BILL DAVIS' VACATION.

MAN came hastily down Chestnut street, Philadelphia, and mounted the stone steps in front of the Central station.

He entered the broad, old-fashioned doorway with the step of one who was at home in the building.

Two steps from the front door was another, the entrance to a large room .-Here the newcomer found a number of brother officers, lounging, smoking and gazing out upon the street.

"Hulloa, Bill! seen the chief yet ?" asked a tall, broad-shouldered,good-looking man, as the new comer entered.

No. Why ?" asked Bill. "Oh, nothing in particular, I sup-

pose. He asked for you a while ago,' was the reply. Bill turned upon his beel and left the

room. Mounting the stairs, he reached the second floor, and entered the chief's

"Here's a letter that was left for you. Bill," said the chief, as he handed the missive to him.

"And here's something else I want you to take in hand. You have been working very faithfully in the city for the past year, and this job will take you into the country for a month, perhaps.

As the chief ceased speaking he handed a telegram to the man before him.

Bill glanced at it in a careless manner, and read the following:

COUPLY, Pa., Aug. 6, 1864.

"Send one of your smartest detectives as soon as possible. A mysterious murder has been committed and if you comply with my request the life of an innocent man may be saved.

"A. J. FERGUSON."

One hour after reading the above, Bill Davis, one of the shrewdest detectives in Philadelphia, was being carried as fast as steam could carry him, toward the village of Couply.

For the first time since his start Bill thought of the letter which the chief had given him.

Taking it from his pocket he proceeded to open it, and as he began to read, the careless look upon his face deepened to one of intense interest.

It ran as follows:

COUPLY, July 20, 1864.

"Well, dear old boy! I suppose you thought that I had forgotten you. No, sir! And I take this opportunity of writing to beg that you will come to Couply and spend a week or two with me. To be in at the wedding, you know—at the wedding! Yes, I am captured at last, old boy, and it will be your turn next. I think I see you smile at the thought that you will ever yield up the charms of old bachelorhood. I shall say nothing about my bride, but shall leave you to see for yourself. But when you see her sister, Rose, if you don't fall in love, why then you never will; and I will be willing to believe that your are a hopeless case. Be sure and come, old boy. The country is just delightful.

"Yours, NED HARRINGTON."

Our hero did smile, but not at the thought of falling in love. Oh, no!

His was a smile of pleasure at the thought of seeing his old school chum, whom he had not met for over five

William Davis had often longed for a home and home surroundings one to love, and for the love of some warm heart to cheer him on in life's rough journey.

But he remained alone; none in the wide world seemed to care for him. He threw all his tireless energy, all his unyielding perseverance into his profession. and he stood at the head of it. It was said that Bill Davis was the best detective on the force.

"Coup-lee!" shouted the brakeman. poking his head through the door, and then out again, as though he expected to have something shied at him.

Couply was a small country station, and our hero found himself to be the only passenger for that place.

The few loafers who always gather about a country station to see the incoming train, were there. Of one of these our hero asked to be directed to the residence of Mr. Ferguson.

Receiving his directions he was about to start, when he was accosted by an elderly gentleman who had just come

"I think you were inquiring for Mr. Ferguson, if I mistake not ?" he said.

"Yes; do you know him?" "I am the man you are looking for, if

you are from Philadelphia." "I am."

"Come with me," said the stranger. Our hero followed his guide, and after walking a short distance they entered a

neat, pleasant-looking cottage. Together they entered the library, and Mr. Ferguson at once proceeded with the business he had in hand.

"You are a detective, are you not?"

"I am," replied Bill, as he handed a card bearing his name to his com-

"Ah, you are Mr. Davis, I have heard of you before, and believe you are capable of working up this case, it any

"Thank you," returned the detective.

"Now please begin at the beginning and tell me the whole story. You said, I believe, that the life of an innocent man might be saved."

"I did; and I firmly believe that Ned Harrington is innocent of the crime of

"Ned Harrington!" Great heavens!"

gasped the detective. The dectective was used to great surprises and startling developments, but all his self-control left him, and he sank back in his chair, pale as a sheet, at the

mention of his friend's name. "You know him?" said Mr. Fergu-

son, in some surprise. "He is my friend. We graduated from the same school, and I, too, know that he is innocent. Such a manas Ned could not take the life of a fellow man." "I am glad that you are his friend,

and we can work together," said Mr. Ferguson, extending his hand, which the detective grasped and shook warmly.

