CHAPTER XXX.—Continued.

Felix recognized at once that he had gained a point. "Then look to it well," he said, austerely. "Be careful how you act. Do nothing rash. For either the soul of the god is in the heart of Lavita, the son of Sami: and then, since I refuse to eat it, it will decay away, as Lavita's body decays, and the world will shrivel up, and all things will perish, because the god is dead and crumbled to dust forever. Or else it is in my body, who am god in his place: and then, if anybody does me harm or hurt, he will be an impious wretch, and will have broken taboo, and Heaven knows what evils and misfortunes may not, therefore, fall on each and all of you."

A very old chief rose from the ranks outside. His hair was white and his eyes bleared. "Tu-Kila-Kila speaks well," he cried, in a loud but mumbling voice. "His words are wise. He argues to the point. He is very cunning. I advise you, my people, to be careful how you anger the white-faced stranger, for you know what he is: he is cruel; he is powerful. There was never any storm in my time, and I am an old man—so great in Boupari as the storm that rose when the King of the Rain ate the storm-apple. Our yams and our taros even now are suffering from it. He is a mighty strong god. Beware how you tamper with him."

He sat down, trembling. A younger chief rose from a nearer rank and said his say in turn. "I do not agree with our father," he cried. "His word is evil: he is much mistaken. I have another thought. My thought is this: Let us kill and eat the white-faced stranger at once, by wager of battle, and whosoever fights and overcomes him receive his honors and take to wife the fair woman, the Queen of the Clouds, the sun-faced Korong, whom he brought from the sun with him."

"But who will then be Tu-Kila-Kila?" Felix asked, turning round upon him quickly. Habituation to danger had made him unnaturally alert in such utmost extremities.

"Why, the man who slays you," the young chief answered, pointedly grasping his heavy tomahawk with profound expression.

"I think not," Felix answered. "Your reasoning is bad. For if I am not Tu-Kila-Kila how can any man become Tu-Kila-Kila by killing me? And if I am Tu-Kila-Kila, how dare you, not being yourself Korong, and not having broken off the sacred bough, as I did, venture to attack me? You wish to set aside all the customs of Boupari. Are you not ashamed of such gross impiety?"

"Tu-Kila-Kila speaks well," the King of Fire put in, for he had no cause to love the aggressive young chief, and he thought better of his chances in life as Felix's minister. "Besides, now I think of it, he must be Tu-Kila-Kila, because he has taken the life of the last great god, whom he slew with his hands: and therefore the life is now his—he holds it."

Felix was emboldened by this favorable opinion to strike out a fresh line in a further direction. He stood forward once more, and beckoned again for silence. "Yes, my people," he said calmly, with slow articulation, "by the custom of your race and the creed you profess I am now indeed, and in every truth, the abode of your great god, Tu-Kila-Kila. But, furthermore, I have a new revelation to make to you. I am going to instruct you in a fresh way. This creed that you hold is full of errors. As Tu-Kila-Kila, I mean to take my own course, no Islander hindering me. If you try to depose me, what great gods have you now got left? None, save only Fire and Water, my ministers. King of the Rain there is none: for I, who was he, am now Tu-Kila-Kila. Tu-Kila-Kila there is none, save only me, for the other that was, I have fought and conquered. The Queen of the Clouds is with me. The King of the Birds is with me. Consider, then, O friends, that if you kill us all, you will have nowhere to turn: you will be left quite godless."

"It is true," the people murmured, looking about them, half puzzled. "He is wise. He speaks well. He is indeed a Tu-Kila-Kila."

Felix pressed his advantage home at once. "Now, listen!" he said, lifting up one solemn forefinger. "I come from a country very far away, where the customs are better by many yams than those of Boupari. And now that I am indeed Tu-Kila-Kila—your god, your master—I will change and alter some of your customs that seem to me here and now most undesirable. In the first place—hear this!—I will put down all cannibalism. No man shall eat of human flesh on pain of death. And to begin with, no man shall cook or eat the body of Lavita, the son of Sami. On that I am determined—I, Tu-Kila-Kila. The King of the Birds and I will dig a pit, and we will bury in it the corpse of this man that was your god, and when his own wickedness compelled me to fight and slay, in order to prevent more cruelty and bloodshed."

