

A Miser's Hoard

By... DONALD ALLEN

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Jacob Van Girten had been known as a miser for thirty years, and at his death people looked for a large sum of money to turn up. Jake, as he was always referred to, lived on a farm about three miles from the village of Castle. It was a farm of eighty acres and yet it produced few crops. Aside from an acre or two of corn and potatoes for his own use, he planted nothing. He began with a little money and in the course of fifteen years he was the capitalist of the county. If anybody was willing to pay his usurious rates of interest, he could borrow from \$5 to \$5,000 without trouble. For many years he did business with the bank in the village, but finally became suspicious and took care of his own funds.

It finally became a matter of gossip for leagues around that Miser Van Girten kept thousands of dollars in his old farmhouse, and for once gossip was right. Of course there were men who told him of the risks he ran and advised him against it, but he smiled at their solicitude and made no change.

It was predicted that robbers would come and that he would be found murdered. And in due time robbers came. They came more than once, and they tried several sorts of tricks on the old man. The first pair of robbers simply kicked the old door open in the darkness of midnight and rushed in to catch the miser in bed. He wasn't in bed, however. He was up and dressed and armed with a shotgun, and he peppered the fellows so thoroughly that there was no trouble in arresting them when the constable was notified.

The next man who came along was in the guise of an old woman. He made a call just at dark, hobnobbing on a cane and telling a story of want and destitution, but when he got ready to take the old man by the neck Jake wasn't there. He dodged him and got hold of that old shotgun and gave the stranger a dose that kept him in the hospital for four months before he could be taken to jail to await arraignment.

When the miser had reached what might be called old age, the authorities of the county insisted that he take bet-



HE LOOKED IN TO FIND THE OLD MISER'S STRONG BOX.

ter steps to protect himself. While they could not legally compel him to do anything, the case was put to him so strongly that he finally consented to pay a sturdy young man a small sum weekly for sleeping in the house with him at night and acting as a guard and defender. This service continued for two years, and then the end came. The guard was not there in the daytime, and one evening when he made his appearance at the usual hour he found the old man dead in his rocking chair. He seemed to have passed away while sleeping.

The proper authorities were notified at once and took charge, and the curiosity of a whole county was excited over the question of how much money would be found in the house. When it came to that, the guard, whose name was Henry Davis and who was known to be honest and truthful, stated that during the two years he had been there he had not seen the old man handle more than \$10 in cash. He knew that in that time he had loaned and received thousands, but where he kept his hoard was a matter that could not even be fathomed. All money transactions had been made in the daytime, when the young man was absent.

People who borrowed and repaid had always to give two hours' notice. They then found the old man ready to lend or receive. It was judged from this rule of his that he wanted time to dig his money up or to produce it from some secret hiding place outside the house. This theory, which seemed quite plausible, led to some funny results. Every farmer for two miles around began searching his barn and sheds, thinking they might have been made the depository, and scores of men looked for hollow trees and stumps and

went digging in what they thought were likely places.

In the meantime the old house was submitted to the most careful and thorough search. It was a cottage, with parlor, bedroom and kitchen below and a half garret upstairs. The miser occupied the bedroom and the guard the parlor, both sleeping on the floor on straw beds. The kitchen was furnished with an old rusty stove and a meager supply of dishes, and Jake cooked what he ate.

Beginning at the cellar bottom, the searchers worked up. The bottom of the cellar was dug over to a depth of two feet, but nothing was found. Then the baseboards were torn off the rooms above, the walls pierced here and there, and before the search ceased the very shingles were taken from the roof. One reason why the search was so keen and thorough was because of the number of heirs who came forward. Plenty of people had heard old Jake declare that he was the last of his race and if he had any blood relatives at all they were second cousins living in some province in Germany, but no sooner had news of his death traveled about than kinsmen began showing up and fling their claims.

Van Girten was German born, but Englishmen, Frenchmen and Italians came forward, to say nothing of Americans, and none of them, according to his account, was anything less than first cousin. All insisted on the most rigid search, and, although not allowed to participate in it, the sheriff did his whole duty. When he had finished with the house it was a wreck, and all agreed that a dollar bill could not have been hidden away and escaped the search.

As nothing was found in the house, the "heirs" insisted on the grounds being searched. Diggers threw up the earth at the foot of every tree, rocks were rolled over and mounds burrowed into, and another two weeks were wasted in vain.

The searchers hated to let go, but they had to, and then the only thing remaining was to sell the old man's personal property at auction and turn over his real estate to the law and let the heirs prove their claims. The term "personal goods and chattels" made everybody smile. The straw beds and dirty blankets, the two or three old chairs, the rusty and broken old stove and the few cracked dishes were valued at \$1 at a liberal estimate, and when a farmer named Robinson bid them in for 70 cents he was made the butt for many jokes. He loaded up his "bargain" and carted it off, and the case was considered closed.

