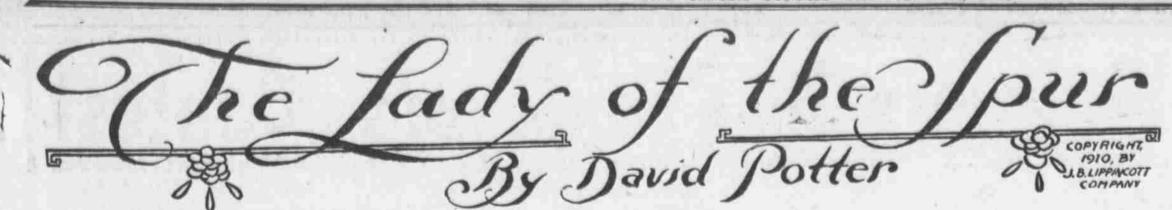
THE OMAHA SUNDAY BEE: MAY 14, 1911.

Flower of the Pines-the Wildflower of the speak,' he said coolly. 'I reckon you know good for a piner's."



## CHAPTER IV-Continued.

E

"May be you have my dear." "Yes, I have. And what do you think? -today Mr. Arnold asked me to marry Had it not been for the girl sleeping in Swamp, by gad! Mary Pedersen of Lost what you're about. Well, I'm ready for "Yes, or for me, for that matter. Well, I

all this?" "You don't may! What did you tell him?"

"I told him 'no,' of course." "Yes, yes-to be sure, you did."

over it.

who he is-ch?"

told you a dozen timeman I'd never marry ing, stealing cautiously through the woods, with spirit. She snatched the cup and ter. him A strange fancy for late riding!

"Oh, we'll see. It's natural for a young siri to be a little shy at first. We'll see, this lonely cabin. Now the 'night was daughter, when the other's just waitin' matters stand now. My cousin-" cold, and the trees whispered mournfully for you?" my dear."

the woman's "my dear!" There was a sounded its weird note. touch of sycophancy about it that I did I reflected that this part of the country "There you go!

versation to cling to. I remembered the to stumble upon me lurking here, I was I'm beginning to think that's only another behind me as I landed on the pine needles. Mr. Lawrence Arnold who had been in at- likely to be bludgeoned out of hand-per- one of our dreams."

possession of the estate. He had stood beside Bram Morvan when safer place for me-but the girl! the latter had welcomed me, heartily As I stood debating, a sharp whistle

Arnold was much the same sort as Bram- cabin. a country gentleman, although neither so The Swede started up, heedless of her

riotous nor so frank in manner as my pet's head, which slipped smartly to the "cousin." I had guessed they were Damon floor. The snake hissed angrily. and Pythias to each other.

My act of usurpation had been made woman. "It's the handsome gentleman. absurdly easy. It had occurred to no one don't you hear? Yes, yes, it's my hand- wanted to talk over things with her. I that I was other than I seemed-Harry some young man." She hobbled eagerly told her not to come till late-I'd be away Morvan returned to his ancestral home for to the outer door. "He'll find something with a sick woman. Yes, yes, nursin' a the first time since his carllest boyhood, here for him-something soft and dainty, sick woman in the swamp."

I had hardly played a part-I had had only ch?" to accept one-to fall into the duties that There was a sharp knocking, and the were awaiting me. My twenty years' ab- whistle was impatiently repeated.

and they were not many. But, upon the other hand, my fear of stiff-yes, yes, her bones are old and stiff." there so sweet." making a fatal misstep had kept me from She unlocked the door with trembling fin- His eyes sought the inner room. In half parted.

learning many things during my two days gers. "Come in! Come in, sir! Ab, there there?" darkness outside the cabin window. I won't look fine when you're equire of white hair beautiful in the firelight. yet for a full second I gazed at her. Then stump, but I consoled myself with the the way, Bram-who is the Lady of the at home-things that now, lurking in the you are-handsomer than ever. Maybe you longed very heartily to know. Exasperated at my isnorance, I ground sup for your old nurse, then, won't you?" -I made the tea. Yes, yes, I made the was extinguished. my heel into the earth. I was soil cov ered with pine medles and fallen boughs- and stamped into the room. I was hardly Bram's face turned a shade redder than a twig cracked under my boot.

The Lady of the Spur was instantly upon Bram Morvan! her feet, her eyes luminous beneath her dark brows.

"What was that?"

not reflect the light.

"That snappin' sound?" asked the old woman

"Yes. There's somebody there!" trees crack. It's all the time doin' it, cold light ride I had proposed, and had even this on my soul You're nervous, my dear."

with a feeling of disgust. One is not used He hesitated a moment, then lifted his riding gloves lay half hidden by the tea- "By gad, boys," declared Bram. "I was to associating white hair with ribald songs, sup with jovial sentimentality. "I meant pot. He grinned at Bram nor kind-faced old women with treacherous the Flower of Morvan township-the "Side issue of your own. Squire, so to saw the scoundrel's boots-they looked too servents.

him? Do you wonder I'm rather eick of the next room. I would have left the cabin. Hollow, and 'Wrigsles' of-of the devil, I business.' with its peculiar occupants, to the dark- sive you a toast. Here's to the brownest The two other men leaned their weapons he heard." "Squire Arnold!" cried the old woman. ness and the pines. I had learned nothing, beauty that ever showed a neat bare ankle! in a corner, then, paying no heed to the

yet there must be something to learn. Two -here's to pretty Suc Bucksloo!" "Sue Buckaloo!" cried the Swede. "Are placed themseives before the fire in an nothin' hours or so before, driven to distraction by Bramfield Morvan's company, I had gone you after her, Squire?"

