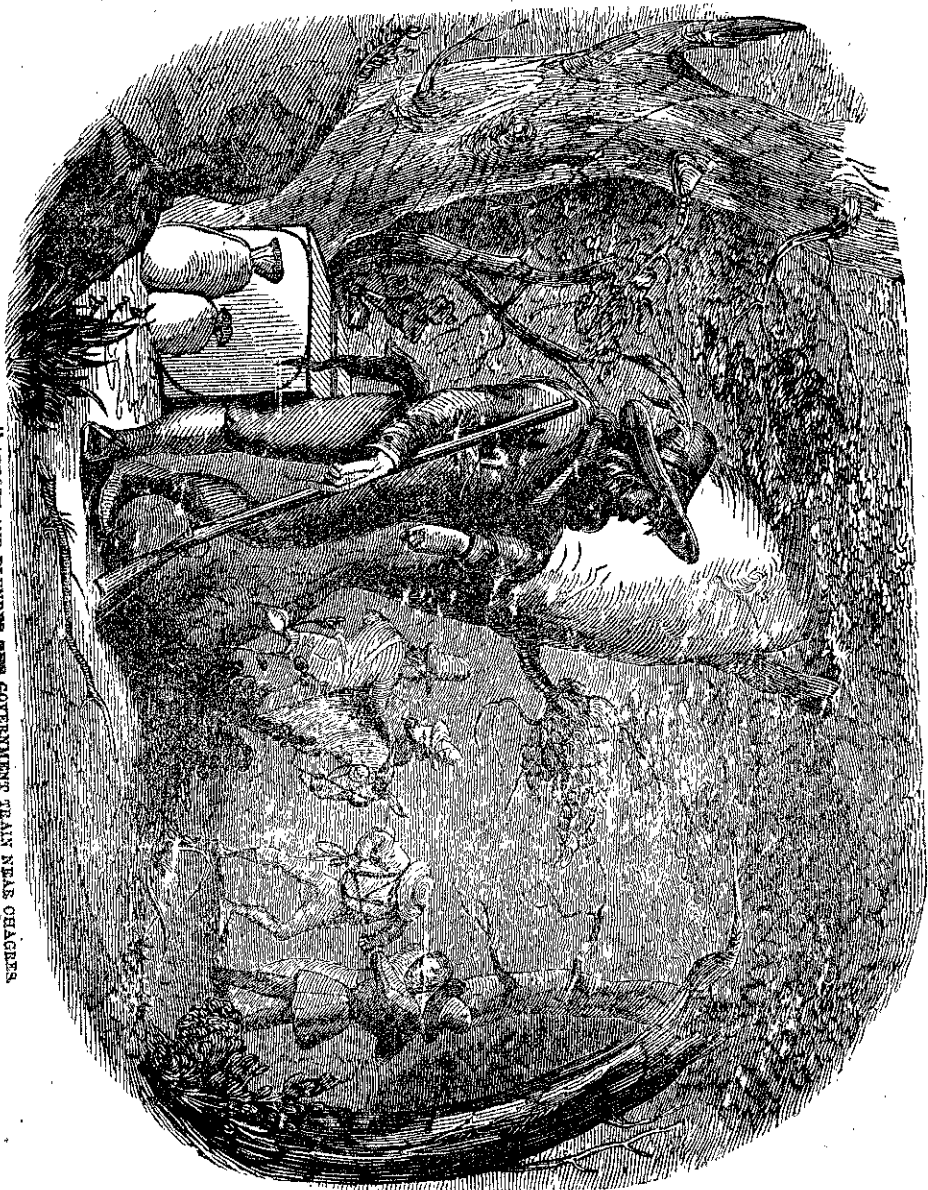


"THE DEERHILL" ATTACK AND PLUNGER AND CAPTURED TRAIN NEAR CHARTER.





Entered according to the Act of Congress in the year 1852, by

A. R. ORTON,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the  
Northern District of New York.

## PROLOGUE.

The discovery of gold in California has given a change to the affairs of the whole world. Since the first yield of the precious metal to Mr. Sutter, the race of mankind has been unsteady and transitory. While a new state has become settled, we might say, the rest of the universe has been unsettled. The eye of man has become gorged with visions of wealth, and stories of streams running with precious gold, and of mountains whose height is the almighty metal. All these illusions have aroused the latent spirit of enterprise in the unfortunate; has given scope to the vicious cravings of depraved hearts, and rein to the unbridled lusts of the dissipated. It has opened fields of enterprise, and revealed to us forests of vice. California gold has subverted religion, and made for us thieves instead of believers. Its highways, while they are choked with poor, honest, industrious men, seeking that which, in more Northern latitudes, they have never had, or, perhaps, have lost; fathers seeking dowers for their children, and a competence for old age; husbands pining for their wives, but hoping soon to carry back to their beloved ones, the only remaining link in the chain of happiness unconnected, and that is money; the young man who, desirous of procuring a name or a fortune, also clogs the thoroughfare; there is, lurking in the train, men whose life is alcohol, whose happiness is gaming, whose religion is money, and whose social comforts are to be found in nothing save in their own notions of them. Gold and crime have been synonymous terms since the discovery of the mines. It has brought into the world more scoundrels, more accomplished ruffianism, than whole ages could have otherwise organized.

Though the history of these pages is not immediately connected with California, yet the men whose doings we are about to narrate, operated on the highway to the gold regions, and lived upon the unwary traveler, or the boxed up earnings of thousands, passing, as they hoped, to their expectant friends. But, alas! what must have been their feelings on both sides? of him in Oregon more acute, who has labored in fear of life, early and late, with relentless trouble, grasping, and at length, by the force of his energy, plucking out of the bowels of the earth, his first instalment to his friends at home. O, how most painful to those who are waiting the arrival of every steamship with anxiety, and learn, by letter, of gold to come; then, to hear of robbery and tales of loss. Yet even so it is; plunder is the order of the day. We should hope that in a land where the precious ore is to be gained by working for it, that few men would desire to gain the goal by a

shorter route. Let us opine that this is dying out. When the ploughshare is used; when the busy wheel of the mill shall foam and ripple the gushing creek; when the sledge hammer shall be wielded by the adventurer; when the loom and shuttle shall play; then shall the frightful deeds which have been committed in the name of civilization and commerce, be scarce in the historian's lore. As these are transpiring, so is crime being hunted out of existence. Let us hope that American enterprise, which has dispatched the Indian to the west, and made his vast hunting ground into a garden, will blot out of existence the labyrinth of iniquity which has so quickly grown up in that newest of new worlds—California. On the Isthmus of Panama existed, and probably now exists, in some shape, a desperate and rapacious set of men, combining their united strength for plunder, and even murder, if necessary to the accomplishment of their base and foul designs. Their name is

"THE DERIENNI."

Their scene of labor is in the mountains which the passenger crosses to reach the city of Panama. Every tree might tell a tale of robbery; every nook and cranny have been hiding places for ill-gotten store; and the waters of its rivulets have been crimsoned with the blood of butchered victims.

You have heard, reader, of mining associations, and gold washing associations, and companies organized for the opening of huge gambling houses, and palaces of vice of another character; but as yet, with all the writings which have deluged the reading public upon the mighty Eldorado before your eye, with letter upon letter which have added to your knowledge, you probably have not heard of associations of thieves, robbers and assassins. Depravity is so low, and the gain so high, that men have actually left the olden countries to become members of banditti. Highway robbery on the Isthmus, is as romantic and chivalrous an affair as we read of in Spanish and Italian novels; but the former are, in truth, known, while, for the latter, we have only to rely upon the inaccuracy of romancists for our information. The Derienni comprised intellect, perseverance, daring and unanimity, worthy of a better cause. Its deeds we shall bring to light; its more prominent crimes will be found in these pages. Regardless of consequences, but mindful of truth, shall we push our work through to the last.

