

Investigation of the Packers.
Very general interest has been manifested in the government investigation now in progress into the mode of conducting business by the large packers located in Chicago and elsewhere. Much has been written upon the alleged illegal and improper modes of business procedure connected with the packing industry; but it seems that so far no definite charge of illegal or inequitable methods has been disclosed to the public. While a wave of severe criticism of this great industrial interest is now passing over the country it might be well to remember that the packers have had as yet no opportunity to make specific denial, the many indefinite charges of wrong-doing having never been formulated so that a categorical answer could be made.

The recent report of Commissioner Garfield, which embodied the results of an official investigation undertaken by the Department of Commerce and Labor of the United States, was a vindication of the Western packers, but this result having been unexpected attempts in many quarters to discredit it were made.

In view of the situation as it now stands, however, attention may properly be called to a few facts that owing to popular clamor are now being apparently overlooked. Fair treatment in this country has heretofore been accorded to all citizens whose affairs assume prominence in the public eye and some of the facts that bear upon the relation of the packers to the commerce of the country may at this time be briefly alluded to. It would be difficult to estimate the benefits gained by the farmers of the country resulting from the energetic enterprise of the packers, for whatever is of benefit to the farmer is a gain to the entire commerce of the country. And connected with their continuous aggressive work no feature perhaps has been more important than their efforts in seeking outlets all over the world for the surplus products of the farmer. Our total exports of agricultural products have remained but little in the past twenty years, and leaving out corn, the total of all other farm products was far less in 1903 than in 1891. But in packing house products there was considerable gain during this period, because an organized and powerful force has been behind them seeking new and broader markets.

Besides the benefits reaped by farmers on account of the enterprise and energy exercised by the packers in attaining commercial results by foreign trade, the great development in the manufacture of packing house by-products has added enormously to the value of all live stock raised in the United States. The waste material of twenty years ago, then an expense to the packer, is now converted into articles of great value and an economic fact. This must correspondingly increase the value to the farmer of every head of cattle marketed at the numerous stock yards of the country. Let these facts be remembered while now it is so popular to regard the great packing industry as deserving of condemnation. At least it must be admitted that, so far, there is no adequate reason for the almost unanimous howl that may be heard everywhere in the face of the Garfield report above alluded to which practically exonerates the packers from the obscure and indefinite charges that have been for some time past made the subject of popular comment.

Set Right.
Catholic Standard Times: "I hadn't been introduced to him five minutes before he began to talk 'society.'"
"Of course you didn't like that, eh?"
"And you did it. If a man's an idiot I like to know it right away."

Private Car Lines.
The railroads seem very willing to have the private car lines brought under the jurisdiction of the Interstate Commerce Commission. A railroad president is authority for the statement that lines are paid mileage, without discrimination, and the question of excessive charges is a matter for the shipper to settle with the car lines, so long as there is no law to govern their rates. Car mileage paying has been decided to be as legal as the payment of rental for property.

Self Approving.
Washington Star: "Do you feel that you did anything for the good of your country?" asked the serious citizen.
"I don't know about that," answered the congressman. "But I feel that I have a better record than some in not doing any damage."

\$100 Reward, \$100.
The readers of this paper will be pleased to learn that there is at least one dreadful disease that science has been able to cure in all its stages, and that is Catarrh. Hall's Catarrh Cure is the only positive cure known to the medical profession. Catarrh being a constitutional disease, requires a constitutional treatment. Hall's Catarrh Cure is taken internally, acting directly on the blood and mucous surfaces of the system, thereby destroying the foundation of the disease, and giving the patient strength by building up the constitution and assisting nature in doing its work. The product has so much faith in its curative powers that they offer One Hundred Dollars for any case that it fails to cure. Send for list of testimonials.
Address: F. J. CHENEY & CO., Toledo, O. Sold by Druggists, 75c.
Hall's Family Pills are the best.

Not Improving.
Boston Traveler: Kind Lady—Oh, my what a pity to hear a child like that using bad language!
Young Hopeful—Dat's not 'n, mam. He could cuss most as good as dat when he wuz 2 years old, he's most 5 now.

Shopping in Rome.
Louisville Courier-Journal: "Ah, these are so beautiful Roman filigree combs," said the salesman, with genuine enthusiasm.
Mrs. Nooritch was not visibly impressed.
"Show me some catacombs," commanded she.

No Class Needed.
Chicago News: Gunner—I think there should be an auto-graph class connected with every big college. I mean so students would be enabled to write fiction for money.
Guyer—Fiction? Say, did you ever see the letters the students write their parents when they need a check?

Getting Time.
Mine eyes have seen the fury of the Kansas man amuck:
He is giving every trust in sight a jab or two for luck.
And he's getting mighty nearly time for Standard Oil to duck.
For he's still rampaning on.