"Now for the details," resumed the merchant. "The story is short, and the facts seem to be very conclusive. One evening Ned was coming across a pasture lot upon the other side of the village and found the body of a murdered man .-The corpse lay directly across the footpath which was used by those living upon the other side, as a short cut across the lots. He stooped over the body and drew from it a long clasp-knife. The deed had not been committed long, for the body was hardly cold, and as he drew forth the knife a stream of blood followed it. At this moment several men, with Lawyer Grey at the head, came upon him. They had been traveling in that direction and had suddenly come upon the terrible scene. The freshness of the blood, which was hardly cold, the finding of Ned standing over the body, knife in hand, the confused manner in which he answered their questions, all seemed to point to him as the guilty one. And when it was discovered that the knife which had done the deed was Ned's own, with his name upon the handle, nothing seemed clearer than that he was the murderer. Since his imprisonment he has protested his innocence, but of what avail? When his trial comes off he will be condemned just as sure as the sun shines!"

"His declaration is sufficient. I would believe Ned against the world."

The detective remained a while longer, and was introduced to the wife and two daughters of his friend. He could not help admiring Ned taste as he gazed upon the fair face of Mabel Ferguson. He smiled as he stood face to face with the gentle Rose. This was the maiden with whom Ned had predicted that he would fall in love.

He did not think so, however, as he gazed upon her thoughtful face and looked into the clear depths of her blue

Mr. Ferguson had informed him that Ned was engaged to his daughter Mabel; for Ned had not mentioned the name of his betrothed bride in his letter, and but for that he would never have suspected that it was to the daughter of the merchant that he was engaged.

"I must see Ned," said Bill, after he had spent some time in the company of e merchant and his fami

He had no difficulty in gaining access to his friend.

"Bill!" gasped Ned.

"Oh, Ned, it thus I find you ?" "Oh, Bill, you don't believe meguilty of this great crime, do you?"

"No,my boy. Sooner would I believe that the sun ceased to rise. I believe you to be innocent."

"Thank you, Bill. But how did you get here? I mean how is it that you are here at this critical juncture?"

"Well, I received your letter inviting me down here. I did not get the fetter until to-day, at the same time I received a telegram from Mr. Ferguson, or rather the chief did, asking for a smart detective. I was detailed to work up the case. Little did I think I was to spend my vacation in saving the life of my friend. Owing to your letter having been written a week or two before the telegram, I knew nothing about the affair. Now tell your story. Be particular and tell

Thereupon Ned related the facts which are already known to the reader.

" Had Miss Ferguson any other suitors besides yourself?" asked Bill.

"Why, yes." "How did they take their defeat in the matter ?"

"Why, only as gentlemen should."

" All ?"

"Well, no, not all. Robert Grey, the lawyer, seemed angered at first, but he seemed to recognize the inevitable and take it quietly enough after a short time."

"Do you know of any other instance in which this lawyer was defeated in his object ?"

"Let me see. Yes, there was the Medon's estate. He wanted that, but a young man stepped in and paid off the mortgage. That kept it out of his

"What happened to that young

man ?"

A strange look came into Ned's face as he saw the drift of the detective's

"Great heavens, Bill, what do you mean y"

"Answer my question, please." " He dled within six months."

" How did he die ?"

" His body was found in the mill-pond and it was always supposed that he fell

" Very good. And now, Ned, when does your trial come off?"

" In two weeks."

" Now, I must leave you, but I have hopes that you will be cleared. I will do my best."

" I am sure you will, Bill."

" But what do you mean about Lawyer Grey Y"

"Never mind; you'll know soon enough."

It was night when the detective quitted the cell in which his friend was confined. Having ascertained the whereabouts of the residence of Lawyer Grey. he walked slowly in that direction, intending to survey the premises.

Why he did so he could hardly have explained, but he had an idea, and he determined to work it out.

Having arrived opposite the lawyer's handsome residence, he looked about him as well as the darkness would permit. As he was standing in the darker shadow of some trees he saw the form of a man dart quickly forward and enter the house.

" I must gain admittance to that house by hook or crook," muttered the detect

The two weeks that intervened before Ned Harrington's trial passed away rapidly. Strange to say, the detective had disappeared, and nothing had been seen or heard from him.

If Mr. Ferguson felt any misgivings he did not mention the fact. Some strange influence urged him to trust the officer. He believed that there was a deep plot somewhere to ruin Ned. It was well known to some persons that a detective was upon the ground, but few knew where to look for him.

Still, the merchant feared that in spite of all his caution, the detective might have met with foul play. In no other way could his strange disappearance be accounted for.

At length the day of the great trial arrived. The court-house was thronged with eager people. It was with the greatest difficulty that the officers could keep the aisles clear.

