A Brave Coward.

By Robert Louis Stevenson.

CHAPTER IX.—(Continued.)

And with that he was gone among the thicket. I made a fire, for I had no fear of the Italians, who had even spared all the little possessions left in my encampment; and, broken as she was by the excitement and the hideous catastrophe of the evening, I managed to bring her back to some composure of mind and strength of body.

Day had already come, when a sharp "Hist?" sounded from the thicket. I started from the ground, but the voice of Northmour was heard adding, in the most tranquil tones: "Come here, Cassilis, and alone; I want to show you something."

I consulted Clara with my eyes, and, receiving her tacit permission, left her alone and clambered out of the den. At some distance off I saw Northmour leaning against an alder, and, as soon as he perceived me, he began walking seaward. I had almost overtaken him as he reached the outskirts of the wood.

"Look," said he, pausing.

A couple of steps more brought me out of the foliage. The light of the morning lay cold and clear over that well-known scene. The pavilion was but a blackened wreck.

Close by the islet a schooner yacht lay to, and a well-manned boat was pulling vigorously for the shore.

"The Red Earl!" I cried. "The Red Earl twelve hours too late!"

"Feel in your pocket, Frank. Are you armed?" asked Northmour.

I obeyed him, and I think I must have become deadly pale. My revolver had been taken from me.

"You see I have you in my power," he continued. "I disarmed you last night while you were nursing Clara; but this morning—here—take your pistol. No thanks!" he cried, holding up his hand. "I do not like them; that is the only way you can annoy me now."

He began to walk backward across the links to meet the boat, and I followed a step or two behind. In front of the pavilion I paused to see where Mr. Huddlestone had fallen; but there was no sign of him, nor so much as a trace of blood.

"Graden Floe," said Northmour.

He continued to advance till we had come to the head of the beach.

"No farther, please," said he. "Would you like to take her to Graden House?"

"Thank you," replied I; "I shall try to get her to the minister's at Graden Wester."

The prow of the boat here grated on the beach, and a sailor jumped ashore with a line in his hand.

"Wait a minute, lads!" cried Northmour; and then lower and to my private ear: "You had better say nothing of this to her," he added.

"On the contrary!" I broke out, "she shall know everything that I can tell."

"You do not understand," he returned, with an air of great dignity. "It will be nothing to her; she expects it of me. Good-bye!" he added, with a nod.

I offered him my hand.

"Excuse me," said he. "It's small, I know; but I can't push things quite so far as that. I don't wish any sentimental business, to sit by your hearth a white-haired wanderer, and all that. Quite the contrary: I hope to God I shall never again clap eyes on either one of you."

"Well, God bless you, Northmour!" I said heartily.

"Oh, yes," he returned.

He walked down the beach, and the man who was ashore gave him an arm on board, and then shoved off and leaped into the bows himself. Northmour took the tiller.

They were not yet half way to the Red Earl, and I was still watching their progress when the sun rose out of the sea.

One word more and my story is done. Years after Northmour was killed fighting under the colors of Garibaldi for the liberation of Tyron.

THE END.

Carrie

The Telegraph Girl

x x x

A ROMANCE OF THE CHEROKEE STRIP.

x x x

By Captain Jack Crawford

"THE POET SCOUT."

I had not met Carrie Rankin. I did not know if she was long or short, blonde or brunette, sweet sixteen or crabbled forty, plump as a mountain quail or thin and angular as a Kansas female suffragist; yet we had become the best of friends, and daily chatted with each other on terms of marked sociability. I confess that, as the days sped by and I listened to her witty expressions and bright conversation, I found myself falling in love with her, yet I had not the least tangible idea of her personal appearance, and knew not whether her voice was soft and musical, or pitched in a high key that was harsh and disagreeable to the ear. I knew she was good-natured and possessed of a keen sense of humor, for she would laugh heartily at my remarks, and respond with the most brilliant repartee when my humorous darts were leveled at herself.

This may all seem enigmatical to the reader, but will assume an aspect of entire plausibility in the light of the fact that she and I were telegraph operators at widely-separated stations on a western railway. She knew as little of the young man with whom she daily chatted as I did of herself. We had each drawn an ideal picture of the personal appearance of the other, and in our frequent conversations over the wire, each had in mind a face and figure to whom the remarks were addressed. I had pictured her as a bright-eyed, laughing, jolly little creature, with golden curls and silvery voice. I often wondered what sort of a mortal picture she had drawn of myself.