The Gotham Viewpoint.
Puck: Philadelphia—Have you read Robert Herrick's new novel, "The Common Law?"
New Yorker—No. What's it about?
Philadelphia—Chicago people.
New Yorker—Good title, eh?
Poet and Spring.
I plucked a quill from Fancy's ring
And swiftly wrote "Reign, lovely Spring."
It rained.
I turned my Muse to softly sing
In accents sweetest "Hail, gentle Spring."
It hailed.
—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Handy Habit.
Boston Transcript: Hester—You'll pardon me for speaking of it, but your fiancée is the greatest girl to borrow things I ever saw. She almost always has some of her sister's clothes on.
Doltite—By George, I'm glad to know that; suppose she'll keep on wearing her sister's clothes after we're married? Be a big savior for me, won't it?

Enlightened!
Philadelphia Ledger: "Pa," said the little Kansas boy, "what does 'b-o-o-z-e' mean?"
"That," replied his father, "is an eastern slang term for 'spiritus frumenti.'"

A Tale of Suffering.
Oakley, Mich., May 8.—(Special.)—"I could not sleep or rest in any place," says Florence Capen of this place in a recent interview. "I had a pain in my back and hips. If I sat down I could not get up out of my chair. I was in pain all the time. I got poor for I did not eat enough to keep a small child. I could not rest nights."
"Then I sent for a box of Dodd's Kidney Pills and went to taking them and what do you think that very night I went to bed and I slept till morning. I got up and thanked God for the night's rest and Dodd's Kidney Pills. I know that Dodd's Kidney Pills are all that is claimed for them."
This is only one of the numerous experiences that show the way to build up run down people is to cure the kidneys. Thousands of people in every State bear witness to the fact that Dodd's Kidney Pills never fail to cure the kidneys.

Never!
Cleveland Plain Dealer: "And do you mean to say, madam, that you and your husband never had any spat?"
"My husband had a pair once, sir, but he gave 'em to the boy who sprinkled our grass."

Mrs. Winslow's Soreness Remedy for Children
(Coughs; softens the gums; reduces inflammation of eye; pain; cures wind colic. 25 cent a bottle.)

BIBLE IN MANY TONGUES.
Its Enormous Circulation Through the World.

Century: Three hundred million copies of the bible have been printed in a century.
The British and American Bible societies alone circulate some 8,000,000 a year. Forty per cent. of the cost is recovered from sales.
Often the payments were made in curious substitutes for money, such as cowry shells in Uganda, copra and arrowroot in New Hebrides, swords, daggers, sandals, amulets, straw hats, pieces of silk, eggs, butter, rotten cheese, dogs' teeth, seabirds' eggs and other picturesque circulating material. Occasionally, even bibles were stolen.
Something like 2,000 colporteurs and bible women travel in like manner to outlandish places, by railroad, carriage, boat, bullock wagon, sleigh, bicycle, wheelbarrow, on mule, jiribisha or afoot, to distribute bibles.
Bibles must be packed in water-tight parcels to be landed through the surf in Madagascar, they are made up in fifty-six-pound packages to fit coolies' backs in Annam.
A century ago the bible was printed in forty languages. It is now printed in 450, and new ones are being added every year. Sometimes languages are practically made by the bible—that is to say, it is the first book printed in some obscure tongue, so rude that it does not even contain words enough to express thought.
Take, for example, the translation just made for the Sheetwa tribe in East Africa. They had no word for Supreme Being, or home, father, heaven, house and other ideas equally fundamental. Other recent translations have been made in Persian, Uganda, Labrador-Eskimo, Kongo-Batido, Wedan, Fang, Madarese and Nonggu.
And there are said to be on the borders of the Indian empire alone 108 languages in which there is no Christian scripture printed.

COFFEE HEART.
Very Plain in Some People.
A great many people go on suffering, from annoying ailments for a long time before they can get their own consent to give up the indulgence from which their trouble arises.
A gentleman in Brooklyn describes his experience, as follows:
"I became satisfied some months ago that I owed the palpitation of the heart, from which I suffered almost daily, to the use of coffee (I had been a coffee drinker for 30 years), but I found it very hard to give up the beverage.
"I realized that I must give up the harmful indulgence in coffee, but I felt the necessity for a hot table drink, and as tea is not to my liking, I was at a loss for a while what to do.
"One day I ran across a very sensible and straightforward presentation of the claims of Postum Food Coffee, and was so impressed thereby that I concluded to give it a trial. My experience with it was unsatisfactory till I learned how it ought to be prepared—by thorough boiling for not less than 15 or 20 minutes. After I learned that lesson there was no trouble. Postum Food Coffee proved to be a most palatable and satisfactory hot beverage, and I have used it ever since.
"The effect on my health has been most salutary. It has completely cured the heart palpitation from which I used to suffer so much, particularly after breakfast, and I never have a return of it except when I dine or lunch away from home and am compelled to drink the old kind of coffee because Postum is not served. I find that Postum Food Coffee cheers and invigorates, while it produces no harmful stimulation." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.
There's a reason.
Ten days' trial proves an eye opener to many.
Read the little book "The Road to Wellville" in every pkg.