The young chief stood up, all red in his wrath, and interrupted him, brandishing a coral-stone hatchet. "This is blasphemy," he said. "This is sheer rank blasphemy. These are not good words. They are very bad medicine. The white-faced Korong is no true Tu-Kila-Kila. His advice is evil and ill-luck would follow it. He wishes to change the sacred customs of Boupari. Now, that is not well. My counsel is this: Let us eat him now, unless he changes his heart and amends his ways, and partakes, as is right, of the body of Lavita, the son of Sami."

The assembly swayed visibly, this way and that, some inclining to the conservative view of the rash young chief, and others to the cautious liberalism of the gray-haired warrior. Felix noted this division, and spoke once more, this time more authoritatively than ever.

"Furthermore," he said, "my people, hear me. As I come in a ship propelled by fire over the high waves of the sea, so I go away in one. We watch for such a ship to pass by Boupari. When it comes the Queen of the Clouds, upon whose life I place a great Taboo, let no man dare to touch her at his peril: if he does, I will rush upon him and kill him as I killed Lavita, the son of Sami. When it comes, the Queen of the Clouds, the King of the Birds, and I, we will go away back in it to the land whence we came, and be quit of Boupari. But we will not leave it fireless or godless. When I return back home again in my own far land, I will send out messengers, very good men, who will tell you of a God more powerful by much than any you ever knew and very righteous. They will teach you great things you never dreamed of. Therefore, I ask you now to disperse to your own homes, while the King of Birds and I bury the body of Lavita, the son of Sami."

All this time Muriel had been seated on the ground, listening with profound interest, but scarcely understanding a word, though here and there, after her six months' stay on the island, a single phrase was dimly intelligible to her. But now, at this critical moment she rose, and, standing upright by Felix's side in her spotless English purity among those assembled savages, she pointed just once with her uplifted finger to the calm vault of heaven, and then across the moonlit horizon of the sea and last of all to the clustering huts and villages of Boupari. "Tell them," she said to Felix, with blanched lips, but without one sign of tremor in her fearless voice. "I will pray for them to Heaven, when I go across the sea, will think of the children that I loved to pat and play with, and will send out messengers from our home beyond the waves, to make them wiser and happier and better."

Felix translated her simple message to them in its pure womanly goodness. Even the natives were touched. They whispered and hesitated. Then after a time of much murmured debate, the King of Fire stood forward as a meditator. "There is an oracle, O Korong," he said, "not to prejudice the matter, which decides these things—a great conch-shell at a sacred grove in the neighboring island of Aloa Mauna. It is the holiest oracle of our holy religion. We gods and men of Boupari have taken counsel together and have come to a conclusion. We will put forth a canoe and send men with blood on their faces to inquire at Aloa Mauna of the very great oracle. Till then, you are neither Tu-Kila-Kila nor not Tu-Kila-Kila. It behooves us to be very careful how we deal with gods. Our people will stand round your precinct in a row, and guard you with their spears. You shall not cross the taboo line to them, nor they to you: all shall be neutral. Food shall be laid by the line as always, morn, noon, and night: and your Shadows shall take it in: but you shall not come out. Neither shall you bury the body of Lavita, the son of Sami. Till the canoe comes back it shall lie in the sun and rot there."

He clapped his hands twice.

In a moment a tom-tom began to beat from behind, and the people all crowded without the circle. The King of Fire came forward ostentatiously and made taboo. "If any man cross this line," he said in a droning sing-song, "till the canoe return from the great oracle of our faith on Aloa Mauna, I, Fire, will scorch him into cinder and ashes. If any woman transgress, I will pitch her with palm oil, and light her up for a lamp on a moonless night to lighten this temple."

The King of Water distributed shark's-tooth spears. At once a great serried wall hemmed in the Europeans all round, and they sat down to wait, three whites together, for the upshot of the mission to Aloa Mauna.