Red Rock, where I was located, was a station on the Santa Fe railway, in the Cherokeen strip of Oklahoma, before that now famous stretch of land was purchased by the government from the Indians and thrown open for settlement. The population of the town (?) consisted of a burly section foreman, of Milesian extraction; his wife, a red-faced, red-armed woman, who had no aspirations outside the limits of her not over-clean kitchen; four section laborers, and myself, the agent and operator for the railway company. The country was, at the time of which I write, a wild one, inhabited only by Indians, a few cattlemen who leased grazing lands from the aboriginal owners, the cowboys who looked after the scattered herds, and roving bands of desperadoes under the leadership of the Dalton brothers, the most famous of whom, Bill Dalton, was punctured by a well-directed bullet from the rifle of a deputy United States marshal but a few days ago, and who died with pistol in hand cursing the shot which had laid him low.

Miss Rankin was my predecessor in the position of agent and operator at Red Rock. She learnt the art of telegraphy in the train dispatcher's office at Arkansas City, where her widowed mother resided, and when competent to assume charge of a small station, had asked for and been given a position at Red Rock. She tired, of a while, of the lonely monotony of that obscure station, and asked to be sent to one less isolated from mankind; and when one day the operator at Edmond, further down the line, reported that his fingers had been "pinched" while endeavoring to couple two cars together, and that he must hasten to Arkansas City for surgical attention, the Red Rock agent was telegraphed instructions to lock up her depot, leave the key in the care of the section foreman, and proceed on a train then almost due to Edmond, and assume charge until the injured agent should return. I was at the time an "extra operator" on a Kansas division, and on the afternoon of the day on which Miss Rankin left Red Rock, I found myself sitting in her recently vacated chair for an indefinite stay at the lonely station.

My first train report had scarce announced my presence to the operators up and down the line, ere Edmond called me up. She expressed regret that she had been denied the privilege of extending to me a personal welcome to my new home, said she hoped I would find the station a pleasant one, and asked me if I would not kindly collect a number of feminine trifles which she had overlooked in packing her trunk, and then send them down to her. She would be ever so much obliged, and should an opportunity present itself, would certainly reciprocate my kindness. That was my first "meeting" with a lady who was soon destined to play a heroic part in a thrilling adventure in which I was a prominent figure.

Little by little Miss Rankin and myself became acquainted over the wire. We were soon holding daily conversations, then semi-daily, and then our chats became so frequent that at times jealous operators at other stations would break in on our conversation with hints that some one was "mashed" on some one else, and that we had better give the suffering wire a rest and do our spooning by mail. To these ungentlemanly interruptions we paid but little attention, but continued our long-distance intercourse—I, as I before remarked, falling more hopelessly in love with my new friend as the days sped by, and often wondering if a reciprocatory feeling was not growing in warmth at the other end of the wire. I was a young man of but 20, very susceptible to female charms, and as I was then denied even a look at a pretty face, aside from fleeting glimpses of female passengers on passing trains, I came to regard Miss Rankin as "my best girl," and her personal telegraphic signal, "Cr," became the sweetest sound my instrument clicked into my ears.

Modesty, coupled with a fear of being "guyed," had prevented me from questioning the train men regarding the personal appearance of my inamorata, but one day when I had orders to hold a north-bound freight until a belated south-bound passenger had arrived, and the freight conductor, Tom Armstrong, came into my office and sat down for a chat, I determined to sound him and learn a little something of the idol of my dreams.

"What sort of a looking girl is that now holding down Edmond station?" I asked.

He looked at me a moment in a half-quizzical, half-mischievous manner, and replied:

"Say, Fred, I've heard some of the boys on the line say you was dead gone on that piece, and I have an idea she is on your trail, too, for she made me tell her all about you while my train was lying there this morning waiting for No. 7. Did you never see her?"

"No, I never had the pleasure of meeting Miss Rankin."

"Miss Rankin? You mean Mrs. Rankin."

"Mean wha-a-a-at?"

"Mrs. Rankin. I thought you knew she was a widow with two kids at her mother's, up in Arkansas City. I guess she's square enough sort of woman, but when you see her, old man, I've an idea you won't want a second look. She's no spring chicken! Forty if she's a day, and she doesn't need a better protector than that face of hers. And temper! Gee-whiz! My hind-brakeman asked her the other day if that face didn't pain her, and she grabbed up a coupling-pin and let it go at him. He'd have been a dead brakey if he hadn't been a good dodger. He never sticks his head out of the caboose window now while we are at that station, for she's got it in for him."