The public of Panama city has done its duty, in sending into the interior a band of honest men, to risk their lives in the summary punishment of the Derienni. Their labors were attended with partial success; they have scotched the snake, but not killed it. The monster Derienni shows its head now, sometimes, and when the stakes are ample, is not backward in making war upon life and property; and too often do we hear of a traveler murdered for the few grains of gold in his possession; and a mail train is occasionally attacked, and slaughter may transpire. We give the lives of the three men shot by citizens; they were hardened and depraved ruffians, but had been innocent once; and that remark contains a moral to the thinking mind, which may be of service at a future time. We do not pander to any morbid taste; but hope, by the exhibition of vice in its nudity and its undistorted state, to cause the young man to avoid the embrace of crime, and follow the path of honesty, perseverance and virtue, the only true road to wealth and peace.

## THE DERIENNI.

### CHAPTER I.

A CONVERSATION — THE CABIN AND ITS OCCUPANTS — THE DEAD MAN — THE ATTACK AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

"Well, Hank," said a brawny-looking fellow, putting his feet upon the only table that served the apartment, "that express man fought like a wild fellow."

"He did so," answered another man, similarly dressed, and of about the same age as the last. "Easing that train was a darned tough job, warn't it?" and up went the speaker's feet upon the other side, and, with an air of nonchalance, he stowed away a big quid of tobacco behind his cheek.

"I would n't like to run the risk of another muss like that; great risks and small profits, Hank;" and the latter, in a most easy manner, set to whittling the logs of the cabin, against which he was sidewise reclining.

"Joe, boy," said his companion, "I tell you there haint such bad profits upon that haul. It was a \$13,000 trade, and that aint bad. No, sir!" said he, in an emphatic manner.

"Well, now, you divide that between fifteen fellows, and it haint worth the risk of losing your breath for," answered his companion.

"Not so bad, old fellow, when we take into consideration the other work we've done lately." Then, changing his manner, "I wonder how that other expedition is going to succeed. It comes off to-night!"

"Well," said his friend, "the boys are going to have a tough time of it. Them fellers are desperate chaps, and haint going to knock under without a struggle; but as our boys are well mounted, and have good nags under 'em, I don't fear the consequences," he continued hopefully.

"I wish, Hank, they had let us gone off with 'em. I hate this mounting guard. It's a slow business — d——d slow!" and the man seemed to grow restless and uncomfortable.

"O, well, these things must be done; so it's no use worrying. Let's take a nap;" and, bounding from the table, the man threw himself upon a matting.

"Agreed," said his friend, following suit, drawing his bed across the door-way, which he closed. In another minute the two men were fast asleep.

The scene was decidedly picturesque, though not comfortable. The interior of a log hut, which was no more than a barrier against the inclemency of the weather, being rude and ungarnished by wall furniture. A few weapons hung around the interior. Powder flasks, scabbards, cigars, bottles, knives, and revolvers, were carelessly thrown upon rude shelving; while garments and Panama hats hung around in profusion. A dim oil lamp was suspended from the roof; and huge trunks, with ponderous locks, served as seats. Opposite to the door at which one man was sleeping, was another door, which opened upon a smaller hut or cabin, in which, it was plain, the culinary or cooking affairs were carried on; for there, huddled up in a corner, with his immense chin hanging on his breast, lay a fat negro, who was sleeping with his arms locked around his knee, and snoring aloud.

This cabin was the temporary residence of the terrible "Derienni." It was situated in a deep ravine, by a curious and intricate side of a mountain. It was not observable from the muddy, stony and difficult road, as it was secluded by the hanging boughs of many trees. Not even from the highest hill could you perceive anything of it, even in day time, more than a streak of smoke struggling through the leaves, to mingle with the skies above.

The two men who were sleeping in the cabin, though of the same profession — either brave, dauntless and sanguinary — were of different build. Hank, as his friend called him, was named Harry Ryer, a large, athletic, powerful man, with a frame displaying energy and elasticity, and a face tanned by Southern sun, rendered still more dark by black, shaggy eyebrows, and hair of the darkest dye, growing over his lips and chin, and bristling all over his face, that left but a small matter of cheek, and his eyes, and a narrow strip of forehead unhaired. He had on one of those flexible felt hats, with a broad supple brim, which lend such a look of chivalrous daring to the Spanish. He wore a light green coat, most fantastically ornamented with bright buttons. A big belt and buckle girdled his waist, and gave a symmetry to the hugeness of his form. His pantaloons were dark, and rolled up over a pair of ferocious Wellingtons; and there he lay, in the slumber of powerful and vigorous health, with a blanket thrown carelessly over him, and a straw bed, with a stained covering, beneath him. The other man was not over five feet five in height, of light frame, but so encumbered with clothing that he looked a much more desperate customer than he would if he had been dressed as a fashionable New Yorker. His hair was of a reddish turn, and hung in profusion, and though his eyes were blue, and his complexion delicate, yet he looked like a man who had done some service, and could do it again. They had been taking a long nap, when suddenly the tramp of heavy feet was heard outside; then came a tremendous lunge at the cabin door, which brought Hank to his feet, as nimble as possible; and Joe was awake, but the old cook still slept on.

"Hold on, boys, a minute, till I move the bed," and Hank, with the rapidity of lightning, hurled the bed from the threshold, and four men entered, carrying a wounded body, and two others followed, bearing a box, small and almost square, made out of very heavy lumber; in short, a "specie box."

None of the men spoke a word, but looked sad and heavy enough, as they deposited the dying man upon a matting, which Joe rapidly spread upon the chest, and then, taking off their hats, they wiped the perspiration from

their brows. The two fellows, putting down the specie, and just relieving themselves of a few encumbering articles they carried about them, went out again for the purpose of taking charge, and stalling their nags for the night. The remaining four, emptying their pockets, and pulling off their coats, formed a picturesque group, with their red and blue flannel shirts, their different attitudes of sympathy over the man, illuminated by the heavy light of their old lamp.

"Here's a bad job," said Hank; "can anything be done?"

"Nothing," replied Mathew, or Mat, and boss, as he was sometimes called; and another remarked, in a brief manner, "He's a goner;" and a third, in a husky voice, "Shot three times about the heart;" while a fourth was staunching the blood of his expiring companion upon his knee, with an immense bundle of rags. It was, after all, a pleasant sight to behold these men. How affectionately did they tend their friend! Not a word escaped them about the booty. Their minds were absorbed in his very look; and every wry face that the poor fellow made was rewarded and answered by an eloquent look of compassion from his fagged and rough companions; till at last his head fell heavily upon the man's arm who bore it; his eyes were open and garish, but Dan Decker was a dead man.

For a few minutes after this, there was a dead silence. Not a word was uttered, till Mat said, "Boys, let's to bed. We'll bury the poor fellow to-morrow evening."

The time of undressing was speedy; and, in a few minutes more, the other two returned from the stables, and the eight men retired to rest, in a manner that bespoke their grief most emphatically. Not a sound escaped them. Rest soon came to their eyelids, and there reigned in the cabin a silence as profound as its tenant — death.