And the dawn now gleamed red on the Eastern horizon.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AT SEA: OFF BOUPARI.

Thirteen days out from Sydney, the good ship Australasian was nearing the equator.

It was four of the clock in the afternoon, and the captain off duty paced the deck, puffing a cigar, and talking idly with a passenger on former experiences.

Eight bells went on the quarter-deck: time to change watches.

"This is only our second trip through this channel," the captain said, gazing across the channel with a casual glance at the palm-trees that stood dark against the horizon. "We used to go a hundred miles to eastward, here, to avoid the reefs. But last voyage I came through this way quite safely—though we had a nasty accident on the road—unavoidable—unavoidable! Big sea was running free over the sunken shoals, caught the ship aft unawares, and stove in better than half a dozen portholes. Lady passenger on deck happened to be leaning over the weather gunwhale; big sea caught her up on its crest in a jiffy, lifted her like a baby, and laid her down again gently, just so, on the bottom of the ocean. By George, sir, I was annoyed. It was quite a romance, poor thing; quite a romance; we all felt so put out about it the rest of that voyage. Young fellow on board, nephew of Sir Theodore Thurstan, of the Colonial office, was in love with Miss Ellis—girl's name was Ellis—father's a parson somewhere down in Somersetshire—and as soon as the big sea took her up on its crest, what does Thurston go and do, but he ups on the taffrail, and, before you could say Jack Robinson, jumps over to save her."

"But he didn't succeed?" the passenger asked, with languid interest.

"Succeed, my dear sir? and with a sea running twelve feet high like that? Why, it was pitch dark, and such a surf on that the gig could hardly go through it." The captain smiled and puffed away pensively. "Drowned," he said, after a brief pause, with complacent composure. "Drowned. Drowned. Drowned. Went to the bottom, both of 'em. Davy Jones' locker. But unavoidable, quite. These accidents will happen, even on the best-regulated liners. Why, there was my brother Tom, in the Cunard service—same line that boast they never lost a passenger—there was my brother Tom, he was lost one day off the Newfound'an banks, heavy swell setting in from the nor'-nor'-east, icebergs ahead, passengers battened down—Bless my soul, how that light seems to come and go, don't it?"

It was a reflected light, flashing from the island straight in the captain's eyes, small and insignificant as to size, but strong for all that in the full tropical sunshine, and glittering like a diamond from a vague elevation near the center of the island.

"Seems to come and go in regular order," the passenger observed reflectively, withdrawing his cigar. "Looks for all the world just like naval signalling."

The captain paused and shaked his head a moment. "Hanged if that isn't just what it is," he answered slowly. "It's a rigged-up heliograph, and they are using the Morse code dash my eyes if they aren't. Well, this is civilization. What the dickens can have come to the island of Boupari? There isn't a darned European soul in the place, nor ever has been. Anchorage unsafe; no harbor, bad reef; too small for missionaries to make a living, and natives got nothing worth speaking of to trade in."

"What do they say?" the passenger asked, with sudden quickened interest.

"How the devil should I tell you yet, sir?" the captain retorted with choleric grumpiness. "Don't you see that I am spelling it out, letter by letter? O, r, e, s, c, u, e, u, s, e, o, m, e, w, e, l, l, a, r, m, e, d—Yes, yes, I twig it." And the captain jotted it down in his note-book for some seconds, silently.

"Run the flag there," he shouted, a moment later, rushing hastily forward. "Stop her at once. Walker, Easy, easy. Get ready the gig. Well, upon my soul, there is a rum start anyway."

"What does the message say?" the passenger inquired, with intense surprise.

"Say? Well, there's what I make it out," the captain answered, handing him the scrap of paper on which he had jotted down the letters. "I missed the beginning, but the end's all right. Look alive there, boys, will you. Bring out the Winchester. Take cutlasses, all hands. I'll go along myself in her."

The passenger took the piece of paper on which he read, "and send a boat to rescue us. Come well armed. Savages on guard. Thurstan, Ellis."

In less than three minutes the boat was lowered and manned, and the captain, with the Winchester six-shooter by his side, seated grim in the stern, took command of the tiller.