"Yes. But he was quite-quite bullying for a ride, only to have my horse bolt and "After her-that's the very word," re- seat upon the chimney bench, my redoubtbrush me off against a drooping bough, sponded the careless fellow. "I'm after able "cousin" beside her, "He'd better leave you be" said the other Thin, by sheer good luck, I had obtained her so hard that I've already had a good lolled carelessly against the table, his back you came in. menacingly. "More than one of the boys the thing which insecure in my new post- slap or two from Sue. Her blackfaced old toward the window where I was listening in the swamp would see Squire Arnold had tion, I had not yet dared to seek-another father has threatened to blow my head off and looking with all my soul. an accident, if I say the word. Only one glimpse of the Lady of the Spur who had with his shotgun, too. I'm after her, but I "Go ahead. Squire," said "Brownle."

man's goin' to marry you, and we know warned me from Morvan: Trudging home- don't mind telling you. Mary, that I In my caserness to miss nothing, I forward on foot after my fall, I had caught doubt if I'll ever get her." got that I stod on an ascending slope, and "Pahaw, Mary! you talk nonvense. I've sight of a girl, mounted on a grey geld- "I'm glad of it," retorted the old woman that I leaned against a half ruined shut-

bottle from his hands. "Why, Squire! "Boys," began Bram, raising his hand Well, I guess that ain't agoin' to hang no-Myself unseen, I had followed her to would you chase after a charcoal burner's to emphasize his words, "here's the way body-not even you. Ha, ha! What's a

> 1 fell headlong into the room! There was a hubbub of startled cries and

I was rather sinkened by the frequency overhead. Deep in the forest a screech owl Bram's eyes followed the liquor longingly. He broke into a rueful laugh. You always spoil my furious hissing of the great snake, I pretty awkward for me." Bram's tone net fancy. However, her face and laugh was none too safe, and I had not thought best dreams. Mary. I wasn't talking about scrambled to my feet and hurled myself sounded decidedly sheepish. were genuine-in spite of her ugly pet. to bring my pistols. If any of the char- marrying Sue, was I? Besides, the other out of the window as abruptly as I had I had at last found one point in the con- coal burners I had heard mentioned were girl isn't waiting for me. By gad! no. come.

tendance at Morvan, the day I had taken haps deserved to be for spying in such 'The Swede knelt beside him and placed to crawl along close to the wall of the hollow into the cabin. It'd be easy to cabin. I must reach the path by which I fashion. Yes, the library at Morvan was a her hand affectionately on his knee. "Oh, yes, my dear," she said softly, had come or I was lost. "She's waitin' for you. To be sure, she I could hear the men within rushing

enough, at the door of the manor house, sounded from the opposite side of the don't know she is; but she's waitin' for madly to the door. It was locked, and de- begun shootin' at him. I never did see you-here-now." layed them a precious half minute, anybody move so quick in my life." Bram's voice rang out furiously. "Here? What do you mean?" "Why-what I say, my dear, to be sure."

> He stared down at her. "She's here?- could it have been!" "Never mind, 'Wriggles,'" said the old in this shanty?-at this time of night?" "Yes, yes. I sent her a letter. I said I sprang into the open.

"Well! you are a-" "She came, but she wouldn't touch food lay. I leaped to my feet-and recoiled. nor drink. But, by and by, little 'Wrigsence from West Jersey-as was believed "I'm comin'," called the woman. "I'm' gles' scared her, so she took some tea for Lady of the Spur, a flickering candle in long time I did not care to stir. Not three by all-excused me for what slips I made, comin', Squire! Who'd let you in, if it her nerves. After that she went to sleep, her hand, was staring out. Our faces were yards from my ear, a screech owl bgan to anything."

wasnt your old Mary? But her bones are and very pretty she must look, sleepin' not a yard apart. Her eyes were luminous hoot most lamentably. The weird cry made

"Yes.' She was looking up at him, her second, and ten yards might mean life, still ached from their collision with the

to "Brownie" Davis' commands, they were He sat down heavily. "Sue Buckaloo's pushing straight through briar and underhave overtaken me almost at once.

night like this-it's gettin' on to winter. flung a half drunken jeer at me as I left She regarded him with that placid gaze As it was, in three minutes I was half him. Yet here he was, plainly quite at that I now understood served to mask a way across the "neck." I was beginning

resembled each other, but I flatterd myself nursin' you, if I'd known how obstinate struck from ambush.

Bram's florid features were as different have let myself get so fond of you. Don't the first giddiness passed off. Then only for your own sake old Mary wants staggered and nearly fell. "Brownie's" voice rang out a few rods "Yes, I know," said Bram tolerantly, down the ridge. "Keep to the bottom, "but drop it, will you? Look here! where's Bill-he might take to the reeds!"