These men, all members of the Derienni, set forward that night to rob a small band of merchants who were returning from the golden regions to their mother States, with the rich rewards of their industry with them. The band of Isthmus pirates had been advertised of their coming, by a member of the body in Sacramento city; but he only told of there being three in number, so that the Derienni thought six would effect the business easily; and that being their number without the two who were always left at home, they did not think it worth while to ask assistance from their friends at Chagres, Panama or Gorgona, at either of which places they had formidable fellows, in all numbering thirty men, inclusive of their own strength. As night approached, Mat, who commanded, was standing upon an eminence, when he perceived, through his spy-glass, a train approaching, and communicated to the boys that he could plainly discern seven men with it. They felt a little surprise, but knew no fear of success. Mat, then gathering them, he asked whether they would chance it, or let the train pass; when Dan Decker said, springing up from the sward, "Boys, haint six of us enough for any seven? Shall the Derienni come down so soon. No! let's do our work like men." The six then determined upon standing the hazard of the die, and a loading of arms, and a preparation for an attack commenced, with that promptitude and method so peculiar to this band. The men were fixed: two, Mat and another, on one side of the road, at a bend, were to attack the party on the right, and Decker and another were located on the opposite side, while two, with rifle pieces, were to attack the

party in the rear. The procession came at length, slowly and tediously dragging along, when Mat shouted "Fire," and the four men took aim and fired with a rapidity and precision that would have done honor to the most experienced disciplined soldiers. When the smoke cleared away, the unwary travelers had scarcely recovered from their surprise, and had just time to perceive that one of their number had fallen from his mule, and that he was mortally wounded, when the roar of guns was heard in the rear, and, in another minute, the six men, determined upon making their visit good, flew from their hiding places, and attacked the travelers with the utmost ferocity and daring. Each party being well armed, the struggle continued for a few minutes with great heat, when Dan Decker fell from the shot of a revolver, from the hands of one of the travelers. This incited and excited the Derienni, and they fought with demon-like ferocity. Cut, slash and fire was the order of the time till they hewed down the man who was riding upon the mule laden with the box of specie. One of the pirates, drawing the mule away, secured it to a tree, and then returned to the scene of action, to fight it out. The five remaining travelers put their boots to the mules' sides, and succeeded in making their escape, while the poor native guide, and one of the merchants, were left to mark the scene of a desperate and bloody conflict. In a few minutes, the mangled corpses were washing down the rapids, and four of the party had Decker on their shoulders, and were carrying him home to their cabin; two following, leading the horses, and carrying the money box.

## CHAPTER II.

THE BURIAL — THE STORY TELLING ARRANGEMENT — LIFE OF MAT, THE BOSS.

Gus. Randall and Rob. Bowler, two members of the Derienni, set to work early in the morning, digging a grave for their deceased companion. It was a custom with this band that their men should be buried in a decent manner, or as near to decency as they could approach. They cleared a spot—a kind of jungle—and beneath this was the 'dead carcass laid. There was no mummery of prayers, for none were there who felt competent to the task of uttering them; nor were any chaunts uttered, nor disgraceful lines repeated, as has been often the case with organized bands of ruffians; but it was a calm, quiet, serious affair. The night was beautiful and moonlit, and no idea could be had of the natural romance of such a scene. The sentiment of the occasion was indeed beautiful. When the men returned to the cabin, they sat for a few minutes, some reading novels or old letters, others smoking cigars, till Mat called upon "Uncle," or Unc., as it was sometimes abbreviated, for a bottle of brandy, and some glasses, with which the old colored man came in, rocking from side to side like a narrow-beamed ship in a hurricane, and, waddling to the table, put down all that was required.

"Some sugar, Unc," said Joe



RETURN OF "THE DERIENNI" WITH THE DEAD BODY OF THEIR COMRADE.



"Hi, hi," replied the old man, in a very seaman-like manner, and the men, throwing off their previous gloom, prepared for a carousal.

"Boys," said Mat, rising to his feet, "we have lost a good friend, a good pal, and a good worker for the Derienni. Dan Decker was the second man who joined this enterprise. I was the first, and I say it with pride, who organized this conspiracy, with little hopes of its reaching its present powerful and influential position. Now, I am not going to make a long speech; but I want you to understand that the laws of the Derienni require us to pay due respect to a brother chip who chances to be croaked while in the order. We have paid him that, and we should be unmanning ourselves if we continued to be low-spirited on his account. Let us hope that Dan is better off. He may go to worms, or to the devil, or to God; but I believe such a good fellow can only go to heaven. Now, gentlemen, I have nearly done. Our business is to drink to his memory, and then drown the subject in a bowl and song, and proceed with our calling like true men. Here 's," said Mat, lifting a heavy glass filled with brandy to his lips, "here 's to the memory of Dan Decker," and the fellows, rising to their feet, knocked the bottoms of their tumblers on the table, and then, raising them to their lips, drank off the contents, with the name "Dan Decker." Down they sat again, and Joe, who was considered the best singer, led off with the splendid song of "Paul Clifford," which his manly voice and natural dignity did ample justice to, and it was loudly applauded. Then followed Rob. Bowler with the song "Whisky in the Jar;" but when Mat was called upon, which, of course, was a compliment, for he seldom sung, save in a chorus, he said, in his usual coarse manner, "Lads, I'm no singer, and you know it. I generally tell you a yarn, which you accept as an apology, but to-night I am going to give my life. I am an old salt, and have many yarns stowed away up here," and he pointed to his head. "As this is an extraordinary 'casion, I shall tell you my history. I shall give you my life, as near as I can recollect it, from the first day Mat knew what he was, and a little afore." The boys seemed pleased with the arrangement, and, upon Mat's invitation, each man took another tug at the brandy bottle; and then came a terrible bustle in the way of cigar lighting, throwing away old soldiers, and putting in their mouths new ones, and placing their feet in a very elevated and comfortable position. Mat was a kind o' righting himself, and taking another small horn. He asked the boys — "All aboard?" They replied — "All aboard;" and Mat commenced:

"Well, here 's

#### "THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF MAT ROWLEY,

##### THE BOSS DERIENNI.

"Well, you all know that I am a regular full-blooded Yankee. I was born in the town of New Bedford. My father was a Cape Cod fisherman afore me, and, of course, it was very natural I should be a fisherman arter him. Well, I am now — I am. Let me see," and the old man looked up to the oil lamp, for the purpose of jogging his memory. "Yes; I'm nothin' short o' fifty-two years old, boys. Well, the old man died early; much afore he'd oughter, and left me, a boy of nineteen years old, to bring up my two young sisters, and attend to my mother. Well, I worked hard,

I tell you. I fished later in the season, an' earlier too, than other men; and many a frozen finger and toe have I had off them Newfoundland banks. Howsomever, I was nothin' daunted, and my mother was as happy as her lone situation would allow her to be. She was a pooty woman, boys, and my sisters was two sweet looking critters as a man looked at. One was named Isabella, and the other they called Laura. Two spry names, warn't they?" and the boys nodded assent. "Well, nothin' particier happened, and all went along to hum as slick as needs be, when one day I returned to our pleasant cottage, and who should I find there but a fellow as they called Hiram Garnett. I thought that he 'd come to borrow a net or line, or summut for boat gear. So I set myself down, an' axed Hiram, 'What 's new?' and he seemed quite bamboozled, and in a kind o' fizzle, and said, 'Nothin' new.' He then got up, and walked his carcass away. When he was gone, I made bold to ax-mother what Hiram wanted. She was astonished and bewildered, and I felt more anxious to learn what Hiram wanted, 'cos he never came to our house afore. Well, she kind o' balked. But I warn't to be beat slowly, so I swore by G—— she must tell me directly. Well, she shuddered as I swore, for it was the first time I ever took an oath in her presence. She said 'No good would come of my swearing,' and then she up'd and told me how Hiram made love to her, and wanted her to consent to marry him. And then she burst into tears. I felt kind o' bad, and my blood warmed; and although I was then only a young un, I determined upon being even with Hiram for his insult to my lone mother. So, one day, a few of us boys were talking on shore, while repairing our canvass, about a big haul we 'd made, and this Hiram interfered with us, and doubted something I said. Well, as the saying is, one word brought up another, and I told him he had insulted my mother. He doggedly replied, 'My mother warn't no better than she should be.' Upon which I rose up from my sitting, and, drawing off with all my might, I struck Hiram upon the temple, a heavy blow with my marlinspike, that shattered his head, brought him reeling to the ground, and in a few minutes Garnett was dead. All the fellers were taken aback, and set to carrying off the body, and I made my escape to the road, and cut along, and for several days wandered through the country like a stray dog. I had neither appetite nor rest. I could not work. I was like a mad feller, until one day I arrived in Boston. Here the immense population, and the strong wall of houses made me feel safe from the pursuers' vigilance, and finding a vessel bound for Liverpool, I engaged with the skipper as an apprentice, and, after a run of fifty-one days, which, afore these ocean steamers or Baltimore clippers had brought the old soil within a fortnight's voyage of us, was considered very fast work. Although I liked the sea, I left my ship, and was determined to scrape up an acquaintance with Master Johnny Bull. Well, I was only a lad, and I got kind o' home-sick, and felt as how I'd like to see mother; and yet I was scared to go home; and every thing I eat went agin me. I longed for buckwheat cakes and molasses. I liked hard cider better than their bully ale; and I tell you I felt as though I must die without some codfish, cooked as the old woman knew how. I was working at a warehouse on the dock, and was mocked by the men, who grinned at my Yankee greenness; but they were all pooty good-natured fellers, and I did n't mind it at all. They soon made me their acquaintance,

