

"Hands up!" he shouted to Stranleigh.  
"Impossible!" was the quiet answer, "my left is helpless."

"Then hold up your right."

Stranleigh did so.

"Slide off them packs," roared the guide to his followers, whereupon ropes were untied on the instant, and the packs slid to the ground, while the mules shook themselves, overjoyed at the sudden freedom.

"Turn back!" cried the guide. "Keep your hand up, and they won't shoot. They want the goods."

"What! do you mean to desert?" asked Stranleigh.

"Desert nothing!" rejoined the guide gruffly. "We can't stand against these fellows, whoever they are. We're no possé. To fight them is the sheriff's business. I engaged to bring you and your luggage to Armstrong's ranch. I've delivered the goods, and now it's me for the railroad."

"I'm going to the ranch house," said Stranleigh.

"More fool you," replied the guide, "but I guess you'll get there safe enough, if you don't try to save the plunder."

THE unladen mules, now bearing the men on their backs, had disappeared. The guide washed his hands of the whole affair, despite the fact that his arms were upraised. He whistled to his horse, and marched up the trail for a hundred yards or so, still without lowering his arms, then sprang into the saddle, fading out of sight in the direction his men had taken. Stranleigh sat on his horse, apparently the sole inhabitant of a lonely world.

"That comes of paying in advance," he muttered, looking round at his abandoned luggage. Then it struck him as ridiculous that he was looking the part of an equestrian statue, with his arm raised aloft. Still, he remembered enough of the pernicious literature that had lent enchantment to his early days, to know that in certain circumstances the holding up of hands was a safeguard not to be neglected. So he lowered his right hand, took in it the forefinger of his left, and thus raised both arms over his head, turning round in his saddle to face the direction from whence the shots had come. Then he released the forefinger, and allowed the left arm to drop as if it had been a semaphore. He winced under the pain that this pantomime cost him, then in a loud voice he called out:

"If there is anyone within hearing, I beg to inform him that I am wounded; that I carry no firearms; that my escort has vanished, and that I'm going to the house down yonder to have my injury looked after. Now's the time for a parley, if one is wanted."

He waited for some moments, but there was no

response, then he gathered up the reins, and quite unmolested proceeded down the declivity until he came to the homestead.

The place appeared to be deserted, and for the first time it crossed Stranleigh's mind that perhaps the New York lawyer had sent him on this expedition as a sort of practical joke. Nevertheless, he determined to follow the adventure to an end, and slipped from his horse, making an ineffectual attempt to fasten the bridle rein to a rail of the fence that surrounded the habitation. The horse began placidly to crop the grass, so he let it go at that, and,



"There are no bones broken, which is a good thing. After all, it is a simple case, Mr. Stranleigh"

advancing to the front door, knocked.

The door was opened by an elderly woman of benign appearance, who nevertheless regarded him with some suspicion. She stood holding the door, without speaking, as if waiting for her unexpected visitor to proclaim his mission.

"Is this the house of Stanley Armstrong?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Is he at home? I have a letter of introduction to him."

"He is not at home."

"Do you expect him soon?"

"He is in Chicago," answered the woman.

"In Chicago?" echoed Stranleigh. "We must have passed one another on the road. I was in Chicago myself, but it seems months ago; in fact, I can

hardly believe such a place exists." He smiled a little grimly, but there was no relaxation of the serious expression with which the woman had greeted him.

"What is your business with my husband?"

"No business at all; rather the reverse. Pleasure, it might be called. I expected to do a little shooting and fishing. A friend in New York kindly gave me a letter of introduction to Mr. Armstrong who, he said, would possibly accompany me."

"Won't you come inside?" was her reluctant invitation. "I don't think you told me your name."

"My name is Stranleigh, madam. I hope you will excuse my persistence, but the truth is, I have been slightly hurt, and if, as I surmise, it is inconvenient to accept me as a lodger, I should be deeply indebted for permission to remain here while I put a bandage on the wound. I must return at once to Bleachers, where I suppose I can find a physician more or less competent."

"Hurt?" cried the woman in amazement, "and I've been keeping you standing at the door."

"Oh, I think it's no great matter, and the pain is not so keen as I might have expected. Still, I like to be on the safe side, and must return after resting a bit."

"I'm sorry you've had an accident," said Mrs. Armstrong, with concern. "Sit down in that rocking chair; I will call my daughter."

THE unexpected beauty of the young woman who entered brought an expression of mild surprise to Stranleigh's face. In spite of her homely costume, a less appreciative person than his lordship must have been struck by Miss Armstrong's charm, and her air of intelligent refinement.

"This is Mr. Stranleigh, who has met with an accident," said Mrs. Armstrong to her daughter.

"Merely a trifle," Stranleigh hastened to say, "but I find I cannot raise my left arm."

"Is it broken?" asked the girl, with some anxiety. "No; I fancy the trouble is in the shoulder. A rifle bullet passed through it."

"A rifle bullet?" echoed the girl, with alarm. "How did that happen? But—don't tell me now. The main thing is to dress the wound. Let me help you with your coat." Stranleigh stood up. "But no exertion, please. Bring some warm water and a sponge," she continued, turning to her mother.

She removed Stranleigh's coat with a dexterity that aroused his admiration. The elder woman returned with dressings and sponge. Stranleigh's white shirt was stained with blood, and to this Miss Armstrong applied the warm water. (Continued on Page 10)

## THE LAUGH OF OLD AEOLUS

By Charlotte W. Thurston

*The voice of Old Aeolus rang across Aeolian foam:  
"Back, Eurus, Auster, Zephyrus; Aeolus bids ye come!  
How spent your hour of liberty, I gave, unleashed to roam?  
Speak, Boreas! Back, my Rascals, back to your cavern home!"*

ZEPHYRUS  
THE  
WEST WIND

"I raced with Love and Laughter across the Rockies' chain;  
With sunbeams chasing after we danced across the plain;  
I piped, and Hope, all smiling, came dancing in our train;  
I piped, all hearts beguiling, till life was joy again."

BOREAS  
THE  
NORTH WIND

"Bolder I blew and bolder aslant a northern shore;  
At my fierce voice grew colder the ice of Labrador;  
With white beard all snow-laden the Snow-Queen's dance I led;  
But I seized a mortal maiden and I kissed her rosy-red."

AUSTER  
THE  
SOUTH WIND

"On Florida's hot beaches I crooned my slumbrous tune;  
Along her rain-swept reaches murmured my drowsy rune;  
O restless mortals, falling before your gold's false gleam,  
Auster is calling, calling, 'Life is for rest and dream.'"

EURUS  
THE  
EAST WIND

"Pale mortals called me, 'Eurus,' faint through the sultry air,  
'Thy waving wing shall cure us; lift us from our despair.'—  
Ask of the Nausett billows who raced them hand in hand!  
Who hurled their green wave-pillows on the white Orleans sand!"

*The laugh of Old Aeolus rang across the cavern gloom:  
"Ho! Ho! Four dove-like Innocents! Room for the darlings, room!  
Boreas, my lamb; and Eurus, thou Janus of the deep;  
Thou hypocrite, my Auster; Zephyrus, my mcdcap;—Sleep!"*