## fillheim Thursday June 19

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#### SWIMMING FOR LIFE.

A Thrilling Episode on the Mo-nongahela River.

I am afty years old now, hale and strong, but not the vigorous man I was at the time of the events described in this story. I was reared on the Monongahela river. My earliest employment was on that stream. I was a ferryman, a fisherman, a boatman, a raftsman, and certainly a swimmer-everything that did not call me away from the river. When the United States declared war against Mexico I enlisted at Pittsburg in the Second Pennsylvania Regiment, and went, I passed through General Scott's campaign with but one slight wound, and it was an adventure I had near the City of Mexico after the fighting was over, that resulted, strange as it may seem, in a big swim in the Monongahela two years afterward. One day, while we were quartered at Buycan, seven miles from the conque: ed capital. I, being a sergeant, was ordered to take a file of men and pursue a rechlers character, named M'Cutchin, who had escaped from the guard house and fled toward the city. He was one of the worst men in the regiment, and had lately been confined in the guard house to await trial by court martial on a charge of murderous assault on a superior officer. We caught sight of the fugitive before we had gone half the distance to the city, and he immediately left the road and plunged into adense thicket of a square mile in extent. We immediately scattered through the bushes in pursuit, and five minutes later I came upon him hiding in a very thick clump of the chaparal. I

me, and had he been one second sconer he certainly would have stabbed me. But with one blow from the butt of my musket I felled bim. and immediately called for my companions. They were both within hearing, and soon at the spot. "Here he is, boys," I said. "The

expected he would run for it on

I had barely time to club my musk-

rascal made an assault on me with his knife, and I knocked him down. Watch him. Where is that knife?" picking it up.

M'Cutchin had now got upon his lines of the tall hills against the feet and was rubbing his head, eve- sky. The heavens themselves were ry now and then scowling upon me in a very terrible manner.

"Oh, I'll pay you for this!" he feel; and it may be relied on that I finally said.

"M'Cutchin," said I, "in arresting you, I simply obeyed orders, and in knecking you down I simply acted in self-defense. You know you attempted to kill me with that knife. Now I want none of your threats, or I'll make your case worse than it is. March him to camp, boys."

We proceeded to camp, the despea brother-in-law to the Monongarate prisoner all the while glaring hela river. So I struck out vigorupon me like a demon, and repeating muttered threats. He was a very wicked and revengeful man. how was I to get there? In which

He was soon after court-martialed and sentenced to wear a ball and chain about his ankle for one month life of me-and that life was at and after that to be dismissed from stake-I could not guess in what dithe army in disgrace, forfeiting all rection either shore lay. So I struck his back pay. So two months later out at random. There was a strong he was put on board a transport at current in the river, but as I moved Vera Cruz and sent to New Orl ans. along with it, I had no means of

calculating its course, Still, 1 During the second summer after swam away through the black tormy return to the United States I was employed as mate of a steamrent, confident, that I must eventually reach one shore or the other. boat on the Monongahela. She was a light draught boat called the Merry, and as the water did not a moment, and again endeavored to usually fall low till late in August, pierce the awful gloom, but in vain. we plied between Pittsburg and My eves actually pained and head New Geneva nearly all summer-the throbbed with the effort. It was so distance being one hundred miles. perfectly dark that I remember Occasionally, when there was any considerable rise in the river, we wandering if it ever could grow light again. There was no means ran up to Morgantown, W. Va., twenty miles above New Geneva.

One rainy evening, when we arrived at New Geneva, we found the water high enough for a venture to in vain. Morgantown, and the captain decided to run up.

