

The Girl a Horse and a Dog

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(Continued).

SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—Under his grandfather's will, Stanford Broughton, society idler, finds his share of the estate, valued at something like \$40,000, lies in a "safe repository," latitude and longitude described, and that is all. It may be identified by the presence nearby of a brown-haired, blue-eyed girl, a piebald horse, and a dog with a white, half black and half white. Stanford at first regards the bequest as a joke, but after consideration sets out to find his legacy.

CHAPTER II.—On his way to Denver, the city nearest the meridian described in his grandfather's will, Stanford hears from a fellow traveler a story having to do with a flooded mine.

CHAPTER III.—Thinking things over, he begins to imagine there may be something in his grandfather's bequest worth while, his idea finally centering on the possibility of a mine, as a "safe repository." Recalling the narrative on the train, he ascertains that his fellow traveler was a mining engineer, Charles Bullerton. Bullerton refuses him information, but from other sources Broughton learns enough to make him proceed to Placerville, in the Red Desert.

CHAPTER IV.—On the station platform at Atropia, just as the train pulls out, Stanford sees what appear to be the identical horse and dog described in his grandfather's will. Unable to get on the train at the next stop, Angela, there he finds that Atropia was originally Placerville, his destination. Unable to secure a conveyance at once to take him to Placerville, Broughton seizes a construction car and escapes, leaving the impression on the town marshal, Beasley, that he is slightly demented.

CHAPTER V.—Pursued, he abandons the car, which is wrecked, and escapes on foot. In the darkness, he is overtaken by a girl on horseback, and THE dog. After he explains his presence, she invites him to her home, at the Old Cinnabar mine, to meet her father.

CHAPTER VI.—Broughton's hosts are Hiram Twombly, caretaker of the mine, and his daughter Jeanie. Seeing the girl, Stanford is satisfied he has located his property, but does not reveal his identity.

CHAPTER VII.—Next morning, with Hiram, he visits the mine. Hiram asks him to look over the machinery, and he does so, glad of an excuse to be near Jeanie, in whom he has become interested, and he engages in the first real work he has ever done.

CHAPTER VIII.—Broughton and Hiram get the pumps started, but are unable to make an impression on the water. Bullerton, apparently an old friend of the Twomblys, visits the mine. He offers to drain it in consideration of Broughton's giving him fifty per cent of the property. Stanford refuses. Then Hiram offers to buy the mine outright for \$50,000. It had cost Broughton's grandfather more than half a million. Stanford again refuses.

CHAPTER IX.—Jeanie cautions Broughton against selling the mine, under any circumstances, and, apparently in a spirit of mischief, allows him to kiss her. After a conversation with Daddy Hiram, Broughton decides he will stick to the property.

The longer I thought about it, the larger the conviction grew that no such expensive expedient was to be resorted to. Bullerton, or his backers, or both, knew some other and far cheaper and more expeditious way of getting rid of the water. Sitting on a big rock that had in some former earth convulsion tumbled from the broken cliffs above the mine, I gave the mechanical fraction of my brain (it was a small fraction and sadly underdeveloped) free rein.

Two possibilities suggested themselves. A siphon, a big pipe, starting at the bottom of the shaft and leading out over the top and down the mountain to a point lower than the shaft bottom, would, after it was once started, automatically discharge a stream of its own bigness, whatever that should be. But the cost of over a mile of such pipe was beyond my means; and if two six-inch pumps driven night and day had failed to make any impression upon the flood, what could be expected of a siphon which, in the nature of things, couldn't be much bigger than an ordinary street water main?

The other possibility was even less hopeful. It was the driving of a short tunnel, which Daddy and I might undertake without additional help, from the level of the high bench straight in to an intersection with the mine shaft. This, I estimated, might tap the water at a point possibly twenty feet below its present level in the shaft. Its success, as I saw at once, would depend entirely upon the location and volume of the underground lake which was supposed to be supplying the flood. If this reservoir were shallow and high in the mountain, the short tunnel might drain it. If it were deep and low, nothing would be accomplished.

The question was still hanging hopelessly up in the air when I made my way around to the mine buildings by the left-hand gulch path, sneaked in and began to sneak myself into Daddy's extra pair of overalls; just for what, I hadn't the least idea; only I needed to be doing something to keep me from going completely dotty in the guessing contest.