On the island it was the first day of Felix and Muriel's imprisonment in the dusty precinct of Tu-Kila-Kila's temple. All the morning through, they had sat under the shade of a smaller banyan in the outer corner, for Muriel could neither enter the noisome hut nor go near the great tree with the skeletons on its branches; nor could she sit where the dead savage's body, still festering in the sun, attracted the buzzing blue flies by thousands, to drink up the blood that lay thick on the earth in a pool around it. Hard by, the natives sat, keen as lynxes, in a great circle just outside the white taboo-line, where, with serried spears, they kept watch and ward over the persons of their doubtful gods of victims. M. Peyron, alone preserving his equanimity under these adverse circumstances, hummed low to himself in very dubious tones: even he felt his French gayety had somewhat forsaken him: this revolution in Boupari failed to excite his Parisian ardor.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Pride Goeth Before a Fall.

"I was admitted to the bar in 1882," said Representative Heiner of Pennsylvania, "and I thought it the greatest event of my life, barring birth and attainment to the estate of manhood. I immediately set to work to make an immortal name for myself as a great orator. I did not have long to wait until the opportunity to distinguish myself was offered. It was my maiden speech and I threw my whole soul into the effort. I thought it was one of the finest speeches I had ever heard. There were those kind, benevolent spirits who are always ready to encourage a struggling genius, and who went to some extent in expressing approval of it. To sum up my feelings I may say I was entirely satisfied with myself. Why, even the children on the streets as I passed to go to the depot looked at me in awe, and pointed to me, while they whispered among themselves: "There he he is; there he is."

"I shall never forget how my heart swelled with pride and how my pulses throbbed in silent glee over my success. Why a group of boys followed me at a distance and lingered at the depot where I expected to take the train. I smiled at them in an encouraging way and after a little delay they approached me.

"'Well, boys,' I said, 'what can I do for you?'

"My heart sank into my shoes as the boldest of the group blurted out:

"'Say, mister, ain't you the man what gives boys tickets to the circus?'

"From that day to this," concluded Mr. Heiner, "I have never allowed my head to obtain a circumference that could not be modestly screened from view by an eight hat."—Washington Post.

Found by a Divining-Rod.

The divining-rod has again been used in Essex, England, with success, this time on the estate of Gen. Thompson, of Whethersfield place, near Braintree. Some years ago Gen. Thompson had a field surveyed by an eminent engineer, who after testing the ground with boring apparatus, expressed an opinion that no water was obtainable there. Hearing, however, of the success of the divining-rod in the immediate neighborhood, the General invited Mr. H. W. Golding of Bocking, to walk over the field, with the result that at two places which Mr. Golding marked water was found at less than ten feet from the surface.

THE NIGHTINGALE'S SONG.

The eve was calm and still,
The woods were hushed to rest,
The moon, behind the hill
Gleamed on the silver West.
Over the dewy earth
Under the moonbeams pale,
A mystic song had birth,
In the heart of the nightingale.

Like a bard inspired she sang
Of love and love's unrest,
Like a morning carol rang
Her thoughts of joyous breast
While the dew on her nest was wet with tears,
And the bright stars burned above,
She sang to the infant night
Of the golden dawn of love.

And I said to my beating heart,
"Be still!" for the minstrel bird
Had torn its wounded smart,
And the gushing fountain stirred.
"Ah, love, love, love!" I cried,
Under the moonbeams pale,
When that mystic music died
In the throat of the nightingale.

—Longman's Magazine.

A QUEER BARGAIN.

Well, you see, said Cousin Sally Baker, when the railroad people first came along here with their queer looking machines, a lavin' out the new track, we were all mightly exercised about it. Some took one view and some another. Some was pleased, and said 'twould open up a market to us and increase the vally o' land, while others allowed that the farms would be ruined, the wheat fields set afire, the cattle run over and killed, and the noise itself be an abidin' noosance.

"I tell you some o' 'em was real mad, but the maddest of the hull lot was ondeniably Betsey Ann Simcoe.