"Eh? Ob. I didn't sit at table long after you went the grand tour. Nobody ever you left. I finished up in my room- thought to show you the old family skeleworse luck! Joshua put me to bed, I'm ton, or, may be, everybody thought it best to keep the dusty bones locked up in the afraid.' "A bad habit," I remarked with due closet."

"But I never even knew there was a gravity. "Damnable! Dewnright damnable! I'd Ferriss Dayton."

"No. Why should you? It's been Europe reform, but what else is there for me to or the west for you, ever since you grew do in this accursed hole?" 'Come, come! I won't join you in cure- up. Gad! Hal, I envy you your roughing ing Morvan, until I know a little more it on the Missouri." about it. Besides, man, you aren't forced "It's there waiting for you," I said.

to stay here. You've income enough of He growled out an oath "Morvan for your own to do as you please." "Income to do as I please? No, not a mother until she died, and you since, have tenth of it." He broke an egg with a let me live here so long, I can't get out

vindictive gesture. "D'ye see, Hal, I can't of the way of thinking I own it." He live quiet anywhere-it isn't in ms. I'm brought himself up with a jerk, and heaved no parson-I've got to have my fling. I a great sigh that seemed to come from the can't do it in the world on my money, but toes of his boots. "By gad, Hal, mornings so mixed up with that cursed snake I only I can here, in a beggarly way. It's a God- after I've had a bottle too much, I wish forsaken spot, but after all. I'm used to it. I wasn't such a rip. Well. I'm off-a stiff He laughed ruefully. I'd never feel at home anywhere else. No, ride will take this bad taste out of my

no! Here I am, and here I'll stay-I mean, mouth. He stamped from the room. Long after until you evict me." "Oh, only at your leisure," I said with the coffee had grown cold, I sat pendering what he had said.

secret relish. hissing protests of the great pine anake, thing. Nothin' had been said, I reckon-"Well, well, Bat Merry will take me in Perhaps no man, even in a plain way of to hurt. Don't you remember. when the time comes. But this neighbor- life, may clearly set down all that he hood isn't the place for a quiet life, d'ye thinks or the reasons that lead him to ac-"That's all right for you boys," reunderstand? To tell the truth, Hal, you tion. And my way was by no means plain. "Brownie" turned Bram. "But I'd been talking before aren't the sort of man I guessed you'd be. This thing I resolved upon at last-to The way you've been knocking about all hold myself only as a Morvan-to do what your life-things we heard now and then Henry Morvan might do were he present "Yes-no-o, not exactly. It was-hum-m even down in this neck of the woods-well, in the flesh. Yet every moment I so bore hang it! I thought you'd have more dash myself. I was keeping a lovely girl from His follower broke into a knowing laugh. about you-more spice and go, d'ye see? her heritage. So be it! Judging from what 'Ha, ha! Squire! You'd been talkin' about I was counting on your hunting the layern I had seen the night before at the cabin in your side issue, I reckon. Wasn't that it? fox along with the best of us. Lost Hollow, Ferriss Dayton deserved Bide issue and side saddle, so to speak. "But you say you want to be quiet here small consideration.

-you've sown your wild oats, and want to settle down. All proper enough, of course, little love makin'! I reckon you can trust but, as I was telling you the other day there have been a good many threats

give it up. I'm only wendering how much

"How much?" repeated Davis. "Not a

"About this business, Squire?"

the side saddle, ch?"

He paused in embarrassment.

"Like as not. Souire. Anyway, he's clear

Her eyes seemed to shine luminously upon

it fear, or weariness, or only the candle-

me-her mouth dropped pitifully.

lifted arm.

from himself.

her name.

attitude of attention. The crone took her Squire, you was just goin' to begin "'

"Oh, of course. But I'd like to know oaths. In the midst of which, and the what he heard. He might make things against us gentlemen lately-it's a wild don't like the look of things-there's a ruck of rascals from the three states in "Mebbe he didn't hear nothin', Squire,"

the Barrens. Footpads have been pretty "Brownie's" pistol cracked futilely suggested Lens. "More'n likely he's some lively the last few months, too, and you oysterman who lost his way, and first know Tom Bell robbed Mr. Hancock over I gained my hands and knees, and began thing he knew, he rolled slap down the toward Clayville only the night before you came. These piners and runaways-I come plumb through the window that way, shouldn't wonder but what they raided once he got started. O' course, he'd light some of our houses any night-this house out, hotfoot, when a room full o' people may be. Lawrence Arnold thinks the same

thing." "Pshaw, man!" I returned. "You talk as "By gad, man! I believe you're right," if we were in the midst of the brigands Who declared Bram. "It certainly sounds reaof Sardinia. If we live until we're atsonable enough. What d'ye think about it, tacked by the yokels from the woods, we'll

reach a green old age." "At any rate, I've warned you."