By this time, as I knew, they would be getting up from breakfast in the cabin across the dump head, which would most likely be Bullerton's cue to come over and ride me some more. When I looked out in sour anticipation, here he came, smoking one of his high-priced cigars and swaggering a bit, as he always did in walking.

"This is your thirty-thousand-dollar day, Broughton," he tossed at me as soon as he stepped over the threshold of the shaft house door; but I fancied I could notice that, some way, he didn't seem quite so chipper and care-

less as he had the day before. "See here," I ripped out; "what's the use? You can't buy this mine at any price! It's not in the market and it isn't going to be. Not in a thousand years!"

"But see here; what's the use of butting your head against a stone wall? You're stuck, world without end, and you know it. This flooded hole in the ground is of no more use to you than a pair of spectacles to a blind man!" "Perhaps not; 'tis a poor thing, but mine own. I guess I can keep it as a souvenir if I feel like it, can't I?" "Oh, h—!" he grunted, and turning on his heel went away.

After he had gone I patted myself on the back a bit for not losing my temper and then, just to have an excuse for staying away from the cabin and the Bullerton vicinity, I made fires under the boilers and got up steam. In the former pumping spasm Daddy and I had operated only the two big centrifugals, ignoring the deep-well pumps designed to lift the water from the lower levels of the mine.

Just to try something that we hadn't tried before, I got steam on the deep wellers, and soon found that the machinery, which we hadn't taken down in the general overhauling, needed tinkering before it would be safe to run it. Banking the boiler fires, I went at the job single-handed and managed to wear out the livelong day at it.

It took me all the afternoon and then some to get the machinery cleaned and tinkered up and reassembled. In pawing over the supplies in the mine storeroom—stuff left by the former operators—we had found an acetylene flare torch and a can of carbide and I rigged the torch so that I could go on working after dark.

It was along about nine o'clock when I got the deep-wells ready to run and freshened up the fires and turned the steam on. In curious contrast to the care which had been taken to provide a discharge outlet for the centrifugals, the Cornish pumps had merely an iron trough which ran to a ditch leading down to the bench below the mine buildings. After a few minutes of the clanking and banging, the water began to come. It was horribly smelling stuff, thick and discolored; evidences sufficient that it was coming from the bottom of the mine. The two pumps together were lifting about an eight-inch stream, and it occurred to me at once that if I could set the centrifugals going at the same time, the mass attack might accomplish what the piece-meal assault couldn't.

Throwing in the clutch that drove the big rotaries, I ran up against what Daddy would have called a "circumstance." There wasn't power enough to drive both sets of pumps coupled in together; at least, not with the steam pressure the boilers were carrying. Thinking to get more power by pushing the fires a bit harder, I went to the detached boiler room to stoke up, leaving the deep wells clanging away in the shafthouse. I had fired two of the furnaces and was at work on the third when a series of grinding crashes in the machinery sent me flying to find out what was going wrong.

What was happening—what had already happened—was a plenty. As I have said, the great Cornish water-lifters were driven through a train of gearing. When I reached the scene, the steam engine was still running smoothly, but the pumps had stopped. The reason didn't have to be looked for with a microscope. The gear-train was a wreck, with one of the wheels smashed into bits, and half of the cogs stripped from its mesh-mate, if that's what you'd call it.

Mechanically I stopped the engine and went to view the remains. The deep-wells were done for—there was no question about that; they'd never run again until a new set of gears should be installed. That much determined, I began to look for the cause of the calamity. Naturally, I supposed that a cracked cog in one of the wheels had given way, and with this for a starter, the general smash would follow as a matter of course. But a careful and even painful scrutiny of the wreckage failed to reveal the cog with the ancient fracture. Each break was new and fresh and clean; there wasn't a sign of an old flaw in any one of them.

I think I must have knelt there under the gear train for a half-hour or more, handling the fragments of iron and fitting them together. It was like a child's broken-block puzzle, and after a time I was able to lay all the larger bits out upon the floor in their proper relation to one another. It was in the ground-up debris remaining that I found something which suddenly made me see red. Battered into shapelessness, but still clearly recognizable, were the crushed disjecta membra of our twelve-inch monkey-wrench!

