

# TWO-BITS AND A NICKEL.

By H. WALTER BURR.

"Oh, this is grand!" exclaimed George Casey, as he paused for a few moments to enjoy the embracing air and scenery. All about him the mountains lay in tumbling heaps, further away the foothills sloped gracefully downward, and still further down in the valley and out over the mining camp he could see the old trail that stretched away to the westward. He was new to these scenes, having recently come to Wyoming from his home in Boston, and he was drinking in the atmosphere of the new life to the fullest.

"Y-ess," drawled the girl as she overtook her companion; "but I'm a thinkin' as how we better start for home. It's a-gettin' pretty late, and we've come a ways from town. We can't much more than get there by dark."

"Two-bits," said George, tauntingly, "I believe you're a coward. Here you were born and raised in this country, and you're scared about being out in the hills after dark. Now, I'm tenderfoot, and yet I wouldn't be afraid to wander all over these hills from now until morning."

"George Casey was indeed a tenderfoot," but this was not the worst of his failings. Raised in a wealthy family, he had been given everything that money could buy. His father's house to suit himself. That he was the most important portion of the family, he did not doubt for a moment, and it was his greatest desire that others should share that opinion with regard to him. When he was a boy he was spoiled, and the summer in Wyoming looking after some mining interests, he determined that of all other things he would like to spend that there was one tenderfoot that was not so tender after all. The few friends whom he had made on his various journeys over the country, he had not forgotten. Cold Springs, had soon tired of his lordly ways and the only one who cared to accompany him on his various journeys over the hills was Two-bits, who followed him around like a faithful dog.

Nobody could tell where Two-bits got her name. She was a rough, uncouth girl of fourteen years, born in the wilds and true to her birthplace. Her checkered hair and swarthy features took Indian blood—a fact of which she was proud.

No two characters could possibly have been more opposite than those of George Casey and Two-bits. She had always been accustomed to associating with roughly-dressed, brown-skinned, low-spirited cowboys, who treated her like one of their own kind, and sometimes enjoyed teasing her for the association. Her father's admiration had been awakened in her for this smooth-shaven, well-dressed, polite young gentleman who had come from the hills, and she had heard such wonderful stories. She had dreamed of such individuals but had never seen one before. And since no one else in that immediate vicinity seemed to share the feeling, he gladly allowed her the monopoly of it.

So the two had formed a sort of social system all their own, with just two classes—master and vassal.

"N-aw," she drawled, "I ain't no coward, neither. But I tell you, we can't go back the way we come, for it's too long round. We got to go straight back toward the Springs, and it's a good four hours' walk. Maybe you don't know that them there hills just above the camp has got fire all under 'em. They is great big cracks that is under so warm yer can hardly hear yer hand in 'em. Maybe yer wouldn't like ter fall down one of 'em later the fire."

"Ho, ho, ho," laughed the tenderfoot, such a ghost story. Now Miss, he added, "do you see that big pile of rocks yonder? Well, that's the highest place there is around here, and I'm going to go there."

"Huh!" muttered Two-bits. "Yer kent neither. A while back yer thought this was the highest—yer yer are, an' that's the highest. It'll be the same way when yer git that; the highest will be just beyond. I tell yer, it's time to go home."

"Go home, then, if you want to, and be afraid. I'm going on. It isn't more than a mile farther."

"It's all of five miles!" she declared; but the master started along, and the faithful slave followed obediently. If he were going, there was nothing for it but that she must accompany him. They trudged along in silence for half an hour, and still the peak seemed as far away as ever.

"Confound it!" said George, at last, "if we had not stopped so long to talk about it, we could have been there before this. I suppose it's too late to go any farther."

Had Two-bits been more cultured and learned, it is likely she would have said, "I told you so." But she only turned as

Then he remembered that she had not been in the best humor, and so for a moment she would probably enjoy the sport as much as any of the others.

"Hello!" called a voice, "Where are yer, Mr. Casey?" It was the voice of Two-bits, and it was sweet music in his ear.

"Right here, Two-bits," he answered, "Have you brought help?"

She came to the other side of the gulf, and thrusting a stout plank out toward him she drawled:

"Y-ess. That's er help. Did yer think I yadn't a-goin' ter give yer way ter the gang? Yer would never a-heard the last of it. I guess we ken make it all right with this here." Then, making sure the plank was resting securely on either side, she ordered, "Now, git s'ry, and don't waste no time."

