THE SATURDAY MORNING COURIER



CHAPTER X.

Henry Bruce walked rapidly away in mellow light of the moon. By the de of a leprous sycamore he paused to light a cigar. In the quick, upspringing light of the match he beheld a man seat-ed upon the doorstone of Murray's store and dejectedly smoking. The soft moon and dejectedly smoking. The soft moon rays beat gently down upon the dejected figure, idealising his attitude. The man was armed, and his revolvers glanced in the moonlight. A large, rawboned horse stood gauntly outlined in the shadow. Bruce recognized Buck Jerrold and the erratic Buckshot.

"A fine night for a ride," he said, puffing his cigar. Mr. Jerrold raised his head gloomily.

Mr. Jerrold raised his head gloomily. "Well enough for them es cares to ride," he assented, "but I ain't in no humor fer thet sort of amusement." "Tastes differ," replied Bruce pleas-antly noting the other's manner and shrewdly divining its cause. "Now, I should like nothing better-myself." "Why don't ye start in then?" returned Mr. Jerrold. "I'm sure thar's prairie enough before ye to make it an object." "Bimply because I have no horse," Bruce rejoined. "I came over from the ranch with the rest of my party in a car-riage."

"Well, of thet's all thet stands in yer way," replied the accommodating Mr. Jerrold, taking his pipe from his lips. "thar's Buckshot. Barrin a disposition to rare and 'buck' now and then, as ye've seen, he's a peart hoss enough and is at reservice. For myself, I've got enough think about without ridin into the

He took a 6-shooter from his belt and sparded it absently, cocking and un-ocking the weapon with the finger and humb of his brawny right hand. The licking of the lock sounded ominously

in the still night. Bruce looked curiously at the man be-fore availing himself of his offer. He med to have something upon his mind. wever, he untethered Buckshot, and

However, he untothered Buckshot, and hanging the long rists from the saddle-bow sprang into the saddle. He rode at a swinging gallop through the main street of the little frontier town, the hoofs of his horse echoing ondly on the level road. In a few mo-ments he had left the settlement behind tim and was alone upon the vast, illim-table plain.

The grateful transition from the fever-

Brnce, at once noting the condition of Bruce, at once noting the condition of the redoubtable captain, turned his horse aside and endeavored to pass him without replying, but Foraker, perceiv-ing his intent, put spurs to his gray and cannoned into him with a force that compelled him to halt. "What do you mean by that?" de-manded Bruce, with difficulty reining in the prancing Buckshot after the collision. "Twa got anthin to way to you work the flask and drank a swallow of its con-tents. It braced his nerves. In a few words he recounted what had happened. "Ye don't say!" remarked Mosely when he had finished. "So ye called Foraker in, eh-jest natch'ally dropped him right in his tracks when he had a bead on you "bat? Well, now, pardner, I congratulate

"I've got suthin to say to you, young feller," said the captain thickly, rising reiler," said the captain thickly, rising in his stirrups and leaning forward over the neck of his horse in an aggressive way. He emphasized his remarks with his heavy riding whip. "You insulted me tonight. I want you to und'shtan I'm a West Poin'r and a damned sight too good company for any girl you or any other tenderfoot eshcorts to a ball. You hear me?" he demanded with drunken directness, raising his voice. "Wass more, she ain't much on looks anyway, more, she ain't much on looks anyway, nor style either, and there wasn't any occasion for you to be so damned e'sclu-sive." Then, leaning over his saddle with an insulting air of giving very im-portant advice, "You want to be dev'lish careful, young feller, or yo'll get your-self into trouble—mind that." "Stand aside!" Bruce broke in sternly.

reigning back his horse as if about to ride

"Tryin to get away!" said the captain with a sneer, attempting to intercept him by keeping his gray in front of him with whip and spur-"tryin to get away. are ye? I want you to und'ahtan, young feller, you can't do that until I'm done with you. I want you to und'ahtan'

But here Bruce struck Buckshot sharply and attempted to dash by him.