I tried not to go off the handle in a fit of mad rage. With a sort of forced calm I considered every beam and projecting timber where I might incautiously have left the wrench, and from which it might have jarred off to fall into the gears. There was no such chance. I had used the wrench in re-assembling the machinery, but now that I came to recall all the circumstances, I distinctly remembered having put it, together with the other tools, on the little work bench back of the engine. The alternative conclusion was, therefore, fairly inevitable. While I was firing the furnaces, somebody—and doubtless somebody who had been watching for the opportunity—had taken advantage of the moment when my back was turned and had thrown the wrench into the gears.

It was the final straw. There was only one person on the Cinnabar reservation who could have any motive for wrecking my machinery; and while

I was banking the fires and setting things in order for the night, I charted my course, as the navigators say. The dawn of another day, I told myself, would schedule the ultimate limit. Unless he should prove to be a good bit quicker with his gun than I was with my fists, Bullerton was due to get the man-handling he seemed to be acting for; and beyond that, he'd quit the Cinnabar, if I should have to tie him on his horse and flog the beast half-way to Atropia.

It was with this most unchristian design seething and boiling in my brain that I finally went over to the cabin, let myself in, and climbed stealthily up the loft ladder to my blankets, and the next thing I knew, it was broad daylight, the sun was shining in at the little window over the head of my bunk, and from the kitchen at the rear a juicy and most appetizing odor of frying ham was wafting itself up through the cracks in the unchinked walls of my cubicle.

CHAPTER XI.

An Arctic Bath.

It's an old saying that coming events have a knack of foreshadowing themselves. While I was struggling into my clothes and reviving that overnight determination to have it out with Bullerton the minute I should lay eyes upon him, it struck me all at once that the house was curiously quiet. To be sure, somebody was stirring and the breakfast was cooking, but the premonition that something had happened was strong upon me when I descended the ladder.

In the living room I found a mighty sober-faced old Daddy putting breakfast on the table.

"It's just you and me for it, this mornin', Stannie," he muttered, laying plates for two; and his mild old eyes looked as if they were about to take a bath.

"What!" I exclaimed. "Has Bullerton gone?"

"Uh-huh; bright and early—fore day, I reckon; leastwise, I didn't hear him when he went."

"But where's Jeanie? She isn't sick, is she?"

He shook his head dolefully.

"No; she—she's gone, too."

"Not with Bullerton?" I gasped.

"It sure does look that-away, Stannie. She left a 'I' note on the table



"No, She's Gone, Too."

for me, a-tellin' me not to worry none, and sayin' I needn't look for her till I saw her ag'in."

At first I could hardly believe my own ears. It was so incredibly out of keeping with Jeanie as I had been idealizing her.

"Are you going after them?" I demanded.

"What for?" was the despondent query. "Tain't no morsel o' use, any way you look at it. Jeanie's a woman growed, and she don't have to have the old daddy say she can, 'r she mustn't. Besides, they was probably pitchin' out to catch one o' the early trains—there's one each way, east and west—and them trains 've been gone a couple o' hours."

Daddy had done his best with the breakfast, but I don't recall any meal of my life that ever came so near choking me. I told Daddy about the smashing of the machinery, and the proof I had that it had been a piece of sabotage.

"Reckon maybe he allowed you'd find out he done it and try a dogfall 'r somethin' with him to pay him back?" Daddy queried.

"I don't know," I confessed.

I went on eating in silence, or rather trying to eat, and turning over the puzzling and bad-tasting questionings in my mind. How could Jeanie go off with Bullerton, knowing him to be the scamp he was? And why, if she had been meaning all along to do this thing, had she blocked his game by telling me that I wasn't to sell him the Cinnabar?

It was in the midst of these reflections that I chanced to feel in the coat pocket where I had been carrying the deed turned over to me by Daddy Hiram; and for the second time that morning I nearly choked. The pocket was empty!

"What's hit you now, son?" Daddy inquired; seeing my jaw drop, I suppose.

"The last thing there was in the box that could fall out and hit me," I gurgled. "Bullerton has stolen my deed to the Cinnabar!"