As they came to the last crevice where the board was necessary, George paused.

"Well," drawled the girl, "this is the last one, yer goin' to give up now? If yer do, I'll leave yer fer good, dead sure."

"Two-bits," said George, and there was considerable pathos in his voice; "Two-bits," he repeated, "will you forgive me for calling you a coward? You are the bravest girl I ever knew, and you've been real kind to me to-night. Will you forgive me?"

"Aw, come along with yer," said the girl, greatly embarrassed. "It's my platoon yer fellers in the east list talk ter me, yer head's out half the time, and don't mean what yer say."

They heaved the plank, walking side by side, and the board had been thrown away and from their appearance no one would have known that anything out of the ordinary had occurred. As he left her on her own door he pressed her hand tightly, and said:

"I'll be a brave girl—a regular little heroine."

Next day she found a pony tied to the post front of her mother's house, and on the beautiful saddle which it bore, was pinned a note which read:

"Well, I nicked a present to Two-bits, the brave little girl who was good to a coward."

### TO ENTERTAIN LONGWORTHS.

Ambassador Reid and Wife will Present Young Couple to England's Court.

The Longworths will be guests, while in London, of the American Ambassador and his charming wife.

Refreshed by her long vacation, Mrs. Reid has returned to the Court of St. James with her hands full of preparations for King Edward's first drawing



MRS. WHITLAW REID.

room of the season, to be held May 25, at which she will present many American women, some of whom will be her guests.

Naturally, the presentation most important to the American colony in London this season will be that of Mrs. Nicholas Longworth, President Roosevelt's daughter. During their stay in London, Mr. and Mrs. Longworth will be the guests of the Reids at Dorchester House, where the suite occupied by the ambassador and his wife will be at the disposal of the Longworths. To add to the attractiveness of these rooms, some choice boudoir furniture has recently arrived from France to lend a fresher bridal beauty to them.

### Exiled Queen Ranavalo.

Among the members of the ruling families of the island most of whom have known many sorrows, there are few figures so pathetic as that of Ranavalo, the ex-Queen of Madagascar, who is now on a visit to Paris, and who since 1897 has been a queen without a throne, living in Algiers on the charity somewhat grudgingly vouchsafed her by the French Government.

Ranavalo is now forty-four, and although her complexion inclines to a dusky shade, she is by no means unattractive. She possesses a distinctly good figure, dresses with much taste, and wears her clothes with distinction. She ruled over Madagascar for fourteen years, and like the two queens who preceded her, became the wife of the Prime Minister. When she began her reign the country was at war with France.

### Chinchillas Becoming Scarce.

The chinchilla, the little rat-like animal which produces the popular fur, is in danger of extinction.

The chinchillas were formerly found in great numbers in the high ranges of the Andes, in Bolivia and Chili, but owing to the demand for their skins they have been ruthlessly hunted, in season and out of season, and the Chilean Government finds it almost impossible to enforce a law which has been passed for their protection.

The exports from Coquimbo, the principal port for this trade, amounted last year to twelve thousand dozen skins, and the prices paid were almost double those of the previous year.

### Joke on Time.

A Pennsylvanian named Weeks, with a chronic habit of purloining watches, has been given the Time of his life by the judge, who sent him up for ten years.—New York Evening Mail.

What is the difference? He is no friend of Hours.—Washington Post.

Wait a Minute. We Second the motion.—Chicago Tribune.

Year! Year! What's all this about anyway?—Wichita Eagle.

This squib has been going the rounds so long, that it appears to us a little Decade.

### Most Blessed of Emotions.

Oh, toiling hands of mortals! Soon, oh it seems to you, you must come forth on some conspicuous hilltop, and but a little way further, against the setting sun, descry the spires of El Dorado. Little do ye know your own blessedness, for to travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive, and the true success is to labor.—Robert Louis Stevenson.

### The Newest Wearing Apparel.

The Princess gown occupies the centre of fashion's stage for spring and summer, and will doubtless "go to mill and to meeting" during the coming months. It appears in all sorts of gowns from the exquisite creations for evening to the walking skirt and its accompanying bolero, but there are those who cannot and will not wear this style of garment, and for these there are very pretty skirts, cut circular, and flaring widely about the lower edge. These skirts are constructed from all sorts of materials, even to the thinnest of summer fabrics, and if properly made they will not necessarily give much trouble by sagging. However, for the skirt of washing stuff, the gored models are much more satisfactory and patterns for these can be obtained with the modish flare about the bottom.

