For The Term of His Natural Life

By MARCUS CLARKE

CHAPTER III.—(Continued.)

"Pine," says Captain Blunt, as the two were left alone together, "you and I are always putting our foot into it!"

"Women are always in the way aboard ship," returned Pine.

"Ah! doctor, you don't mean that, I know," said a rich, soft voive at his elbow.

It was Sarah Purfoy emerging from her cabin.

"We were talking of your eyes, my dear," cries Blunt. "They're the finest eyes I've seen in my life, and they've got the reddest lips under 'm that——"

"Let me pass, Captain Blunt, if you please. Thank you, doctor."

And before the admiring commander could prevent her, she modestly swept out of the cuddy.

"She's a fine piece of goods, eh?" asked Blunt, watching her. "I don't know where Vickers picked her up, but I'd rather trust my life with the worst of those ruffians 'tween deck than in her keeping, if I'd done her an injury. I don't believe she'd think much of sticking a man, either. But I must go on deck, doctor."

Pine followed him more slowly. "I don't pretend to know much about women," he said to himself. "But that girl's got a story of her own, or I'm much mistaken. What brings her on board this ship as a lady's maid is more than I can fathom." And as he walked down the now deserted deck to the main hatchway, and turned to watch the white figure gliding up and down, he saw it joined by another and a darker one, he muttered, "She's after no good." At that moment his arm was touched by a soldier in undress uniform, who had come up the hatchway.

"What is it?"

"If you plase, doctor, one of the prisoners is taken sick, and as the dinner's over, and he's pretty bad, I ventured to disturb your honor."

"Why didn't you tell me before?"

In the meantime the woman who was the object of the grim old fellow's suspicions, was enjoying the comparative coolness of the night air. Her mistress and her mistress' daughter had not yet come out of their cabin. The awning had been removed, the stars were shining in the moonless sky, and Miss Sarah Purfoy was walking up and down with no less a person than Captain Blunt himself. She had passed and repassed him twice silently, and at the third turn, the big fellow, peering into the twilight ahead somewhat uneasily, obeyed the glitter of her great eyes and joined her.

"You weren't put out," he asked, "at what I said to you below. I was a bit rude, I admit."

"I? Oh, dear, no. You were not rude."

"Glad you think so!" returned Phineas Blunt, a little ashamed at what looked like a confession of weakness on his part.

Sarah Purfoy laughed a low, full-toned laugh, whose sound made Blunt's pulse take a jump forward, and sent the blood tingling down to his fingers' ends.

"Captain Blunt," said she, "you're going to do a very silly thing."

"What?"

"You are going to fall in love with a girl of nineteen."

"Who is that?"

"Myself!" she said, giving him her hand and smiling at him with her rich red lips.

"I believe you are right," he cried; "I am half in love with you already."

"That is your affair," she said; and as the head of Mr. Frere appeared above the companion, Blunt walked aft, feeling considerably bewildered, and yet not displeased.

"She's a fine girl!" he said, cocking his cap, "and I'm hanged if she ain't sweet upon me."

And then the old fellow began to whistle softly to himself as he paced the deck, and to glance toward the man, who had taken his place, with no friendly eyes. But a sort of shame held him as yet, and he kept aloof. Maurice Frere's greeting was short enough.

"Well, Sarah," he said, "have you got out of your temper?"

"What did you strike the man for? He did you no harm."

"He was out of his place. What business had he to come aft? One must keep these wretches down, my girl."

"Or they will be too much for you, ea? Do you think one man could capture a ship, Mr. Maurice? What could they do against the soldiers? There are fifty soldiers."

"You are a strange girl; I can't make you out. Come," and he took her hand, "tell me what you are really."

"Lady's maid in the family of a gentleman going abroad."

"Sarah, can't you be serious?"

"I am serious. That was the advertisement I answered."

"But I mean what you have been. You were not a lady's maid all your life. Have you no friends? What have you been?"

She looked up into the young man's face—a little less harsh at that moment than it was wont to be—and, creeping closer to him, whispered:

"Do you love me, Maurice?"

He raised one of the little hands that rested on the taffrail, and, under cover of the darkness, kissed it.