and one of them introduced me to what he called 'life.' I fretted so much after my mother, and I could not return to her, that I found a solace for my misery in drink. I very often returned to my bed a drunken fool. Then, of course, I had not the experience in liquor I have now.

"Well, I soon got out of work, and I found it hard to get into a berth again; so I removed to the neighborhood of Primrose Hill. Here I soon found a companion, in a woman named Sal Magnus. She earned enough 'tin,' as she called it, for the pair, and I became a fancy man. Sal was not a common prostitute, but what they call a picking-up-woman in those parts. She would hail a fellow, keep him in tow for a few minutes, and end her interview by easing the fellow of his purse, his pocket handkerchief, or anything else she could grab. She was pretty generally successful, so we had lots of money and lots of fun. Gin made me forget my home, and prosperity hardened me to deeds of desperate character. However, my gal was nabbed one night, and got seven years transportation. Her defence took all the money we had collected together, which was about forty pounds, and I was left in the world, without a character, and without the means of employment. So I then turned what they call 'sneak.' I used to write a neat letter. (I larned to write when I was East.) I'd then walk out and knock at some rich man's door, deliver the letter to the lackey or servant gal, he or she, whichever it might be, 'ud then take the letter to their master, as they call bosses there, and I'd bolt off with all the loose overcoats and trifles that was hanging in the hall, while the boss was reading my note, and the servant was waiting for an answer. I was very successful for six months. I could, average in my earnings, about five dollars a day; but I was overhauled, and they sent me to the Lancaster jail for a year.

"I served my time, and made the best of my way towards Manchester. Let me see, it was about forty miles. I walked very hard, and did it in a day. I arrived very much fatigued, so I went straightway to Dan Galligan's, a brother to the man who bought my stolen goods of me in Liverpool. He knew me, having once seen me to his brother's. He kept what they call there a clothes shop, down a cellar in Swan street. He behaved very good to me, and introduced me to a number of thieves who operated in different ways; also, to a very fine looking woman, named Mary Bowers. She was a tall, splendid craft, and was dressed A. No. 1. Dan said that it was a special favor this introduction to Mrs. Bowers, for she was considered not alone one of the handsomest and showiest women out, but she was one of the best workers in the town. By this he meant she was an accomplished and ingenious female thief. Mary was a woman of good breeding and education, and used to play the lady in good style. She had never been an inmate of a brothel, nor did she bargain away her charms for gold. I was simply a business partner; and although I passed as her husband, it was a long time before, in private, she would allow me to approach her familiarly. Galligan provided me with dress; and although he had plenty of superior second-hand clothing, which even respectable men wear in the old country, still he persisted in my having my clothes made to order. He then put in my pocket a splendid gold watch and chain, and in my breast a magnificent 'prop,' or diamond pin. Mrs. Bowers and myself started on our mission. We were to stay at hotels in large cities, and 'operate' upon

plate at table. We carried on our game, managing to do a large business; and when this failed, we planted 'bogus bills' on to the house. Our magnificent dress arrested all suspicion; and good dress and lots of baggage will take an old country hotel keeper off his guard, for traveling is not so general as in the States. We traveled in this way for two years, and sent all the proceeds to Dan. He used to keep an account — debtor and creditor — and pretended to work for a small percentage; but that was all gas. He made the rocks, while we ran the risk of being sent to Van Dieman's Land. I recollect the last bit of business that Mary and I transacted together was the following: But boys," said Mat, "let's liquor. I find this yarn is too long a one; so, if you'll let me off, I'll own up the corn, that I've begun what I can't keep through." They all persisted in his going on with the history, taking advantage of the pause to have a drink. "Well, Dan gave us a one hundred pound bank of England note, about five hundred dollars. He put us on what is called 'a plank,' and, providing Mary and myself with a splendid horse and open carriage, we took a ride round. Mary was to go a shopping; women buy the groceries there mostly. So, drawing up to the principal establishment in St. Ann's Square, in Manchester, kept by a very rich Quaker, Mary Bowers, escorted by a very perky young man, walked into this tea and sugar palace, for such it was in reality. They had big plates of glass; and I stood at the door, watching the spanking horse I had there, and eyeing the gorgeous harness and the magnificent shay with pride and satisfaction, when one of the porters passed me and requested to know where he should stow away the bundle of groceries. I told him to stow it away mid-way; but as he was a land-shark, I had to stow away the cargo myself, 'cos he did not understand me. This done, I returned to the store, and Mary feigned sickness. She had not paid for the stuff — it was all arranged, — and when she got upon the bottom step of the door-way — for their shops go up a step or two — she fell, or stumbled against an immense pane of glass, and shattered it into a thousand pieces. She, of course, fainted away, and was led back again. The shop was in an immense flutter. I was, of course, extremely busy, very much excited and distressed. But at length I cooled down, when I saw Mary show symptoms of recovery. I was frantic with joy, and the shopman, or clerk, seemed to show symptoms of great contempt for my extraordinary love, when suddenly my Lucretia's eyes opened, according to agreement, and she asked 'Where she were?' and 'Where was her dear Horatio?' that was me, and a great deal more slang of the same sort; when I got her into the chaise, and all was in order for a start, though Lucretia, poor thing, was very weakly, and all the smelling salts were as nothin' to her nose. I had the ribbons in my hand, when the old Quaker came up, with a polished crown, and rubbing his hands as though he were using sea water and soap. Says he, very timidly, 'I beg pardon, sir, but you have not settled for your groceries, nor the pane of glass.' 'Botheration,' said I, in a fluster, 'you talk of being a member of the society of Friends, and yet, while my good lady is perhaps dying, you are following me up for a few paltry shillings.' With all the English pomposity I could scare up, I said this. He said, 'Those windows cost thirty pounds a piece. I will bear one half, and thee the other, and that, with your lady's purchase — five pounds two and sixpence — will be twenty pounds two and sixpence.'

