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CHAPTER XI—Continued.

"It's all quite easy," Gardiner continued. "And if it should fall there are a dozen other ways just as easy. But we won't let it fall. We mustn't let it fall on your account."

"On my account? What more account mine than yours?"

"Well, you see, Harris, no doubt, has your letter stowed away somewhere, and it would make bad evidence for you. I don't think it mentions me at all. Besides, I know a way through a pass in these mountains, and if it doesn't turn out right—why, I'm glad I know the way. You see, I've nothing to lose, and nobody to worry over me. But it's different with you, Hiram. You have a wife and a fine farm down in Manitoba, and it would be inconvenient for you to slip away without notice. So I say that on your account we mustn't let it fall."

"You didn't say nothin' about that before, I notice," said Riles.

"You mustn't expect me to do your private thinking as well as that of the firm," Gardiner retorted. "You had the facts—why didn't you patch them together for yourself? You're in a mess now if things don't go right. But, as I said, I'm going to stick with you and see that they do go right."

They rode along in silence in the gathering darkness. Had they been able to read each other's minds they would have been astonished at the coincidence of thought. Gardiner was planning to make away with the money when he got out of the building. Why should he divide with Riles—Riles, who would only hand it up, and who had plenty of money already? Not at all. Riles might sue him for his share, if he wanted to—and could find him, to serve notice! On the other hand, Riles' slow wits had quickened to the point of perceiving that there lay before him a chance of making \$20,000 instead of \$10,000, if he only had the nerve to strike at the strategic moment. When he got the Harrises out of the shack, by hook or crook he would leave them and follow Gardiner. He was much more than Gardiner's match in strength and he had little fear of the revolver, provided he could take his adversary unawares. If the worst came to the worst, and he could not give the Harrises the slip, he would take them with him, and they would all come upon Gardiner red-handed with the loot. Then he would explain to Harris how he had discovered Gardiner's plot and frustrated it. . . . The idea grew upon Riles, and he rode along in a frame of mind bordering upon cheerfulness.

It was now quite dark, and the horses picked their steps carefully along the hill side trails. At last Gar-



Allan Sat Up in a Sudden Cold Chill of Terror. Had He Been Asleep?

diner drew up and pointed to a heavy clump of trees. A faint glimmer of light shone through it.

"That's the shack," he whispered. "They have a lantern there. We better get off the road and tether our horses in this coulee."

They turned down a narrow ravine with scarce room to walk single file between the branching trees. They tied the horses where the woods closed all about them, and there seemed no chance of discovery.

"Quietly, now," said Gardiner, as they stole toward the old building. "Things seem to be working out as we planned, but we must make sure of every detail, so that we can change the attack if necessary."

The two men stole up the rough road leading to the hut. The glow of the lantern came from the building, shining in a long, fading wedge from the sashless window, but seemed strangely obscure about the door. As they approached this mystery was revealed; a blanket was seen to hang over the doorway.

"That's a good sign," whispered Gardiner. "One, or both of them, are sleeping. That's why they feel the cold. If they had stayed awake they would have built a fire and perhaps walked about outside."

They paused for a moment to listen. The night was moonless and starry, except where a bank of clouds came drifting up from the southwest. A moist breeze, smelling of soft, mountain snow, gently stirred the trees about them. But from the shanty no sound could be discerned. They approached nearer, and still nearer.

"Now, you go to the door, and I'll take the window," Gardiner ordered. "Shove the blanket aside a little and size up the situation before you speak. We must make sure they're there, and there alone."

Gardiner waited until he saw Riles fumbling carefully with the blanket that hung in the doorway. Then he darted quickly to the window.

While Allan sat in the little cabin he gradually became oppressed with a sense of great loneliness. From time to time he looked at the face of his sleeping father, and suddenly the knowledge struck him like a knife that it was the face of an old man. Allan could see plainly the deepening furrows in his strong, still handsome face. As he looked a vast tenderness mingled with his loneliness; he would have stooped and caressed him had he not feared to disturb his slumbers.

He looked upon the sleeping man now, with the wealth of a lifetime's labor at his side, and the bond of trust and confidence between them seemed so tight it brought the moisture to his eyes. He thought of the past years; of their labor on the farm together—hard labor, but always relieved by their comradeship and mutual ambitions.

His memory carried him still further back—back to the days when he was a little child, and in the mirror of the darkness he could see his own small figure trudging in the track of the plow and hanging to the rein ends that dropped from the knot on his father's ample back. Back to the old sod shanty, with its sweet smell of comfort when the snow beat against the little window and the wind roared in the rattling stove pipe, and his mother sat by the fire and plied her dying needles. Old lullabies stole into his brain; a deep peace compassed him, and consciousness faded thinner and thinner into the sea of the infinite. . . .

