Old Robertson's Ranche.

By CHARLES B. LEWIS.

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PART I.

Here on the road between Fort Yuba and the town of San Quin, twenty steps from the west bank of Dog creek, and having hills to the north and a ten-mile plain to the south, stands Robertson's Ranche. The name 'Ranche' is a misnomer. There are no horses or cattle-no farming. In other days, when the stage took this route, it was a road house. It is a road house yet, but fallen into decay and having so bad a reputation that both civil and military authorities keep an eye on it. There are two abode buildingsa house and a shed barn. There is no inclosure-no shade-no surroundings, except a stack of wiry hay, a broker down wagon and a heap of poles which have been brought from the hills for firewood. It is a lonely, evil-looking place, and with three of four men skulking about it would be a nervy tenderfoot who would dismount at the

door, even at broad noonday.

It is 3 o'clock in the afternoon of an August day, and the sun is boiling down on Robertson's Ranche in a way to burn the grass out by the roots. Stretched at full length on the floor of the barroom, with a saddle for a pillow, is John Robertson, a grizzled, victous-looking man of fifty. He has been asleep for an hour. A door leading into what seems to be a living room softly opens and a girl steps into the barroom, looks about inquiringly and then walks to the front door and gazes up the trail winding over the hills. More than one man-aye! more than a hundred travelers—gave a start of surprise at seeing Kit Robertson about the Ranche between the years 1872 and 1875. A girl of seventeen or eighteen, trim of figure, small hands and feet, curly chestnut hair, dark blue eyes and a face which would have attracted a second look on Fifth avenue Her apparel was coarse, but well-fitting, and was what might be called: 'Half-Mexican-half civilized." 'Wake up, dad!"

A mile or more up the trail the girl had caught sight of a horseman headed for the Ranche. "Eh, Kit, what is it?" growls the

half-awaken man in reply. "Stranger!" "Humph!"

He yawned, turned over on his side rubbed his eyes and slowly got up and staggered over to the door. After a look up the trail he said: "Better vamose!"

Without a word she turned and made her way to the rear room, but she did not stop there. She passed out of the side door and out to the shed and I'm here all alone, and I'm tired of the around to the shady side of it and sat down with her back to the wall. By the time the stranger horseman rode up Old Robertson was very much awake and met him with a smile and

"Hot!" muttered the stranger. "Hot as-!" "You are John Robertson?" "You bet!"

The stranger turned his horse loose and entered the barroom. He wasn't a tenderfoot—he wasn't an ex-soldier she wasn't the county sheriff. Robhad met all sorts of men he knew that his caller didn't "hang



"BETTER VAMOSE!"

out" within a radius of fifty miles. For s minute they sized each other up, and during those sixty seconds had either man moved his right hand by so much as an inch there would have been a "I came to have a talk with you,"

said the stranger. "Go ahead."

"Anybody about?" "Only Kit, but I reckon we'll go out-

doors. Come out to the shed." The girl was on the outside of th shed-the men entered it and sat down close together on an old box. Girl and men were separated by an earthen wall a foot thick, but it had crumbied and was full of holes.

"Ever hear of Jim Finch?" queried the stranger as he lighted his pipe. "Yes horse thief, rustler and road

And they tell me you are a game man?"

'If there's money in it." "Plenty of money. I want to hold up the army paymaster on his next trip. and here's the spot to do it. There' six of the boys, and we two'll make eight. There won't be over eight or nine in the escort, even if it comes to fighting."

"How'll you work it?"

"Easy enough." And with the girl Kit listening to every word from the other side of the wall the strangers proceeded to give the details of a plot which had been hatched weeks before and many miles away. Fort Yuba was the first of the five forts the paymaster's route. His safe would contain eight or ten thousand dollars. His usual escort was a sergeant and six men. With his clerk and the driver of the ambulance there would be nine men, all well armed and all ready to fight in defense of the money. Eight rough and ready men might ambuscade and get away with a dozen soldiers, but there was to be no killing if it could be avoided. In case of a fight some of the outlaws would They wanted the money instead of the bullets, and Jim Finch thought it could be got without a man being grazed. When he had given the details Robertson extended his hand and said:

"I'm your man-shake!" "Good! I knew you had sand!" Ten minutes later when the stranger was galloping away and old Robertson had entered the barroom,

queried in a careless way: "What did he want, dad?" "Wanted me to help run some cattle.