"You know I do," he said. "You may be a lady's maid, or what you like, but you are the loveliest woman I ever met."

"Then, if you love me, what does it matter?"

"If you loved me, you would tell me," said he, with a quickyness which surprised himself.

"But I have nothing to tell, and I don't love you—yet."

He let her hand fall with an impatient gesture; and at that moment Blunt, who could restrain himself no longer, came up.

"Fine night, Mr. Frere."

"Yes, fine enough."

Just then, from out of the violet haze that hung over the horizon, a strange glow of light broke.

"Halloo!" cries Frere. "Did you see that? A flash of light."

They strained their eyes to pierce through the obscurity.

"Best saw something like it before dinner. There must be thunder in the air."

At that instant a thin streak of light shot up, and then sunk again. There was no mistaking it this time, and a simultaneous exclamation burst from all on deck. From out of the gloom which hung over the horizon rose a column of flame that lighted up the night for an instant, and then sunk, leaving a dull red spark upon the water.

"It's a ship on fire!" cried Frere.

CHAPTER IV.

They looked again. The tiny spark still burned, and immediately over it there grew out of the darkness a crimson spot that hung like a lurid star in the air. Mrs. Vickers, with little Sylvia clinging to her dress, came up to share the new sensation.

"Captain, you'll lower a boat. We may save some of the poor fellows," cries Frere, his heartiness of body reviving at the prospect of excitement.

"Boat?" said Blunt; "why, she's twelve miles off, or more, and there's not a breath o' wind! They've got their own boats. In the meanwhile we'll show 'em that there's some one near 'em." And, as he spoke, a blue light flared hissing into the night. "There, they'll see that, I expect!" he said, as the ghastly flame rose, extinguishing the stars for a moment, only to let them appear again brighter in a darker heaven. "Mr. Best, lower and man the quarter boats! Mr. Frere, you can go in one, if you like, and take a volunteer or two from those gray jackets of yours amidships. I shall want as many hands as I can spare to man the long boat and cutter, in case we want 'em. Steady there, lads! Easy!" And, as the first eight men who could reach the deck parted to the larboard and starboard quarter boats, Frere ran down on the main deck.

At his nod the prison door was thrown open. The air was hot, and that strange, horrible odor peculiar to closely packed human bodies filled the place. He ran his eye down the double tier of bunks which lined the side of the ship, and stopped at the one opposite him.

There seemed to have been some disturbance there lately, for, instead of the six pairs of feet which should have protruded therefrom, the gleam of the bull's eye showed but four.

"What's the matter here, sentry?" he asked.

"Prisoner ill, sir. Doctor sent him to hospital."

"But there should be two."

The other came from behind the break of the berths. It was Rufus Dawes. He held by the side as he came, and saluted.

"I felt sick, sir, and was trying to get the scuttle open."

Maurice Frere stamped his foot indignantly.

"Sick! What are you sick about? I'll give you something to sweat the sickness out of you. Stand on one side here!"

Rufus Dawes, wondering, obeyed.

"Which of you fellows can handle an oar?" Frere went on. "There, I don't want fifty! Three'll do. Come on now, make haste!"

The heavy door clashed again, and in another instant the four "volunteers" were on deck.

"Two in each boat!" cries Blunt. "I'll burn a blue light every hour for you, Mr. Best, and take care they don't swamp you. Lower away, lads!"

As the second prisoner took the oar of Frere's boat, he uttered a groan and fell forward, recovering himself instantly. Sarah Purfoy, leaning over the side, saw the occurrence.

"What is the matter with that man?" she said. "Is he ill?"

Pine was next to her, and looked out instantly. "It's that big fellow in No. 10," he cried. "Here, Frere!"

But Frere heard him not. He was intent on the beacon that gleamed ever bright in the distance. "Give way, my lads!" he shouted. And amidst a cheer from the ship, the two boats shot out of the bright circle of the blue light, and disappeared into the darkness!

Sarah Purfoy looked at Pine for an explanation, but he turned abruptly away. For a moment the girl paused, as if in doubt; and then, ere his retreating figure turned to retrace its steps, she cast a quick glance around, and, slipping down the ladder, made her way to the 'tween-decks.

