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CHAPTER XV
20

Six-Gun Persuasion.

In the church of which he had long been the chief support the funeral of the dead money-lender was held. In spite of his grasping and domineering ways, the rugged worth of the man, to say nothing of his wealth, had made him widely known. Now joined to this was the mystery of his death. People came from far and near, and the church was packed, while many were forced to remain outside, grouped about the open door and windows.

The Reverend Caleb Hopkins officiated.

It was the first time the Flatwoods had heard him preach, because of the fact that the day before, though Sunday, the church had remained closed out of respect for its leading member, sleeping his last sleep at the red-roofed cottage.

Standing well back among the silent group at the door, Jack Warhope watched the preacher go through his ordeal. Nerve he must have had, or he never could have carried it through. Behind the piously solemn mask of his face there doubtless raged a terrific tempest, but it did not seem to retard his flow of thought or mar his oratory. Little enough can be said over a dead man, at the best, but that little he so clothed with artistry that the like of it had never been heard in the Flatwoods. Each man writes his own eulogy; Simon Colin had written his; that was the basis of his remarks. He neither eulogized nor blamed—and in that he showed the sense of a wiser man.

Most of the crowd lingered about the cemetery for a time, even after the last solemn rites had been performed, as if slow to realize that a man so prominent, so long a power in the life of the little community, had with such suddenness dropped that prominence and power for the mean and voiceless walls of the grave.

Immediately on the death of the old banker, the preacher had, for the sake of appearances, moved to the parsonage. He had returned from the funeral and had been for some time pacing back and forth, or idling restlessly in his chair, in the cool front room upstairs—the former minister's study—when he was very much surprised to see Jack Warhope ride up on Graylock, dismount, throw the bridle rein over the hitch-rack and come striding up the yard.

He sprang from his chair, opened one of his satchels, snatched out the holster with the ivory-handled revolver and hurriedly buckled it on under his vest, where it was concealed by the somber frock coat, and tiptoed back to his chair.

A knock disturbed the sanctimonious quiet of the study door.

"Come in."

The knob turned, with a force and decision that somehow suggested the power of the hand laid upon it, and Jack Warhope entered, carefully closed the door, stood coolly looking the other over.

The preacher slowly rose from his chair; slipped his hand down along the front of his frock coat and loosened it against his side.

The motion was not lost upon the woodsman. His eyes had narrowed to slits in his face; his lips were tightened to a straight hard line. He dropped a quick look at the preacher's feet.

"There ain't another pair o' boot heels in the Flatwoods like them, Mr. Hopkins."

The brows of the other lifted in polite surprise.

"I found the print o' them heels on the dusty floor boards there by Pap Simon's desk, where they couldn't 'a' be'n made till after the rug was drug back."

The preacher peered at him through his huge spectacles; a subtle premonition of what was coming reached him.

"I may have stepped there when I came out of my room. That was a most distressing scene, Mr. Warhope."

"But the board was scratched where the heel had slipped and dug into it under strain. How come y'u slipped?"

The affable, benevolent smile weakened; the premonition of what was coming deepened.

"Really, you must not expect me to remember every small detail of so distressing a moment, Mr. Warhope."

"That 'trick of removin' the brimstone from the caps on the shotgun was what I call downright smart. It took a good head t' think o' that. But ain't it queer that a master hand like that would unlock the door after the murder, instid of b'fore, and leave blood on the key?"

The studious pucker around the eyes was fast smoothing out, and the man was breathing fast. His hand was fumbling the lapel of the frock coat and slowly stealing down the side.

"What do you mean? You surely are not accusing me of the murder of my old friend?"

"I mean," rasped the woodsman, his slits of eyes on the hand stealing down the edge of the frock coat, "that night b'fore last I laid in the little park and heard what was said b'tween you and Black Bogus."

Like lightning the creeping hand darted under the frock coat. But quick as he was, the ivory-handled revolver was not quite out of the holster when the heavy six-gun of the woodsman leaped up and covered him.

"Butt first, parson," came the cold, decisive command over the steady barrel.

Hopkins stood just as the gun had caught him—motionless; poised on the flat of one foot and the toes of the other; his body slightly crouched forward. Reckless though he was, a man who held the world at bay, and keen-witted as a dog fox, he slowly relaxed the pose and grudgingly handed over the revolver—the ivory butt first.