"Push straight for the 'neck,' " roared off, and he didn't hear nothin' to hurt-I 'So you have. But if you think there's No better explanation offered, so after

It was priceless information for me. I some little grumbling and swearing, they self? Wouldn't a tar-and-feather coat be- air. "Charcoal burners." I reflected. come you as well as me?" The sound of their voices and footsteps

longer-none of them is likely to envy me

think I'll chance it." He glanced at me rather sourly. "Stay, I waited a full twenty minutes, then

if you must then." Though a man may run ten yards in a lowered myself to the ground. My ribs "I intend to," I responded easily. \*\*By

> Spur?" along the sandy path. The ridge shortly saucer leaped on the table. fell away to the slough bordered bottom

"What's that! What did you say! land. I was doubtless out of all danger. but I traversed this, too, with silent speed. "What's the matter?" I rejoined.

"Nothing. My confounded nerves-after Mechanically I avoided the pools in my path, but my thoughts were busied with that third bottle last night. Who was that proach. While I sat my horse rather at a

the girl I had seen by the candle's gleam. you asked about?" "The Lady of the Spur.' I called her. I mean a tall, graceful girl, with straight around the corner.

Her face had shown golden pale. Was eyebrows, and a short upper lip." "Where did you see her?" His anxiety was painful.

light that had wrought her pallor? The I put my fancy briskly to work. "On curves of her bosom and throat lingered the post road, three or four miles above the in my memory-and the roundness of her village-the day I came. Her horse had Had she recognized me? If so, what wild gone lame, and she was leading him. I

conjecture she must have of my presence! dismounted and took the stone out of his I was deep in the forest when at last I hoof." "Oh, I know now." His heavy neck recame to a halt, and stood listening. The

barked in the distance. The pines sighed cheks. "It must have been Ferriss Day- hand. on every hand. Nothing else stirred. ton.' Very good. But who **Ferriss** Dayton? Although I had left the Lady of the Spur in what was veritably a den of thieves, is she? Ought I to know the name?" yet I had small fear for her safety. In "You certainly ought-the Dayton part, dad out to starve, like you did Letty some way that I did not understand it was at any rate." "I've been from home so long-I hardly to Bram's interest to protect her-even remember my own name.'

It was a charming day in the early fall, and I felt a pleasant, but, under the circumstances, a deluding sense of power, to see the estate, stretching a good two miles in every direction from the house-crowned hill. To the eyes of one of Henry Morvan's English friends the property might have looked wild enough, for full half of it was clothed in shaggy forests, and about the rest well kept roads and trim lawns were none too plentiful. But the Bob White

time to go over "my" land.

CHAPTER VIII.

A Morning Ride.

for a horse and, following Bram's example,

went for a ride. As yet I had hardly had

When at length I roused myself, I called

me-I mean West Jersey, of course. Your

was calling in the buckwheat, and down by the lake where the uplands melted into the pines, some wild ducks were preening themselves in the sun.

At wide intervals in the great forest, danger of me about here, what about your- columns of smoke went straight up in the

Bram's toast occurred to me: "Here's "Eh! Me? Oh, these people are used to the brownest beauty that ever showed a I was in front of an open window. The died away through the pines, but for a to me. Besides, I'm not the squire any neat bare ankle-here's to Sue Buckaloo!" Impelled by a vague curiosity, I marked the location of the nearest column of "I understand," I said. "However, I smoke, and picked my way toward it through the pines. I judged that the charcoal kiln, if it were really such, was within my bounds-I might as well ride in

that direction as any other. So shortly I came upon a little cottagea home of the poorest sort, but astonish-He put down his cup so sharply that the ingly neat and well kept. There was even

a split rail fence, serving to mark off a small flower garden-a thing beyond the ordinary in a piner's homestead. No one seemed to have noticed my ap-

loss, I heard volces on the other side of the cottage. I dismounted and sauntered

A man whom I recognized as Bram's friend, Mr. Lawrence Arnold. was talking earnestly to a girl. The girl's face. eyes, and hair, were brown as a berry. A calico frock, cut rather short, disclosed a neat pair of ankles. It was Sue Buckaloo, beyond a doubt.

At the moment I appeared their conversation was brought to a peculiar close. As Arnold leaned eagerly over her, she struck owls hooted from the ridge, and a fox laxed, and the blood returned to his florid him smartly on the cheek with her open

> "There!" she cried. "Go, talk to one of your own people, who can't help herself. You ain't my landlord. You can't turn my Miller's." Arnold was by no means abashed. "Come come, girl! Know your place." he returned, rubbing his cheek angrily. "Is this the way you treat a gentleman? Your pretty face has spoiled you. Sue." "You better get out o' here before dad gets back," said the girl, frowning. "He's mighty quick with his scatter gun." "He'll repent it if he takes a high hand with me," said Arnold. "Now, Sue, be reasonable. You'd a deal better agree-" "Good morning." I interrupted, advancing. "May I venture to ask what's the matter in dispute? I hope my tenant hasn't been disrespectful to you, Mr. Arnold."

The Candle's Gleam. I had seen my "cousin" two hours before

snake isn't fit to have about a hovel like But no luck!"

me out here at this time of night! If it your fortunes, as well as my own.'

"Pleasant company, my dear? You don't old woman, haven't you got anything to ered in the path.

to admit he can talk well enough. He's 'Brownie' Davis,' she snapped, 'no, none the marsh, after all-d'ye see?"

"Yes, of course-a girl. But not every bein' careful, first, last, and all the time. like?" demanded my "cousin."

