SAVED BY A HORSE.

[CONTINUED.]

"Yes," I continued, "having nothing to do one afternoon, I filled up a blank check; then, as it would not be complete without, I signed the name of a prominent merchant. That same afternoon a pal of mine, out of experiment, took it to the bank and had it cashed. Immediately after that, New Orleans became very sickly," and that is the reason I am here to-night."

"Lord!" laughed the scoundrel, while his eyes glistened at the information. "I reckon you're a cuss, after all. But yer didn't get much of a pile, did yer?"

"Only fifty thousand," I replied looking him straight in the eye.

"Whe-ew!" he whistled, with a peculiar stress on the last note.

Then, laying his hand upon the table, he asked:

"That yer repeater on yourn cost something, eh?"

"Two hundred and a half—gold," I answered, carelessly.

"S'posing we start up a little dicker," and he drew from his pocket a venerably bull's-eye, worth probably ten or fifteen dollars.

"Well, if you will give me the difference, I have no objection," I returned.

"Difference! What do you mean, stranger?" he inquired, in the same hoarse tone with which he had first accosted me.

"I mean that my watch is worth three hundred dollars, and yours, ten. If you wish to exchange, you must pay the difference in value," I explained.

The wretch threw himself back in his chair, and roared with laughter. "See here," he articulated between his cachinatory efforts, "this thing has been goin' on long enough. This 'boot' business, youngster, must go on t'other leg. This yer turnip o' mine was owned by old Noar in the Ark, and is, consequently, very antiquated and valuble. Now, ef yer want to swap, I want yer to say so, without any more foolin. And that ain't all," he continued, suddenly drawing and cocking the pistol which had been stuck in his belt; "yer might as well hand over that little pile yer made in New Orleans. I reckon that will be about a square deal."

"But," I expostulated, "you surely do not intend to rob me, do you?"

"Call it what you please; only be quick about it," he growled out, sternly.

I saw that expostulation was useless, so I slowly drew forth the watch and laid it upon the table.

"Now, yer flimsies; and mind, no shirkin'," he continued in the same leonine bass.

Oh, how I wished for my navies that were in my holsters. But regrets were useless. They would not bring back my horse or my pistols. To be sure, I would not have been able to cope with this herculean robber even if I had them, on account of my left hand being disabled; yet, I should have attempted to defend myself whether successfully or not. In a secret pocket of my unkershirt, next my skin, I carried ten thousand dollars in bonds. That the robber suspected this I did not for a moment believe. Nevertheless, he was positive that I did have some money about my person, consequently my life was in imminent danger. Following out a plan I had formed in case anything of this kind came to pass, I reached forth my hand, and grasping the whisky bottle firmly by the neck, I placed it again to my lips. Time was everything in my favor, and I knew it. Could I invent some stratagem whereby I could put him off until daylight something might turn up in my behalf.

Suddenly I set the bottle down, saying: "Pshaw! if we gean's have a fresh drink of this critter, I don't want any." I patted the bottle containing the vile stuff as affectionately as if it had been the genuine Elixir of Life.

He seemed pleased at my suggestion, and exclaiming, "that's yer gait, is it!" walked to the rickety cupboard that stood in one corner of the room, and began searching for a fresh supply. As he turned his back towards me, I cast one rapid, searching glance around the hut for some mode of escape. In vain. I might as well have searched Gibraltar for some crevice whereby to gain its summit, as to dream of escaping from that hateful log-prison. The only communication with the outer world that I could discover, was a sort of window, or port-hole, more properly — that was about three feet distant from where I sat, and was hardly large enough to admit an ordinary man's head. By good fortune it was open. Instantly I drew forth a scrap of paper, and scratching a few lines upon it with a pencil, slipped it between the lining of my cap, leaving a corner partly protruding; then, as Asa stooped for an instant to draw the cork from the whisky bottle, I raised myself with quick motion, and measuring the aperture with my eye, hurled my cap through it with all the velocity I could muster.

Hardly had I accomplished it, before he was beside me.