Here Lucretia gave a groan, and requested me to drive on; but I requested her to be calm a while, and then we would drive home. I pulled out my hundred pound note, and contemptuously threw it towards the Quaker, he glanced at it in a hurried manner, rushed to the desk, and gave me my change — seventy-nine pounds seventeen and sixpence; in all, about four hundred dollars, so we did not do a bad job. Dan got a hundred dollars, and Mary and I divided the rest between us. We then parted. She had very little cash, but a wonderful stock of jewelry, worth in all over eight thousand dollars; while I had but a few pounds left. Dan gave me a pile of notes, and hired a colored rascal to serve me as valet. He had been a fiddler at dances. I was to travel as a rich American slaveholder, all over the continent of Europe. I paid my hotels in large bank bills of a bogus kind, and received good currency into the bargain, and gambled largely. I did not do any tricks with the cards, but confined myself to the bogus business. I did not care much whether I lost or gained; but when I gained, I kept the good money, and losing, I paid my debts in bogus; so it was a pretty sure business after all. Sam, the colored chap I had with me, was a lazy, dull, impudent fellow, and scarcely minded what I had to say. He threatened me, upon my promising to discharge him, to give me up to the police. This was at Florence, in Italy. So, not feeling safe, I made the best of my way back to Paris, when I gave him his wages. I became reckless of what he could do; but he informed upon me, and the commissary of police very politely tapped me on the shoulder, and asked me for my passport, which I immediately showed to him. He pocketed it, and requested me to follow him. I was soon in the presence of a magistrate, charged, as I learned, with being a notorious swindler and passer of bad money. My accuser was my discharged servant, who had no proof against me, and therefore they had no power to detain me. I spent money profusely among the gend'armerie, and presented the captain of police, who took me on to the court, an X, which I slipped into his hand on the way. I was soon discharged from custody. I returned to my lodgings on the Rue de Richelieu; and about three months afterwards, a man requested to see me. It was my colored miscreant. He was in rags, and very poor. He had fallen away in size wonderfully, and looked for all the world like a feller as had been fed upon gunny bags for a few months. I was so enraged that I rushed towards him, and gave him a sound lashing. Well, I kind o' felt for him arter, and gave him five dollars; but I insisted on seeing him lay it out for a fiddle. He went to work to fiddling, and soon earned a good living. He was very thankful.

"After going over the continent again, right up into Poland, Turkey and Russia, I returned to Liverpool, after an absence of five years. Here Galligan hardly knew me. I then took to betting on races, and, as I had a pile, I found little difficulty in making heaps of gold at that fun. I used to see plenty of pleasure, and lived in this way for about five more years, in great style; mixing with high and low, and leading a merry time, with lots of money at all times. I felt an anxiety to hear how my mother came on in the world. I found an American sailor — a young fellow, who was born in the town of New Bedford. I met him accidentally, at a shipping office. He told me of my mother's death, and that both my sisters were married to honest fellers. I began to believe that my mother's prophecy,

that no good would come of my swearing, was about fulfilled. I then thought it would be best for me to return to the States; and, going back into the sea-faring business, I got employment as boatswain for a large line-of-packet ship. On the voyage, nothing particular happened, save that I got into a row with the first mate about the provisions, struck him, and was carried into New York in irons. I was discharged before the alderman; so, for fear of being recognized as the murderer of Hiram Garnett, I took ship for New Orleans, where, with the money I had left, I became part owner and commander of a clipper built schooner, as sweet a craft as ever spread canvass. I was commissioned to go to the coast of Africa, and bring away negroes, and land them at the port of Cardenas. My vessel was well manned and well equipped, and we made some very profitable voyages. We were sometimes chased; once hotly by a big British ship, which sailed fast for her tonnage; but our broad canvass, and immense speed, made light of her shot. I had only one near approach to death. We were overhauled by a Yankee brig off Cuba. They boarded us, and them Yankee boys meeting us Yankees, it was a hard show. They fought for the constitution, while we fought for our lives. We ultimately cut them down, and made mince-meat of them. We killed three, wounded four, six jumped overboard and were drowned, and we made prisoners of the remainder of the crew, seven in number. They all turned out jolly good fellows; and, as we lost ten of our men by ship fever soon after, and the rest were sick, the fresh supply of men proved not only a boon, but our salvation. In that affair I was fortunately saved by the timely defense of a chap as they called David Breck. Well, I carried on the slave trade for about six years. It was a profitable game; and when I left off, and sold the craft at Norfolk, in Virginia, I had not less than twelve thousand dollars. I then went to gambling. I played a foolish game, and much as I knew of the tricks of the table, I was seized with a desire for play. There's no accountin' for this taste, for most men know that the chances are against 'em. I played on for six months, and was left without a cent; and although I now commenced to play upon no capital, I found I could make a living at that at which I had lost a fortune. I one night was playing, for I was at the table eighteen months in all, and rose without a cent in my pocket. I returned heavily towards home; when, suddenly, thought I — Fred Pownell, the banker, would return with his wife towards home. They lived out in the country. I waited for them, under the shade of a tree; when, suddenly, they came to the spot where I was standing. I emerged from it. 'Fred,' said I, 'I do n't want to harm you, but I must have some money. You and your party have had my pile, and I am determined to have some of it back.' He protested against giving a cent; his wife remonstrated. 'By heavens, I am not going to be fooled. Now, Fred,' says I, 'are you going to stump up a few thousands; you've got plenty.' He was about answering by withdrawing his knife from his neck, when I anticipated him by drawing a revolver, and shooting him through the head. I told the woman I would n't hurt her. She defied me; and stealthily using her husband's dagger, stabbed me slightly in the arm. Still, I would not wound her; but, taking my handkerchief from my pocket, I bound it over her eyes, and tied her up to the hedge, so that she could give no alarm, nor could she tell whither I had flown. I made the best use of my legs until I reached



a ship ready to make sail for Charleston. I stowed myself amidstships without being seen. Having waited a day or two, she loosed her moorings; and as I had lots of money, of which I had just possessed myself, wherewith to pay my passage, I found the best of accommodation.

"After a pleasant trip of about seven weeks, we made Port Lavaca, in Texas. I stayed in that country for about three years, following one business and another; and at one time was engaged as a leader of a volunteer company to defend American interests, and Texas particularly, against the Mexican desperadoes on the Rio Grande. I went to California after that, with some Galveston fellers, when the gold fever broke out. There I kept a drinking saloon, and was connected in business with a regular Tartar — a Spanish woman, named Christiano Marino. She was not satisfied with taking a man's money, and leaving him penniless, but was very fond of stabbing. Now, I did n't like this eternal cutting and slashing; so I cut her and escaped to this part of the world, where, for a long time, single-handed, I carried on all the business on this Isthmus; and then I formed the Derienni. And then, boys, you know the rest."

"Now, lads," said Mat, "let's liquor and go to roost."

### CHAPTER III.

THE GRENADIANS — THE DERIENNI — THE ATTACK — THE DROWNING MAN — THE RETURN HOME.

