the frontier.

"There is a vast stretch of territory down on the Texas line that is almost in a state of nature. It is a country where you may travel for a week and never meet a soul, except it be a bandit, smuggler, cattle-thief, herder, or a Texas ranger. The territory extends generally from the Gulf coast to El Paso. It is much the same except where the railroads cross the Rio Grande and where small, dirty villages have sprung up.

"This is a fertile field for the coolie smugglers, and thousands of them have been brought into the United States through this wild section and farther to the west, through Arizona. The Government generally keeps a few Secret Service men down on the border, and I was assigned to this duty soon after I entered the service.

"The assignment was not a desirable one, but new men were generally tried out on it and I had to serve my apprenticeship. I imagined that there would be little to do but to loll about a stuffy custom-house under a burning sun. This latter idea was correct in part, for the custom-house was an abominable frame shack and the sun was as hot as a furnace. I found plenty to do besides lolling about the house, however.

"Things began to take a lively turn as soon as I reached Presidio, my headquarters, a village of mud huts and rambling shanties on the Rio Grande. I left the Southern Pacific at Nopal and rode many weary miles across country. Over the river, in Mexico, was the dirty village of Presidio del Norte. It is impossible to imagine a more forsaken-looking place. The Rio Conchos, a river of uncertain habits, flowed into the Rio Grande here. It was by means of this river that coolies were brought to Presidio del Norte.

"They were brought to Chihuahua by a route we never discovered, and here they took the C. & P. railroad to Nogal, where they left the railroad and journeyed across the mountains to a little village on the Rio Conchos. Boats brought them down to Presidio del Norte, and they were then slipped across the border at night, to scatter like a covey of quail through the chaparral.

"It was next to impossible to track them down, once they had entered the brush. They would make their way to the railroad at various points, traveling in twos and threes and all armed with the naturalization papers of Celestials who had long been residents of our great republic, which is so free with its citizenship.

"The Conchos River was at a stage of water which permitted boating when I reached Presidio, and this indicated that we might make preparations to receive a large consignment of coolies. We had information that hundreds of them were at Nogal and Chihuahua awaiting the rising of the river. So we put everything in readiness for their arrival.

"I had arrived in Presidio wearing a heavy Scotch hat. It had been cool when I left Washington, and this was my first trip to the Texas border. I saw at once that my hat was a back-number. Jarral, the customs officer, suggested that I get a Panama, telling me that I could secure a smuggled one at a reasonable price from a dealer in the village.

"He said he knew they were smuggled, but that there was no remedy for it, as the government didn't think it of sufficient importance to put its agents on the case, and he was powerless without them. I took his advice and bought a Panama, the largest and whitest and most conspicuous one I could find. The dealer had two of them, and he didn't want to sell me one. He said they had been ordered for special customers. I had to vow that I was the customer for whom the hat was ordered before he would let me have it. He then told me something in Spanish, but as I didn't understand the language and feared he would find out that I was not the man he had ordered the hat for, if I let him know this, I kept wise and nodded my head as if I was taking in every word he said.

"Jarrall had a good laugh at my expense when I returned to the custom-house with the hat. It was fully three feet across and had a crown that was fearfully and wonderfully made. Jarrall was a fine fellow, but I didn't like him at first because he seemed to adopt a patronizing air toward me. I was puffed up with my own importance, and felt that I had the prestige and support of the greatest government in the world at my back. I was, in plain language, an egregious ass, and I found it out before I got far out of that country.

"My instructions had been to remain at Presidio until evidence should be secured of the identity of the smugglers, and then to ask assistance of the rangers for their arrest. In my officious conceit I had dreams of capturing the smugglers unaided. I scorned to ask for help of any one. Jarrall suspected something of this from the first, and told me in a friendly way that it would be best to exercise caution. He said the smugglers were as fine a bunch of cut-throats as could be found out of jail, and that they wouldn't like anything better than to create a vacancy in the ranks of the secret service department, naturally harboring a grudge against that arm of the government.

"The next morning after my arrival I crossed over to the Mexican village to look around a bit and see if I couldn't pick up some valuable information. I was wandering about, staring at the crude hats and the naked babies, when I encountered an American wearing a hat that was a duplicate of my own, only his showed marks of hard usage.

"'Hello!' he said, 'when did you get in?'

"I was on the point of telling him that he had made a mistake, but something prompted me to play him along and see what he was up to. I merely replied:

"'Yesterday.'