"Mine," said Bram.

horse was that I saw outside?"

"I'm willin'," said the fellow. "Close

the door, Bill. Yes, and lock it. I'm for

"I mean the horse with the side saddle."

stared deliberately about the room. I'vs

drink ?"

been everywhere, and can tell about if like of you, until you've talked things over with

then he lifted his head with an uncanny

wasn't for you, Mary, I'd he in snug quar-

"No, no, certainly not-although I'm free

talk business tonight, remember."

air of attention.

"A girl, ch?"

Yes, I'll remember.

1.0

CHAPTER V.

at Morvan, lingering over his third bottle. only a piner's daughter," he growled. "I growth, whereas, had they kept to the "Oh, no. It's only the cold makin' the He had refused to join me in the moon- may be damned already, but I won't have path up which I was running, they might

come from ?"

well over my brows that my eyes might one had already aired an opinion that we in this world. But my! my! when I was faint-for a moment I thought I had been

Presently har body relaxed. Her mouth the resemblance was one of height only. you'd be when you grew up, I wouldn't I clung, gasping, to the pine trunk until

Morvan in earnest. You'll have a bite and "She'll stay asleep for an hour yet. Squire she caught a sobbing breath-the candle thought of Bram's similar mishap. I stole. A man pushed her rather roughly aside, tea." She gave her little, slivery laugh.

able to repress an exclamation. It was ordinary, He sprang to his feet, "By God! you are a devil!" "Eh, Squire?" She scanned his glower-

ing face. "Didn't you just tell me you By hard running I reached the wooded were after Sue Buckaloo? Is this any ridge well ahead of my pursuers. Obedient different, ch?"

The girl's eyes were still luminous. She home, and well nigh as sober as myself. devilish malignity of purpose.

to laugh to myself over the piners' certain

gazed so intently that I began to fear she He was clad somewhat after my own "Well, well, my dear! Don't you ever chagrin, when, in the darkness, I ran

had indeed made out my face through the fashion, in short blue riding jacket, buff say I didn't do my best for you. You headlong agains the stump of a tree. The opening in the shutter. I pulled my hat trousers, and Wellington half-boots. Some know you're the only thing I care about shock was so severe that I turned quite

drooped, and a tired sigh escaped her. "Yes, I am nervous," she said, "and, as possible from my own brown face, and you see, it would put a stop to all her started on, but one stride proved I was Mary I feel sleepy. Perhaps it was the I was certainly five inches less about the shilly-shallyin' over marryin' you? It's too much shaken to keep up the pace. I tea. I'd feel better if I could sleep. But waist. this isn't the place for a nap." She He entered the cabin with his usual to see you a rich man before she dies."

glanced about with a barely repressed swaggering stride, and flung himself on the shudder. "Besides it's time to start home chimney bench.

-I mustn't stay any longer." "No, no, my dear." protested the Swede. make such a row. I've as good an opinion I haven't seen anything of 'em since Henry through the woods drew nearer every in-"Sleep a little-why not? Nobody's here of myself as any man, but I'm not a hero but your old Mary-she'll wake you in half to bow down to. No, by gad! not even an aren't they?" an hour. You've plenty of time. No use immaculate gentleman like my honorable

in hurryin' off. You don't suppose your cousin."

and-" hardly!" "Immaculate"" he laughed in his bols-"Suppose he should miss me some night. Mary? If he should ever find out what his terous manner. "Gad! you don't know only knows what they're up to!" daughter is doing while he sleeps-" what the word means, do you? No. no.

"Oh, yes, while he's asleep!" interrupted I'm hardly immaculate. Brrh!" he went "No need to worry about that. on. helding his hands toward the fire, slow at doin' anything, though, that's a and swung myself into its top. I sank into Come, lie down, dearie. The bed in there's "It's getting cold. Where's the apple fact." jack, Mary-" The pine snake, disturbed Three men stepped abruptly into the mighty comfortable."

The girl's head drooped in spite of her by his motion, suddenly slipped a heavy cabin-the door had been left ajar by the evident effort to keep awake. "No, no, I coll across his booted foot. "Good God! careless Bram. what's that!" mustn't." "Only 'Wriggles.' Squire.'

The older woman glanced at her sharply. "'Wriggles?" He kicked the reptile then took her by the arm. "Poor lamb! You're 'most asleep already. Come, He from him.

down a little while." She led her, drowsily The snake reared its head almost resisting, to a door at one side. "There! Bram's waist, and hissed furiously. My old Mary's bed. Go in, and rest cousin sprang to his feet. sleep in "What! By gad! I'll make short work

yourself anyway, my dear-lie down, and of you, you yellow worm. Time you were rest yourself a minute or two."