Just before we left the landing a strange man came aboard, stating to be tired, and became really alarmed. the clerk that he wished to take a Suppose whole hours should pass, deck passage to Pittsburg, and asking permission to remain on the boat while running up to Morgantown and back, that he might at once "turn in," and have an unbroken night's sleep, to which the force, and I felt that my strength clerk assented, the passenger paying was failing. I grew impatient and afterwards a short distance below is fare to Pittsburg

He was a rough tooking man, waters in my frenzy, and screaming with a sandy peard that covered found curses against the murderous three-fourths of his face. However, M'Cutchin, whose revengeful spirit I paid but little attention to him, and he soon passed aft to where the freight was stored and the deck hands slept.

this fearful peril.

me alive.

water near me, and, thinking it was the current flowing among the rocks

put out my hand and struck some-

thing solid. But it was not the

shore; it was a large snag that

barely peeped out of the water.

and sat half immersed in water.

shivering, trembling, and wonder-

ing whether the morning would see

The rain was still pouring down,

and I caught the glimmer of a faint

flash of lightning, which was follow-

neath my weight, and I planged

into the current again and resumed

my swimming-in what direction I

At last, when I felt that I could

not stay up much longer, I caught a

glimpse of a light in the distance.

But I persevered, determined to

strike as long as a muscle would

move, for I was swimming to some

purpose now. Ten minutes more,

and I found, that I was undoubted-

ly nearing the light. Hope lent me

new strength and courage, and I

think that, exhausted though I had

recently felt, I now did such swim-

Ten minutes more. I was rapid-

ly nearing the light, when, to my

dismay, it suddenly vanished. My

heart sank again; my strength was

fast leaving me, and I was about to

go down with a half uttered prayer

on my lips, when my feet touched

the pebbly bottom, and I found my-

self in shallow water. I steed up,

and for a few moments lay down al-

The rain had abated somewhat,

most helpless.

ming as I had never done before.

Our boat steamed up the river a little before dark, and we passed the or bushes at the shore, I struck out mouth of the Cheat river just as in the direction with new hope. I night fairly set in-which it did in terrible earnest. The clouds thickened up, the rain came down in torrents, and I never before or since saw a night so intensely dark. The Gladly accepting a respite, however, Merry could hardly proceed far with- I climbed upon it, almost exhausted out running aground, for the tall shores entirely disappeared from view in the awful gloom; but the doors of the furnace were thrown open and the blazing fire under the boilers shed a dim light ahead. which enabled the pilot to pick his way along for a time, by running ed by the low rumbling, of distant very slowly.

We had gone about two miles above the mouth of the Cheat river, | Presently I felt the snag sinking bewhen, descending from the cabin deck by means of a very . narrew flight of steps on the larboard side. I saw our deck passenger skulk did not know. way from the foot of the stairs and pass into the quarters aft, as though to escape observation. As he did so caught a brief glimpse of his facefor the light of a lamp at one of the engines shone on it -and it immediately struck me that it was not unfamiliar. A moment later, while I stood pondering, the face reappeared at the door, and the deck passenger stepped out, saying, in a low tone: "Do you know me?"

"I was just thinking I had seen ou somewhere," I replied. "Must I tell you my name?" he asked.

"Yes, I would like to know it. The mysterious deck passenger

stepped closer to me, so that his bearded face was within an inch of my ear, and whispered, "M'Cutch-

I had scarcely time to think ere he gave me a violent push with both bands, and I fell backward from the low deck into the river, immediately forward of the crashing wheel. A blow of one of its paddles would have crushed me, but fortunately I and with a tottering step, waded sank to the bottom and before I rose out and found myself on shore. I to the surface the wheel had passed | crawled up a steep and muddy bank over me. I shall never forget the sensations produced by the thundering of the paddles over my head and the rushing and bubbling of the

though the darkness had not, but presently a flash of lightning revealmuddy water about my ears. ed the whole scene to me-among My rlunge into the water had other objects, a little log house,, not been so entirely unexpected that I more than fifty yards distant, I being discovered, but to my surprise strangled badly at first, but being arose from the wet earth, and with he sprang out and rushed upon me one of the best of swimmers I soon trembling steps went staggering tolike a tiger, flourishing a large knife. recovered, rested upon the surface ward the house. Another kindly flash of lightning guided me to the et when he was within two feet of to deliberate at to what I was going very door, at which I knocked withto do with myself. The clatter of out hesitation. paddles, rapidly receding from me, "Who's there ?" came from withreminded me, that I ought to make some effort to attract the attention "My name is M'Cann," I replied. of those on the boat, and I shouted "I live at New Geneva, and am with all my might, but to no pur-