The iron-studded oak barricade that, loop-holed for musketry, and perforated with plated trap-door for sterner needs, separated soldiers from prisoners, was close to her left hand, and the sentry at its padlocked door looked at her inquiringly. She laid her little hand on his big rough one, and opened her brown eyes at him.

"The hospital," she said. "The doctor sent me;" and before he could answer her white figure vanished down the hatch, and passed round the bulkhead, behind which lay the sick man.

Though not so hot as in the prison, the atmosphere of the lower deck was close and unhealthy, and the girl, pausing to listen to the subdued hum of conversation coming from the soldiers' berths, turned strangely sick and giddy. She drew herself up, however, and held out her hand to a man who came rapidly across the misshapen shadows, thrown by the sulky swinging lantern to meet her. It was a young soldier who had been that day sentry at the convict gangway.

"Well, miss," he said, "I am here, yer see, waiting for yer."

The tone of the sentence seemed to awaken and remind her of her errand in that place. She laughed as loudly and merrily as she dared, and laid her hand on the speaker's arm. The boy reddened to the roots of his closely cropped hair.

"There, that's quite close enough. You're only a common soldier, Miles, and you mustn't make love to me."

"I know you're above me, Miss Sarah. You're a lady, but I love yer, I do, and you drives me wild with your tricks."

"Hush, Miles! they'll hear you. Who is in the hospital?"

"I dunno."

"Well, I want to go in."

"Don't ask me, miss. It's against orders, and——"

She turned away. "Oh, very well. If this is all the thanks I get for wasting my time down here, I shall go on deck again. Mr. Frere will let me go in, I dare say, if I ask him."

"Go in if yer like; I won't stop yer, but remember what I'm doin' of."

She turned again at the foot of the ladder, and came quickly back. "That's a good lad. I knew you would not refuse me;" and smiling at the poor lout she was befooling, she passed into the cabin.

There was no lantern, and from the partially blocked stern windows came only a dim vaporous light. The dull ripple of the water as the ship rocked on the slow swell of the sea, made a melancholy sound, and the sick man's heavy breathing seemed to fill the air. The slight noise made by the opening door rounsed him; he rose on his elbow and began to mutter. Sarah Purfoy paused in the doorway to listen, but she could make nothing of the low, uneasy murmuring. Raising her arm, conspicuous by its white sleeve in the gloom, she beckoned Miles.

"The lantern," she whispered—"bring me the lantern.

He unhooked it from the rope where it swung, and brought it toward her. At that moment the man in the bunk sat up erect, and twisted himself toward the light. "Sarah!" he cried, in shrill, sharp tones. "Sarah!" and swooped with a lean arm through the dusk, as though to seize her.

The girl leaped out of the cabin like a panther, and was back at the bunk head in a moment. The convict was a young man of about four and twenty. His hands were small and well shaped, and the unshaven chin bristled with promise of a strong beard. His wild black eyes glared with all the fire of delirium, and as he gasped for breath the sweat stood in beads on his sallow forehead.

The aspect of the man was sufficiently ghastly, and Miles, drawing back, did not wonder at the terror which had seized Mrs. Vickers' maid. With open mouth and agonized face, she stood in the center of the cabin, like one turned to stone, gazing at the man on the bed.

"Ecod, he be a sight!" says Miles, at length. "Come away, miss, and shut the door. He's raving, I tell yer."

"He's choking. Can't you see? Water! give me wa.er!"

And, wreathing her arms around the man's head, she pulled it down on her bosom, rocking it there, half savagely, to and fro.

Awed into obedience by her voice, Miles dipped a pannikin into a small unheaded puncheon cleated in the corner of the cabin, and gave it her; and, without thanking him, she placed it to the sick prisoner's lips. He drank greedily, and closed his eyes with a grateful sigh. Just then the quick ears of Miles heard the jingle of arms.

"Here's the doctor coming, miss!" he cried. "I hear the sentry saluting. Come away! Quick!"

She seized the lantern, and, opening the horn slide, extinguished it.

"Say it went out," she said, in a fierce whisper, "and hold your tongue. Leave me to manage."