"'Where is Munson?' he queried, looking me over carefully.

"'He will be here later,' I replied at a venture.

"This seemed to satisfy him, for he asked me to come along, and said he would steer me up against something that would wash the alkali dust out of my pipes.

"I went with him, but did not make any effort to talk, nor did he. We walked some distance, winding and twisting through the narrow, crooked streets, finally stopping before a house with a broken column beside the door, into which he let himself with a pass key. I followed him across a paved court into a large room at the rear of the house, which looked out through barred windows upon a pretty garden. He brought out a bottle of whisky and a bottle of seltzer, and rang for a servant, who came in shortly with a bowl of cracked ice, a great rarity in that country. He mixed two highballs and we drank in silence.

"'Now, let's get down to business,' he began.

"'All right,' I replied.

"'We have three hundred coming down tonight,' he said, 'and two hundred more in three days. The boats are ready and Manuel is in charge at Huatax, so there isn't a chance for anything to go wrong at that end of the line.'

"He paused a moment to mix another highball, which he swallowed at a gulp.

"After a moment he took up the conversation where he had left off.

"'You know where to meet us tonight?' he queried.

"'The instructions haven't been too plain,' I replied.

"'Blame that mutton-headed Indian,' he swore. 'I might have known that he couldn't get anything straight. Well, I will have to tell you all over again. You and Munson be at the cottonwood towhead, two miles above town, at 11:30 tonight to check up the cattle and pay over the money. Take the north trail from Presidio and turn to the left at the giant cactus. You can't miss the way. It is about two miles. The cattle-path at the cactus will lead you out to the landing at the towhead. Andrews and I will come over with the first boat and we can check up as they land. I suppose you have the papers,' he concluded.

"'No, Munson has them,' I ventured, feeling sure that if Munson didn't have them I did not know where they were.

"'Well, be sure that Munson brings them along,' he admonished.

"This concluded the interview, and I lost no time in getting back across the river to tell Jarrall of my adventure. He was delighted at my luck.

"'You have got them red-handed!' he yelled, when I had concluded. 'It's the luckiest piece of work you have ever done.'

"He dispatched a trusty messenger with a letter for Captain Davis, of the Rangers, whose headquarters were the nearest to Presidio, instructing the messenger to ride as if the devil were after him. We planned that Captain Davis and his rangers would arrive by 10 o'clock that night and we would have them lie in ambush at the landing place and capture my friend, the American, and his companion, as well as Munson and the person for whom I had been mistaken, both of whom we figured would arrive before that time.

"It was well along towards night when we completed our arrangements, and although Jarrall's cook had prepared a fine supper, I couldn't do justice to it. I was too excited. This was to be my first real exciting adventure, and I was as nervous as an amateur actor who is about to make his initial appearance before an audience.

"The evening dragged terribly. Jarrall stationed a lookout on the trail from Nopal, but up to 10 o'clock the two gentlemen for whom we waited had not arrived. They were not in Presidio, for we had determined that fact in the afternoon. It was evident that they would not arrive in time to keep their appointment at the cottonwood towhead. They might come the next morning, and in that event we would be ready to receive them appropriately.

"At five minutes after 10 I heard horses' hoofs pounding the sand to the south. I could almost have shouted, for I was sure that it was Davis and his rangers. It was only the messenger whom we had dispatched in the morning. He was covered with gray dust and his throat was so choked he couldn't speak. He literally fell from his horse before Jarrall's door, and we had to support him as he staggered into the room. A few drinks put him on his feet, and then he told us that the rangers were not at their headquarters, but had gone in pursuit of a band of cattle thieves. The time of their return had been uncertain, so he had hastened back after leaving Jarrall's letter for the captain.

"This was a staggering blow. Jarrall swore lurid oaths, but that didn't help the situation.

"'Let's get the local officers and arrest the smugglers,' I suggested, excitedly.

"'Local nothing,' broke out Jarrall. 'Why, there isn't an officer in Presidio. That constable has gone to Nopal with a prisoner. The town marshal was killed three weeks ago by a drunken Mexican, and no one else has been fool enough to accept it. There isn't a man in town I would trust in a case like this.'

"'Well, we can go after them ourselves,' I said. 'There will only be two against two and we will have the advantage by surprising them.'

Jarrall looked at me in blank surprise.

"'You must be crazy, man, to suggest such a thing. I am not counted a coward, but I wouldn't undertake the job without at least half a dozen good men at my back for all the gold in the world. It would mean certain death for both of us. No, I am not a candidate for the undertaker just yet.'