THE MASTER OF APPELEBY

By Francis Lynde.

CHAPTER VI.—Continued.
Although it was most terribly overlong in coming, the end of that black day did come at last, and with it Darius to fetch my supper and the candles. You may be sure I questioned him, and if you know the blacks, you'll smile and say I had my labor for my pains—the which I had. His place was at the quarters, and what was on my table to drink was a cause of more than I. But this he told me; that company surely was expected, and that some air of mystery was abroad.
When he was gone I ate a soldier's portion, knowing of old how ill a thing it is to take an empty stomach into battle, and then I drank a second cup of wine—'twas old madeira of my father's laying-in—and would have drunk a third but that the bottle would not yield it.

It was fully dark when I had finished, and, thinking ever on my plan, would strive afresh to weld its weakest link. This was the hazard of the weapon-getting. With full-blood health and strength I might have gone bare handed; but as it was, I feared to take the chance. So with a candle I went prowling in the deep drawers of the old oaken clothes press and in the esparto which once caused my drunks, and found no weapon bigger than a hairpin.
It was no great disappointment, for I had looked before with daylight in the room. Besides, the wine was mounting, and when the search was on the link, I found the hairpin. I did not rush upon him unawares and put my knee against his back, I thought the Lord of Battles would give me strength to break his neck across it.
At that I capped the candles, and, taking post in the deep bay of the window, I saw the light of the light of the great room at the front. This had two windows on my side and while I could not see them, I knew that I should see the sheen of light upon the lawn.
The night was clear but moonless, and the thick-leaved masses of the oaks and hickories rose a wall of black to curtain half the hemisphere of starry sky. As always in our forest land, the hour was shrilly vocal, though to me the chirping of the frogs and insects hath ever stood for silence. Somewhere beyond the thicket-wall an owl was calling mournfully, and I bethought me of that superstition—old as man, for aught I know. And then I laughed, for surely death would come to one or more of the general of the night with the compass of the night.
Behind the close drawn curtain, though I could see it not, the virgin forest darkened all the land; and from afar within its secret depths I heard, or thought I heard, the dismal howling of the wind, and the low, low, low of the great room at the front. This had two windows on my side and while I could not see them, I knew that I should see the sheen of light upon the lawn.

The night was clear but moonless, and the thick-leaved masses of the oaks and hickories rose a wall of black to curtain half the hemisphere of starry sky. As always in our forest land, the hour was shrilly vocal, though to me the chirping of the frogs and insects hath ever stood for silence. Somewhere beyond the thicket-wall an owl was calling mournfully, and I bethought me of that superstition—old as man, for aught I know. And then I laughed, for surely death would come to one or more of the general of the night with the compass of the night.
Behind the close drawn curtain, though I could see it not, the virgin forest darkened all the land; and from afar within its secret depths I heard, or thought I heard, the dismal howling of the wind, and the low, low, low of the great room at the front. This had two windows on my side and while I could not see them, I knew that I should see the sheen of light upon the lawn.
The night was clear but moonless, and the thick-leaved masses of the oaks and hickories rose a wall of black to curtain half the hemisphere of starry sky. As always in our forest land, the hour was shrilly vocal, though to me the chirping of the frogs and insects hath ever stood for silence. Somewhere beyond the thicket-wall an owl was calling mournfully, and I bethought me of that superstition—old as man, for aught I know. And then I laughed, for surely death would come to one or more of the general of the night with the compass of the night.
Behind the close drawn curtain, though I could see it not, the virgin forest darkened all the land; and from afar within its secret depths I heard, or thought I heard, the dismal howling of the wind, and the low, low, low of the great room at the front. This had two windows on my side and while I could not see them, I knew that I should see the sheen of light upon the lawn.

It must have been an hour or more before the sound of distance muffled hoofbeats on the road broke in upon the chirping silence of the night. I looked and listened, straining eye and ear, hearing but little and seeing less until three shadowy horsemen issued from the curtain wall of black beneath my window.
It was plain that others watched as well as I, for at their coming a sheen of light from the opened door behind me, and the low, low, low of the father's eyes, and then a few low-voiced words of welcome. Followed quickly the closing of the door and silence; and when my eyes grew once again accustomed to the gloom, I saw the three men standing head to head, and in the midst a man to hold them.
"So!" I thought; "but three in all, and one of them a servant. 'Twill be a scanty guessted wedding." And then I raged within again to think of how my love should be thus dishonored in a corner when she should have the world to clap its hands and praise her beauty.
At that, and while I looked, the lawn was banded farther on by two broad beams of light; and then I knew my time was come.
I leaped across the darkened chamber I softly tried the door latch. It yielded at the touch, but not the door. I pulled, and braced myself and pulled again. 'Twas but a waste of strength. The door was fast with that contrivance which my father used to bar me in what time I was a boy and would go reconnoitering with our negro hunters. My enemy was no fool. He had been shrewd enough to lock me in against the chance of interruption.