She bent over the convict as if to arrange his pillow, and then glided out of the cabin just as Pine descended the hatchway. As he groped his way with outstretched arms in the darkness, Sarah Purfoy slipped past him.

(To be continued.)

LIVES WELL ON $10 A YEAR.

Wisconsin Man Has Done It for 40 Years—Seems Content.

Near Mirror Lake, in Wisconsin, is a log cabin in which a man has lived for forty years on $10 a year. George Swinner is his name and he seems perfectly contented, writes a correspondent of the St. Louis Republic.

The old man is a Civil War veteran. When he was discharged at the end of the war he had money enough to perchase an acre of ground on the shores of picturesque Mirror Lake. In this acre of ground he planted vegetables and fruit trees. Close to the house there grows a thick cluster of blackberry bushes and in the garden behind it there are long rows of strawberries. Over the fence that separates the yard from the road are wild roses. Here the veteran makes his home.

How does he live?

Each day he takes his fishing rod and goes down to Mirror Lake. That is his pork barrel. The fish that he draws out of those waters supply his dinner, likewise his breakfast.

The vegetables and meal made from corn grown in his garden complete his diet. For his lake fishing Skinner has built himself a boat which is as unique as himself. In order that he may fish and propel his boat at the same time he has invented an extraordinary contrivance.

At the stern of his boat he has a paddle like that of a river steamer. This is turned by means of a chain running on cogs and attached to a crank that the old man turns with one hand as he trolls with the other. From this strange craft, nicknamed "the flying machine" by the people of Delton, Skinner does his angling.

Skinner lives during the winter as well as he does in summer. From the overabundance of one season he saves enough to meet the necessities of the other. He catches on an average 100 fish a day, mostly small ones. Ten of these suffice for his two simple meals. The other ninety are carefully cleaned and stored away in great barrels of brine kept in the cellar of his cabin. When he has enough barrels of fish stored away to last him through the winter he stops fishing, as he thinks it is a sin to kill any creature, even a fish, except for food.

From his garden he cans his vegetables and berries. Everything that he needs is supplied from nature's "pork barrel."

The $10 which he spends annually goes for tobacco, fish-hooks and clothing.

Six thousand people sleep in the open air in London every night.

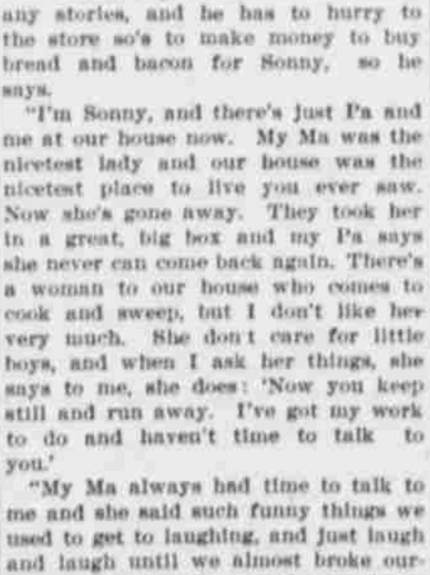
WE'LL KEEP THE LITTLE FARM.

Well, Jane, I guess we'll keep the place,
We've lived here, you and I,
Upon this little farm so long,
Let's stay here till we die.
You know I thought I'd sell it once,
To Jones, or Deacon Brown,
And take the money we have saved
And buy a house in town.
But when the buds begin to swell,
And grass begins to grow,
Somehow it doesn't seem to me
I ought to let it go.

I love the crimson clover,
And the fields of waving corn
The quiet, balmy evening,
And the fragrant, dewy morn;
The pink and snowy blossoms
Hanging on the apple trees;
The chirping of the crickets,
And the humming of the bees,
I love the summer's honey breath,
The blushing buds of May;
The teeming autumn, rich with fruit,
The scent of new-mown hay;
The noisy babble of the brook,
And laughter of the rill;
The lowing herds upon the heath,
And flocks upon the hill.
And when I think of leaving all,
It fills me with alarm;
So, after all, I guess it's best
To keep the little farm.
—J. Edgar, French.