She pushed her gently into the pext dead long ago!" room, and shut the door. Then she stood He grasped the iron poker as if to make showed oddly high and pointed. The two in two!" listening a moment, nodded her head with good his threat, but the old woman inter- men who followed him were as rough look- The incident served to bring the whole fered.

satisfaction, and limped to the table. "Yes, yes," she said aloud. "Time you "There, there, squire! Don't hurt my piece.

poured the contents carefully into the fire, then. I ought to have broken his back horse pistol on his cap. "A side issue-She gave her little, tinkling laugh. "Yes, perhaps it was the tea, my dear. the pot on the table, then hobbled to a seat keep such a pet. Laurie Arnold was say. Bram with some heat. "Your side issues leggin' it there now, we're beat." on the bench.

began to sing in a low tone. It was a Ha, hal on mine ,too, by gad! Where's the Garrison-Lenz-d'ye hear?" pretty scene enough-the old woman, her brandy, Mary? Here's the snake-let's "Ain't any danger," returned "Brownie" hands crossed in her inp, her white hair have the cure handy. Ha, hai" shining in the firelight, crooning to herself. Yet I did not find the picture alto. Into a good humor the Swede had quieted be any trouble. can there?--not while "No," growled "Brownie," after a moeyes reflecting the firelight. Now and speak."

wrinkled lips. A girl, a bottle and a gun. To make the seasons filt-And of the three, when all is done, The girl's the best of it.

"That's worthy of one of Bram's bal-

ads" I thought. "The old dame must have had her fling in her time."

A faithful hound, a gallant horse That strains against the bit-A girl to hold them to the course, For she's the best of it.

I yow there was something uncanny ters tonight, snug quarters and pleasant "I said it was on'y a side issue, didn't I?" above their heads. about this venerable erone, crooning a song company." that might better have fitted the campfires of my wegtern hunters. She sang on her mean him, surely." face turned toward the crackling logs

A spicy tale, a reckless lay. To speed us toward the pit-And if you will to lead the way, A girl's the-"

of the room-the great pine snake was pany?" He means fair company-fair com- done." again crawling from its hiding place. The pany, Mary-d'ye understand?" beldame had evidently been expecting it, for, without pause, her song fell to a low umming.

girl, mind! The Flower of Fairview, now, Humph! I nearly forgot! Granny whose Her pet wound across the slabs and, she-" reaching her side, laid his evil looking The crone's eyes lighted "The Flower head on her knee. Humming quietly, she of Fairview township!" Her eyes rested

began to stroke him as she might have on the door of the inner room. "That's responded the other dryly. stroked a cat. He colled his body leisurely just the reason I wanted to se you here in front of the fire and his head still rest- tonight." ing on his mistress' knee, seemed to bask. He lowered his cup and stared at her. your head about that."

equally in her careases and in the pleasant "What's that you say?" warmth from the embers. "Why, my dear, you mean Miss-" "Miss Nobody," he interrupted roughly, eyes lingered on the table-a pair of small

So they remained, while I watched them

"Confound it, Mary!" he said. "Don't 'Brownie' Davis, and the rest of the boys? The sound of men forcing their way Morvan came. They're coming tonight, stant. I would be caught like a crippled pursuit. cat-without the power of resistance.

'Curse the thing! Damnation!

Nothin' but marsh everywhere else.

I bounded into the thicket.

CHAPTER VI.

The Forest Path.

Apparently the door yielded, and they 'Brownie?' "

beneath the level brows. Her lips were me shiver.

"Brownie." "He's bound to go that way, ain't worryin' over it."

must act upon it without an instant's de- moved off toward the cabin.

"To be sure, my dear." Summoning all my resolution, I stumbled They ought to be here now. As lazy a few paces, gained a dense thicket of

father's sittin' up for you, ch? Not "Ah, but you soon will be, my dear, a lot of rips as I ever saw! They hang scrub pines, and was dragging myself into around Bat Merry's all day, rolling bullets their cover, when I realized that it was and pitching quoits-and at night. God one of the very places my pursuers would

be likely to search most thoroughly. "But they've been watchin' him, Squire My motions had dissipated my giddiness. -findin' out his little ways. They're pretty I gripped the bough of a ten-foot scrub, the bushy dome, as hidden as if I were

in the moon. I was barely in time. Three or four dark figures burst into the path I had just

"Don't you believe it, granny!" quitted. "Forward!"-it was Bram's voice-"He "Slow-nothin', old woman!" Bram leaped to his feet, "By gad, can't be far."

'Brownie!' Hello, boys! Where did you "Look out for the blasted pine, Squire!" called one of the men.

The newcomer's nickname fitted him ex-His warning came too late, for my worceedingly well. He was a powerful fel- thy "cousin," although checking himself low, with a queer, impish face, at present with vigor, came smartly in contact with smutted with streaks of charcoal. His the stump,

head, as he threw his cap on the table, "Damnation!" he yelled. "It's broken me

ing as himself. Each carried a fowling party to a standstill. They halted in front of the scrub pine. I gripped my leaded

should be salesp. He'll be here any min-ute." "Why you gave him to ma yourself." "We've been on a little side fearful lest they should hear the thumping She took the teapot to the fireplace, and "Yes, but he was two yards shorter issue, so to speak." He flung a heavy of my heart. "Where did we come from?" responded riding whip firmly, and held my breath,