I wish you might conceive the helplessness of my position. I was there behind that fastened door; but this, indeed, you may not, having felt it not. For one dazed moment I was sick as death with fear and frenzy and I know not what besides, and all the blackness of the night was upon me. Then, in the twinkling of an eye, the madness left me cool and sane, as if the fit had been the travail-pain of some new birth of soul. And after that, as I remember, I knew not rage nor haste nor weakness—knew no other thing save this: that I had set myself a task to do and I would do it.
My window was in shape like half a cell of honeycomb, and close beside it on the outer wall there grew an ancient ivy vine which more than once had held my weight when I was younger and would evade my father's vigilance.
I swung the casement noiselessly and clambered out, with hand and foot in proper hold as if those youthful fittings of my boyhood days had been but yesterday. A breathless minute later I was down and afoot on solid ground; and then a thing chanced which I would not have believed. The man whom I had called a servant turned and saw me.
"Halt! Who goes there?" he cried.
"A friend," said I, between my wishings for a sword and a pistol, and my prefigurations proved to be a trooper, booted, spurred and armed.
"God, I think you lie," he said; and after that he said no more, for he was down among the horses' hoofs and I upon him, kneeling hard to scant his breath for hountings.
It grieves me now though all these years to think that I did kneel too hard upon this man. He was no enemy of mine, and did but do—or seek to do—his duty. But he would fight or die, and I must fight or die, and so it ended, as such strivings will, with some grim crackling of ribs—and when I rose he rose not with me.
With all the fierce excitement of the struggle yet upon me, I stayed to knot the bridle reins upon his arm to make it plain that he had fallen at his post. That done, I took his sword as surer for my purpose than a pistol, and hug-

peacefully like a trussed fowl before the fire."
The baronet smiled and said: "I'll be your warrant for his safety. We've had him well guarded from the first, and tonight he is behind a barred door with Mr. Stair's overseer standing sentry before it. But as for that, he's barely out of bed from my pin-prick."
Having thus disposed of me, they let me be and came to the graver business of the moment, with a toast to lay the dust before it. It was Falconnet who gave the toast.
"Here's to our bully redskins and their king—how do you call him, Captain Stuart? Ocon—Ocon—"
"Oconostota is the Cheleakee of it, though on the border they know him better as 'Red Head.' Fill us gentlemen, fill up; 'tis a dry business, this. Allow me, Mr. Stair; and you, Mr.—ah—Pengarden. This same old heathen is the king's friend now, but gentlemen all, I do assure you the very devil himself in a copper-colored skin. 'Twas he who ambushed us in '60, and but for Attukullakulla—"
"Oh, Lord!" groaned Falconnet. "I say, captain, drown the names in the wine and we'll drink them so. 'Tis by far the easiest way to swallow them."
By this, the grizzled captain's mention of the old Fort Loudon massacre, I knew him for that same John Stuart of the Highlanders who, with Captain Damare, had stoutly defended the frontier fort against the savages twenty years before; knew him and wondered I had not sooner placed him. When I was but a boy, as I could well remember, he had been king's man to the Cherokee; a sort of go-between in times of peace, and in the border was a man the Indians feared. But now, having grown to learn, he was a man for us to fear.
"Tis carried through at last," he went on, when the toast was drunk. And then he stopped and held up a warning finger. "This business will not brook unfriendly ears. Are we safe to talk it here, Mr. Stair?"
It was Falconnet who answered. "Safe as the clock. You passed my sentry in the road?"
"Yes."
"Here's the padlock of a chain that reaches round the house. Let's have your news, captain."
"As I was saying, the Indians are at one with us. 'Twas all fair sailing in the council at Echota; the Cheleakee being to a man fierce enough to dig the heels of the rebels under the feet of our own troops; temper with my Lord Charles. He says we have more friends than enemies in the border settlements, and these our redskins will tomahawk them all alike."