LONESOME BOY.

IT'S awful lonesome to our house since Ma went away, and my Pa, he don't want to say a word when I ask him when she's coming back. He just sighs a great big sigh and tells me, 'Sonny, don't. Your Ma would come right back here if she could, but she can't, and there isn't any one left 'cept you and me, and we must stick together.' And then he sighs again and we both feel so awful sorry inside of us.



"IT'S AWFUL LONESOME AT OUR HOUSE."

"And mornings when my Pa tries to dress me we have such turble times with buttons and the things 'at holds my clothes on, and my Pa says buttons is the meanest. But my Ma knew just where every button went and when she dressed me she'd kiss me in the hollow of my neck and snuggle me up close and warm and say: 'Heart's delight, I love you, 'cause you're my baby.' And then we'd laugh and romp a little and have the bestest time, and then my Ma would get something good for breakfast and tell me the nicest stories about other little boys what did the nicetest things. Now the buttens bother my Pa so he can't think any stories, and he has to hurry to the store so's to make money to buy bread and bacon for Sonny, so he says.

"I'm Sonny, and there's just Pa and me at our house now. My Ma was the nicetest lady and our house was the nicetest place to live you ever saw. Now she's gone away. They took her in a great, big box and my Pa says she never can come back again. There's a woman to our house who comes to cook and sweep, but I don't like her very much. She don't care for little boys, and when I ask her things, she says to me, she does: 'Now you keep still and run away. I've got my work to do and haven't time to talk to you.'

"My Ma always had time to talk to me and she said such funny things we used to get to laughing, and just laugh and laugh until we almost broke ourselves. And my Pa would come home and find us and he'd say, like he was mad, 'What's all this foolishness a-goin' on?' And then he would catch my Ma around the waist and snuggle her like she snuggled me, and I'd hang onto Pa's hand and we'd all get to laughing together. We had awful good times to our house then. And after we'd had supper, my Pa would say, 'Let's sit down and talk awhile before we wash the dishes,' and my Ma and my Pa and me would sit down in the open door if it was summer time, and talk together and talk and talk.

"Those was the bestest times when my Pa and my Ma used to talk and talk till I fell asleep and my Ma would say, 'Goodness me, Sonny should have been in bed an hour ago!' and 'at was where she'd put me right off—smack!

"Now it's turble lonesome, and my Pa he just stares away off when I ask him where my Ma can be, and he acts like he didn't hear, and both his eyes is full of tears when we're alone, and he acts like something hurt him awful. And when I ask him why she don't come back, and cry and say I want my Ma, he starts to cry too, till I put my arms around his neck and say, 'Please don't cry so hard, is you got a pain?' And then he hugs me back and don't make a sound, and I say: 'Poor Pa, is you feeling so awful bad?'

"Onct he told me that my Ma had gone so far away she never could come back, but perhaps if we were good we might go some day to her. And I said: 'Pa, let's go right off; my Ma wants us both and we're so lonesome. But he don't seem to hear me and all he says is, 'Oh, Sonny, don't, please don't.'

"I can't feel happy when we're alone, just Pa and me. There isn't any fun and we never get to laughing any more. And nights sometimes when I wake up, I'm most sure there's big black bears in the room looking for a little boy to eat, and I get scared and holler, and sometimes my Pa isn't there, only the woman 'at comes to cook and sweep and she acts cross 'cause I'm afraid and she won't leave any light to scare the bears away like my Ma used to do. And she don't know funny stories to tell to little boys and she never sings pretty songs like my Ma used to sing all around the house till I almost thought 'twas birds.

"Sometimes I most forget my Ma has gone and I think she's coming back from somewhere she's been at for just a little while, and pretty soon she'll come and put supper on the table and then we'll stand at the door a-watching for Pa to come, and pretty soon we'll hear his whistle, and my Ma's cheeks will get all pink and warm and she'll hug me in her arms and say, 'Sonny, there comes your Pa.'