The captain saw his intent, and striking his spurs into his horse made an effort to stop him a second time by run-ning into him. The effort proved futile. Buckshot had already got under way. Enraged at his want of success Foraker Enraged at his want of success Forager rose in his stirrups and as Bruce passed him struck him over the head with his heavy riding whip, summoning to the ef-fort all the strength he could muster. The blow made Bruce reel in his sad-

dle. For a moment he feared he should be unscated. The next, wheeling his horse about, he dashed against Foraker, closing with him in a mounted struggle for the whip.

As the horses came together Bruce saw the captain shift his whip to his left hand suddenly and caught the ominous glitter of a revolver in the light of the moon. He had barely time to crouch in the saddle when the weapon was fired, the bullet whistling close above his head. Clearly the time for temporizing had passed. Forbearance was now sui-cidal. In an instant Bruce had drawn his own pistol, and as the captain raised his arm a second time he leveled it upon

The grateful transition from the fever-th scene he had recently quitted to the perfect freedom of boundless space trought to his spirit a sense of rest and most. The night was so arcene, so calm, to passionless. Everywhere the dominant mean silvered the landscape with the listinctness of day. After a long, exhilarating canter, he hashed his panting horse and rode back rous his tracks. The stimultas of physical merciae had quite dispalled the feeling of pritation which had driven him out of reven at this massimily, hour upon horse-back. Ands from his secoupter in the heriff's behalf, which had naturally re-The gray tristed of a few paces and then stopped quietly to grass. Brace threw himself from his horse and hent over the prostrate man. The captain was lying upon his face, his hand still grasping the revolver. A alight smoke issued from the damp bar-rel. As he t wined the body over, some-thing warm & il upon his hand, causing him an indescribable thrill. It was blood-from a wound in the breast! The red drops were trickling fast over the red drops were trickling fast over the front of his uniform. Foraker was dead. Notwithstanding the justice of his ac-tion, Bruce rose to his feet with an overmastering feeling of awe. As he stood gazing down at the dead man, and the eyes so lately opened upon him in hate stared blankly up into his, he tottered and felt faint. White as was the face of the dead, his own was yet whiter and took on a ghastly expression in the cold, gray light that seemed suddenly to pos-sess carth and sky. Bruce gazed vacant-ly about him and realized that it was morning. A faint flush was visible in the east It was no sense of guilt, but the sickening realization of having sent a human being to his long account, that made his beart heavy as he mounted again and rode slowly back along the level road. It was the horror of the thing. So far as the act itself was concerned it was clearly justifiable. It had been done in self defense.

ward mm.

Bruce could hardly force a smile at the

fust? Well, now, pardner, I congratulate you. Ef you'd like a recommend to jine 'the Rangers' any time you're up our way, I reckon Ike Mosely will be on hand with the necessary papers. I tell you what, boys," he said, turning round in the saddle suddenly and addressing the two deputies, "thet's rather sarcastic on a West Pointer, rakin a soger out of his boots when he was fust with his weapon!"

Jake Sharp and Humly Jim, seeing that the great man was disposed to be jovial, received the reflection with ghastly merriment.



Foraker was dead.

"How's thet?" ejaculated Mosely, turning again to Bruce as the latter repeated his intention of giving himself up. "You're thinkin of coming along with "You're thinkin of coming along with ns? I reckon we've got about all we kin take care of today," winking craftily at the deputies. "Lem, here's a big con-tract to handle, and it's pretty good and free country all around about here. My eyes sorter failin me after last night's business and my hearin bein onsartin, I don't know es I hev any knowledge of this conversed meetin onthe there on the this onexpected meetin out here on the road. I reckon, ef I should ever get to hear of any sech encounter, it might be necessary fur me to take some action, but ez the case stands jest now, ye see, I'm not aware thet anything out of the or'nary hes occurred.

In spite of the sheriff's humorous reception of the event of the early morning, Bruce still persisted in his plan of giving himself up, urging that this was the best and most honorable way of clearing himself from the imputation of foul play. To this the genial lke cheer-fully opposed the folly of any one's put-ting himself in the clutches of the law for killing his adversary in a fair fight, and the risk of exposing himself to the infuriated soldiery at the post, who would naturally feel a partian resent-ment at the death of their chief.