"Hut you won't?" "Reckon not. Things are gettia' skeery about here, and I'm thinkin' we may pull up and leave in a few days. The sheriff's nosin' about, and the soldiers don't stop here any more. Drat em they wouldn't let a man make an honest livin' in this country!"

The girl walked over to him, and resting a hand on either shoulder looked him in the eyes and said:

"Oh, dad, I hope you'll get out of this! It's a horrible place, and you don't know how lonely I am, Why do



PEVER HEARD OF JIM FINCH?"

you drag me around from one place to another like this? We haven't had a real house since I can remember." "Don't get started on that tack!" he

gruffly replied, and yet there was a thread of kindness in his gruffness. "But I can't help it. Mother went away two years ago. Why don't she come back? The soldlers drove you away from San Jose; the sheriff drove you away from Quetin; they scared you away from Bell Rose. You are dodging about all the time; you have bad men come here. I've stuck to you, dad, when I could have cut and run, as mother did, but I'm getting tired."

"Kit, haven't I bin a good dad to you?" he asked after a long look at Most times, yes." she replied, "but

place, and I sometimes wonder-won-"What d'ye mean, Kit?" he asked,

"Are you my real dad?" she demanded, as she looked into his eyes.

"That's the third time you've asked

that question within two years!" he sternly replied, "and I'd like to know what's come over ye. If I ain't yer daddy what ye doin' here? What am I takin' keer of ye fur? Who's bin talkin' to ye?"

dred miles around, same as I am myself, but how kin we leave? What we got to go on? Why don't ye wait 'till make a raise?"
"Then you are my real daddy?" she

"Say, Kit, I never laid a hand on ye in my life!" he wishpered, "but don't drive me too fur! Shet up on sich talk or sunthin'll happen! It looks like ye

wanted to disown yer parent and cut ticks, and sich things rile me!" sticks, and sich things rile me!"
She entered the back room without another word, and old Robertson walked out doors just as Jim Finch rode up. The two walked off to the shed and sat down in the same place as before and held a conversation last ing for an hour. Then Jim handed over small bottle, laughing as he did so and rode back over the trail he had come. The girl Kit saw him from one of the windows—saw her father with the bottle in his hand—and there was a look of mingled resolution and anxiety in her eyes as she said to herself:
"I hoped they had given it up, but
they are going ahead, and now I must think of some plan to beat the game and yet save daddy!"

The paymaster's ambulance and es cort were not a new sight to Old Rob-erison on that road. When he first opened up his ranch was a stopping place for the first night out, but after his reputation began to decay the cort jogged along to Silver Springs and sunset of the second day after Jim made their came in the cedars. At Finch's second call Old Robertson had a surprise. He was sitting on the door-step smoking his pipe when he heard the rattle of wheels and the sound of noofs, and next moment the paymaster's outfit came around the corner and halted before him. He rose up and looked at the men in a puzzled way. and Captain Dakin descended from the

"See here, Robertson, we want to stop here for the night. We are behind time, and there's a storm coming up to make a wet night. Just drive our gang and give us the house for

the night."
"I don't know what you mean by gang," replied the old man, with an in-jured look, "but I shall be glad to hev ye stop fur the night. I kin give the two of ye rooms, but the boys'll hev to

put up with the shed." "Good enough," said the sergeant in charge of the escort, and the safe was lifted out of the vehicle and carried into a small bedroom off the barroom which the captain was to occupy,

The soldiers asked for neither food nor drink off the ranche. The creek furnished them with water, and they cooked their bacon and made their cof-fee at a fire in front of the shed. The paymaster and his clerk were received as guests, and a humble but hearty supper spread for them. Just before it was served the old man, who had been officiously flying around and de-claring he wanted to see everybody

claring he wanted to see everybody comfortable, entered the kitchen and said to the girl; "Kit, one of the soldiers wants a bottle of whisky on the quiet. Just drop through the trap and hand it up." He opened the trap door in the kitchen floor which led to a shallow excavation, and the girl droppe through without a look at him. Sh wasn't thirty seconds out of sight, but during this interval he lifted the cover of the coffee pot and poured part of the contents of a bottle into it. The remainder was poured into a quart bot-tle of whisky which he took from his

"For the paymaster and for the blue-pats!" he chuckled; "and in an hour from this we'll be riding away with the

The girl handed up the whiskey, drew herself out of the cellar, and as the man walked out of the room she took the coffee pot off the fire and emptted

and then put fresh coffee to steep. She had heard him at the fire and suspected what he was up to, but she did not suspect that he had a bottle of whisky and had dosed it as well.