"The mischief he has! Plum sure

you hain't lost it out o' your pocket?" We made sure, without the loss of a moment; looking in my left sleeping-place and in the mine buildings. The deed was gone, safely enough, and we both agreed that Bullerton had had plenty of chances to steal it. Wearing overclothes while I was working about the machinery, I had often left my coat hanging in the cabin. As a matter of fact, I hadn't worn it at all on the previous day.

"Well, Daddy," said I, after the prolonged search had proved futile, "where does this leave me?"

Threshing the facts out, we soon found where it left me. Grandfather Jasper, as you may remember, had made no mention of the mine, or, indeed, of any legacy to me in his will as it had been probated; there was no need of it because he had already deeded the Cinnabar to me, and at the time of his death it was no longer among his assets. Moreover, his lawyers had told Bullerton (according to Bullerton's story told me in the Pullman smokeroom) that there was no record of any mining transaction whatever in his papers. Therefore, in the absence of the memorandum which my grandfather had given Cousin Percy—and which Percy had doubtless carried with him to China—there was nothing but the deed to show for my ownership; absolutely nothing.

At that, the loss of the deed wouldn't have been fatal if the document had been properly recorded. It hadn't been. And now, with the unrecorded deed gone, there was nothing to prove that I had ever owned the Cinnabar. The loss was total—with no insurance.

Daddy Hiram was shaking his head sorrowfully after we had run this last bunch of straw through the threshing machine.

With things looking as blue as the bluest whetstone that ever clicked upon scythe, we tried to settle upon some line of action. Copah was the county seat, and the obvious first step would have been for me to go there for a search in the county records for evidence of the sale of the mine to my grandfather. But the minute I should show myself on the railroad, I'd be nabbed for the theft of that infernal inspection car. Daddy offered to go in my place, but that alternative didn't appeal to me at all. I knew perfectly well how helpless he'd be in any such lawyerlike search as would have to be made in the county recorder's office.

Being stopped off short in every other direction, we finally gravitated over to the shaft-house and went to work in an aimless sort of fashion gathering up the wreckage of the smashed gear train and putting things 'hipshape again. With steam up, we turned the machinery over a few times, just to see that everything was in working order again, and I threw in the clutch of the centrifugals, merely for the satisfaction of hearing the flood rushing through the outlet. When the pumps were going at full speed I went to look down the shaft. As before, when we had run the pumps for a week on end, there was a slight disturbance of the water, but nothing more. My makeshift float-and-pulley gauge showed no change in the level. Suddenly a freak notion seized me that I'd like to know just what was going on down in those black depths into which the suction pipes of the big pumps led.

"Daddy, I'm going to try to find out something," I declared and forthwith began to strip my clothes off. "We've seen the water coming out at the other end of things, and now, by George, I mean to make sure that it's going in at this end."

He didn't try very hard to dissuade me, and a minute or so later I was crawling down the shaft ladder in the habiliments that old Mother Nature gave me. It was my first exploration of the shaft, and I was surprised to find it so well and tightly timbered; "boxed" is the better word, since the timbering was really a substantial wooden box built within the square outlines of the pit. Common sense told me that this must have been done to prevent the caving in of the sides; and afterward I remembered wondering, at the time, that the shaft should have been sunk in caving material when the remainder of the bench upon which the buildings stood appeared to be little else than solid rock.

By feeling with a free foot I could determine that the pump suction pipes went on still farther, and then the real adventure began. The ladder suddenly gave out, quit, ended. There were no more rounds below the one upon which I was standing. That being the case, there was nothing for it but to dive, feet foremost, and taking a deep breath, I let go of the ladder and began to swim downward. Almost before I realized it I was fighting desperately for dear life. One of the big suction pipes had taken hold of a foot and leg, like a tentacle of an enormous octopus, and I was unable to get loose.

After all, it was Daddy Hiram who saved my life. Suddenly the thunder of the pumps, magnified a thousand-fold for me in that icy pit of death, stopped short and the mechanical squelch let go of my leg. With lungs bursting I shot to the surface and weakly clutched the ladder. Framed in the square of daylight a dozen feet overhead I could see Daddy hanging over the mouth of the pit; saw him and heard his shouted words: "Freeze to the ladder, boy—I'm a-comin' down after ye!"