Finding at length that Bruce was de-termined, Mosely reluctantly acquiesced, but insisted that he should accompany but insisted that he should accompany them as if merely a traveling companion and not under arrest. Bruce was about to reply, when it suddenly dawned upon him that he was riding Buckshot, and that he might be suspected of having stolen the home—an act generally re-garded by Lone Star tribunals to be less institute the suspected by many stolen the boxe.

will readily appreciate - matters be-tween herself and Miss Berths, wherein the rival charms of the young ladies had come in collision, resulting in consequent jealousy and woe.

The sgony of mind induced by such a succession of causes is readily apparent, so that later, when Mr. Buck Jorrold rode up to the ranch gate and threw himself from the saddle, he was welcomed with a cordiality that might have been misleading.

"What hoss ye got thar, Buck?" inquired Alcides suspiciously, noting the enthusiasm of his daughter's manner "Ain't thet Foraker's gray?"

"I reckon so," Mr. Jerrold returned, with a gravity of manner that impressed both Alcides and Cynthia. "I reckon so, Al, and I don't wonder ye ask me. The fact is, so much hez taken place sence last night thet I kin hardly git it straight myself or git started to tell it. I'm ridin thet hoss because I've got per-mission from Jedge Pemberton to do so, and because Ike Mosely hez seized Buckshot to transport a prisoner to the jail

at Bradford post." He glanced quickly at Cynthia. "To cut a long story short," he con-tinued, averting his eyes from the girl's face, "Jack Foraker was found lyin dead on the prairie this mornin with a bullet wound in his left breast. His hoss was grazing quietly in the neigh-borhood. There wasn't any explana-tion of the shootin, and all sorts of theo-ries were flyin about at San Marcus, when a couple of fellers rode into town

and allowed thet they met like Mosely and his deputies half way to The Post, and thet they hed the man who done it." "And who was it?" asked Alcides breathlessly.

Buck Jerrold glanced again at Cynthia. She was seated on the doorstone of the ranch with clasped hands and startled eyes, noting every detail of the intelligence.

"I don't know nothin about the matter myself one way or t'other," responded Buck, turning his eyes inward as if to escape the imputation of being responsible for what he was about to communicate, "but Ridge Bartram said thet the man they hed was ridin Buckshot, and thet he had confessed to hevin shot Foraker in a hand to hand fight on hossback early this mornin."

"But who was it?" Cynthia broke in

impatiently. "Henry Bruce," said Jerrold quietly. There was a dead silence. Dallas and Jerrold exchanged glances. A moment later Cynthia rose to her feet, white as the neighboring wall, and ran quickly into the house. In the hush that followed her departure the two men grew restless.

The old man was the first to speak, and when he did so it was in tones of exnitation.

"Waal, dern my skin, ef thet young feller don't deserve the thanks of the en-tire county!" he exclaimed, slapping his leg in self congratulation over Foraker's leg in self congratulation over Forsker's untimely decease. "I allers did take consider'ble stock in Henry Bruce, and now I'm a tenderfoot of he sin't ris in my estimation a clean hundred per cent." Buck Jerrold assented with less em-phasis. He was pondering the absence of Carthia

of Cynthia. [TO BE CONTINUED.]



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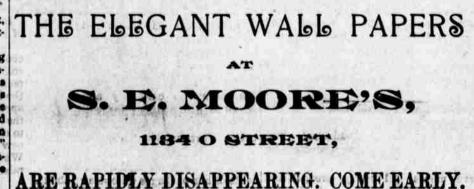
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k. Aside from his successfur in the riff's penalf, which had naturally re-ed sumswhat upon his nerves, there nother things which had tended to have the equanimity of his temper. Is he rode on in the stillness, un-has neve by the ponoteness theshill his heres, his thoughts constantly re-ted to Cynthis and her behavior with coptain. It had annoyed him un-niably, without his knowing why. Irnee did not believe himself to be in-orted in Miss Dalles. Having little that vanity which characterizes most m, is had probably never occurred to a that much of Cynthis's apparent in-ust in Foraker was prompted by pique his own refusal to not as her escort. was aware that the quaint, breezy lit-maiden, who had rescued him so solving from his predicament in the horado some months pafore, interested from his predicament i t in the prade some month: cafore, interested a greatly; that he felt strangely drawn ward her whenever he found himself her society, and that, being impelled a thoroughly masculine impulse to or her with sound advice and bene-

avor her with sound advice and bene-icial counsel, he was annoyed to find that she ignored it. An incident of the early evening had not tended to increase the screnity of his temper. It was when upon first rec-againing Cynthis at the ball in company with Foraker he had so far forgotten himself in his suspicion of the man as to increase.