The passenger whistled, and he hastened to his train to pull out as soon as the track was clear.

How cruelly my idol was shattered. After the trains had gone, I sat as if dazed; in fact, I was so absorbed in digesting the startling information I had gleaned from Armstrong that I neglected to report their departure, and the "jacking-up" I received from the train-dispatcher for my inattention to duty served to still further increase the ill temper into which the conductor's story had thrown me. The snappy clicks of the instruments had scarcely ceased to convey to my ears the merited reproof, concluding with the stereotyped chestnut which dispatchers always crack in such cases, "Don't let it occur again," ere I heard a call from Edmond. Heretofore I had fairly sprung to the table to respond to that call, but now I felt no desire to enter a conversation with the ogre who presided at the key at that distant station. It was with no gentle touch that I answered her call.

"Say, Sd" (my personal signal), "it's too bad, but u shld 'tend to biz. Ha! ha! ha! Was u sleep or reading letr fm ur girl?"

Thus came her consolatory message in the abbreviated conversational style of the telegrapher, and it served to fan the flames of my anger into a fierce heat. Had it been the nice little maiden of my dreams who had slung such chaff at me over the wires I would have smiled and thought it real cute, but that fright! Bah!

"I dt no as it interests u wt I was doing. I'm 2 busy to talk nw."

I snapped the words off with spiteful sharpness and closed my key with a thump that almost sprung the circuit breaker.

"Well u needn't bite my nose off coz Dr (the dispatcher) turned you over. Call me up when u get in gd humor. I've something to sa to u."

My gentlemanly instincts sharply reproved me for treating her in such an ungentlemanly manner. Had she ever led me to believe she was young and handsome? Was she to be blamed because she was a widow, wore a caricature in lieu of a face and was the mother of two children, no doubt as ugly as herself? I felt a tinge of shame for having spoken so crossly to her, and with softer touch of the key replied:

"I beg pardon, madam. I've got bad hedake today, and feel cross as bear. Forgot I was talking to lady. Wt u want to se to me?"

"O, I'm real sorry ur not well, for I've been 'ticipating pleasant visit with u. The agent here is on No. 5, and I'm ordered to Ark. City, and I thought if twould be greeable to u I'd go up on freight trn and stop over t'r for passenger ts eveng. I want to c the old statn again."

(To be continued.)

The Revolutionary Tories.

James K. Hosmer in the Atlantic: If George III. and his ministers were embarrassed by opposition at home, says James K. Hosmer in the July Atlantic, the American patriots were no less embarrassed. An energetic minority, it has been said, brought to pass the revolution, which proceeding, especially from New England, was carried through in spite of a majority in the colonies—a majority in great part quite apathetic, but to some extent actively resisting. The emigration of forces, when the day was at last won, was relatively as great as that of the Huguenots from France after the revocation or the Edict of Nantes. The total number is estimated to have been at least one hundred thousand. In this multitude were comprised only such, with their families, as had been active for the king. The indifferent, who had lent no helping hand to the patriots, must have been a multitude much larger; these remained behind, inertly submitting to the new order of things as they had swayed inertly this way or that, following the power and direction of the blast of war.

Ready with the Text.

From the Boston Transcript: The Maid—What are you doing with the Bible, Freddy? Freddy—Picking out a text for today's sermon. When I come home from church I always have to tell pa what the text was. The Maid—But how can you know the text until you hear it? Freddy—Any text will do. Pa won't know the difference. The Maid—But your grandmother is going with you. Freddy—But grandma will be fast asleep long before they get to the text.

Officers of Our Navy Who Are Distinguished Inventors

The American navy has supplied hundreds of the inventions which have played important parts in the development of the modern navy. The first essential step, the introduction of the ironclad and the monitor, was American born. Another initial advance quite as important in its way was the construction of the modern high-power rifles, requiring in their design a high order of mathematical ability and an intimate knowledge of the characteristics of modern steel. All guns in the navy have been designed by Professor Philip R. Alger, a former graduate of Annapolis, who has since been transferred to the corps of the professors of mathematics in the navy, and who is the highest authority on ordinance matters in this country, if not in the world. Professor Alger received a diploma from the World's Fair Commission for his system of gun construction, now in use in the navy.