The vogue of the circular skirt has led to the fashion for flat skirt trimmings. These sometimes take the form of stitched bands of the material or silk, while braids of one or several kinds are often interlaced in design about the bottom. Another mode of skirt trimming much used is consecutive rows of shaped flounces, one overlapping the other and extending at each side of the front panel. One might almost say that the front panel in unbroken length from waistband to hem prevails in the majority of gowns.

When bands of the same fabric as the skirt are put on as trimming they are usually piped with a contrasting color; the tunic and flounce being often suggested by the manner in which these are applied.

As for coats, the bolero is in high feather this year, and figures in all varieties of wear from the ornamental to the useful. As an ornament it appears in the negligence of the morning as well as upon the evening toilette. The little lace and embroidered boleros are to be much worn with soft silk and summer gowns and will prove very fetching adjuncts to the toilette.

Every woman and girl will do well to provide herself with several lingerie waists for nice wear. These little blouses are very important in the wardrobe, no matter how meagre or sumptuous it be. They can be had in a great variety of styles and in all of the sheer summer fabrics. Those embroidered, or inset with lace, are very dainty and considered quite suitable for any occasion where one needs to look well. On cool days they can be worn over a slip of pink, blue or lavender and be very pretty and becoming. Many of these waists are made with low sleeves but they can be had with the long sleeve—and some of the newest imported blouses are made with sleeves which end in a long point over the hand.

In materials, no one will go astray in purchasing voile and linen for her spring and summer gowns. There are linens of all kinds from the sheer handkerchief qualities to the fine bleached linens. There are also cashmeres, raw silks, mohairs and colenones as well as the immortal serge. White is promised much vogue for summer, and mixed with black it is very smart for the new suits. These suitings are mostly in small checks, or stripes.

### Was a "Anonymous" Letter.

A certain Congressman from Virginia has long retained in his employ a colored man by the name of Ezekiel. One morning the master started for the Capitol, leaving behind him a letter he had forgotten. Sometime in the afternoon he remembered the communication, and as it was of some importance, he hastened back home only to find that the letter was nowhere to be seen in his library. He had a distinct recollection that it had been left on the table. He summoned Ezekiel and asked if he had seen it.

"Yassah, yo' lef' it on yo' table."

"Then where is it now?"

"I mailed it, sah."

"You mailed it? Why, Zeke, I had not put the name and address on the envelope!"

"Jes' so, sah! I thought it was one of dem nonymous communishuns."

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HE CAME TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GULF.

doggedly as before, and followed him back toward the camp.

The sun had come down, and soon the long twilight was drawing to a close. Now and then the howl of a coyote was heard far out over the hills, and in another direction the answering note of its mate. The echo made the whooping take up the sound, until it seemed that the two travelers must be in the midst of an immense pack of the creatures.

"For mercy's sake let me take the lead," said Two-bits; and not waiting for his consent, she pushed her way ahead of him. He had called her a coward, and she would show him that she was not one.

He willingly took his place behind the guide, for he felt safer when he knew that she had taken the responsibility of leading. He secretly wished that he had taken her advice and started home sooner, but he would not admit it to her.

"I'll bet yer bustle faster'n that," she remarked, "er I'll be all up with us when

strained his eyes to catch sight of the retreating party, he thought with bitter anguish of the jokes that would be enjoyed at his expense by the fellows in the camp. He knew that he had tried to lead it over there and now they would have a chance to get even. He could imagine Two-bits, as she was into the "Last Chance," and in great hilarity told the boys how she had led "that fellier from Boston" out on the edge of a chasm on Burning Hills. He could almost hear their loud laughter as they prepared to come in search of him.

In the midst of these thoughts he spied a light in the distance. It wavered, was lost, and appeared again. Yes, it was a lantern, and it was bearing toward him. Should he shout and show them where he was? No, that would only add pleasure to their huge joke. He would remain quiet, even at the risk of having them miss him.

"If Two-bits only had sense enough to tell them some yarn about me getting hurt, or something of that kind," he said.

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