"I made a mental note of this and wondered if my Lord Cornwallis had met with some new change of heart. He was not over-squeamish as I had known him. Then I heard the baronet say: "But yet the thing is done?"
"As good as done. The Indians are to have powder and lead of us, after which they will make a sudden onslaught on the over-mountain settlements. And that fetches us to your part in it, Sir Frank; and to yours, Mr. Stair. Your troop, captain, will be the convoy for this powder; and you, Mr. Stair, are requisitioned to provide the commissary."
There was silence while a cat might wink, and then Gilbert Stair broke in upon it shrilly.
"I cannot, Captain Stuart; that I cannot be protested, starting from his chair. 'Twill ruin me outright. The place is stripped—your know it well, Sir Francis—stripped bare and clean by these thieving rebel militiamen; bare as the back of your hand, I tell you!"
But the captain put him down in brief.
"Enough, Mr. Stair; we'll not constrain you against your will. But 'tis hinted at headquarters that you are but a fair weather royalist at best—nay, that for some years back you have been as rebel as the rest in this nesting-place of traitors. As a friend—mind you, as a friend—I would advise you to find the wherewithal to carry out my lord's commands. Do you take me, Mr. Stair?"
The grizzled old man fell back in his chair, nodding his "yes" dumbly like a marionette when the string has been jerked a thought too violently, and his weasel face was moist and clammy. I know not what double-think he would have been at before, but it was surely something with the promise of a rope at the publishing of it.
So he and his factor fell to ciphering on a bit of paper, reckoning ways and means, as I took it, while Falconnet was asking for more particular orders.
"You'll have them from headquarters direct," said Stuart. "Oconostota will furnish cartridges, a Cherokee escort, and guides. The rendezvous will be here—mine, I tell you. His title was changed on a tree with his damned rebel father!"
A laugh uproarious from the three soldiers greeted his patulant outburst; at which the baronet enlightened the others.
"As you know, Captain John, Appley Hundred once belonged to the rebel Roger Ireton, and Mr. Stair here holds but a confiscator's title. 'Tis likely the son heard of the war and thought he stood some chance to come into his own again."
"Oh, age; sure enough," quoth the elder officer, tilting his bottle afresh. And then: "Of course he promptly 'listed with the rebels when he came? Trust Roger Ireton's son for that."
The baronet waggled his head assentingly to this; then clinched the lie in words.
"Of course; we have his commission. He is on DeKalb's staff, detached for special duty."
"A spy!" roared the jester. "And yet you haven't hanged him?"
Sir Francis shrugged like any Frenchman. "All in good time, my dear Captain. There were reasons why I did not care to knot the rope myself. Besides, we had a little disagreement years ago across the water; 'twas about a woman—oh, she was no mistress of his, I do assure you—'tis to quench my jester's laugh incredulous. He was taken upon me for satisfaction in this old quarrel, and I gave it him, thinking he'd hang the casier for a little blooding first."
Here the factor-lawyer cut in anxiously. "But you will hang him, Sir Francis? You've promised that, you know."
"I did not hate my enemy the more because he turned a shoulder to this little bloodhound and quite ignored the interruption."
"So you fought it out one morning in Mr. Stair's wood-field, and he had what he came for. Not to give him a chance to escape, we brought him here, and as soon as he is fit to ride I'll send him to the colonel. Tartleton will give him a short shaft, I promise you, and then—'tis to the promise of Appley Hundred—'then your title will be well quelled, Mr. Stair."
And this the weather-beaten captain roared again and smote the table till the bottles reeled.
"I say, Sir Frank, that's good—damned good! So you have him cuffed here in his own house, stuffing him like a penned capon before you writing his neck. Ah! ha! ha! 'Tis to be hoped you have his legs well tied. If he be any son of my old mad-bull Roger Ireton, you'll hardly hang him