PART II.

Up to the moment the paymaster and his clerk sat down to supper the sol-diers composing the escort had treated Old Robertson gruffly or ignored him altogether, but his persistent efforts to render himself agreeable induced the ergeant to remark

'I haven't a doubt that you are us bad as the reputation they give you, but that's neither here nor there with us. If you can bring us a drop without the captain getting on to it we'll take it that you are white."

"You shall have a bottle of my best,"
was the reply and it was the bottle he

was the reply, and it was the bottle he dosed in the kitchen which he carried out to the men under the shed a few The escort had had a hard day of it. First, a wheel had come off the ambu-lance to detain them for an hour. Then one of the mules had gone lame with a nall which had worked into his foot. Then they had met with a tree which had fallen across the road at a narrow spot and they had to make a circuit over bad ground to clear it. Late as

son's Ranche they might have kept on o Silver Springs but for the big thundto Silver Springs but for the big thund-er-storm rising in the west.

Kit waited on the paymaster and his clerk at supper. Both had heard of her, but neither had seen her before. The captain did his best to start a conver-sation with her, but the girl was brusque in her answers and soon dis-couraged him. She confined herself to monosylables until just as they were monosylables until just as they were ready to leave the table; then, having opened the door to the barroom and made sure that her father was not there, she top-toed back of the captain

ind whispered:
"Don't let the soldiers get hold of any of dad's whisky tonight! 'Why?" he asked, as he regarded her

Her father's step was heard in the parroom and she passed into the cookoom without completing the sentence. A minute later the captain left the table and sauntered out doors. There was a wild play of lightning among the black clouds in the west, but the storm was yet miles away. Strolling out to the shed he nodded to the sergeant, who had just finished his supper, and as the latter came over to him, he

"Sergeant, you know the reputation

"Yes, sir."
"Robertson is an old scoundrel and hates the military like poison. While he's all alone here he wouldn't hesitate to play us a shabby trick. No whisky, severable."

"Not a drop, sir."
"You will post a sentinel here at the shed and another in the barroom, and let the other men be ready to spring at the first alarm." "Yes, sir. May I ask if you have seen

or heard anything to arouse your sus-"Nothing of account, but we know

"Not if we were offered barrels, sir," At that moment the sergeant had the quart bottle in his pocket, and he not only meant to have his nip but to pass it around. "No whisky" meant getting drunk, as he interpreted it, and seven or eight old soldiers couldn't get dizzy-headed on a quart of whisky which old Robertson would be sure to dilute at least one-third. He stationed the sentinels, after giving each one a drink from the bottle, and half an hour later the storm broke and a wild night came on. For a few minutes after lighting up the house old Robertson hung about the barroom and acted nervous and un-easy, and he looked at his guests in a strange way. Then he observed that as no other callers could be expected and he was not feeling well he'd go to bed. He disappeared into the living-"Nobody."
"Then drop it! I don't blame ye for bein' tired of the Ranche and the folks and the hull blamed airth fur a hunning as he ran up the trail. A few minutes after his disappearance the paymaster and his clerk went to their rooms, leaving their doors open, while the sentinel sat down on a chair and wondered that he should have been posted there. There was thirty minutes of wind, deluge and reverberating thunder, and then the storm settled down to work, as it were, there being a steady downpour with now and then a blaze of lightning. The outside door had been shut to keep the storm out, and by and by the captain asked the sentinel if it could not be opened. No answer, He raised his voice and repeated the question, and then got out of bed to find the soldier fast asleep chair. He shook him, but the

in his chair. He shook him, but the man did not awake. "Whisky, eh?" whispered the pay-master as he bent over and got a snift of the man's breath. "If he got it some f the others did also. Queer whisky He was perfectly sober thirty minutes

At that moment the door of the liv At that moment the door of the liv-ing-room opened and the girl Kit stepped into the bar. She walked straight up to the man, noticed his condition, and turned on the captain

'Didn't I tell you to warn 'em?"