"He smiled a sort of sickly, patronizing smile, as much as to say: 'You are a foolish child. You don't know anything about the bad men we have down here on the border. The place for you is back home with mother.'

"His manner and his answer both nettled me, and I retorted with some warmth:

"'Well, if you are a coward, I am not. I'm going to arrest those men single-handed or get killed in the attempt.'

"With that I buckled on my revolver and started for the door.

"'I wouldn't do that, old man,' Jarrall breathed, a look of real concern displacing the amused expression that had so nettled me. 'My God, man, you don't know what you are doing. I haven't lived on the border 10 years for nothing. You will be killed. I can't—I won't permit it.'

"I turned on him and snarled in his face:

"'You are not big enough to hold me and you can't keep me any other way unless you shoot me, and I don't think you want to commit murder.'

"I poured out a volume of vile abuse for which I was afterwards heartily ashamed.

"'I am going,' I concluded, and with that I sprang out of the house and set off at a run for the north trail.

"'Wait until I get my gun and I will go with you,' Jarrall shouted after me, but I paid not attention to him.

"It was half-past ten, and I knew it would be a tight race to be at the appointed place on time. The messenger's horse was standing before the door. I mounted it and set out at a rapid rate for the trail. It was a wild ride through the chaparral that night, my heart beating time to the pounding of the horse's hoofs. At the giant cactus I hobbled the pony and hastened, on foot, down the cattle trail towards the river.

"As I came in sight of the water, shining white and silvery through the bushes, I could make out the bulk of boat approaching. I gripped my revolver nervously and waited for it to land. The cottonwood trees cast heavy shadows where I crouched, and this gave me the advantage of the smugglers, for the moonlight was almost as brilliant as sunlight. The prow of the boat grated on the beach and four men stepped out. I had only counted on two. In my hurried ride I had planned out my course of action. I had read somewhere of a soldier capturing a company of the enemy singlehanded, and I intended to follow his plan.

"As the four men advanced up the shelving bank I gave a tense command to an imaginary posse hid back in the shadows and, with my revolver leveled I stepped out into the moonlight, covering the nearest of the men.

"This trick may have worked with soldiers, but it certainly didn't go with border outlaws. No sooner had I stepped from the shadows than the four men reached for their guns, at the same instant dropping flat upon the ground, where they were almost invisible.

"I took hurried aim at the foremost man and pulled the trigger. The hammer fell with a metalic click, which rang sharp and distinct in the still air. Then, with a sickening sinking of the heart, I remembered that in my hasty departure I had failed to load the revolver. I was unarmed and at the mercy of the outlaws.

"These incidents had happened with marvelous swiftness. Instantly there was a flare of light, a loud report, and a bullet sang uncomfortably close to my ear. It was the first time I was ever under fire. There was a second flash, and my right arm dropped limply to my side. I sprang for the shadows of the cottonwoods just as the third revolver cracked. The bullet cut across the back of my neck and I fell unconscious.

"When I came to myself I was in the bottom of a boat and the four men were paddling with might and main for the Mexican shore. Here was a pretty mess my rashness had dragged me into. I realized that the men would show me no mercy, that death probably awaited me at the landing. But I was mistaken in this. They did not know that I had recovered consciousness and I could hear what they said when they paused in their furious rowing to catch their breath.

"They seemed highly excited over my singlehanded attempt to capture them. One of them, a Mexican, wanted to kill me at once, but the American wouldn't hear to it. He advised that I be revived and made to tell just what I knew. This met with general approval, and it was decided that I should be taken to the house that I had visited that morning in company with the American. They were going to hold me a prisoner there until they had gained the information they wanted, and then they were going to make an end of me.

"They stopped talking and resumed their paddling. I was in the heavy shadows at the bottom of the boat, and when I noticed that my big Panama hat was resting on my chest an idea came to me. I fished a pencil stub from my pocket, and with my left hand, scrawled a message to Jarrall on the brim of the big hat. It was a miserable effort, and I feared it would be unintelligible. I told him of my capture, that I was wounded, and being taken to the house with the broken column.

"The men jerked me out of the boat with small ceremony when we reached the shore. I moaned piteously and lay limp and inert, clutching the hat with my left hand, the writing underneath. As they packed me up the bank I dropped the hat in the shadow of a bush. After this I became unconscious from the pain of my wounds.