She was a single woman, about forty or more, and lived on a poor little place of her own, just above the Cross Keys tavern.

'Twas only two or three acres of gravelly land, with a two-room frame house on it. Folks said she had a leetle money hid away somewhere, for she was powerful sharp at making bargains and held a tight grip on all she got hold of; but, all the same, she made a great talk about poverty as an excuse for not giving more to the missionary society and for repairs to the meeting house.

Still she seemed to get along as well as anybody with her garden and her cow and her poultry, and the little gal she'd 'prenticed from the city's poorhouse to help to do chores.

She wasn't a bad-tempered woman in gen'ral, but I tell you she was mighty riled up the day the railroad folks come to her house and told her they were surveyin' the track and that it would hev to run straight through her house.

She rared up to them and 'lowed the property was hers, and nobody had a right to so much as set a foot on it without her consent. They were civil enough and explained, and they said they was willing to pay double the vally of the hull property for the privilege of running the railroad through.

She wouldn't hear it, but out o' sheer contrariness refused every offer, though everybody could see that her mouth watered at the very mention of the money.

She said she'd never give up her home and if they run their injine through the house t'would be over her mangled body. And she wound up by threatening if they didn't quit in a short time, she'd have them arrested for trespass on her premises.

Well, the next day she went down to Hobb's Holler to see her cousin, Lucindy Parks, and talk over the railroad business. Lucindy and the rest tried to convince her she'd get the best o' the bargain by letting the railroad company have the land, but she "'lowed she'd not be turned out o' doors to 'commodate a passel o' sassy men folks that cared for nothing but their own good." She staved two days at Lucindy's, and then went back to her own house at Cross Keys. Leastways, she went to where she'd left her house standing, but when she come in sight of it, 'twas gone, and nothin' of it left but a lot o' burnt wood and ashes.

Then there was a row! Betsey Ann accused the railroad folks of burning her house, and threatened to persecute 'em by law. They said they could prove it by the neighbors that it had been done accidentally by a passel o' tramps who camped on the place the night she was away, and made a fire in the woodshed to roast some of her chickens for supper. The chips had caught and set fire to the house, then they got skeered and made short tracks out o' Cross Keys. Betsey Ann was convinced the railroad folks knew more about these tramps than they chose to let on. But she didn't say much—only dropped a little hint that she'd be even with them bimeby.

They offered to build her another house if she'd give up the land. She said she'd consider of it and let 'em know. Purty soon they come to an agreement by which, besides paying well for the land, they was to build her a two-story, four-room frame house, and likewise allow her to travel free on the road for the rest of her life whenever she wanted to, with a female companion along.

At first they objected to the companion; but when she explained that she was a one woman and couldn't think of exposing herself to the attentions of strange men by traveling unprotected, they laughed and agreed to put in that in the condition too, which was done, and the papers made out and signed and sealed according to law. You see they heard the neighbors laughing at the idea of Miss Simcoe ever traveling on the railroad—she that has hardly been farther from home than Hobbs' Holler or Bowling Green meetin' house in all her life, and wasmost afeard to trust herself out o'sight of her own house.

Well, the company kept their word, and run up a two story, four-room frame house for Betsey Ann—sech as it was. She declared that 'twas nothing better than a shanty, that wouldn't keep out the summer's heat nor the winter's cold and was liable to be blown away by the first high wind that came along. The company said they hadn't stipulated for the exact way the house was to be built: they'd done the best they could afford to do, and she ought to be satisfied. She shut up then, and sot her saw in a way she had when she'd made up her mind to something she didn't choose to talk about just yet.

At last the road was finished, and one day everybody turned out to see the injine for the fust time as it tore and screeched up to Cross Keys.

Betsey Ann Simcoe looked on with a smile of triumph as if the hull concern belonged to her. Every time the train passed she came out and looked at it till she got used to seeing it and hearing its unearthly noise. And then one day she tuk her little white help along, and got aboard the cars and rode to the next station, as she said to see how it felt and how she liked it. Next week she went again as far as Cloverdale, and a little while arter made anther trip, 'long with her cousin, Lucindy Parks, clear up to the city.