mate of the Merry. I fell off, and pose; and the faint lights that peephave just swam ashore." ed from the after cabin soon disap-"But what was the steamboat reared beyond a bend in the river, a doing on Cheat river ?" asked the little way above. man of the house, striking a light, The rain was pouring down, and "Cheat river !" I exclaimed, "We "Here it is," said one of the boys, the darkness so intense that I strained my eyes in vain to catch the out-

was not decidedly cold, but it was

much too cool when taken in such

though I could not say with Byron

that I was a "child of the ocean,"

I deemed myself, at least, as near a8

ously for-what? Shore? Well,

yes. I had some vague notion of

getting to shore before morning, but

direction should I swim? For the

When I had swam at least four

cover the shore or strike it by ac-

angry, and began beating the cruel Brownsville.

haven't been on Cheat river." The door was cautiously opened. and the farmer appeared, with a candle in one hand and a gun in the as black as the rushing river. Nothing was to be seen; I could only "Oh, come in," he said, as he re-

cognized me (for he had seen me befelt very uncomfortable. The water fore), what's all this ?"

I tottered in and fell to the floor exhausted. I must have been a picture to look at-with my wet and But I was too familiar with the muddy clothes, hair disordered, and water to be easily daunted, and alwithout hat or coat.

The farmer whose name was Davis assisted me to arise, and gave me a seat in an old-fashioned arm-

chair. "Dear me," I presently heard him say in a low tone to his wife, who came in from an adjoining room, "I've often heard he drank too much, poor feller, but I never know'd he got on such terrible 'uns

as this. 19 But I soon convinced them that I was not on a "terrible up." A roaring wood fire was started in the huge fire place, and some coffee made for me, which I drank, and found myself materially revived.

Then I told my story. Mr. Davis' house stood on the right bank of the Cheat river, a mile from its junction with the Monontimes the width of the river I lay-to gabela; and it began to appear to after having swam a couple of miles varied the exercise, in the blind

mind-and such was the fact-that the Morongahela, I had night, by swimming a mile up the Cheat river, and that against a strong current. I presume that I had first described the light shining from Mr. Davis' window while still of ascertaining where the shore was floating in the Monongahela at the and I endeavored more than once to | mouth of its tributary. Such was my swim for life. Not long after I had been pushed

"touch bottom" with my toes, but from the deck of the Merry she ran I then struck out again, and after aground, as I afterwards learned, swimming with all my might for and stuck till morning. M'Cutchin ten or fifteen minutes, I began to the malevolent deck passenger, thinking it a good opportunity to escape, attempted to leap ashore; but the boat was not so near the and I should still be unable to disshore as he supposed, and he landed in the water, and was soon carried beyond his depth by the swift current. Not being such a swimmer as the man he had endeavored to The danger of my situation now murder on that dark night, he soon burst upon me, with bewildering sank beneath the maddy torrentand his body was found a few days

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### had prompted him to hurl me into this fearful peril. Presently I heard the rippling of water near me, and think in the second s CHEAPER then ever!

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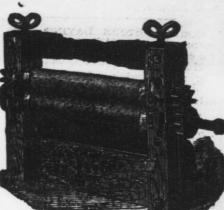
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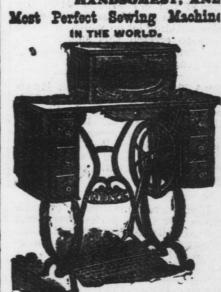
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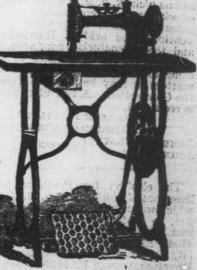


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