The woodsman snatched it; removed the caps from the tubes and stuck it back into the holster under the frock coat.

"And now I'll jst trouble y'u f'r that parlor-door key."

Hopkins scowled; whipped a black look at the steady muzzle of the six-gun; dragged the key out of his pocket and passed it over.

"No, I ain't accusin' you of the murder," the woodsman went on, as cool and collected as if there had been no interruption, at the same time dropping the key into his pocket. "I'm doin' y'u the honor t' think y'u ain't want 'e death, nohow. No, y'u wanted 'im t' live, so's you could slip out all the good bills y'u dast every night and leave counter'f'it bills in his place."

"You'd jst got through changin' the money that night when 'e rushed out on y'u. He tried t' shoot—both barrels—but you fixed the caps so's they wouldn't go off. Then foller'd the struggle, and no doubt you was bad flustered when 'e fell back across the chair, dead of heart disease. Then y'u unlocked the door t' head off suspicion, but y'u must 'a' be'n flustered f'r y'u wouldn't 'a' left blood on the key."

Hopkins was bowed forward, staring hard through his glasses. The woodsman glanced at him.

"There's jst one pint I ain't quite clear on—did 'e know it was you?"

The question caught the other off guard.

"My God, yes! Oh, his dead face there in the coffin—in the black night it's before me."

He shuddered; gripped his hands till the knuckles turned white; stiffened after a moment and pulled himself together.

"Mr.—Caleb Hopkins"—a peculiar twist had slid into his voice that brought a quick look from the man addressed—"I low y'u didn't aim t' kill Pap Simon, but the Flatwoods ain't big enough any more t' hold you and me both. The Milford stage from down the river is leavin' the post office f'r the city in a few minutes. You're goin' t' be a passenger—and y'u ain't comin' back."

Hopkins winced; involuntarily dropped his hand to the butt of his six-gun, before remembering it was useless; snapped out a muttered curse and stood glaring about him.

A grin, hard and dangerous, crawled out of the woodsman's eyes and twisted his face.

"I low we'll be startin'—now," he rasped.

Hopkins swore again—an artistic

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whirled to spring at him; faced the muzzle of the steady six-gun; flinched back.

With exasperating deliberation the woodsman stored away the bundles of bills in the capacious pockets of his hunting blouse; snatched the satchel shut, dropped it to the floor and slid it toward the other with his foot.

"You'll go ahead o' me downstairs," he directed, crisp and cold. "Make whatever excuse y'u please t' Mrs. Mason, f'r anybody else we run onto. We'll stand out there at the hitch-rack till the stage comes along. When it does, you'll board it, jst like nothin' had happened. I'm aimin' t' trail y'u on Graylock. Make one false move, and—the next move will be mine."

He backed to the stair door, threw it open and, with a slight sweep of the revolver, stood aside.

The eyes of Hopkins behind his glasses were like the eyes of a trapped viper, but he dared not disobey the command. He strode through the door. The woodsman dropped the six-gun back in its holster and followed.

Mrs. Mason was at the back of the house when they came down, so they escaped encountering her. The same good luck held at the hitch-rack, for the stage was just pulling out from the post office as they reached the gate. The woodsman waved his hand; the driver drew up; Hopkins stepped aboard and it rattled away.

Twilight had put the woods to sleep when Jack Warhope rode back to the homestead from trailing the stage. He groomed his horse, fowl with sweat and sand; fed him and went straight to his cabin. Before lifting the latch he stopped a moment and, with a slow sweep of his eyes, sifted the gathering shadows.

The foothills away across on the plains were already hiding under the sable wings of the south; a sinuous lighter streak marked where the river rimmed the bottoms; the red flare of the spent day faintly spangled the west; the woods breathed softly; hardly a pulse stirred the apple blossoms; out of the silence came the tinkle of the spring under the cliff lapping down the sulphur-stained gutter on its way to the barn-lot and cattle pens.

He filled his lungs full of the serene evening; entered the door; closed and fastened it with unusual care; drew the blinds of the two small windows and lit his candle.