"I came to in a small room with a single window up near the ceiling. It was heavily barred with iron, between which I could see a single star, so I knew that it was still night. I lay there for a long time, its semed, half-conscious and utterly resigned. I was suffering too much and was too weak from loss of blood to care whether I lived or died. In fact, I think I preferred to die. The smugglers had not dressed my wounds and I felt that I was slowly bleeding to death. It was beyond my strength to make any effort to escape.

"I had dozed off again, I suppose, when the report of shots awakened me. A battle seemed to be in progress about the building, but I was too weak to more than raise myself upon my good elbow for a moment; then I fell back panting and exhausted. The rattle of firearms grew less distinct, as if the shots were coming from a great distance, and I slept again.

"The next I knew Jarrell was bending over me. I was in bed and very weak. It was the room where I had stopped in Presidio. I felt that it was a hallucination of my feverish brain.

"It was little that I did towards my recovery. Jarrall did it all. By force of his personality he nursed me back to life and health, and when I got strong enough to talk and tried to apologize to him and ask his forgiveness for my abominable conduct he would not permit it. He was a man and a gentleman at all times.

"One day he told me how he had come to rescue me.

"He had followed after me when I ran from the house, only stopping long enough to get his gun. This delay had allowed me to mount the horse and secure a good start. He knew it was useless to follow on foot, and he had lost further time catching a pony and saddling it.

"Before he managed to reach the giant cactus where I had hobbled my horse, he heard the firing at the landing. He had arrived at the river in time to see the boat landing at the farther shore.

"As soon as the bandits had left, he swam his horse across the stream and found my hat. His pony struck it with a hoof and knocked it out into the moonlight. He had picked it up and found the message upon the brim.

"Appreciating that pursuit was useless, he had hastened back to Presidio to secure assistance. He met Captain Davis and ten rangers on the way. They had returned to camp sooner than was expected, and seeing Jarrall's note, had pushed on to Presidio without rest.

"The rangers then committed a breach of international law. With Jarrall for guide, they had invaded Mexico and rescued me."

(Next week Captain Dickson will relate the story of "The Affair of the National Bank.")

Tempting Beverages for Afternoon Functions.

Fruit Punch—Into a large bowl put one heaping cup of medium dark brown sugar, and pour over this two cups of rather strong hot tea. Let this stand until the syrup is perfectly cold. Add to this one cup of orange juice, one cup of lemon juice, a small can of preserved strawberries, a small can of shredded pineapple and a bottle of cherries. Mix the fruit and the syrup well. Into the punch bowl from which it is to be served put a large block of ice and then add the mixed fruit. Now open two bottles of ginger ale and pour into it, then two or three large bottle of appollinaris water. Mix well and serve. If not sweet enough, add more sugar to suit the taste.

Claret Punch—Take the juice of two large lemons and the grated rind, add to this one small glass of sherry and then one quart of claret. For every quart of claret add one bottle of soda water or appollinaris. Pour over the block of ice and decorate with sprigs of geranium or lemon verbena.

To Embroider Gowns.

Hand-worked gowns are within the means of women who know how to do some of the fashionable quick embroidery which embellishes many of the most expensive of the thinner costumes. A black chiffon cloth gown which looked like an expensive model had large water lilies decorating the bottom in a band almost 18 inches in width. The flowers were worked with rather heavy black silk, and occasionally there was a thread of silver. Another effective pattern, and one that is easy to do, is a row of disks about two inches across. A single or a double row of these used as a border on a net gown will be found unusually attractive.

Hardships of the Ancients.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

When Homer smote his blooming lyre
And sang his memory green,
He never knew the bites entire
Of running a machine—
But wrote his poems with a quill
Upon an unsmoothed page,
And cramped his hand to feeling ill
In that
(Confound that B bar!—stuck again!
Bang-bang! There!)
benighted age.

And Sappho when she painted love
In all its ecstacies
Had never guessed the rapture of
Verse writing on the keys—
But labored with her pen and ink
With what fatigue and rack
And goodness knows how bad a kink
In her
(Shoot this old mill, anyway! Bang!
I don't care if I do break it! What's
the use of——)
slim Grecian back.

And Petrarch?—how he must have boiled
With anger while he wooed
The ancient Muse for having toiled
With implements so crude,
That might today sit in his chair
And trip the dancing keys
The while he sang his Laura fair
With automatic
(Boy!—telephone the typewriter office
and tell them if they don't send some
one down here to fix this blank-blank
machine we'll throw it in the stre——)
esse!