"Who is that fellow, Cynthia?" "A gentleman," Miss Dallas replied ovokingly. The rebuke was crushing. a writhed ander it now at the recol-

on. second in hoof bests of a horse caused to look up. So absorbed had he been a redections that he had taken no of his extremalings. He found self on the fear Marcus highway at a distance from the town. A horse-was coming toward him mounted a powerful gray. The mounlight ced upon the openiets and other dec-lone of the rider. The cause of his ings - annoyance stood before his For

Forebar was evid for his evening's servery the hater parties of the in-the magnituding entropy metric participation of the server participation of the server has being the being models all for roll call at the garrison, usied to the stable, bloked the stiller into conscionsness and roll-sentimetriated person into the artist out of town an hour before

high order to be a set of the second second

ustifiable than actual homicide. He ex-

plained his position to the sheriff. / "Don't let thet worry you," replied that worthy, quickly cutting the Gor-dian knot of the difficulty with official promptitude. "Ef you're bound to make me arrest ye, thet matter's easily settled. Freese to the critter, pardner, for the rest of this trip. The state al-lows me to provide the means of bringin in my prisoners, understand? It won't bother Jerrold much. I reckon I'll attach the animal fur your partickler benefit.'

CHAPTER XI.

The event of the San Marcus ball had not proved entirely satisfactory to Cyn-thia, nor her stay with Miss Bertha Mav-erick an unalloyed delight. She returned to the Dallas ranch with a very decided feeling of disappointment. Per-haps the behavior of Alcides on the evening in question sensibly aggravated this tate of mind.

The door had hardly closed on the departing Foraker when the old man presented himself, gun in hand, before the astonished Maverick household and excitedly announced his intention of taking his daughter home with him that very night. In vain Cynthia pleaded fatigue, and Miss Bertha declared that the festiv-ities of the week were not ended. In clearly justifiable. It had been done in self defense. His mind was made up as to what he should do. He would ride back to San Marcus, seek out Sheriff Mosely. at in

s will be understood by my feminine ders that the young lady did this th very ill grace, and that she rose her inte upon the following day a lit-fretful and cross in consequence. 'I suppose them carrings didn't fetch at Foraker to the extent she expected," mmented Alcides, who was making sparstions to ride into town for some

mmented Alcides, who was making sparations to ride into town for some mily stores he had forgotten. The ther Dallas referred to some jeweiry of glaring pattern he had recently pur-chased for Cynthia. He was not alto gether confident of the purity or appro-priateness of his own tasts. He contin-ued his preparations for departure, but was quietly observant and critical. Miss Dallas took no notice of the so-licitude of her size. She was annoyed and displeased for many reasons; at her father, for his abrupt termination of her visit; at Henry Bruce, for not proffering the attention she had determined before-ind to thwart; at the captain, for his negatibility to the attractions of other lies and his disposition to be convivial is in her company. Cynthia was too pristenced in the society of the frontier we either puritanical or profish in the ter of beverages, but she resented the tain's indulgance under the circum-mes with the sincerity it deserved. Her there were other masters of sto-uide-not so apparent to the master-mind, but which a sympathetic say

Two little sand beaps or the ena As much alike as pea and pes.

Beside one heap a little ind With serions eyes, and all intent Open his work, with patience had Molded a mound, and as I went Past him I wondered what is meant "A piet" I asked, "A fort," said ha.

Beside the other pile of sand There sat a tiny, gold haired maid. She patted with her baby hand "I' e warm, white hillock, and I said, " hat is a noble fort you've made." "No, 'tis a pie," she answered me.

We grown folks hardly understand The happy fancies children have, Busy amid the scabeach sand That is washed white by many a wave The boy would be a patriot brave; A housewife would his sister be.

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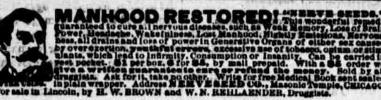
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