I was freezing all right, in both senses of the word, but I found breath to warn him back, and presently managed to crawl up the ladder and roll out upon the shafthouse floor. Instantly the old man pounced upon me, buffeting, slapping and rubbing, mauling me worse than any Turkish-bath



Framed in the Square of Daylight I Could See Daddy Hanging Over the Mouth of the Pit.

pirate would have dared to. It was keen torture, but it turned the trick, and by the time I was able to breathe comfortably again, I had acquired a beautiful spanked blush where I had been blue—all but the great brute, ring-shaped, where the suction pipe had bit me.

Of course, Daddy was chock full of sympathy and concern, mixed up with a good bit of curiosity.

"One of the suction pipes," I explained, beginning to crawl back into my clothes. "I was foolish enough to get under it and it grabbed and held me. If you hadn't stopped the pumps I'd have been a gone goose. I was just about all in, as it was."

"Well, you found out the pumps are suckin' all right, anyhow," he remarked.

"They sure are; you'd think so if you'd been where I was." Then I began to recall some of those mixed and mingled impressions I had gathered. "What kind of soil is there under this floor, Daddy?" I asked.

"Huh!" he snorted; "what soil there is on this here ledge you could mighty near put in your eye, I reckon. 'Tain't nothin' but rock, and blame' hard rock, at that."

"That was my notion. But if the shaft is in rock, why did they box it so strongly with timber? Surely there wouldn't be any danger of a cave in solid stone."

"Well, now, I'm dinged!" he returned, musingly. "Long as I've been monkeyin' round mines and such, it never once come to me to wonder about that!"

Speaking of the wooden bulkheading renewed that other impression, or rather two of them; one of having the feeling that I was shut in a tight box at the moment of the fiercest struggling, and the other of fancying that I had felt a swirling inrush of the liquid ice as well as the sucking outrush. But the recollection was so confused that I attached no importance to it. When a man is fighting for his life ten or twelve feet under water, pipe-dreams are nothing to the things he can imagine.

It was while we were sitting at the shaft-house door, hammering away at the old puzzle of why the water level never varied so much as a fraction of an inch in the shaft, in wet seasons or dry—as Daddy testified it never did—and why the subtraction of two six-inch streams at a velocity sufficient to stir up a veritable whirlpool at the suction intakes should make no impression upon it, that I began to notice the queer actions of the pie-faced colliery, Barney. First he would come and stick his cold nose into my hand; then he'd trot over to the cabin and back, and maybe loaf a little way down the road toward the bench level. Coming around to the shaft-house again, he'd sit beside Daddy Hiram, yawning and panting as if he were waiting impatiently for us to stop talking and pay some attention to him.

"Poor old Barney's homesick, and I don't blame him," I said. "I'm feeling a good bit that way, myself, Daddy." Then to the dog: "Come here, old boy!"

The colliery came to lick my hand, and while I was petting him I found a pretty bad gash just behind one of his ears.

"See here, Daddy," I broke out; "the dog's hurt!"

We examined the wound and decided at once that it was not a bite. It was a bruised cut, looking as if it had been made by some blunt instrument or weapon. I had a hot-flash vision of Bullerton kicking the dog with his iron-shod heel in an attempt to drive him back home, and it was so real that I couldn't shake it off.

When it began to grow dusk in the shaft-house we shut up shop and went over to the cabin to cook our supper. The dog went along, but evidently with reluctance. While we were crossing the dump head he turned back and once more started off down the road toward the bench below, but when he found that we were not following him he came to heel again. Still, neither of us had dog sense enough to guess what was the matter with him.

Daddy Hiram and I, being merely stupid humans, were commenting upon his queer actions, and laying them to Jeanie's absence, when again the dog started off down the road, looking back and barking when he found that we were still sitting on the doorstep. At that, since even solid ivory can be

penetrated if the would-be driller of it stays on the job long enough, we finally caught on.

"Say, Stannie!—he's a-tryin' to tell us to come on!" Daddy exclaimed, starting to his feet. "Methusalem-to-gracious! I did it have to take us a hui-endurin' afternoon to figger out that much dog-talk?"