Purty soon she got to be known to all the railroad folks along the line, and there was no end to the jokes about her.

"By gosh," says old Mr. Potter to one of the conductors one day, "I'm thinking you'll hev to fix up a car for her special 'commodation, if it goes on this way much longer."

The conductor smiled.

"Oh," he answerd, "it's a novelty to her at present, but we don't objec'. When her curiosity's gratified she'll be content to settle down at home again, and talk over her travels."

"Well, she did stay quiet for a week or two, and then took again to riding on the rail. First she went to Cloverdale to buy a tin kittle for 50 cents, which, she said was a saving of 5 cents from gittin' it at Cross Keys.

Then she left her gal at home and tuck Lucindy Parks along all the way to the city to sell her eggs and buy a calliker gownd; and so it went on all summer.

"Oh, never mind," says the conductor, smiling a hard kind of smile, "she'll get tired of traveling after a while."

But she didn't seem to get tired. On the contrary, she took to making regular trips, taking along first one person and then another, until the conductors got to looking as grum as bears; and even the firemen and engineers scowled or laughed every time she appeared. One engineer used to let off a fearful screech o' the biler when he seen her comin'; but after the fust scare she got used to it and tuk no notice. Once when she was late, and the conductor started the train just as she and Lucindy Parks was climbin' in, she threatened to sue the company if it happened again. They knew she'd keep her word, so they were obliged to be on their good behavior to her.

So she kept it up all the first year or two. Her way was to get aboard with her female companion, whoever it might be, and jest fix herself comfortable near the stove or at a winder, 'cording as it was summer or winter, and thar sit and knit the whole journey through.

She'd carry one woman up, maybe, and bring another down and at last it came out that she was making a regular business of it, with folks that wanted to visit the town or country, they paying her half or a quarter the regular fare on what was passed off on the railroad folks for a free trip.

The company interfered then, and said something about stopping it by law, but she 'lowed they hadn't stipulated about any business matters o' hern, and she was keeping to the letter of the agreement.

Then they tried to buy her off, but she said she was satisfied as things was and wanted no change. Still, it was clear that she was not only making money for herself, but keeping the company out of it.

There was one injineer named Wells on one of the trains, and bimeby, when this had been going on a matter of four or five years, Betsey Ann Simcoe noticed that he always tetched his cap and looked at her in a soft, spoony sort o' way whenever he seen her.

One day, when she was standing on the bank he flung a bokey of pinks and bachelder buttons to her feet, and another time pitched her a pound of candy. Then he handed her a newspaper with some verses in it marked with charcoal—something about his heart being captivated by a lady "over the way" that he'd never spoke to; and at last came a letter, saying as how he'd been interested in her ever since he'd seen her so often on the cars, and he was sure she would make him the good, clever, sensible wife he'd always wanted, if she could only bring herself to fancy fancy him as he did her.

Well, she answered the letter, and a meeting was fixed; but meantime one o' the railroad chaps stepped in and told her that Wells was getting so dissipated that the company talked of discharging him, but that she might be able to save him by stiperating that she'd marry him only on condition that he'd give up going to barrooms.

He considered of it and said he would if she'd promise likewise to give up her railroad traveling and stay at home and make it comfortable and agreeable for him and her.

So they both put it down in black and white, and got witnesses to it, and took oath to keep their words, and then they was married.

Of course Betsey Ann Wells stayed at home now, and set about doing all she could to make it pleasant for her husband. She had plenty of time to do it in, for he didn't make his appearance there once a month, skeersely; and at last she found out that it was all a put up job of the company's who'd bribed Wells with $500 to marry her and get her off the road for good.

He was a reckless sort of a chap, but not bad, and had always been as sober and free from barrooms as a judge.

Betsey Ann was awful cut up when she found it all out, for she'd set her heart on him, as old maids are apt to set their hearts on the first man that pretends to keer for 'em.