"Where the devil has he got to?" dewhen I found him. I tell you a rod of that's about it. Catch the idea, Squira? manded Davis. "I heard his boots on the hard ground a minute ago. The spong Perhaps it was the tea." She replaced this. Only an old witch like you would "Confound you, 'Brownie!' exclaimed begins the other side of the stump-if he's

ing, the other day, a look in here was will get us all hanged some fine day. I "Feel in the sand," ordered Bram Swaying her body back and forth, she worse on his nerves than a bottle of rum, advise you to drop them. And you, too, astutely. "May be you can find his tracks. Ugh! I'm near crucified, by gad!" Straining my eyes, I presently made out

coolly. "Everybody thinks it's Tom Bell a form crawling zig-zag across the path, While Bram was thus talking himself loose again. Ha, ha! Besides, there can't a yard or two beyond the riven pine.

my grandmother-in heaven these man gether pleasing to my taste, for the words her pet. The reptile colled himself on Squire Arnold rules the roost in Fairview ment-the fellow's conversation was always years-sat on a throne of yellow-and of her song sounded strange from her the opposite side of the chimney, his cold township, and you in this one, so to larded with caths which I shall not trouble brown serpents, and sang a roaring song. to repeat-"No, there ain't any tracks. "Yes, but how long will we rule the He must ha' stopped before gittin' this

roost, if it's discovered we're in league far." He rose to his feet. "Where's the Mary hobbled about. "Here's the apple with footpade? Our roost will be the loose most likely place?"

That's what's he's done, sure."

I sint sure I saw anybody."

jack, my dear-and here's a cup for you. and of a rope, that's the sort! And if "In the cripple there," said Bram. Don't drink ton much, though. We must anything happens to us, worse will happen ho! Hark to him! Search him out, boys!" to you, count on that. Now I want it The bolsterous fellow, unrestrained even swamps of tea, and sobhed my name as she He took the bottle eagerly. "Business? stopped, d'ye hear? We've higger busi- in the gravest moments, cried his men on ran.

What else brought ness on hand-business that'll make all as he would have urged his rounds after a fox. They soon beat the thicket from "All right, all right," grumbled the other, end to end, while I crouched securely

Late Breakfast.

CHAPTER VII.

He turned to the Bwede. "Now, then, Cursing their ill luck, they again gath-My "cousin" and I met over a late breakfast. The eyes of both were heavy, "Gone clean away," declared Bram. but, in addition, his had the yellow hue "You won't get a drop in this house, dare swear he had a boat, and took to that betrays over indulgence. The cup, too, rattled against his teeth as he sipped his Davis swore flercely. "That's it, Squire. strong coffee. I guessed that he and his meant vice versa, I suppose." Daniel Webster himself. But what does me and the Squire. The business is movin' If Bill didn't get into the bottom first, it'l followers had consoled themselves for their

> punt and sneak down a branch to the bay. Swedish crons's apple brandy, After Joshua had poured my coffee and taken himself off. I opened my batteries. "Didn't anybody see what he looked "What ho, my lad!" I challenged "Art Dayton is the next helr to Morvan? If I at dawn." "Lord! I didn't,' replied the fellow

called Lenz. "He tumbled through the the wine when it is red." You must have Miss Dayton would have all this?" window both ways, like the devil himself. made a night of it, Bram.' He tried to assume his ordinary cock-a-"Well, I saw him," said Davis. "If he

"That's mine, too," asserted Bram. "I'm hadn't been so almighty quick, we'd be in charge of it, at any rate. Don't bother buryin' him now. But I don't know what stopped at the second bottle. I kept at it peated again. he looked like. I couldn't tell you if he three-parts the night."

The fellow gave him a keen glance, then was ten fest high, or white or black." "Was he a piner, d'ye think?" "Yes, I reckon so, Squire. I don't know."

"Just so. Well, she's the same relation After an hour or more's toilsome walk, I emerged into the country road. It was to you I am-first cousin three times rethe very spot where the girl had turned her moved, and of the half-blood. Ha, ha!" horse into the pines and so drawn me in He planted both elbows on the table. "No wonder you're at sea. It's this way. You

Notwithstanding my assurance of her remember our great-grandfather had three safety, I felt some qualms at deserting wives-a regular Turk! Well, three wivesher-to be sure, I had not been allowed three families-three lines of descendants." much choice in the matter. I sat down on He held up one finger comically. "Number a fallen tree where I could watch the path three, Bram Morvan-God help him!" The three fingers gave place to two. "But unobserved

number two, Ferriss Dayton-God-God-" It was not more than an hour before the dawn. The trees looked grim and "God bless her. Amen!" I said. threatening, and a damp mist clung about "She needs it." he agreed. "I doubt if she'd return the blessing, though." their boles. I could not resist a shudder

as I thought of the adventures of the "Why not?" "You see, she's John Dayton's daughter. night. Suppose, after all, Bram should change his mind about the girl! Perhaps You remember?" he had already repented his chivalrous