What to do with the bundles of money? A key to the dead banker's safe he did not have, even if he could have found the chance to open it and put them back. He took the thick bundles out of his blouse pockets and began to count them. They totaled exactly three thousand five hundred eighty dollars—one hundred seven twenties and one hundred forty-four tens. The woodsman's eyes lifted at the amount. Such a sum in five nights—it showed what Hopkins might have done in time.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

You respect a man's prejudices, if he thinks a good deal of you.

little run of oaths that the Flatwoods call "split hic'ry"—stamped across the floor; picked up his two satchels and brought them back to the desk.

"Empty 'em," the hard voice commanded.

"—d if I will," the other snarled, his eyes like live coals in his face.

"Y'u will, f'r y'u'll face Jerry Brown—and I ain't carlin' a dern which."

The other glared around; appeared to meditate some desperate move; seemed to realize his helplessness; finally slammed the satchels on the desk with a snarl and snatched out their contents.

One of them contained some clothing and a few personal belongings; the other a number of thick bundles of money—real money; the face of Hopkins left no doubt of that very important fact.

The woodsman's eyes widened a trifle.

"Lord, parson, y'u cut some swath—f'r a preacher! How much did y'u have when y'u struck the Flatwoods—real money?"

"Five hundred."

"I'm takin' y'ur word f'r that, 'e feel off that many and put the rest back."

Hopkins picked up one of the bundles; counted off bills—all tens and twenties—to the amount of five hundred dollars; and dumped the rest with the other bundles back in the satchel.

The long arm of the woodsman unexpectedly stabbed across the desk and snatched the satchel. Hopkins



They Totaled Exactly Three Thousand Five Hundred Eighty Dollars.

Sports Duds Now Emphasize Colors

White Is Relieved by Winsome Shades; Novelty Flannel Is Chic.

White unrelieved by any color is evidently not in the mode, according to the designers of sports clothes, says a fashion writer in the New York Herald. That those put out for use in the South settled many points in this department of the wardrobe does not deter the makers from expressing many new ideas and details which are decidedly interesting. That color combined with white shall be part of every sports costume, or for any other costume designed for country wear, seems to be a feature with which they like to dally.

The sleeveless jacket is one of the means used to introduce the required color note, and pipings and bindings are responsible for another form of treatment. Contrary to custom last year, the hat is more frequently white and the color used as part of the design of the dress or suit instead of the plain white dress and hat of bright color. It must be admitted that one of the difficulties with this ruling is that the white hat is not so apt to be becoming as one with some tone. An effective one seen is of Roman stripe, and apparently will be well received later in the season.

White flannel, seemingly a material of undiminished popularity, is used for the foundation of a suit, with a colorful novelty flannel used for trimming the skirt and for the sleeveless jacket.

The novelty flannel is so delightful that it merits a description by itself. It is a form of the tufted material which has been seen in one tone and used for winter suits and coats.

Heavy crapes which are being used extensively for sports and country

Gray Whipcord Cloth and Henna Embroidery

This charming new overblouse suit for spring shows a gray whipcord with embroidery of henna and gold thread.



Distinguished in Line and Material is This Sports Costume of Novelty Tufted Flannel, White With Red, Blue and Yellow.

Alpaca and Satin in Spring Fashion List

Fabrics for the earliest openings, indicate a season of brilliant satin and alpaca, the latter so fine grained and supple that it more nearly resembles crepe than the old-time, useful fabric of our grandmothers' days.

The Rodier fabric chameleone which, as its name implies, is a woolen fabric with the texture and surface of chameleone, is a feature with all the leading Paris houses for their spring models. The highly reflective surface has found wide favor for a great many fashionable frocks of the springtime. Crepe satin, employed to display both its dull and cre surface, is another material which is being thoroughly exploited. Rodier reports a great demand for cre surface moire both in plain colors and with borders and Oriental designs such as this famous house is featuring.

Skirts Shorter Than Ever for Paris Women

Cables from Paris fashion openings received by New York dress manufacturers confirms early season hints that skirts are to be much shorter. Some say the new skirts will be cut "barely below the knees."

A New York resident buyer with an office in Paris, said, however, that American styles this spring will not follow the French designs too closely. Panel effects will make shorter skirts necessary, he added, but the American models will not be too extreme.