Many people continued to search for a year, taking in woods and hills four miles away, but at last it was a dead subject and was not heard of again for ten years.

Then a very singular thing happened. Robinson, who had removed to another state, met with a fatal accident, but before dying made a confession. He passed for and really was a wealthy man, and as to how he had made his money no one knew. In his confession he said that after getting the old stove home he found the oven doors wired up. Loosening one of them, he looked in to find the old miser's strong box resting there. By the use of brick and mortar the oven had been so shut off that a fire in the front of the stove would not warm it. While the stove was the most conspicuous object in the kitchen, it was at the same time the safest hiding place for miles around. There was over \$30,000 in the box, and the finder simply kept quiet until he could arrange to move away and enjoy it. At the auction sale, when that old stove was bid in, there were at least 200 men in attendance, any one of whom could have got the fortune by raising Robinson's bid 10 or 15 cents, and now, after twenty years have elapsed, none of them still living has forgiven himself.

Fears of Famous Folk.

The great Dr. Johnson, with all his philosophy, was not without a superstition. He was very careful not to enter a room with his left foot foremost. If by any chance he did so he would immediately step back and re-enter with his right foot foremost. He was terribly afraid of death, too, and would not suffer it to be mentioned in his presence.

Julius Caesar, to whom the shouts of thousands of the enemy were but sweet music, was mortally afraid of the sound of thunder and always wanted to get underground to escape the dreadful noise.

Marshal Saxe, who loved to look upon the ranks of opposing armies, fled and screamed in terror at the sight of a cat.

Peter the Great could scarcely be persuaded to cross a bridge, and whenever he placed his foot on one he would cry out with fear. Like the great man that he was, he tried to overcome his weakness, but he was never able to do so. And Byron would never help any one to salt at table, nor would he be helped himself, and if any salt were spilled he would immediately get up and leave.

Why the Jew Excels.

In almost every field of human endeavor the Jew excels. There is a philosophical reason for this which has no relation to essential superiority. The Jew is thorough. He is so as a result of long necessity. The world has vainly sought to deprive him of the means of existence. He was quick to understand that with merely equal merit he could not hope for an even chance. He perceived that his only promise of survival under the handicap of race lay in superior qualifications. He applied himself. He learned to master difficulties and surmount obstacles. Discounted

by prejudice, he realized that his work must carry a premium of value in order to reach parity in the open market. As the problem grew more difficult his capacities increased proportionately, for nature responds unflinchingly to every demand of necessity.—Walter Hurt in *Culturist*.

Cures Old Sores.

Westmoreland, Kans., May 5, 1902: Ballard, Snow Liniment Co., your Snow Liniment cured an old sore on the side of my chin that was supposed to be a cancer. The sore was stubborn and would not yield to treatment, until I tried Snow Liniment, which did the work in short order. My sister, Mrs. Sophia J. Carson, Allensville, Miss. Co., Pa., has a sore and mistrusts that it is a cancer. Please send her a 50c bottle. Sold by Hart's drug store.

The moonshiners will have to learn by experience what effect denatured alcohol will have on the delinquent article. Probably the difference will be slight at forty rods.

Unknown Friends.

There are many people who have used Chamberlain's Colic, Cholera and Diarrhoea Remedy with splendid results, but who are unknown because they have hesitated about giving a testimonial of their experience for publication. These people, however, are none the less friends of this remedy. They have done much toward making it a household word by their personal recommendations to friends and neighbors. It is a good medicine to have in the home and is widely known for its cures of diarrhoea and all forms of bowel trouble. For sale by Frank Hart and leading druggists.

A new \$7,000,000 railroad is to be constructed between Oklahoma, Texas, and the gulf. The southwest keeps its place steadily at the head of the national ratios of growth.

That Tired Feeling

If you are languid, depressed, incapable for work, it indicates that your liver is out of order. Herbine will assist nature to throw off headaches rheumatism and ailments akin to nervousness and restore the energies and vitality of sound and perfect health. J. J. Hubbard Temple, Texas, writes: "I have used Herbine for the past two years. It has done me more good than all the doctors. It is the best medicine ever made for chills and fever." 50c. Sold by Hart's drug store.

An English novelist, H. G. Wells, has found much to admire in the United States. This is so unusual in an English novelist that it is worth setting down in the pages of fact.

Acute Rheumatism.

Deep tearing or wrenching pains, occasioned by getting wet through; worse when at rest, or on first moving the limbs and in cold or damp weather, is cured quickly by Ballard's Snow Liniment. Oscar Oleson, Gibson City, Ill., writes, Feb. 16, 1902: "A year ago I was troubled with a pain in my back. It soon got so bad I could not bend over. One bottle of Ballard's Snow Liniment cured me." Sold by Hart's drug store.

Uncle Joe Cannon has been so long a useful servant of the people, and is so much a man of the people, that his presidential boom spontaneously holds its own with all the other booms.