"And so I did," he replied.
"They've all got it and it's been drugged! Daddy fixed to drug the cof fee, but I beat him at it. He's out now o meet a gang and bring 'em in to get the safe, and you'd better see how your men are!"

The clerk came out at that moment and the two men started for the shed. It was pitch dark out doors and darker still under the shed, but after go ping around for a while they found a sleep-ing man. A vigorous shake failed to arouse him, and they groped and discovered a second, third and fourth. Every man had partaken of the drugged whisky, and every man had been drugged to insensibility. The cap-tain was cursing and the clerk groping for other bodies when they wer

Daddy meant to do for 'em and has



"DIDN'T I TELL YOU TO WARN
"EM?"

done it. The gang may come now at any minute, and they won't let your two lives stand in the way of that safe. Bring in all the carbines and cartridges you can lay hands on!"

you can lay hands on!"

They felt about and got hold of four carbines and four or five belts full of cartridges, and with one of the weapons in her hand, the girl led them back to the house. Her first move was to bar the rear door and secure the heavy blinds. Then the front was made fast, and she brought another light into the horroom and said:

doors and windows? There's others in the back room. Daddy shouldn't have gone into this, but I hope he won't get hurt. I hate to go back on daddy, but I'm tired of this life. Get ready for a hot light, for daddy must have a des-nerate gang behind him.

versed in whispers. By and by the rain ceased, and hardly had it done so when a gentle tapping was heard at the back door. The trio tip-toed into the look door. The trio tip-toed into the room, and with her mouth to one of the loopholes, Kit called out:
"Is that you, daddy?"
"Yes, upen the door," he replied.
"What have you done with the sol-

"Tied 'em up. Open the door." "Who's out there with you?"

"Who's out there with you?"
"No matter—open up."
"I can't do it, daddy. You fixed to drug the captain and his clerk, but I made new coffee. They are both all right and have got carbines, and mean to make a fight for it. I don't want to fight you, daddy, but I must help 'em out. Please give it in and so way." out. Please give it up and go away Jim Finch's gang had arrived. It was their work which had delayed the escort—their plan to oblige the pay-master to stop at the Ranche—their ext was when they reached Old Robertpectation of making an easy capture. The soldiers had been drugged and were helpless, but the house was secured against them and there were three people inside to handle weapons.

There was a moment of silence after Kit's appeal, and then it was Jim Finch who shouted through the door: "Inside, thar"! We have no time to fool away, and we ar' bound to hev that safe. Will you open the door to "Never!" replied the paymaster

"Then we'll open it fur ourselves, and you kin takethe consequences!"
The captain took one door—his clerk and the girl the other, and they had not long to wait. Both doors were attacked simultaneously with battering-rams while others of the gang outside opened fire on the windows. Bang! bang! bang! went the three carbines, fired into the darkness at a venture, and the logs were dropped and the assailants took cover, leaving two wounded to crawl after them and one who would never move hand nor foot again. Five minutes later four or five rifles opened fire on the doors, which were not bul-let-proof, though almost stopping the bullets, and Kit left her place to say to

There's a weak spot in the wall over there, and daddy knows it. Some of them will be digging through while the others are shooting."

The candle, which had been shaded, was now extinguished, and the captain and Kit moved to the spot she had indicated. Knives wer already at work, and when the dirt was heard falling inside the girl whispered to the captain:

"Now use your revolver, and give 'em every bullet in it!" She fired two shots from her carbine while the captain emptied his revolver, and the yells and groans from the mea outside showed that some of the bullets had taken effect. Leaving the captain to guard the spot, the girl took her stato guard the spot, the girl took her sta-tion at the back door, and for the next quarter of an hour there was lively fir-ing from without and within. Then the gang had enough of it and drew off, but it was long past midnight before the besieged felt sure that the cheiny had retired. Not a word had been heard from Kit for half an hour when the captain struck a light and exthe captain struck a light and ex-pressed his belief that it was now safe the men. The flame showed her lying



"SHE'S GONE, TOO, CAPTAIN."

on the floor with a bullet in her side. She had been hit with one of the last shots fired and though not rendered unconscious, she had not uttered

"I'm done for!" she said, as the pay master and his clerk bent over her. " thought I heard him groaning awhile

The horses of the escort and the am bulance mules had been driven off, but no harm had come to the soldiers who still slept under the influence of the There were four dead outlaw on the ground, and Jim Fitch was of them. There were two wounded, and old Robertson was the hardest hit. They lifted him up and carried him into house and laid bim down besid Kit. He was unconscious, but her words brought him back to life.