Allan sat up in a sudden, cold chill of terror. Had he been asleep? What cold breath of dread had crossed his path? He was no coward; the sense of fear was almost unknown to him, but now it enveloped him, stifled him, set his teeth chattering and his limbs quaking. He had heard nothing, seen nothing. The gun was in his hands as it had lain when last he remembered it; his father slept by his side, and near the wall lay the precious satchel. And yet he shook in absolute, unreasoning, unfounded terror. His eyes wandered from the lantern to the door—to the blanket hanging limply in the door; and there they stared and stayed as though held in the spell of a serpent. Subconsciously, certainly without any direction of will of his own, he raised the shot gun to his shoulder and kept it trained on the sagging blanket. . . . The blanket seemed to move! It swayed at first as though a light breeze had touched it and yet not as though a breeze had touched it. The impulse seemed too far up—about the height of a man's shoulder. The blood had gone from Allan's face; he was as one in a trance, obeying some iron law outside the realm of the will and the reason. He cocked his gun and tightened his finger on the trigger, and watched. . . . And then, so plain that it must have been real, he saw stealthy fingers feeling their way about the blanket.

Then Allan fired. In an instant he was wide awake, and wondering terribly what had happened. The explosion blew out the

lantern, and the building was in utter darkness. His father was cumbering to his feet with "Allan, what is it? What is it, Allan?" The blanket had been torn from its hangings as by a heavy weight, and something was writhing in it in the doorway. Allan sprang up and would have rushed upon it, but in the darkness he collided with another man. His fingers found his adversary's arm and ran up it to his throat, but before they could fasten in a fatal grip there was another flash of light, and a hot pang stabbed him in the breast. There was a strange gurgling in his lungs, a choking in his throat, a spinning dizziness in his head, as he staggered over the mass in the doorway and fell into the night.

Gardiner had reached the window just in time to see Allan's gun trained on the doorway. For an instant he stood dumbfounded; there was something uncanny in the sight of the young man sitting there in silent, absolute readiness for the attack. He drew back to warn Riles, but he was too late. At that moment the gun spoke; there was the sound of a heavy body falling, and stifled noises bore ample evidence of the accuracy of Allan's aim. But even in that moment of un-



Things Began to Go Badly With the Farmer.

certainly Gardiner had not lost thought of their purpose, and his quick eye took in the sleeping form of John Harris and the location of the leather bag beside the wall. Without an instant's hesitation he vaulted through the window and, revolver in hand, began to steal his way softly toward the treasure.

He had not taken three steps when Allan plunged full force into him. He staggered with the shock, but recovered himself only to find the young farmer's strong fingers clutching for his throat. It had been no part of Gardiner's plan that there should be bloodshed in the carrying out of the robbery, but he was a man of quick decision, who accepted conditions as he found them. . . . A slight pressure on the trigger, and Allan fell, coughing, through the door.

Gardiner retained his sense of location, and slipped silently to the wall, Harris was rushing about the rotten floor in the darkness, crying, "What is it, Allan? For God's sake, what has happened? Are you shot?" and for his own noise he could not hear Gardiner's stealthy movements. Gardiner's hand fell on a log of the wall, and his keen fingers traced their own way along it. Five steps, he judged, and the bag would be at his feet. At the fifth step his toe touched an object on the floor; he leaned over and raised the booty in his hand.

By this time his eyes had responded to the intense darkness, and he could discern a square of gray gloom where the window admitted the night. He moved rapidly and silently toward it, but almost with the last step his foot slipped through a broken spot on the floor, and he staggered and fell. The revolver was thrown from his grasp, but he was able to pitch the bag through the window as he crashed to the floor.

The sound arrested Harris, and before Gardiner could extricate himself the farmer was upon him. At first he seemed to think it was Allan, and felt about in the darkness without attempting to defend himself. This gave Gardiner an opportunity; he was able to clasp his arms about Harris' shins, and with a quick turn of the body, cast his adversary headlong to the floor. At the same moment he freed himself from his entanglement and made another dash for the window.

But Harris, still numbed from his heavy sleep, now realized that some kind of tragedy had occurred, and guessed enough to believe that Allan was a victim. From his prostrate position, with one powerful leg he interrupted Gardiner's flight, and the next moment the two men were rolling on the floor in each other's arms. Har-

ris was much the stronger man of the two, but Gardiner was active and had some skill in wrestling. Besides, Harris had been taken wholly by surprise, and had no idea who his antagonist was, while Gardiner had full knowledge of all the circumstances, and the struggle was less uneven than might have been supposed. Inwardly cursing the luck that had thrown the revolver from his hand, Gardiner sought in the darkness for his adversary's throat, nose, or eyes. Harris, seizing the younger man by the waist, lifted him bodily from the floor and crashed him down again upon it, but the next instant Gardiner had one of his hands in both of his, and, bringing his knee down with great force on Harris' elbow, compelled him, at the risk of a broken arm, to turn face downwards on the floor. Gardiner again wrenched violently to break free, but Harris' grip was too much for him, so with the quickness and fury of a tiger he threw himself upon the farmer's back and wrapped his free arm about his throat. With his air partially cut off Harris released the grip of his other hand, and Gardiner instantly took advantage of this move to bring both arms to bear on Harris' throat. Things began to go badly with the farmer; face downwards on the floor, he was unable to shake his adversary off, and was losing strength rapidly with his choking. Gardiner no longer sought an opportunity to break away; his blood was up and he was in the fight to the finish, ruled at last by his heart instead of his head. Had he been content merely to retain his present advantage unconsciousness would soon have overcome his victim, but he tried to improve his grip, and the attempt proved disastrous. His thumb, seeking better vantage, fell into Harris' gasping mouth. Harris was no more depraved than most of mankind, but when fighting for life, and choking to death in the hands of an unknown enemy, he was ready to seize any advantage, and with a great effort he brought his jaws together upon the intruder.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