In these pages, we have not dwelt at length upon the many monstrosities and crimes of the bloody and sanguinary Derienni. Because, in feasts of blood we do not love to gorge our readers. It is an unwholesome food; one that hardens the mind, and makes callous the heart to the spilling of blood. Beyond a doubt, it has been ascertained that such is the result; for in some countries, and in several states of this Union, have the people gone so far as to abolish death punishments, believing that, instead of changing or deterring men from cruel murder, it merely produces and engenders an indifference to the spectacle of death. We say that we have not detailed their numerous crimes upon the unwary traveler, but one scene we cannot help recapitulating. The afternoon had far progressed towards its successor — night. The immense sun was pouring down its lava-like streams upon the isthmus from an almost purple face. The sky was tinged with fiery hues, and nature seemed scorching beneath the scathing heat of this all-powerful sun. Three haggard and weary travelers were urging with cudgels and feet their unwilling and fagged mules along, whose tongues hung from their mouths, and, ever and anon, would stop and try to find water. But little progress was made in this way; their coats were hidden beneath the white foam of relentless perspiration, and the travelers, suddenly coming beneath the grateful shade of a huge tree, they halted, and got down from their pommels. These men were New Grenadians, who were crossing the Isthmus with some gold belonging to their government. They then

observed the dust of riders coming toward them, and they thought, although with no expectation of relief from the travelers, that they would await in the shade their approach. Those whom they saw were the Derienni, upon a scouring expedition. These had observed the travelers resting, and made immediately toward them. Their mules having been but recently brought from the barn, they were comparatively fresh and vigorous. After a long and tedious patience, the Grenadians saw the new-comers alight, and found, to their chagrin, that they could only speak an occasional word of the native language. This provoked the Derienni, who wanted to learn the cause of their travel; but there were not many ceremonies, for the ruthless robbers approached the saddle-bags of the mules, and commenced turning over the contents. When one of them saw a large red seal upon an official, diplomatic kind of paper, they, the Derienni, made up their minds that the strange travelers were agents for their government. The surprised travelers pulled off the man who had taken such an unwarrantable liberty, but were soon roughly handled, beaten and tied up for their pains, while the Derienni quietly removed the saddle-bags from their mules to the backs of their own. The Grenadians shouted and grimaced, but all in vain; the robbers merely laughing at the curious faces they made. "Well," said Mat, "having got so far, it's of no use going any further without caution. Let's make up our reckoning, and ascertain where we are, throwing himself upon the ground. The other pirates followed the example, and they held a consultation upon the sward.

"Well," said Mat, "now that we have determined that these ere fellers be government officers, it won't do, boys, to let em go, for their government will send a number of men down upon us, and they will overpower us. Then we shall taste a rope dance afore we want to do, that's all; so, let's steer clear of breakers."

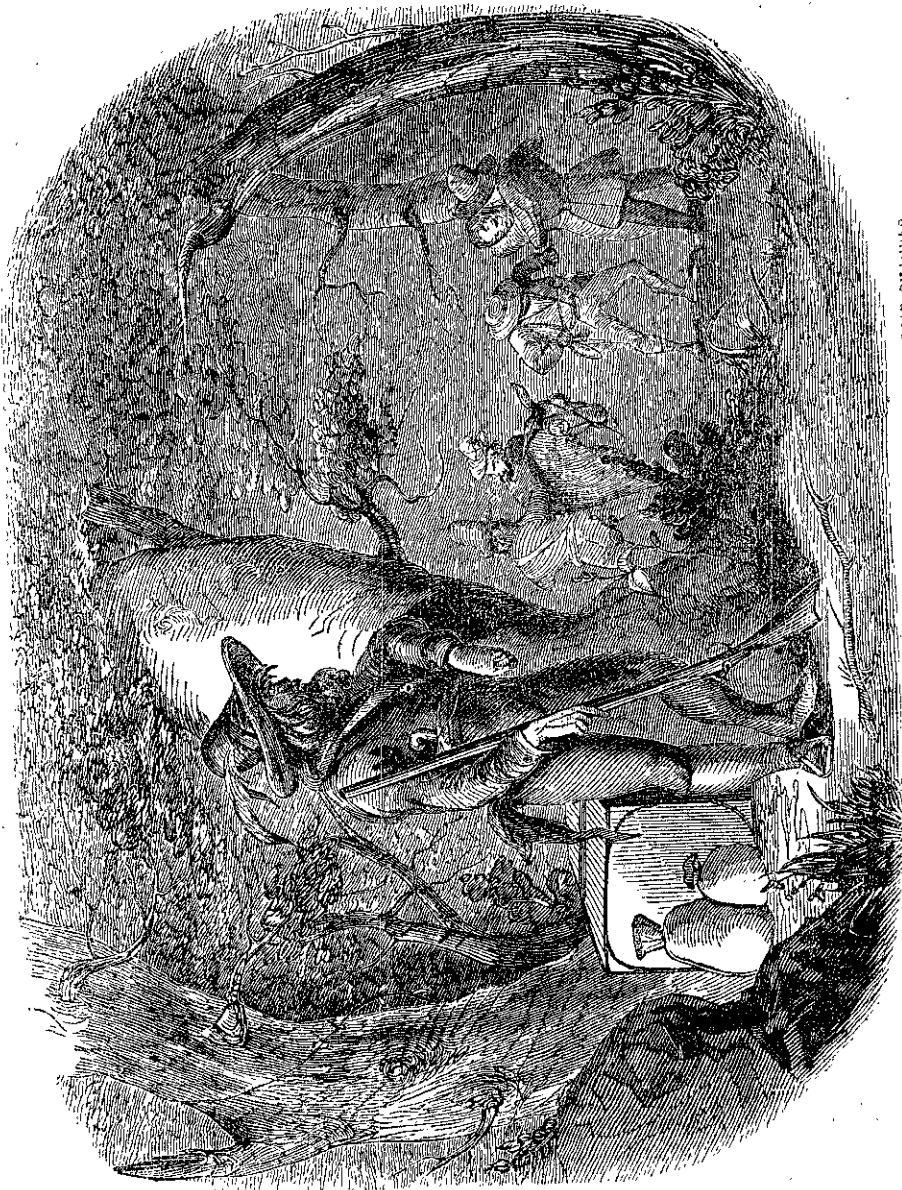
"Well," said Hank, "the only way is to put an end to there being any clue to them," and out came his tobacco box.

"You mean, to kill 'em," said Mat.

"I do," replied he, coolly.

"Well, that's my opinion," said the boss.

The others concurred in this view, and the pirates arose from their seats with determination marked upon their brows. Mat gave orders to one of their band to lead home their newly-acquired mules and saddle-bags. The rest proceeded to untie one of their victims from his stake. He made a desperate resistance, but it was in vain. The five brigands tied his hands and feet, and then putting the disabled man upon the back of a mule, one leading the beast, others held steady the victim, until they reached the banks of the river, and then hurled the man into the gushing creek. They turned not an eye to perceive what became of the poor wretch they had so mercilessly murdered, but proceeded back to repeat the crime upon a second, then upon a third victim. This being all got through, they mounted the mules, and left the victims without remorse, pity or sense, a prey to the rapids. One of the poor fellows, the second one, had not been confined about the feet, like the first and last. The rope was certainly coiled, but the knot was not a secure one; and when the man was in the water, being an expert swimmer, he lay upon his back on the water, and managed to kick about with his legs until he reached the opposite bank, after much



THE DERIENNI. ATTACK AND PLUNDER OF GOVERNMENT TRAIN NEAR CHARLES

battling with the current. Here he lay exhausted for several hours, with his arms tied. He tried to raise himself, but unsuccessfully, until he dragged himself against the trunk of a tree. He managed to raise his body up by a slow and tortuous process. This was a work of no mean labor, and the big sweat drops stood upon his brow; he was almost exhausted. He walked slowly, however, and, almost dead with exertion and fatigue, he arrived in Panama, where his story was told, and a committee of public safety was the next day organized, for the purpose of putting down these miscreants. The best men lent their aid to the design, and there was great rejoicing when the mass learned that the people were going to take the law into their own hands, and execute that which their courts failed to touch. We are no friends to lynch law; it robs the accused of every right of defense; but, we ask, will any man doubt the wisdom of such a tribunal, where no other is calculated to be productive of the like results. In a state, city or village where the law can be administered, there is no necessity for the lynching system — it becomes in itself a curse; but in a case like this, there can be no doubt of its justness and fitness.