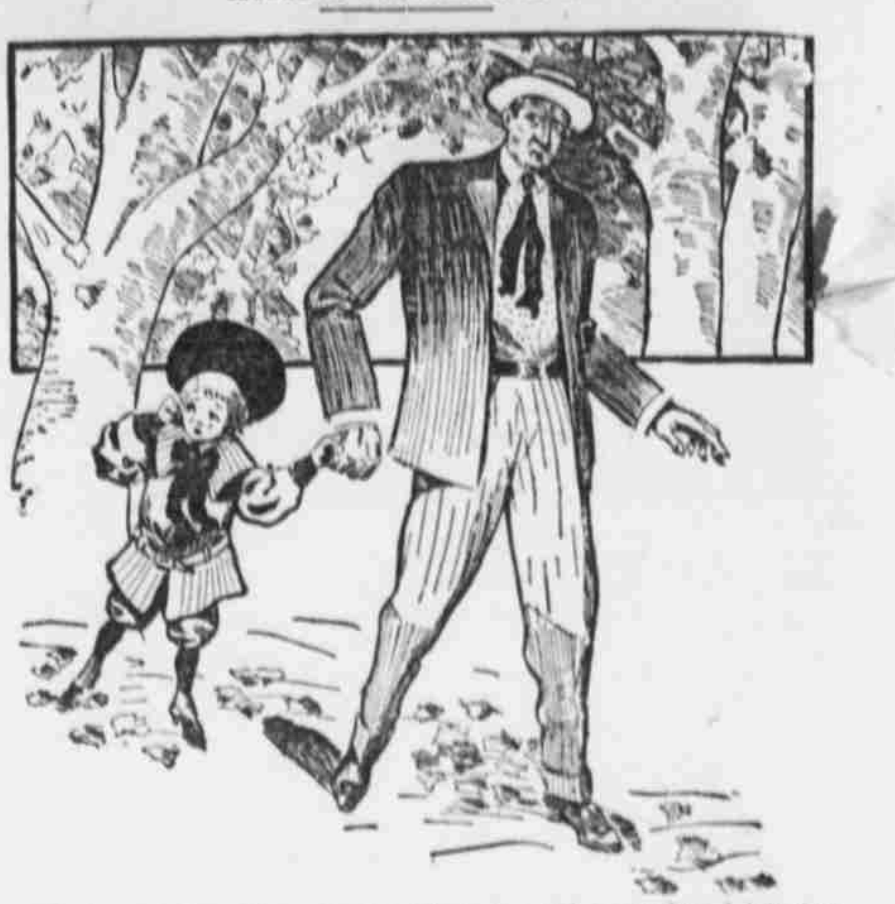
"And these times when I most forget, I say to my Pa: 'Maybe my Ma will come home soon and put the supper on.' Pa's eyes look all blurry and he says he isn't hungry and 'at my Ma can't come. And then I say, I isn't hungry either, and my Pa says so low I can hardly hear him, 'It's awful hard,' and I don't quite know what he means, but I think it's cause my Ma has gone away so turble far she can't get back again. I know she didn't go a-purpose. She liked me and Pa too well to go away and stay 'less she couldn't help it.

"Nights when she don't come to put the supper on, and we say we isn't hungry, my Pa rocks me in his lap and rubs my head with his hand a'most as soft as Ma, and he asks me if I don't want to take a nap. And everything's so still with no one in the house 'cepting Pa and me, 'at in a little while I fall asleep and he just sits and rocks and rocks, but he don't never go to sleep at all. And when I wake up his eyes is looking way off somewheres I can't see the place, and I say, 'Is you trying to see where my Ma is at?'

"And we sit and rock and rock till I go to sleep again, and my Pa don't want to let me go to bed, so we sit and rock and rock, and my Pa hugs me tight and he don't go to sleep at all. He says, 'Sonny, there isn't anyone left 'cept you and me and we must stick together.'

"It's awful lonesome at our house now 'cause my Ma has gone away. I wisht so hard I could hear my Ma say, 'Heart's delight, I love you, 'cause your my baby.'"—Toledo Blade.

MYSTERY OF MISSING BOY.