peacefully like a trussed fowl before the fire."
The baronet smiled and said: "I'll be your warrant for his safety. We've had him well guarded from the first, and tonight he is behind a barred door with Mr. Stair's overseer standing sentry before it. But as for that, he's barely out of bed from my pin-prick."
Having thus disposed of me, they let me be and came to the graver business of the moment, with a toast to lay the dust before it. It was Falconnet who gave the toast.
"Here's to our bully redskins and their king—how do you call him, Captain Stuart? Ocon—Ocon—"
"Oconostota is the Cheleakee of it, though on the border they know him better as 'Red Head.' Fill us gentlemen, fill up; 'tis a dry business, this. Allow me, Mr. Stair; and you, Mr.—ah—Pengarden. This same old heathen is the king's friend now, but gentlemen all, I do assure you the very devil himself in a copper-colored skin. 'Twas he who ambushed us in '60, and but for Attukullakulla—"
"Oh, Lord!" groaned Falconnet. "I say, captain, drown the names in the wine and we'll drink them so. 'Tis by far the easiest way to swallow them."
By this, the grizzled captain's mention of the old Fort Loudon massacre, I knew him for that same John Stuart of the Highlanders who, with Captain Damare, had stoutly defended the frontier fort against the savages twenty years before; knew him and wondered I had not sooner placed him. When I was but a boy, as I could well remember, he had been king's man to the Cherokee; a sort of go-between in times of peace, and in the border was a man the Indians feared. But now, having grown to learn, he was a man for us to fear.
"Tis carried through at last," he went on, when the toast was drunk. And then he stopped and held up a warning finger. "This business will not brook unfriendly ears. Are we safe to talk it here, Mr. Stair?"
It was Falconnet who answered. "Safe as the clock. You passed my sentry in the road?"
"Yes."
"Here's the padlock of a chain that reaches round the house. Let's have your news, captain."
"As I was saying, the Indians are at one with us. 'Twas all fair sailing in the council at Echota; the Cheleakee being to a man fierce enough to dig the heels of the rebels under the feet of our own troops; temper with my Lord Charles. He says we have more friends than enemies in the border settlements, and these our redskins will tomahawk them all alike."
"I made a mental note of this and wondered if my Lord Cornwallis had met with some new change of heart. He was not over-squeamish as I had known him. Then I heard the baronet say: "But yet the thing is done?"
"As good as done. The Indians are to have powder and lead of us, after which they will make a sudden onslaught on the over-mountain settlements. And that fetches us to your part in it, Sir Frank; and to yours, Mr. Stair. Your troop, captain, will be the convoy for this powder; and you, Mr. Stair, are requisitioned to provide the commissary."
There was silence while a cat might wink, and then Gilbert Stair broke in upon it shrilly.
"I cannot, Captain Stuart; that I cannot be protested, starting from his chair. 'Twill ruin me outright. The place is stripped—your know it well, Sir Francis—stripped bare and clean by these thieving rebel militiamen; bare as the back of your hand, I tell you!"
But the captain put him down in brief.
"Enough, Mr. Stair; we'll not constrain you against your will. But 'tis hinted at headquarters that you are but a fair weather royalist at best—nay, that for some years back you have been as rebel as the rest in this nesting-place of traitors. As a friend—mind you, as a friend—I would advise you to find the wherewithal to carry out my lord's commands. Do you take me, Mr. Stair?"
The grizzled old man fell back in his chair, nodding his "yes" dumbly like a marionette when the string has been jerked a thought too violently, and his weasel face was moist and clammy. I know not what double-think he would have been at before, but it was surely something with the promise of a rope at the publishing of it.
So he and his factor fell to ciphering on a bit of paper, reckoning ways and means, as I took it, while Falconnet was asking for more particular orders.
"You'll have them from headquarters direct," said Stuart. "Oconostota will furnish cartridges, a Cherokee escort, and guides. The rendezvous will be here—mine, I tell you. His title was changed on a tree with his damned rebel father!"
A laugh uproarious from the three soldiers greeted his patulant outburst; at which the baronet enlightened the others.
"As you know, Captain John, Appley Hundred once belonged to the rebel Roger Ireton, and Mr. Stair here holds but a confiscator's title. 'Tis likely the son heard of the war and thought he stood some chance to come into his own again."
"Oh, age; sure enough," quoth the elder officer, tilting his bottle afresh. And then: "Of course he promptly 'listed with the rebels when he came? Trust Roger Ireton's son for that."
The baronet waggled his head assentingly to this; then clinched the lie in words.
"Of course; we have his commission. He is on DeKalb's staff, detached for special duty."
"A spy!" roared the jester. "And yet you haven't hanged him?"
Sir Francis shrugged like any Frenchman. "All in good time, my dear Captain. There were reasons why I did not care to knot the rope myself. Besides, we had a little disagreement years ago across the water; 'twas about a woman—oh, she was no mistress of his, I do assure you—'tis to quench my jester's laugh incredulous. He was taken upon me for satisfaction in this old quarrel, and I gave it him, thinking he'd hang the casier for a little blooding first."
Here the factor-lawyer cut in anxiously. "But you will hang him, Sir Francis? You've promised that, you know."
"I did not hate my enemy the more because he turned a shoulder to this little bloodhound and quite ignored the interruption."
"So you fought it out one morning in Mr. Stair's wood-field, and he had what he came for. Not to give him a chance to escape, we brought him here, and as soon as he is fit to ride I'll send him to the colonel. Tartleton will give him a short shaft, I promise you, and then—'tis to the promise of Appley Hundred—'then your title will be well quelled, Mr. Stair."
And this the weather-beaten captain roared again and smote the table till the bottles reeled.
"I say, Sir Frank, that's good—damned good! So you have him cuffed here in his own house, stuffing him like a penned capon before you writing his neck. Ah! ha! ha! 'Tis to be hoped you have his legs well tied. If he be any son of my old mad-bull Roger Ireton, you'll hardly hang him