"It looks that way," I admitted; but now, having "figgered" it out, we made no delay. Daddy got his rifle and cartridge-belt, and told me to take Jeanie's pistol for myself—which I did. Indian-filing down the mountain road in the darkness, Daddy Hiram, with his gun in the crook of his left arm, setting the pace, and the colliery running on ahead to point the way.

CHAPTER XII.

Around Robin Hood's Barn.

After we had covered possibly two of the four miles between the Cinnabar and the railroad station, the dog branched off to the left along the mountain on a road that was little better than a bridle path through the forest, and which, for the time, kept its level on the slope, neither ascending nor descending.

"How about it, Daddy?" I asked. "Where does this trail go?"

"Give it time enough, it comes out at the old Haversack, on Greaser mountain."

"Ends there, you mean?"

"You said it; far as I know, it ends there."

"What is the Haversack?"

"It ain't nothin', now. Used to be a gold prospect eight 'r ten year ago. Never got far enough along to be a mine, they tell me."

It was certainly singular that the dog should be leading us to an abandoned mining project, but Barney seemed to know perfectly well where he was going.

In one of the gulch headings there was a patch of wash sand in what, in wet weather, a runway for water, but which was now only a streamless ravine with a few damp spots in it. Here Daddy called a halt, and while the dog sat down and yawned at us and otherwise manifested his impatience at the delay, the old man gathered a few pine-cones and twigs, struck a match and lighted a fire, cautioning me meanwhile not to walk on the damp sand patch.

I hadn't the slightest idea of what he was driving at, and he didn't explain; but after the fire had blazed up enough to light the surroundings a bit, he went down upon his hands and knees and began to give an imitation of a man hunting for a dropped piece of money. "It's sort o' queer. Jeanie's been here, and the dog's been back and across a couple o' times, as you can see. But Bullerton hasn't crossed here. There's only the one set o' tracks."

We made a wider search, with a dead pine branch for a torch, but found no other tracks; in fact, the gulch was gullied so deeply above and below that there was no other practicable crossing-place for a horse. If Jeanie had headed for the gulch—and the hoof prints in the sand, and Daddy's identification of them seemed to prove this past, any question of doubt—she had headed it alone. But why had she been riding alone into the depths of this uninhabited mountain wilderness?

Calm and self-contained as he usually was, I could see, or rather feel, that Daddy Hiram was growing increasingly nervous as we pushed on. I didn't blame him; so far from it, I was sharing the nervousness in full measure. What were we going to find at the end of the trail?

It must have been at least two miles beyond the damp sand patch that the dim trail we had been following ended abruptly at the abandoned mining claim spoken of by Daddy Hiram—the Haversack. The starlight was bright enough to show us what there was to be seen, which wasn't much; a couple of tumble-down shacks, a shed that had probably been the prospectors' blacksmith shop, and a tunnel mouth that had once been securely boarded up, but from which the bulkheading was now partly fallen away.

Once more Daddy hunted for a dead pine branch and lighted a torch. The shacks were empty, of course, and while we did not go into the tunnel, we could see, through the broken bulkheading, that it was half filled with caved-in earth and broken stone. Underfoot there was only the coarse gravel of the tunnel spoil, and a full troop of cavalry might have passed over it without leaving any visible trail. Worse than all, Barney, the pie-faced colliery, appeared now to be completely at fault. He was running around in circles with his nose to the ground; a pretty plain indication that he had lost the trail.

"I'll be bat-clawed and owl-hooted if I know what-all to do next," Daddy puzzled.

He hadn't any the best of me there, and it was precisely at this point that the split-faced dog took it into his head to add another snarl to the knotted tangle. After galloping around all over the place half a dozen times, sniffing at everything in sight, he had finally come to a stand with his nose at a crack in the tunnel boarding. The next instant he had leaped through the hole where the planks had fallen away, and presently we heard him whining and scratching behind the bulkhead.

I don't know about Daddy Hiram's heart, but I do know that mine was doing flip-flaps and back somersaults when we ran up to see what the dog had found in the tunnel. For a half-second after Daddy thrust his torch through the hole I was afraid to look—scared stiff at the thought of what I

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