BISHOP CAME ALL PREPARED

Talleyrand's Costume for Visit to the "Wild West" Astonished Those Who Saw It.

Talleyrand, the witty Frenchman whose sharp and pointed sallies kept Paris either wincing or laughing, once made a visit to America in the days before he laid aside the bishop's lawn and purple for the robes of a minister of state. And while in this country he made a visit into the Wild West, which in those days could be found in Ohio. A friend chanced upon him in New York and was invited to breakfast, and after the meal was concluded Talleyrand withdrew to his bedroom and donned the suit in which he proposed to adventure into the wilderness. Even in those days New York had begun to draw sartorial distinctions, and the friend, who was familiar with the modes of dress in this new country, was astounded almost to speechlessness when Talleyrand stepped from his bedroom clad in full dress of a backwoodsman of the century before. The bishop had thrown off his churchly garments for the fringed buckskin breeches and coonskin cap of the earliest of America's pioneers. Where and how he had achieved the costume was a mystery; yet he saw nothing ridiculous in it, was in fact delighted with it, and thus clad, departed for the wilds of America.

Lake's Peculiar Migration.

Near Valdosta, in Georgia, there is a lake three miles long and three-quarters of a mile wide, with an average depth of twelve feet of water, which disappears every three or four years and then comes back again. It disappears into natural subterranean passages, taking two or three weeks in the process and leaving a beautiful sandy basin. After a month or so the water begins to come back, and in a couple of weeks it is the same old lake.

Funeral Arrangements.

Teacher—What is the presidential succession law, John?
John—the presidential succession law provides that if both president and vice president die the cabinet members will follow in succession.—Boys' Life.

Enlightenment.

"Is this speech-making tour of yours a campaign of education?" "I don't know how it strikes the audiences," replied Senator Sorghum, "but I must admit that I am learning a few things."

Booze in Baby's Bottle.

Magazine Story—He was an only son. His father, heavily alcoholic, had died in his infancy from pneumonia contracted during a spree.—Boston Transcript.

The value of the argon gas in the air was not known until its introduction into electric lamps recently.

The woman who never sheds a tear on account of a man doesn't love him.

BOY SCOUTS



(Conducted by National Council of the Boy Scouts of America)

LEAVES FOR WORK IN FRANCE

Lorne W. Barclay, director of the national council, department of Education, Boy Scouts of America, has again been loaned for the summer to the American committee for devastated France of which Miss Anne Morgan is chairman. Mr. Barclay sailed for France in May and will there direct five scout camps. This work is proving a notable contribution to the up-building of war-stricken France. As Mr. Barclay said in his recent report: "These boys lived in ruined homes; they have been out of school for five years; there is no place for them to find companionship in their villages unless they go to the wine shops. They have suffered so much that they are undeveloped physically and mentally, yet they crave good wholesome education and recreation. They only ask the chance to grow into manhood with all the best scout ideals of courage, self-denial, honesty and endurance."

Many boy scout troops in the United States have contributed \$25 each, which means that each troop will have as its guest at one of the camps, a French boy, who will not only gain immeasurably himself by the experience, but who will also go home carrying the message of scouting with him to reach other boys and the community.



Lorne W. Barclay.

This is what a French boy scout wrote last summer from the camp at Compiègne:

"What I am learning is worth the sacrifice you made in letting me go from the work in the field, I will work all the harder when I go home but I must make a scout of every boy in our village too."

"And they must know that it is American scouts that have made this possible. Vive la France and vive L' Amerique! We never salute our flag without seeing in imagination the stars and stripes of another flag floating beside our own!"

SAVE-THE-FOREST CAMPAIGN.

As soon as President Harding appointed May 22 to 28 as Forest Preservation week, the Boy Scouts of America immediately offered their services in promotion of the cause to which they have all along been definitely committed. When the secretary of agriculture wrote requesting the co-operation of the organization the national council, through its chief scout executive, gladly accepted the task and urged its scout leaders all over the country to get busy at once. The plan is to have every scout troop promise to plant trees and care for them, as many have been doing for some years past, to spread forest fire prevention propaganda throughout the country and get as many people as possible in and out of the scout movement actively enlisted in this important cause.