

THE TREASURE OF THE FOREST.

"Gentleman at the door who wishes to see you, sir," said the office boy. "He has no card."

"Show him in!" I answered, and the boy disappeared.

A moment later the door opened and a tall, well-dressed man advanced to my desk.

"How are you, Alger?" he exclaimed, holding out his hand, which I grasped mechanically.

"You have me at a disadvantage," I said, after a keen glance into my visitor's face. "You know me, but I do not recognize you."

"Not know me?" cried he, laughing. "Well, that is rich."

Then something in the nature of that jolly laugh caught my ear, and I exclaimed:

"Surely you're not—not Tom Brinton."

"The very same," he replied, laughing again.

Yes, a closer glance at the sun-browned face convinced me that it was he. But how changed he seemed from the Tom Brinton I had known when we were classmates at college five years ago.

"Well, by all that's wonderful," I gasped, "how did you ever happen to turn up here?"

"Why, we live in the city now," he exclaimed, readily.

"We?" I repeated, quizzically.

"Yes; Cecil and I. Oh, you don't know that I'm married. Well, I am. That happy event happened just three months ago."

Well, I was immensely surprised, to say the least. To think that Tom Brinton, the most bashful fellow in the class, should get married was quite a shock. Why, when he was at college he would go red and white by turns if a girl merely happened to glance at him. And now he was married. I was simply overcome. At length I managed to blurt out:

"Why, Tom, where did you ever get the nerve to speak to her?"

"Oh, that's quite a different matter," he replied carelessly.

"Maybe I'll tell you about it sometime."

And tell it he did, that very evening, as we sat sipping our wine in the parlor of the Marsden Club. And this is the story, told in his own words, as nearly as I can remember them:

"My first three years after graduation were spent in the employ of my father, who, as you remember, had quite an extensive