Ned Harrington, pale and careworn, sat in the dock. But there was no look of guilt upon his face, and his eyes never faltered as he gazed upon the multitude. Mr. Ferguson and his family were there, sitting near the prisoner. Mr. Ferguson gazed anxiously over the sea of faces, hoping to see the detective. But he did not see him, and his heart sank. How could he hope to see the prisoner go forth a free man?

The lookout was indeed dark.

Ned had many friends present, but they had lost all hope.

Near the witness-stand, among other laborers, sat a rough clad miner. It was nothing strange to see such a man there. There were many such men in the village every day, and this man seemed to excite no particular attention. But his interest in the trial seemed to be intense.

The counsel for the State, a young and rising lawyer, opened his argument for the prosecution, and as fact after fact was brought forward, the doom of Ned Harrington seemed sealed.

Lawyer Grey was called to the witness-stand, and he repeated his story with terrible distinctness and precision.

The counsel for the defence now opened, but it was simply an elaborate argument, the principle feature of which was the prisoner's previous good char-

He was a smart young lawyer, and he did his best, but he had no facts to present. He recalled Lawyer Grey to the stand, when the miner asked permission to question him.

"Certainly,my man,if you know anything about this case, let us hear it by all means," answered his Honor.

"The crime was committed upon the night of the 25th of July, wasn't it?"

"At about 10 o'clock at night."

" Yes."

"Well, I'd like to ask where you were at 10 o'clock on the night of the 25th of July."

The lawyer started, and for an instant his face paled, but by a powerful effort he controlled his emotion.

What do you mean, fellow?" he asked. "Your Honor, am I to be questioned by every vagabond rascal that chooses to speak ?"

"You need not answer if you don't care to," replied the court.

"Then I decline to do so," growled the lawyer. "The miner grinned audibly, as he

asked: "Maybe you won't object to telling us where you were at midnight on August 6th ?"

"I was at home in bed," replied the lawyer, although his voice trembled slightly as he spoke. He felt troubled. Why, he could not tell. Who was this man who seemed to read his very soul with his burning gaze? Was he the simple miner that he appeared to be?

"Let Mrs. Reid come forward," was the next request of the miner.

Mrs. Reld, Lawyer Grey's housekeeper, came forward.

What do you know about this case?"

asked the judge.
"On the night of August 6th I sat up nearly all night. I had the tooth-ache. and found it impossible to sleep. I know that Lawyer Grey held an interview with a strange, rough-looking man and that it was half-past one o'clock when he went up to his room."

The lawyer's face was pale, but his teeth were tightly elenched, as though he had resolved to brave out whatever might be said of him.

The testimony of the housekeeper caused quite a sensation throughout the court-room.

"Now, yer Honor, if that man will lle one time, why would he not lie any time ?" asked the miner, quaintly. Without giving time for a reply, he

continued: "Have you got the knife that done the deed ?"

"Yes-here," said the judge, as the knife was produced.

"Is that Ned Harrington's knife?"

" It is," Hardly had the question been an-

swered, when the miner produced a knife the exact counterpart of the one in the judge's hand.

"Which is Ned Harrington's knife?" he asked, as he stepped forward and laid the knife by the side of the other. The judge, and those around him, gazed with astonishment upon the two knives .-They were exactly alike; Ned's name was engraved upon the handle of each, in exactly the same place.

"Let Robert Smith come forward," asked the miner, and in the response to the demand, a strange man came forward.

"You are in the hardware business in New York, are you not?" asked the miner. "I am."

"Did you, or did you not, have this knife made the exact counterpart of this other, to the order of Lawyer Grey ?" " I did." "Liar!" thundered the lawyer, start-

ing up. "Your Honor, I protest. Am I to be subjected to this outrage, to be insulted by this miserable coal digger ?" He was ordered down; and when he had ceased his raving, the strange miner

resumed. "Let Billy Duffy come forward!" At the mention of this name, the lawyer's face became perfectly ghastly; but ere he could utter a word, a man led by two officers, came forward. He was very weak from loss of blood which was flowing from an old re-opened wound in his breast. His face was pale, and his clothes were wet with his life-blood,-He fixed his wavering gaze upon the

judge. "Your Honor, I'm dying," he said in a faltering voice. "I have been the scapegrace of this town; I have led a bad, wicked life I know; but God forgive me! But, your Honor, I can do one act of repentance ere I die. As I hope for mercy from above, I declare that Ned Harrington is innocent of the erime for which he is now being tried .-Mine was the hand that drove the knife to the heart of William Roberts. But there, cowering before you, is the real murderer, Robert Grey; with my dying breath I swear it! He hated young Harrington because he won the hand of the lady whom the lawyer loved. He furnished me with the knife, and told me where to strike the blow-when he knew that Ned was coming directly across that fatal spot. Grey contrived to be on the ground with several others and thus he entrapped Ned. He knew that Ned had lost his knife, and he thought if he could get one made like it he would more effectually fix the crime upon him. I visited him upon the night of August 6th, and we had a quarrel about the pay; he stabbed me, and, thinking me dead, carried me down into the cellar, and there left me. Why, or for what purpose that coal miner was in the house, I cannot tell; he rescued me and took me to the house where he boarded, and secretly cared for me for two weeks. But I am dying, and as I am a dying man, I've told the truth !-Yes, I'm-"