The Derienni kept out that evening till the skies darkened. They traveled many, many miles in search of new victims. Not a word escaped them, as they rode along side by side, of pity for the poor wretches they had hurried into a premature grave. On, on they rode; story after story was told; halt after halt was made; observations taken, and nothing else appeared to attract their ferocity and rapine; so, jaded and haggard, careworn and tired, they retired to their cabin, and soon were buried in the deepest and profoundest sleep. Who shall say whether such brutish men had dreams at all? If they did, what spectres must have they seen? what misery must have been theirs. Rest to them seems unnatural; for dreams, horrid hallucinations, black phantasies, and dreaming tortures should be reserved only to plague the solitary moments of such terrible beasts. And this is no tale, but a simple record of facts, which are undeniably true.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### AN INCIDENT — AN ATTACK — GENEROSITY — HANK RYER'S HISTORY.

The next morning, Pete Dunham was perched in a high place, on the look-out. The boughs of some splendid trees kept the sun from melting his burly frame, and spying three specks in the distance, he kept his glass upon them, until they had increased into a train of three mules. A shrill whistle made his friends aware of the lucky discovery of a good chance for pillage. They were soon equipped, and in about half an hour were near the spot where Pete was holding his watch. A few stray steps of a dance, a song or two, a drop of brandy, and whistling, managed to keep the party in amusement and glee, until the arrival of the fresh victims.

"Hold on," shouted Mat. "Bout ship!" as the three mules were carrying the listless travelers along. The travelers seemed taken by a paralysis, so surprised were they, when the Derienni coolly marched up to the ex-Californians. Mat then said, "We're very sorry to trouble you, gentlemen—very sorry; but the fact is, you've got a small commodity which we're very much in need on, and that is gold. We expect toll here, at this 'ere point; and as there are no justices at hand here, we're obliged to collect our dues by main force, gentlemen."

At length, out spoke the oldman, who was the father of his companions:

"If you wish the few grains of gold I have, I will give it you without a murmur; but, gentlemen, I am a poor old man of broken fortunes. These young men you see with me, are my two young sons. I have been in business in Eastern Pennsylvania, where I failed, and we came out here to redeem our fortunes. I mean to re-establish my character. I have just a few dollars over what will pay my creditors. For God's sake, spare me, gentlemen; if you take from me these few grains, I shall die of a broken heart, and those who had confidence in my character will curse me in my grave. Rather kill me, and let my sons go home with the money, that they may redeem their father's name. I have a family at home, whose honor I wish to redeem; and in old age have I commenced a new life in a new country; and just as I am returning to make peace with my Maker, and die happy, I am met by you. You are all men; you have good hearts, and you would not rob a poor old man, who is willing to sacrifice his life, but not his honor," and the old man burst into tears. The young men plead in similar terms. The old man cried and entreated, and the robbers, after consulting together, determined to let the old man go. It was an awful moment of suspense for him; but right conquered, and the three pursued their course, while the old man delivered an audible prayer for the salvation of these desperate, yet noble men.

That night the men were more joyous than usual, and over their cups they laughed and joked with light hearts and great glee. Every anecdote was received with laughter; every joke told twice well, when Hank said:

"I have a proposition to make. I was very much amused and gratified at our boss's story of his life; and I would be glad if we should make it a rule that each man should tell his story. Each life to occupy a night."

"Agreed, agreed," shouted the merry Derienni.

"Now, to make the thing all right, I will lead off with mine. It is not a very amusing career; but, as I make the proposition to others, I think it right that I should set the example myself."

This brief speech was received with loud shouts of "Aye, aye;" and then commenced the rotary movements of a black brandy bottle, a lighting of cigars, and an arrangement of seats; when Mat, placing himself at the head of the table, with his tumbler of brandy before him, asked,

"All aboard?"

The boys replied, "All aboard," as a signal for going on, and Gus shouted in enthusiasm, "Hank, let her rip."

"Boys," said Hank, "I am no great hand at telling stories. I want the language, and lack the taste for such an operation. But no matter, here goes for the

### "LIFE OF LOAFER HANK,

"As they used to call me. My eyes first opened on the 'Points,' of New York city. We lived on a back street, and had a full view of the Tombs in our face—a splendid prospect. My father's name was Harry Ryer, and mine is precisely the same. All that I know of my parents is, that my father and mother kept a small grocery, or groggery, and that they were nearly always drunk. They quarreled often, and both of them used to lick me like Old Nick. This was done to make me a good boy, I was told; but it did not turn out a very useful thing in that way, for I never was either a good boy or good man. My father and mother would fuddle themselves, and then turn round and fight each other. Well, when I was very small, the rowdy boys who used to come to our grocery, delighted in getting me drunk, so that, when I was six years old, I could drink any quantity of whiskey and rum, and smoke pipes and dance break downs, and so forth. I was a lusty little fellow, and was as hard as nails. At ten, I could whip everything of my age on the Points, and was considered a very promising youngster. Well; then, I went out with papers, and soon acquired a taste for becoming a fireman, and used to get drunk nearly every night. I soon found newspaper selling too unprofitable an employment, so I turned porter at eighteen, and was strong and commanded good wages; but I was not to be relied upon for punctuality, because I would repeatedly go off and get drunk. They soon discharged me. I then worked as a porter down at the ferries, drove a hack, or worked on a steamboat. I then married a young Irish woman, named Polly Maguire, she was a faithful good creature, but could not endure my bad treatment, late hours, and the cruel beatings to which I subjected her. We had a child—a boy; but, thank God, it died! the same day, too, that my mother died of delirium tremens; and my father soon afterward cut his throat. I became a reg'lar loafer. I would n't work. All I would do was, engage for a few shillings, or a promise of drink, to make up one for an election muss. Yes, I certainly did the public some good by attending fires. One morning I returned at about three o'clock, and I found Polly up, ironing away. It was a hot night, and she stood there, almost falling from exhaustion, having been at work since five in the same morning. I had no pity for her, nor consideration. She chided me, poor thing, and I, monster as I was, grew irritated and quarrelsome, and ended by striking Polly, so that she fell, and then I kicked her ferociously. There she lay, bleeding from her throat, and I struggled into bed, and snored away, unconscious of having killed my wife. But the next morning came, and when I went out into the room, and saw what I had done. I knew not what to do, where to run or go. We lived down a cellar in Frankfort street, and I was soon in the custody of a police officer, and under examination before a police captain, then before an alderman, and ultimately before a judge of the sessions. The counsel, who was provided for me by the fire company of which I was a member, succeeded in proving to the jury's mind that I was insane, the result of which was, that I was discharged. I then loafed around, and became a kind of pauper on my fire company. I retained all my strength and vigor. I became acquainted with some fellows, and I then went to house-breaking. This I was at for about two years, and made considerable money, but spent it as

fast as I could, and laid about, wallowing in my stupid love of drink. During the two years that I was at housebreaking, I had several tussles with the police; but, by —, I never knew the policeman that was strong and powerful enough to take me. Well, then, I went to canaling and boating, and this I enjoyed most deliciously. The summer I spent on the water, and the winter in port, among the girls, fighting, loafing, and drinking. I then made a journey with a menagerie, which was bound for the Southern States; and when I got as far as Mobile, in the State of Alabama, I left them, and went on the steamboats. I felt myself getting less addicted to drinking, and more attached to gaming and pleasure than ever. After which I started for California, and I became a porter at a hotel. Here I drank largely and freely, and then, getting into a row with a man at the bar of a California hotel, a fight ensued, and I strangled him, and left him for dead. I was pursued by a band of citizens, and making a desperate rush, I escaped. Finding a steamer leaving for the Isthmus, after concealing myself for a night, we got under weigh, and here I arrived. I fell in with Mat, and now I am one of the Derienni: and that, boys, finishes my story."

## CHAPTER V.

THE ATTACK UPON CHAGRES — THE DEADLY AFFRAY — THE DEATH OF MAJOR PEARSON — THE DAUGHTER AS A HOSTAGE.