She didn't say nothing, even to Lucindy Parks, but went right along doing the best she could to make it pleasant for her husband whenever he came to see her. And at last, when he met with an accident from a collision on the road, and had to be laid up for weeks before he got well again, she had him from the hospital and nursed him as tender and keerful as a mother does her ailing baby. And would you believe it, that in time she brought the man round to be ashamed of the trick he'd played her and to be jest as steady and easy going a husband as any in Cross Keys?

Betsey Ann Wells never went on the rails again except once or twice with her husband, paying her own fare.

Once she told the conductor that, spite of everything the company had done, she'd got the best of the bargain—a good husband and money enough to make him and her comfortable for life.—Waverley Magazine.

HE STRUCK OIL ONCE.

Which Explains the Fact He Now Has a Fortune Nearly Uncountable.

"I see petroleum has been discovered up in Marin County and a company is buying up all the land in the neighborhood," remarked a rancher at a down-town hotel last evening, and it was noticed that there was a tinge of incredulity in his tone.

"Yes; I believe they have struck oil up that way," was the corroborative evidence of one of his hearers.

"Well, I'll believe it when they commence piping it into tanks, and not a minute before. I struck oil once."

"Is that the way you made your fortune?"

"Yes, that's the way I made my fortune, which at the present time just lacks $2,000 of being a blamed cent. Those are my liabilities; assets nominal, as the papers say."

"How did it happen?"

"Well, it was this way: I had a mineral spring on my ranch up in Lake County, and the gas that came out of it used to kill little birds that came to drink. 'Natural gas,' says I and commenced poking around a little with a spade. Then a yellow, greasy scum formed on top of the water. 'Coal oil,' says I and commenced dreaming of tanks of petroleum and barrels of money. I got a cheap drilling outfit and bored a hole down about eighty feet, and all the neighbors sat around laughing at me, but I reckoned on having the last laugh.

"One morning when I went to work the hole smelt awful strong of coal oil, and the first lift brought up a lot of oil that burned for half an hour. 'I've struck oil,' says I to myself, but I kept it quiet. I let a few of my friends in, we organized a company, bought up all the land around there, got an expensive outfit, and commenced drilling. We punched the ground full of holes for about six months and couldn't find enough oil to make a grease spot on a silk dress. It broke the whole crowd of us."

"How did you chance to strike that little pocket of oil in the first place?"

"I just found out that one of the neighbor's boys poured a five-gallon can of coal oil in the hole one night to make me feel good, and, if anybody should ask you, you can tell them that I am feeling a blamed sight better than he is right now, for his dad went broke on it, too, and we took turn about walloping him."—San Francisco Post.

A Hongkong Robbery.

An extraordinary and daring robbery was that which took place at the Central Bank of Western India, Hongkong, in 1865, when the thieves succeeded in getting clear off with gold and specie to the extent of nearly £50,000. The robbers must have been at work for some weeks before they entered the bank's treasury. Their principal labor was in constructing a tunnel of sixty feet from an adjacent drain to a spot exactly below the floor of the bank's treasure vault.

A perpendicular shaft of ten feet of sufficient diameter was then made to permit of the passage of one man to reach the granite boulders on which the floor of the vault rested. These gave way through being undermined; and a flag being forced up, entrance to the vault was at once obtained. Two boxes were removed containing gold bars or ingots marked with the bank's stamp, as well as all the paper money, some bags of dollars, and a box of 10-cent pieces. No fewer than between twenty and thirty men were arrested on suspicion. One of them had $6,000 in his possession and two bars of gold bearing the bank's mark.

The robbery was effected between a Saturday and Sunday; and the first thing that roused suspicion was the fact of a little boy trying to sell a bar of gold to a hawker in one of the bazaars in Hongkong. A gentleman who was passing asked where he got the gold, and the boy replied that it had been found at a certain place. He gave the youth what he asked for it—namely, $1—and then informed the police.—Chambers' Journal.

Paris Doctors on Bicycling for Women.

To the question whether the use of the bicycle in moderation is good for women, the Paris Journal de Medicine has just received answers from forty-three doctors, of whom thirty-three say yes, and ten say no.

SMOKE-proof helmets have been invented for firemen.