Before he could finish his voice failed him; limp and lifeless his form slid from the grasp of the two officers, and fell heavily upon the floor. When they raised him up he was dead.

"I've played my game and lost?"
hissed the lawyer. "But you, curse you, you shall not gain by my downfall."

As he spoke he drew a pistol and aimed it full at Ned Harrington. With a bound that was like the leap of a wild animal, the miner was upon him, and before he could fire, the weapon was knocked from his grasp; the next instant there was a loud click, and a pair of delicate steel bracelets encircled his

. " No, you don't!" cried the miner. "In the flend's name, who are you?"

hissed the baffled villain. "Yes, who are you, sir?" questioned the court.

" I'm Bill Davis, the Philadelphia detective," was the quiet reply.

The excitement in the court-room was Intense; cheer after cheer came from the vast multitude. A desperate rush was made toward the platform, and Ned Harrington and the detective were raised shoulder high, and borne from the court. The detective had spent his vacation nobly; he had saved the life of his friend !

The jury rendered a verdict of " not guilty," without leaving the room. Ned Harrington was borne from the courtroom a free man, without a stain upon ble name.

" But, my dear fellow, how did you do it? How did you find out so much about Lawyer Grey, when none of us suspected ?" asked Ned.

"I thought it a singular coincidence that the only two men that crossed that man's path, should meet with such disastrous ends," replied Will. " A young man baffles the lawyer in obtaining an estate, and in a short time his body is found floating in the mill-pond. Another young man baffles him in obtaining a wife, and, ere two weeks pass, that young man is the inmate of a felon's cell, charged with murder. We detectives have a way of putting things together, and those two facts gave me an idea which I resolved to work out. After my interview with Ned, the first night of my stay here, I visited the residence of Grey. While looking around outside of the house, I beheld a man enter in a very suspicious manner. I resolved to gain admittance to the house myself; I did so, and overheard the interview between the lawyer and the man who entered, who was no other than Billy Duffy. I saw the lawyer stab him, saw him carry the supposed dead man into the cellar. I followed him, and when he left, I examined the wounded man, and found that, though badly hurt, yet he was not dead. I secretly removed him to a house where I had resolved to board, and nursed him until the trial came off. I then disguised myself, that I might the better follow the course I had marked out for myself. You know the rest."

"Ay, we know the rest. God bless you, Will !" cried Ned, giving his hand a warm grasp,

Three days after the above event, the detective "stood up" at his friend's marriage. And we are happy to state that Ned's predictions did come true.— Will did fall in love with the gentle Rose Ferguson, and when the bells rang a merry Christmas chime, they were married. As for for Robert Grey, to use the Irlshman's expression, "he was condemned to be hung, but saved his life by dying in prison!"

A ship on the broad, boisterous and open ocean needeth no pilot. But it dare not venture alone on the placid bosom of a little river, lest it be wrecked. Thus it is with life. 'Tis not in our open, exposed deeds that we so much need the still voice of the silent monitor, as in the small, secret, everyday acts of our lives.

Nothing is more common than for great thieves to ride in triumph when small ones are punished. But let wickedness escape as it may, at the last it never fails of doing itself justice, for every guilty person is his own hang-

There is one thing about a hen that looks like wisdom - they don't cackle much till they have laid their eggs. Some folks are always bragging and cackling what they are going to do

Good resolutions, like a squallingbaby at church, should always be carried out.

One life; a little gleam of time be tween two eternities; no second chance

for us forevermore. He who wants little has always. enough.

A Wise Deacon.

" Deacon Wilder, I want you to tell me how you kept youself and family well the past season, when all the rest of us have been sick so much, and have

had the doctors visiting us so often." "Bro. Taylor, the answer is very easy. I used Hop Bluers in time; kept my family well and saved the doctor bills. Three dollars' worth of it kept us well and able to work all the time. I'll warrant it has cost you and the neighbors one to two hundred dollars apiece to

keep sick the same time." "Deacon, I'll use your medicine here-