Have You a Cough

A dose of Ballard's Horehound Syrup will relieve it. Have you a cold? Try it for whooping coughs, for asthma, for consumption, for bronchitis. Mrs. Joe McGrath, 327 E. First street, Hutchinson, Kans., writes: "I have used Ballard's Horehound Syrup in my family for five years and find it the most palatable medicine I ever used. Sold by Hart's drug store."

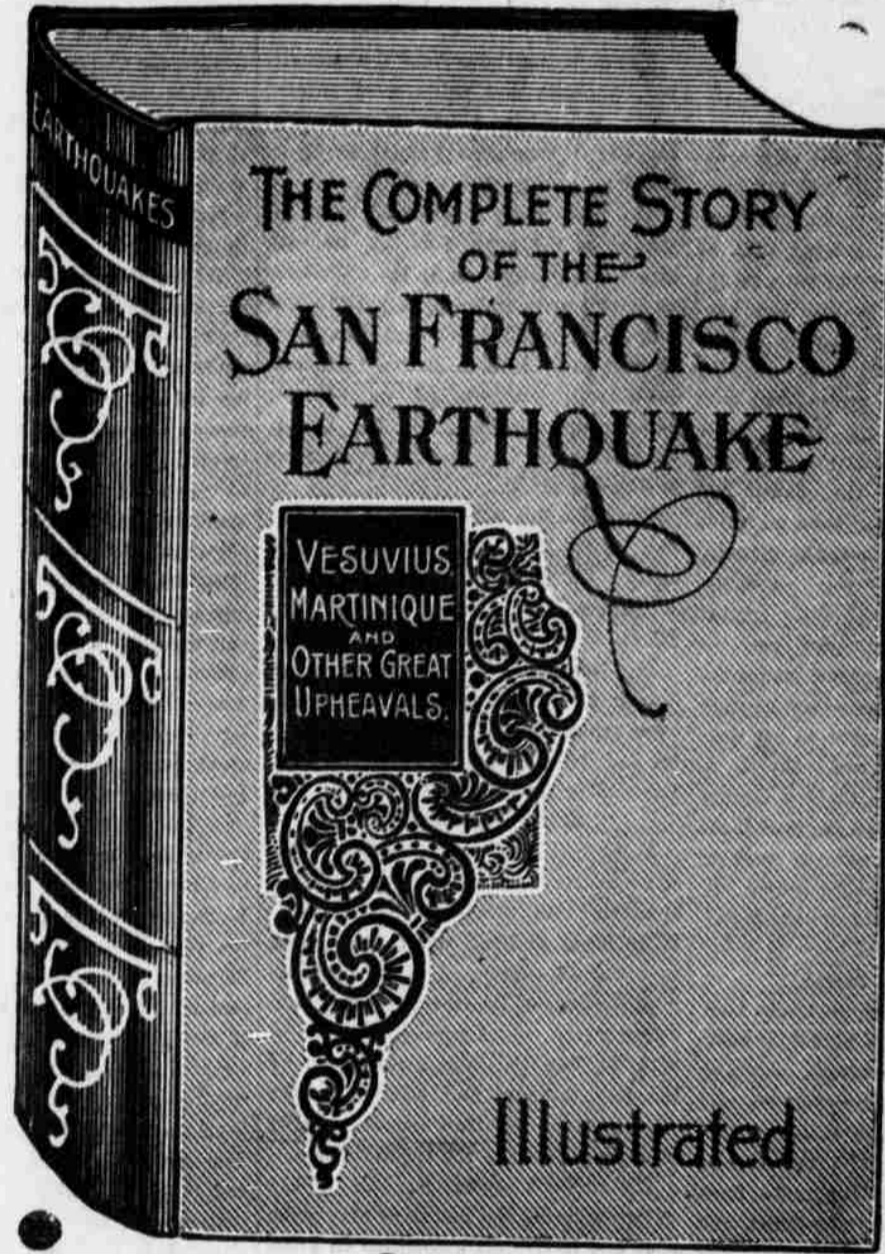
Governor Folk may take a notion to amble over into Nebraska and corral an endorsement as a candidate for the presidency.

If you knew the value of Chamberlain's Salve you would never wish to be without it. Here are some of the diseases for which it is especially valuable; some nipples, chapped hands, burns, frost bites, chilblains, chronic sore eyes, itching piles, tetter, salt rheum and eczema. Price 25 cents per box. For sale by Frank Hart and leading druggists.

It is safe for Oklahoma to lay in an extra supply of fire crackers for the coming Fourth, and to look over the flag for room to accommodate another star.

It tones and vitalizes the entire system and makes life worth living no matter what your station. Hollister's Rocky Mountain Tea is the greatest preventative known for all diseases. 35 cents, Tea or Tablets. Frank Hart, Druggist.

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