Swagger Stick Fashion

The swagger stick has taken a new lease of life and is seen with many models in sports clothes and tailored suits. It must be said that its present form suggests a raison d'etre, for it is not a foolish little club now, with no apparent purpose but to hold in the hand; it is quite the size of a man's walking stick, and has at least a useful appearance.

For Library Table

For the library table a pair of shears increased in a dark red leather case will be found most useful. Another case of brass contains a paper knife of generous proportions.

Many Chic Belts Are Among Spring Styles

Belts are assumed to presuppose shirtwaists and the old-time waistline. But these are now almost obsolete, and a belt has become a part of the one-piece frock, to hold in ever so slightly the straight coat dress, chemise dress or coat dress. Some most artistic belts have been fashioned of leather, hand-painted and illuminated, of elastic, beaded in a pattern to represent the coat of a serpent.

Other leather belts are stitched in silks or wools, or studded with steel, jet or colored china and glass beads. Some are of silk, prettily embroidered, some are all of beads in Oriental patterns, in cut-steel or rhinestones, while the newest extravaganzas, straw, embroidered with woolen flowers, is quite the rage.

Attractive Overblouse With Short Sleeves

Quite attractive for afternoon wear is an overblouse with short sleeves, like the bertha cut in one with the frock, giving it the air of a complete frock. The edge of the sleeves, two bands and a girdle are all embroidered with gold and green beads on the beige crepe background.

Allover tucked blouses are also used, tucked perpendicular and sometimes edged with a plait; or, again, in the same effect with ribbon sewed only at one side, the idea copied probably from a model gown very popular last season. Crimped ribbon—or, as the French call it, crinated—is another manner of trimming seen in the georgette models.

A green suede cloth model has cut-

Rejuvenated

Prominent retired merchant says he feels like new man since Tanlac relieved him of his troubles. Can now outwalk men 20 years younger.



R. E. Boyd, 5000 Fourteenth St., N. W., Washington, D. C., for forty-eight years prominent hardware merchant in the national capital, but now retired, lends his name to further the cause of Tanlac.

"Indigestion and stomach weakness of a very pronounced type had troubled me for several months prior to last October fifteenth," said Mr. Boyd, recently, "but since that date the Tanlac treatment has made a new man of me. Now I eat heartily, never have a sign of indigestion, sleep like a log, and get up mornings feeling like an athlete. Today I can outwalk men twenty years younger. Tanlac alone put me in my present fine physical condition, enabling me to get more real pleasure than ever before out of meeting and mingling with friends. Tanlac has rejuvenated me completely, so to speak. It's the finest medicine I ever ran across."

Tanlac is for sale by all good druggists. Accept no substitute. Over 40 million bottles sold.

Take Tanlac Vegetable Pills.

for **catarrh**

Thousands afflicted with nasal catarrh have found Zonite highly efficacious as treatment for it. Spray the nose morning and night according to directions on bottle. Tonics up the mucous membranes and kills germs without injuring body tissues. Doesn't irritate or burn and is positively non-poisonous.

Zonite KILLS GERMS

Clear Your Skin With **Cuticura** Soap to Cleanse Ointment to Heal Absolutely Nothing Better

The most difficult part of a drinking song is the refrain.

A Standard External Remedy of known value—safe and effective. It's "Allcock's"—the original and genuine porous plaster.—Adv.

Prudery is a wig often used to cover a bald character.

Take It at Night Makes Morning Bright

St. Joseph's LIVER REGULATOR for BLOOD-LIVER-KIDNEYS The BIG 25¢ CAN

BOSCHEE'S SYRUP

Alleviates irritation, soothes and heals throat and lung inflammation. The constant irritation of a cough keeps the delicate mucous membrane of the throat and lungs in a congested condition, which BOSCHEE'S SYRUP gently and quickly heals. For this reason it has been a favorite household remedy for colds, coughs, bronchitis and especially for lung troubles in millions of homes all over the world for the last fifty-seven years, enabling the patient to obtain a good night's rest, free from coughing with easy expectoration in the morning. You can buy BOSCHEE'S SYRUP wherever medicines are sold.

There is something undeniably fascinating about the black top coat of sumptuous material which has for its only ornament a big coat of arms in white embroidery on the left side of the front. The sole ornament is so quaint and so splashy that it is extremely effective.