peacefully like a trussed fowl before the fire."
The baronet smiled and said: "I'll be your warrant for his safety. We've had him well guarded from the first, and tonight he is behind a barred door with Mr. Stair's overseer standing sentry before it. But as for that, he's barely out of bed from my pin-prick."
Having thus disposed of me, they let me be and came to the graver business of the moment, with a toast to lay the dust before it. It was Falconnet who gave the toast.
"Here's to our bully redskins and their king—how do you call him, Captain Stuart? Ocon—Ocon—"
"Oconostota is the Cheleakee of it, though on the border they know him better as 'Red Head.' Fill us gentlemen, fill up; 'tis a dry business, this. Allow me, Mr. Stair; and you, Mr.—ah—Pengarden. This same old heathen is the king's friend now, but gentlemen all, I do assure you the very devil himself in a copper-colored skin. 'Twas he who ambushed us in '60, and but for Attukullakulla—"
"Oh, Lord!" groaned Falconnet. "I say, captain, drown the names in the wine and we'll drink them so. 'Tis by far the easiest way to swallow them."
By this, the grizzled captain's mention of the old Fort Loudon massacre, I knew him for that same John Stuart of the Highlanders who, with Captain Damare, had stoutly defended the frontier fort against the savages twenty years before; knew him and wondered I had not sooner placed him. When I was but a boy, as I could well remember, he had been king's man to the Cherokee; a sort of go-between in times of peace, and in the border was a man the Indians feared. But now, having grown to learn, he was a man for us to fear.
"Tis carried through at last," he went on, when the toast was drunk. And then he stopped and held up a warning finger. "This business will not brook unfriendly ears. Are we safe to talk it here, Mr. Stair?"
It was Falconnet who answered. "Safe as the clock. You passed my sentry in the road?"
"Yes."
"Here's the padlock of a chain that reaches round the house. Let's have your news, captain."
"As I was saying, the Indians are at one with us. 'Twas all fair sailing in the council at Echota; the Cheleakee being to a man fierce enough to dig the heels of the rebels under the feet of our own troops; temper with my Lord Charles. He says we have more friends than enemies in the border settlements, and these our redskins will tomahawk them all alike."
"I made a mental note of this and wondered if my Lord Cornwallis had met with some new change of heart. He was not over-squeamish as I had known him. Then I heard the baronet say: "But yet the thing is done?"
"As good as done. The Indians are to have powder and lead of us, after which they will make a sudden onslaught on the over-mountain settlements. And that fetches us to your part in it, Sir Frank; and to yours, Mr. Stair. Your troop, captain, will be the convoy for this powder; and you, Mr. Stair, are requisitioned to provide the commissary."
There was silence while a cat might wink, and then Gilbert Stair broke in upon it shrilly.
"I cannot, Captain Stuart; that I cannot be protested, starting from his chair. 'Twill ruin me outright. The place is stripped—your know it well, Sir Francis—stripped bare and clean by these thieving rebel militiamen; bare as the back of your hand, I tell you!"
But the captain put him down in brief.
"Enough, Mr. Stair; we'll not constrain you against your will. But 'tis hinted at headquarters that you are but a fair weather royalist at best—nay, that for some years back you have been as rebel as the rest in this nesting-place of traitors. As a friend—mind you, as a friend—I would advise you to find the wherewithal to carry out my lord's commands. Do you take me, Mr. Stair?"
The grizzled old man fell back in his chair, nodding his "yes" dumbly like a marionette when the string has been jerked a thought too violently, and his weasel face was moist and clammy. I know not what double-think he would have been at before, but it was surely something with the promise of a rope at the publishing of it.
So he and his factor fell to ciphering on a bit of paper, reckoning ways and means, as I took it, while Falconnet was asking for more particular orders.
"You'll have them from headquarters direct," said Stuart. "Oconostota will furnish cartridges, a Cherokee escort, and guides. The rendezvous will be here—mine, I tell you. His title was changed on a tree with his damned rebel father!"
A laugh uproarious from the three soldiers greeted his patulant outburst; at which the baronet enlightened the others.
"As you know, Captain John, Appley Hundred once belonged to the rebel Roger Ireton, and Mr. Stair here holds but a confiscator's title. 'Tis likely the son heard of the war and thought he stood some chance to come into his own again."
"Oh, age; sure enough," quoth the elder officer, tilting his bottle afresh. And then: "Of course he promptly 'listed with the rebels when he came? Trust Roger Ireton's son for that."
The baronet waggled his head assentingly to this; then clinched the lie in words.
"Of course; we have his commission. He is on DeKalb's staff, detached for special duty."
"A spy!" roared the jester. "And yet you haven't hanged him?"
Sir Francis shrugged like any Frenchman. "All in good time, my dear Captain. There were reasons why I did not care to knot the rope myself. Besides, we had a little disagreement years ago across the water; 'twas about a woman—oh, she was no mistress of his, I do assure you—'tis to quench my jester's laugh incredulous. He was taken upon me for satisfaction in this old quarrel, and I gave it him, thinking he'd hang the casier for a little blooding first."
Here the factor-lawyer cut in anxiously. "But you will hang him, Sir Francis? You've promised that, you know."
"I did not hate my enemy the more because he turned a shoulder to this little bloodhound and quite ignored the interruption."
"So you fought it out one morning in Mr. Stair's wood-field, and he had what he came for. Not to give him a chance to escape, we brought him here, and as soon as he is fit to ride I'll send him to the colonel. Tartleton will give him a short shaft, I promise you, and then—'tis to the promise of Appley Hundred—'then your title will be well quelled, Mr. Stair."
And this the weather-beaten captain roared again and smote the table till the bottles reeled.
"I say, Sir Frank, that's good—damned good! So you have him cuffed here in his own house, stuffing him like a penned capon before you writing his neck. Ah! ha! ha! 'Tis to be hoped you have his legs well tied. If he be any son of my old mad-bull Roger Ireton, you'll hardly hang him