More of an unfathomable mystery to-day than when the child disappeared, three and one-half years ago, is the case of the missing little Wilbur Clarke, of Beverly, Mass. Since that fateful June 17, 1902, when the boy vanished almost from beneath his parents' eyes, no tangible clew has been found. The efforts of skilled detectives of the State police department, as well as the aid of local officers of all the surrounding towns, and a child-hunt made by half the population of that part of Essex County, the use of blood-hounds and the offering of large rewards at the time—all proved unavailing.

As time has passed the case has only become more inexplicable, more like the famous kidnapping of Charlie Ross a generation ago.

A startling suspicion has gained ground of late that the reason of this profound mystery and the reason why no rewards have brought any news of the boy is that the kidnapper was a wealthy summer resident who stole the boy to adopt him, and that all the resources of wealth, influence and a great family name have been used to suppress any information about the case.

The kidnapping of Wilbur Clarke at the time became a newspaper sensation even greater than the Charlie Ross case. Pages upon pages of details about it were telegraphed all over the country and the reports continued for weeks. Yet all that was ever known about it could be condensed into two paragraphs.

At 10 o'clock on June 17, 1902, Mr. Clarke closed his office, as it was a half holiday, got a carriage and took his family, consisting of Mrs. Clarke and his four boys, Walter, Wilbur, Russell and Harry, the latter a baby in arms, for a drive into the Essex County woods. By chance they came to Chebacco pond about noon and were invited to eat their lunch at the camp of Mr. Ryan, an ex-alderman of Salem, who had gone there for a day's outing. Mrs Clarke took the baby and the two other boys to the cabin, while Wilbur, four years old, remained with his father while Mr. Clarke unharnessed the horse and hitched it to a tree. When the horse was attended to Mr. Clarke look around for the boy, but he was gone.

A cry was raised and a hunt of the woods begun. In an hour or so searchers brought back from a wood road half a mile away a blue chambray tie which the mother identified as belonging to the boy. Near the spot where this was picked up the footprints of a man and boy were found. An old pair of Wilbur's shoes were found to fit exactly the small footprints in the mud.

Beyond these two bits of evidence nothing definite has ever been discovered except the very significant fact that a fashionably dressed man with Panama hat and pink striped outing shirt was seen by one of Mr. Ryan's boys half an hour previously near the path where Wilbur Clarke disappeared.

FORM ARMY OF EDUCATION.

120,000 Men and 330,000 Women Employed as Teachers.

The army of education teachers in the United States is made up of 450,000 teachers, of whom 120,000 are men and 330,000 women. The overwhelming majority of the teachers are natives of the United States, less than 30,000 having been born abroad—one in fifteen.

Most of the men teachers are between the years of 25 and 35. The majority of the women teachers are between 15 and 25.

There are 2,300 men teachers over 65. There are less than 1,500 women teachers over 65. Three times as many women as men teachers are put down as "age unknown."

There are 21,000 colored teachers in the United States, thus divided between the two sexes: 7,700 men and 13,300 women. There are 500 Indian teachers in the Indian schools of the United States—240 men and 260 women.

The average age of teachers in the United States is higher than in England and lower than in Germany. The proportion of very youthful teachers is much greater in the country than in the city districts.

The largest proportion of men teachers is to be found in West Virginia, where they number 50 per cent of the total. The largest proportion of women is to be found in Vermont, where they form 90 per cent of the whole number. The standard of education is much higher in Vermont than it is in West Virginia.

The number of teachers in the United States has increased greatly in recent years. In 1871 there were 125,000; in 1880, 225,000; in 1890, 340,000, and it is at present 450,000.

His Viewpoint.

Little Willie—Papa, what is a bigamist?

Mr. Hennypeck—A bigamist, my son, is a—sh-s-s-s! Is that your mamma coming up the street? No, I see it isn't. Well, a bigamist is a benefactor who prevents at least one of his fellow men from marrying."—Puck.

For Cross Purposes.

"Why do they call it the bridge of the nose?"

"Because, you know, objects have to pass from eye to eye."—Baltimore American.

Ambition.

Now, this is my ambition:
I'll say it, frank and blunt—
A nice long row of figures
With a dollar mark in front.
—Washington Star.

No Way to Please Him.

A man hates to see his sister get married because he knows what men are, and he despises her if she doesn't.—New York Press.