In order to make these guns efficient, methods had to be devised for handling them on board ship; opening and closing the breach for loading, mounting them on carriages for sighting and training, protecting them with armor, supplying them with powder and shell, developing smokeless powder for their use, designing primers, fuses, telescopic sights and a hundred little accessories used in connection with their services. It was also essential to provide the necessary appliances for using the modern automobile torpedoes to be fired from our ships and torpedo boats; apparatus for signaling orders from the conning tower to the guns and to every part of the ship, for measuring the distance of the enemy, for countermining harbors and clearing channels and many other devices more or less directly connected with the ships as a fighting machine.

To perfect these devices in foreign navies the government have had to pay millions of dollars for improvements and inventions that tended to make their guns and ships more powerful in their keen competition for supremacy. In this country, the home of the inventor, our government had paid little or nothing. Nearly every improvement has been invented by its naval officers. One instance of a naval officer who received compensation for an invention was that of Chief Constructor Wilson, now retired, to whom the Navy Department paid $10,000 for an air port-hinge. But most of the work of naval officers' brain have been given tto the government free.

How much the inventive faculty of its keen-minded officers has meant to the Navy Department is illustrated in the case of Lieutenant Frank F. Fletcher, now on duty in the ordinance bureau. It was said at a hearing before a committee of the Senate last winter, on a bill to give naval inventor's compensation, that a gun-mount of Mr. Fletcher's had saved the government more than $500,000. All rapid-fire guns are now placed on this gun-mount and the World's Fair Commissioners awarded it a diploma. Briefly described and without technical terms, this gun-mount is the application of ball-bearings to the upper carriage of the gun, with a hydraulic check to take up the recoil after firing, and a spiral spring to return it to its place. There is also elevating and training gear of a complicated character.

Mr. Fletcher is the inventor of several other devices. One of these is a breech mechanism for heavy guns. This mechanism is used for handling all the heavy breech plugs, weighing from 500 pounds to half a ton, of our 8-inch, 10-inch, 12-inch and 13-inch guns. The army has also recently adopted it. These plugs were formerly handled by hydraulic machinery, but Fletcher's device enabled this to be done by hand power by one man. So successful was the device that one man, with his left hand turning a crank, can unlock from the breech of the gun its plug, weighing 1,150 pounds, withdraw it to the rear and swing it clear in seven seconds.

Finally Mr. Fletcher is the inventor of a rapid-fire gun which is now the standard of the navy. His device is being used on all the 3-inch, 4-inch, 5-inch and 6-inch guns in the service.

Just before the war with Spain began Secretary Long recommended to Congress an appropriation to build a big powder factory for making smokeless powder. At the same time he announced that a satisfactory smokeless powder had been made after many years of experiment, and that this powder was superior to the smokeless powders made abroad. "Lieutenant J. B. Bernadou showed special aptitude for this work and capacity for the solution of the problems involved in the prosecution of the experimental work of this nature," said the report of the inspector in charge of the torpedo station at Newport. This Lieutenant Bernadou is now at Key West recovering from wounds received while in command of the Wilslow at Cardenas. It was in fact Lieutenant Bernadou and Commander G. A. Montgomery who invented the smokeless powder just adopted by the Navy Department. The navy is particularly proud of this achievement. Foreign governments possess a smokeless powder, but it contains nitro-glycerine, which makes it unreliable and dangerous, and besides develops a high heat which soon ruins a gun. All countries have been working for the ideal smokeless powder containing no nitro-glycerine, and we are the first to get it. As in many other matters, our Navy Department stayed behind Europe in the adoption of a smokeless powder until we had one that was perfect.

Lieutenant B. A. Fiske, prolific inventor in electrical devices, made some years ago a range finder for automatically finding distances at sea. It is one of the most useful contrivances on shipboard, and is worth an immense sum to the navy. Another of Lieut. Fiske's inventions was the stadimeter—very clever modification of the sextant, by which it is possible to measure the distance of a ship from the height of its mast or smoke stack. Still another was a range indicator—an electrical device for signaling from the conning tower to the gun captain the direction and distance of the enemy. This is fitted on nearly all our ships.

Captain Sigsbee of the St. Paul, is an inventor. The navy now uses a deep-sea sounding apparatus and parallel rulers for navigation of his invention.

Lieutenant Dashiell invented a breech machanism which was a great improvement on all that had preceded it. It was adopted by the navy department in 1892, and was introduced on many rapid-fire guns. This device enabled the man at the breech of the gun to do with one motion what had always taken two. In the breech mechanism the plug had to be turned with one motion until it unlocked, and then withdrawn with another motion. But by an arrangement of cogs Lieutenant Dashiell made the pull of a lever turn the plug until it was unlocked and then withdraw it. The reverse motion of the lever drove the plug home and then turned it until it locked. The Dashiell machanism has been supplanted by the Fletcher mechanism, but it is still to be found on some rapid-fire guns.