peacefully like a trussed fowl before the fire."
The baronet smiled and said: "I'll be your warrant for his safety. We've had him well guarded from the first, and tonight he is behind a barred door with Mr. Stair's overseer standing sentry before it. But as for that, he's barely out of bed from my pin-prick."
Having thus disposed of me, they let me be and came to the graver business of the moment, with a toast to lay the dust before it. It was Falconnet who gave the toast.
"Here's to our bully redskins and their king—how do you call him, Captain Stuart? Ocon—Ocon—"
"Oconostota is the Cheleakee of it, though on the border they know him better as 'Red Head.' Fill us gentlemen, fill up; 'tis a dry business, this. Allow me, Mr. Stair; and you, Mr.—ah—Pengarden. This same old heathen is the king's friend now, but gentlemen all, I do assure you the very devil himself in a copper-colored skin. 'Twas he who ambushed us in '60, and but for Attukullakulla—"
"Oh, Lord!" groaned Falconnet. "I say, captain, drown the names in the wine and we'll drink them so. 'Tis by far the easiest way to swallow them."
By this, the grizzled captain's mention of the old Fort Loudon massacre, I knew him for that same John Stuart of the Highlanders who, with Captain Damare, had stoutly defended the frontier fort against the savages twenty years before; knew him and wondered I had not sooner placed him. When I was but a boy, as I could well remember, he had been king's man to the Cherokee; a sort of go-between in times of peace, and in the border was a man the Indians feared. But now, having grown to learn, he was a man for us to fear.
"Tis carried through at last," he went on, when the toast was drunk. And then he stopped and held up a warning finger. "This business will not brook unfriendly ears. Are we safe to talk it here, Mr. Stair?"
It was Falconnet who answered. "Safe as the clock. You passed my sentry in the road?"
"Yes."
"Here's the padlock of a chain that reaches round the house. Let's have your news, captain."
"As I was saying, the Indians are at one with us. 'Twas all fair sailing in the council at Echota; the Cheleakee being to a man fierce enough to dig the heels of the rebels under the feet of our own troops; temper with my Lord Charles. He says we have more friends than enemies in the border settlements, and these our redskins will tomahawk them all alike."
"I made a mental note of this and wondered if my Lord Cornwallis had met with some new change of heart. He was not over-squeamish as I had known him. Then I heard the baronet say: "But yet the thing is done?"
"As good as done. The Indians are to have powder and lead of us, after which they will make a sudden onslaught on the over-mountain settlements. And that fetches us to your part in it, Sir Frank; and to yours, Mr. Stair. Your troop, captain, will be the convoy for this powder; and you, Mr. Stair, are requisitioned to provide the commissary."
There was silence while a cat might wink, and then Gilbert Stair broke in upon it shrilly.
"I cannot, Captain Stuart; that I cannot be protested, starting from his chair. 'Twill ruin me outright. The place is stripped—your know it well, Sir Francis—stripped bare and clean by these thieving rebel militiamen; bare as the back of your hand, I tell you!"
But the captain put him down in brief.
"Enough, Mr. Stair; we'll not constrain you against your will. But 'tis hinted at headquarters that you are but a fair weather royalist at best—nay, that for some years back you have been as rebel as the rest in this nesting-place of traitors. As a friend—mind you, as a friend—I would advise you to find the wherewithal to carry out my lord's commands. Do you take me, Mr. Stair?"
The grizzled old man fell back in his chair, nodding his "yes" dumbly like a marionette when the string has been jerked a thought too violently, and his weasel face was moist and clammy. I know not what double-think he would have been at before, but it was surely something with the promise of a rope at the publishing of it.
So he and his factor fell to ciphering on a bit of paper, reckoning ways and means, as I took it, while Falconnet was asking for more particular orders.
"You'll have them from headquarters direct," said Stuart. "Oconostota will furnish cartridges, a Cherokee escort, and guides. The rendezvous will be here—mine, I tell you. His title was changed on a tree with his damned rebel father!"
A laugh uproarious from the three soldiers greeted his patulant outburst; at which the baronet enlightened the others.
"As you know, Captain John, Appley Hundred once belonged to the rebel Roger Ireton, and Mr. Stair here holds but a confiscator's title. 'Tis likely the son heard of the war and thought he stood some chance to come into his own again."
"Oh, age; sure enough," quoth the elder officer, tilting his bottle afresh. And then: "Of course he promptly 'listed with the rebels when he came? Trust Roger Ireton's son for that."
The baronet waggled his head assentingly to this; then clinched the lie in words.
"Of course; we have his commission. He is on DeKalb's staff, detached for special duty."
"A spy!" roared the jester. "And yet you haven't hanged him?"
Sir Francis shrugged like any French