

delighted cordiality and placed a chair for him close to the cheerful blaze of the kitchen fire and then sat down opposite to amuse herself with his growing agitation and await developments.

As Napoleon entered the kitchen his eye had failed to note a dusky figure that was slouching in the shadow of the lilac bushes at one of the kitchen windows. This figure belonged to Mr. Zeb Pease, a lazy, wild unmanageable country youth, whose native qualities of meanness and reckless daring had been much improved by reading large quantities of dime novels and who had lately decided to lay by the unpleasant restraints of civilization, and under the lofty name of Daring Dick the outlaw, set up business as a blood-thirsty villain and bandit of the woods. This purpose he had carried out. He had stuck a couple of large revolvers in his leather belt, hung a cavalry saber at his side, and, on the whole, presented a most startling and ferocious appearance. He had found a cave in a deeply wooded glen, called Woodchuck Hollow, at some miles from the village, and begun his bandit career in proper form.

Thus far, however, the feats of this youthful outlaw had been mainly confined to nightly raids upon farm yards and cellars belonging to the neighbors in his efforts to keep supplied with the luxuries of life. But lately he had come to believe that no first rate bandit such as he aspired to be, could get along without the charms of female society. The average bandit chieftain of the novels had a wife and Zeb had decided, after mature study of the situation, that he must have one too in order to render his bandit career a perfect success. He was vain enough also of his handsome appearance to believe that with his remarkable personal advantages made vastly greater by the imposing array of sword and revolvers he must offer irresistible attractions to any young lady of his choice. And then, further, he reasoned that even if by some chance his offers of love were rejected it would be all one to him any how.

It was the privilege of a bandit chieftain to capture the lady of his choice should she resist his claims, and carry her off without further ceremony. In fact, Zeb rather inclined toward the latter way of taking a partner for life as being more bandit-like and more full of romantic excitement.

In looking about among the attractive young ladies of the country Zeb had concluded at once that Theo Brown was precisely fitted to reflect credit upon his choice and do the honors of