Lieutenant W. H. Driggs and Lieutenant Seaton Schroeder are the inventors of a rapid-fire mechanism, which is of the same class as the well-known Hotchkiss gun. It is applied to one-pounder and six-pounder guns. This invention is owned by a private corporation, unlike most of the navy inventions, which belong to the government.

Commodore John A. Howell is the inventor of the automobile torpedo, which bears his name. Its mechanism consisted chiefly of a heavy cog wheel made to revolve at a high rate of speed before the torpedo is put in the water. Commodore Howell sold this invention to the Hotchkiss company, and for a time drew a royalty on it. Of late it has been supplanted by the Whitehead torpedo.

Lieutenant Joseph Strauss is the inventor of improvements in mounting turret guns. He conceived the idea of the double turret, having an eight-inch turret placed on top of a thirteen-inch turret, as used on the battleships Kearsarge and Kentucky, which were launched not long ago at Newport News.

Chief Constructor Philip Hichborn invented the Franklin life buoy, and sold it to a concern in Bath, Me. It is a self-lighting buoy. Two small tin cases attached to it contain phosphide of calcium. Stoppers to these cases are attached to the ship, so that when the buoy is thrown into the water the stoppers are withdrawn, and when the buoy strikes the water the combination of the chemical with the water makes a bright flame.

Lieutenant Very, late of the navy, devised a set of signals which are now in use, not only in our navies, but in all the navies of the world. Lieutenant Herbert O. Dunn invented a stockless anchor, which is now in use on some naval vessels. Lieutenants Van Duzer and Mason were the inventors of an ingenious electric steering gear. Lieutenant Fiske and Lieutenant Lucien Young are the joint inventors of a boat detaching apparatus. Chief Engineer Harry Webster invented a clinometer, used to determine the angle roll of a ship. Chief Engineer Nathan P. Towne is the inventor of an improved boiler. Lieutenants Diehl and Gibson are inventors of a "compensating binnacle," designed to neutralize the magnetism of a steel ship's hull. Passed Assistant Engineer Tobin is the inventor of the famous Tobin bronze, much used for hulls of racing yachts and for the shells of torpedoes, and Prof. E. C. Munroe, of the navy, is the inventor of the high explosive "jovite."

These are only samples of the many contributions to inventions which naval officers have made. Their inventive talent and their skill in designing have made the ships of the United States navy superior in every convenience and efficiency to those of Europe. In fact, many foreign governments pay tribute to the superiority of American ideas in royalties on the inventions of American naval officers.

OFFICERS WHO ARE FAMOUS INVENTORS.

BEACON FIRES IN CHINA.

The payment last month of the great war indemnity from China to Japan has again aroused the question why so little patriotism was shown by the Chinese during their late war. It is not generally known that a vast secret society flourishes in that country to oppose the present emperor, and that a majority of the Chinese army is said to belong to this society. One reason for this opposition is that the present emperor is not strictly a Chinaman, but belongs to a Tartar dynasty.

In China, such beacon fires as spread the alarm of the Spanish Armada through England, still call to war. Some years ago, the story goes, the emperor sat with a beautiful woman, looking toward the beacon hills. She would like to see those waiting piles lighted, and upon her insisting the thing was done. The greatest excitement prevailed throughout the provinces, and troops came hurrying from all sides.

When the leaders learned that no danger menaced, that the fires were lighted to satisfy the whim of a woman, their wrath fed on their lost confidence, and with the actual call to arms the response was slow and unenthusiastic. It was a repetition of the old story in Webster's spelling-book. "Wolf" had been cried too often.

"You may roughly divide nations as the living and the dying," Lord Salisbury declared in a recent address before the Primrose league. China belongs to the second class; but she will not have existed in vain if her example teaches living nations that faith in their rulers and the patriotism of the people are the sure defence of nations.

An Ideal Wotan.

According to the Academy, Sudermann is "a muscular giant, bearded and blue-eyed," resembling "the ideal Wotan of Wagnerian drama." He is a native of eastern Prussia.

A Great Scheme.

Browne—"What is your object in visiting Spain at this time?" Towne—"I want to be on the ground early so I can have first choice of castles."—New York Journal.

Astronomers tell us that in our solar system there are at least 17,000,000 comets of all sizes.