I shook my head. He went on. impulse-or was it merely fear of the possible consequences that had restrained inheritance, with your grandfather. John lowance for the whims of a spelled heauty. him? Perhaps he would yet yield to the Dayton fought the will to the last, fought I know a little about women. Sue, here, sneers of the malevolent crone. and lost, by gad! Of course, the con-

the quick tramp of a horse's hoofs-the girl property he did get. When it was over, by ged!" rode out of the forest. Cousin John had hardly a cent left in the

it was still too dark for me to see her next township now-Chestnut Farms, they you remember the old song?-'if she be face or eyes. I could only make out that call their place. They aren't quite pau- not fair to me?"" she sat erect in her saddle, as one who pers, but they're the next thing to it-poor feels neither fear nor distress. I noticed, enough to make it grind, d'ye see?" too-for the tenth time-her graceful length

of limb, and the sway of her slim waist. my ancestors did?" She passed, unconscious of my scrutiny "The old man does-yes, there's no doubt Gaining the road, she instantly put spurs he bears a grudge. And Ferriss has been leave her in the sulks, but, d'ye see, Mr. to her horse, and vanished at a gallop. brought up with that sort of thing-that Morvan, she's too pretty to let alone. It As I sat listening to the drumming hoofs, sort of father. She can't help feeling would be a crime, no less, to let a figure sounding fainter and fainter. I suddenly some of it." remembered that I had not even learned "I'm sorry."

"But that isn't all,' went on Bram. It It was almost daylight when I let myself in the side door at Morvan. No one was stirring in the house, and I dragged pillow, but I dreamed very gruesomely. Through my heavy slumbers, I though

very kindly." "No-he had a temper like a crab apple. I naw the siri's eyes flash. She opened

A sploy tale, a reckless lay, To speed us toward the pit-And if you will-to lead the way-A girl's the best of it. court house and told him what he thought me, closed them again. while a tall girl, her eyes luminous beneath level brows, ran through endless of him, in the plainest Anglo-Saxon."

"That didn't help matters. I suppose." on Cousin John-and, by gad! John's man." spirit was so broken for the time that he never called him out for it. No wonder

John Dayton-and Ferriss, too-hates the very name of you, ch?"

"No-no wonder." I admitted sadly. A I'm not a patient man." sudden thought made me stir uneasily. "You called yourself number three, just mean what I say."

now, and Ferries Dayton number two-you "Not at all. John Dayton's grandmother There was a heavy rustling in the corner a man mean when he says 'pleasant com- too slow to suit us. Something's got to be be easy enough for the hellion to git his failure to overtake me by finishing the was the Grand' Turk's second wife-my Mr. Morvan. You understand me?" grandfather was the son of the third

"Oh, you were away at school.

wife." "What! Do I understand that Ferriss

downcast this morning. 'Look not upon hadn't turned up-should die, I mean-"Of course."

hoop manner. "I did, by gad! Hang it: had not dreamed of-a move against a face turned purple. He gulped down his I ought to have taken your advice, and woman. I was silent so long that he re-"Of course, man. Who else?"

"I didn't see anything of you when I came in." I returned carelessly, "I looked before. Bram."

into the dining room, too."

The girl fell back with a muttered cry: "The new squire!" and stood watching me curiously. Arnold's face grew red, but he lost nothing of his self-possession.

"Oh! Good morning, Mr. Morvan. No, "It was he had that law suit over the no! It's all right. I'm willing to make alis pretty and she knows it. Too much at-But I had not long to wait. There was founded lawyers used up the share of the tention has about turned her little head,

"Very likely," I rejoined pleasantly. "The She passed within two yards of me, and world. He and Ferriss live over in the best remedy is to leave her alone, isn't it?

My easy going manner had completely deceived the man. He fumbled in his pocket "Do they bear me a grudge for what and producing a clay pipe, began to fill it with canaster.

"No doubt that would serve her right to and face like Sue's go to waste. She's worth some trouble-you understand, ch?"

"I'm not sure I do." was plain he relished my discomfiture not He gave a careless laugh. "I mean I've a little. "You know that law suit was the just been telling Sue she's wasting herself bitterest kind of a fight. After the last down here in the Barrens. I've offered to myself wearily to bed. I was too tired trial-there were a dozen, at least-the take her to the city for a month or soto lie awake an instant after I touched my court gave its final decision in your grand- let her see the world and live like a lady. arthers favor, he came out of the court I'll look out for her afterward, too. That's fairly swelling with the triumph of fair enough, I take it. As a man of the world, Mr. Morvan, fou'll understand a

in fancy turned a neat phrase for gentleman doesn't expect a girls' temper "I've heard the old gentleman wasn't over such a chance will last. Eh? what do you think?"

Well, John Dayton met him outside the her lips as if to speak, but at a sign from

"Sir." I said deliberately, "I think such an action as you propese, more suited to a "No. The old hot-head used his cane Don Juan than to an American gentle-

"What do you mean""

"It's strange I never heard of all this I'm willing to overlook your words."

"I mean you are playing the part of a scoundrel, sir."

'Be careful what you say, Mr. Morvan.

"As impatient as you choose, sir. I

He gave me a very ugly look. The pipe snapped between his fingers. "There's a way for satisfaction between gentlemen.

"Certainly. I'm at your disposal any hour of the day. No-not earlier than \$ o'clock. I never could endure a meeting

My coolness-my contemptuous attempt at humor-nonplussed him. Perhaps had I blustered more, he would have known bet-I stared at him. I had taken a step I ter how to deal with me. As it was, his wrath. "You're a newcomer in the county, Mr.

Morvan-you don't understand our ways.

(To Be Continued.)