"That you, daddy?" she asked. Hurt bad, daddy ?"

he'll answer over there!

"The done for, too, Say, daddy, take hold of my hand. Now, then, as we lay here dying, tell me if you are my real

Then who am 17 "I stole you when you was a little-

"Clo on, daddy." But he never spoke again. She wait-ed a minute to hear his answer, and then looked up at the captain with smile. He backed away and leaned against the bar and was looking out of the open door into the darkness, when his clerk whispered. She's gone, too, captain! Perhaps

FORTUNES FROM THE SEA. Treasure Discovered at the Botton of the Ocean.

From the London Mail. But the great romance in this connection lies with the professional div-ers. One of the most extraordinary instances of a fortune found in the sea concerned the wreck of the Spanish treasure ship Alfonzo XII., which was sunk off Point Gando, Grand Canary. A single diver, David Tester, employed by the well-known diving experts, C E. Heinke & Co. of Great Portland street, recovered Spanish gold coin of the estimated value of \$100,000. The depth from which this specie was revered was twenty-six and two-thirds fathoms, or 160 feet. One of the most difficult operations

ever performed by a diver was the recovering of the treasure sunk in the Malabar off Galle. On this occasion the large iron plates, half an inch thick, had to be cut away from the mailroom, and then the diver had to work through nine feet of sand. The whole of the specie on board this vessel-upward of \$1,500,000-was saved, as much as \$80,000 having been got out

in one day. It is an interesting fact that from time to time expeditions have been fitted out and communies formed with the sole intention a searching for bur-led treasure beneat the sea. Again

"You see the loopholes cut by the and again have expeditions left New York and San Francisco in the certainty of recovering tons of builion sunk off the Brazilian coast, or lying undisturbed in the mud of the Rio de la Plata. It is, however, an everyday oc-currence for divers to be sent from perate gang behind him."

During the next hour the rain came down steadily and monotonously, and no other sounds were heard. The three on watch inside blew out one of the candles and shaded the other and conversed in whisness. He eard by the rain of the ocean—where sunken vessels are of the ocean-where sunken vessels are to be entered, and their valuable cargoes recovered

At the end of 1885 the large steamer Indus, belonging to the P. and O. company, sank off Trincomalee, having on board a very valuable East India cargo, together with a serge amount of specie. This was another case of a fortune found in the sea, for a very large amount of treasure was recov-

THE WAYS OF THE ANT.

Some Members of the Family Make

Honey Pots of Their Fellows. It has long been recognized that the ant is a very intelligent insect and leads a very complicated social life. There are classes among them-plutocrats, laborers and criminals, accordingto a writer in the New England Journal.

The author of the recent work on entomology notes the curious habit of one species of ant of "turning some of their fellows into animated honey

Instead of placing honey in a comb as the bees do, the ant selects a certain number of workers and disgorges the honey obtained from the cucalypti (on which it is deposited by coccidae and other insects into the throats of their victims. The process being continually repeated causes the stomachs of these workers to be distended to an enormous

This extraordinary habit was - discovered in the case of certain auts in Mexico, and subsequently shown to prevail in Colorado. It has been found to exist in Australia also, and Mr. Froggart describes and figures three ants of the genus camponotus that pursue this remarkable practice. The ants containing the honey are

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J. A. Barron, 215 Lackswanna and Priceburg. STEREO-RELIEF DECORATIONS AND PAINTING. S. H. Morris, 247 Wyoming ave.

TEA, COFFEE AND SPICE. Grand Union Tea Co., 103 S. Main, TRUSSES, BATTERIES, RUBBER GOODS

Benjamin & Benjamin, Franklin and Soruce. INDERTAKER AND LIVERY.

UPHOLSTERER AND CARPET LAYER. C. H. Hazlett, 226 Spruce street, WALL PAPER, ETC.

Ford, W. M., 120 Penn, WATCHMAKER AND IEWELER.

WINES AND LICCORS. Walsh, Edward J., 32 Lackawanna. WIRE AND WIRE ROPE.

Washburn & Moen Mig Co., 119 Franklis