"Thar," he said, thickly, for the liquor was beginning to take effect upon his sluggish brain, "thar's yer lightnin,' now drink it."

Moving the bottle gently toward him, I bowed, and, with much politeness, said:

"Excuse me, but you are the host and I the guest."

With a coarse laugh, he grasped and carried the vessel to his mouth. I could have danced for joy at the length of time it remained there. Driving in the cork with a single blow of his fat, flabby hand, he returned it, adding:

"Look at that for a drink, youngster."

Raising it on a line with my eye, I held it at arm's length between me and the light.

Hardly had I done so ere the sharp crack of a pistol echoed throughout the hut. At first I thought I was shot, but the loud guffaw of the half-drunken ruffian before me soon convinced me that I was mistaken.

"Why don't yer drink?" he asked, as he regained his breath, while his hideous fangs protruded like those of a wild bear.

I looked at the bottle in my hand. To my amazement and horror there was no cork in it. Instantly the firing of the revolver was explained. He had been practicing his deadly skill, utterly reckless in his semi-intoxicated condition, as to the consequences.

"Ha, ha!" he laughed maudlinly, as he toyed with the dangerous weapon in his hand. "Yer wouldn't believe I could snuff a whisky cork at that distance, would yer?"

I was about replying indignantly, for I was driven to desperation by the fiend's utter want of decency, when, with a sudden spring, he reached my side, and placing the cold muzzle of the pistol against my forehead, continued:

"This playin' has been goin' on long enough. I want them ar' rocks o' yourn, and I'll give yer jes' three minutes to produce 'em in."

To be continued.

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New York, January 17th, 1870. L. E. CHITTENDEN, Late Reg. U. S. Treas.

WATCH No. 1,001, STEM-WINDER.—Bearing Trade-Mark "Frederic Atherton & Co., Marion, N. J.," manufactured by the United States Watch Co., has been carried by me fifteen months; its total variation from mean time being only one second per month.

WILLARD DERBY,
Of Derby, Snow & Prentiss, Jersey City, N. J.

WATCH No. 1,124, STEM-WINDER.—Bearing Trade-Mark "Frederic Atherton & Co., Marion, N. J.," manufactured by the United States Watch Co., has been carried by me seven months; its total variation from mean time being only six seconds.

A. L. DENNIS, Pres't. N. J. R. R. & T. Co.

UTICA, Feb. 15th, 1870.

WATCH No. 10,564, STEM-WINDER.—Bearing Trade-Mark "Frederic Atherton & Co., Marion, N. J.," manufactured by the United States Watch Co., has been carried by me twenty months; its total variation from mean time being five seconds per month.

E. C. PRIEST,
Ass't Sup't. N. Y. C. & H. R. R.

WATCH No. 1,117, STEM-WINDER.—Bearing Trade-Mark "Frederic Atherton & Co., Marion, N. J.," manufactured by the United States Watch Co., has been carried by me fifteen months; its total variation from mean time being only an average of two-thirds of a second per day.

F. P. PHELPS, Con. N. J. Central R. R.

WATCH No. 1,087, STEM-WINDER.—Bearing Trade-Mark "Frederic Atherton & Co., Marion, N. J.," manufactured by the United States Watch Co., has been carried by me since June, 1867; its total variation from mean time being only five seconds per month.

HENRY SMITH,
Treas. Panama R. R., 58 Wall St., N. Y.

WATCH No. 12,012, STEM-WINDER.—Bearing Trade-Mark "United States Watch Co., Marion N. J.," manufactured by the United States Watch Co., has been carried by me six months; its total variation from mean time being only twelve seconds. GEO. LOVIS,
Gen'l. Eastern Pass'r. Ag't. Toledo, Wabash Western R. R.

SUNBURY, PA., Feb. 28, 1869.

WATCH No. 1,178, STEM-WINDER.—Bearing Trade-Mark "Frederic Atherton & Co., Marion, N. J.," manufactured by the United States Watch Co., has been carried by me three months; its total variation from mean time being only five seconds during that time.

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