A special messenger having arrived at the cabin of the Derienni, with a request, or an order, for six of the party to go down to Chagres, as an attack was to be made upon the house of Major Pearson, who was an exceedingly rich person, and who had irritated the Derienni by making overtures to the wealthy citizens of that city, for forming a powerful armed force, to put down this system of Isthmus plunder and robbery, and to bring to punishment the miscreants who kept the whole country in fear, and made the roads as much a terror to the traveler as a forest of wild beasts of prey. These desperate men were so combined, that it was impossible for a weak party to cross their dangerous path. Hence, it became necessary to travel in immense numbers, which was inconvenient, and attended with considerable delay. Gus. Randall and Pete only were left at home, to protect the house and their stronghold. The other six men went forward on their way, and managed to arrive in Chagres by night, and so stealthy were they, that not a word was known of the arrival of any strangers in their small, irregular, wooden city. The major's house was on the outskirts of the place. As the doors were not locked — no such precaution being considered necessary, the Derienni soon found an easy ingress, and access all over the frame house. There were twelve men engaged in this affair, and eight more were engaged in a similar affair at the same time, in another part of the city. They had been collected from the four various points of the Derienni's rendezvous. They did not anticipate a resistance;

but, as an alarm might be given, they thought they would go well armed with men. At a given signal, the party took possession of the house, and stationed sentries all around, four in number, and several at the thresholds; and so they proceeded with the greatest care and caution. A party, to the number of twelve, proceeded to the sleeping apartments. They bound the several female domestics, but, much to their delight, they did not find a single male, so they made sure of an easy conquest. Upon the Derienni reaching the large sleeping apartment of the Major, they were surprised to see him up and dressed, and his daughter standing beside him, with his rich nut-brown locks hanging in confusion around her snowy brow. Her face was very pale, but was relieved from ghastliness by two small circles of color, of about the size and hue of delicate roses, on her cheeks. She was much agitated, and held in her hand a splendid small pistol, which she seemed more disposed to throw away than use. The room was occupied by seven gentlemen, armed, some with rifles and bayonets, others with revolvers, swords and cutlasses. This was a desperate sight for the Derienni, who did not expect such a terrible resistance; when, no sooner had the door opened, than the citizens, prepared for the rush, fired upon the pirates as they were entering. Wounds were plentiful, but nothing serious happened. The Major took the command; and, as the apartment was very large, and led to another by which the assassins had entered, there was a fair field for battle. The struggle was hot and strong. Single-handed combats and cross-firing were kept up for nearly half an hour. Two of the victims lay upon the floor. The windows were shattered in their frames, and the walls and every piece of furniture, were perforated with shot. The major shouted out of the window — "Boys, scour the grounds," when the door of a barn suddenly opened, and several men rushed out, armed to the teeth; and the sentries of the Derienni, who thought their occupation was merely a sinecure, in a moment had to fight for their lives. As the citizen volunteers were evidently getting the worst of it, notwithstanding that the Derienni on sentry in the garden had made a rush up stairs, being less in number by fifteen than their opponents, this brought the numerical strength to the side of the defending party. But it availed them not, for the Derienni fought with their usual bravery and fearlessness, while the opposing party were not prepared for so fearless and bloodthirsty an attack. The major was engaged with Cal, a Derienni. The former was a tall, powerful, fine-looking gentleman of about fifty summers; but the latter succeeded in getting him down, and ran a long dirk into the brave man's heart, who did not even groan or wince. His daughter no sooner saw this, than with a desperate nerve she pulled the pistol, and before Cal could draw breath enough to raise him from his position, kneeling; as he was, over the corpse of the major, a ball had entered his neck, and he rolled over, and, with a heavy force, fell upon his face, gave a deep groan, tried to raise himself up, fell again with still heavier sound, and died. The fighting was desperate all around; and several lay upon the ground, bleeding and groaning. A rude hand caught the major's daughter by the waist, and carrying her a great distance, to where the Derienni had their mules, brought out a mule, a man following in the wake. The two, by sheer force, lifted her upon the beast, one mounting by her side; and Roda Pearson, half fainting and insensible, was riding away, with an assassin as



DREADFUL CONFLICT BETWEEN THE "DERIENNI," AND MAJOR PIERSON'S HOUSEHOLD.

an escort, to the Derienni's cabin. But fifteen of the band survived this dreadful attack; and twenty-two of the citizens was all that survived. The Derienni retreated irregularly until the whole party were back again. The last man who left was Mat; but so accomplished a pirate was he, that, although wounded, he would not leave the spot, until he had possessed himself of the deceased major's money, and, with one of the enemy's guns, he battered in the safe door—a rudely-constructed affair—and possessed himself of a large sum of money. We mentioned that another section of the Derienni had gone off to another place. They went to an American commission and forwarding house, but encountered no great opposition. They made the best of their way to their quarters, and arrived there in advance of their friends, with their booty. Such a night, so fruitful in its gains, was, nevertheless, a sad affair for the band, and sadly did they feel it.

It is morning. The cabins are all filled; but there is no joy nor festive occasion; no laughing; no light and happy faces, as name after name is mentioned, and old companions are known to be dead. But there is a new and strange feature to this den, since last we saw it. There sits, crouched in the corner, a most beautiful girl, whose face is innocence and charity. Oh, what a companion is she to those sanguinary and criminal faces who swarm around her. Her heart is nearly broken; her sobs are loud; her shrieking wild, and her grief is heart-rending. She mourns the loss of a father, whom she saw cut down by her side. She tried to save his life, but success was not hers; she only avenged his death. The Derienni plied her with food, but she would neither accept food nor consolation. For two days after her being first brought into the log hut, she neither slept nor ate, nor tasted of anything but water.

\* \* \* \* \*

For satisfaction, we will state that the major was prepared for an attack upon the Derienni, but not by them. That afternoon, he had collected all the men and cattle under his roof, for the purpose of scouring the country in search of these scourges of the Isthmus. But accidentally going up to the top of a very high turret, he observed the Derienni approach the city. He knew it was them by their swift and rapid riding; none else ventured beyond a mere walk or canter. He came down, and arranged his men, part of them—the most part—in the barn, the fewer with him up stairs; wishing to receive the party with open arms, at his own residence, which he instinctively felt sure they were about to attack, for he was their known enemy. It is a pity that so noble a design was not to be attended with success; but the major was disappointed in his supporters, they being undisciplined and raw men.

## CHAPTER VI.

RODA — JOE'S STORY OF HIS LIFE — THE PROPOSAL — THE ESCAPE — THE EXECUTION OF A TRAITOR.

Miss Pearson was lodged in one of the out-buildings to the log cabin, which was fitted up with all the comfort that the Derienni could possibly furnish to the apartment. At night, the weather being warm, the men



paraded the grounds around the buildings, in order to keep watch over their fair hostage. Hank had brought the young lady away with no special purpose, but it was decided by the Derienni that she should be kept as a hostage. They expected that a truce, rather than an attack, would be the result of her being held, as the citizens would naturally expect that, if any force was used toward the Derienni, they would retaliate by putting to death Miss Pearson. She had never spoken since she had been with them, and had not even asked for anything, save of the old negro cook. The extra members of the band had retired to their old quarters, and this left the cabin with the same number of male inhabitants that it possessed when we first introduced it to the reader. We have already spoken, in terms of faint praise, of Miss Pearson's beauty. Her pensive look added a charm to her very beautiful countenance, and her silence lent a holy influence to the young girl. She sat on a low seat, occasionally, among the banditti, but did not join any of their affairs by word or look; and it was gratifying to notice that they did not insult her by carousals or bacchanalian feasts. In the course of one of their evening sittings, Mat called upon Joe for his life; to which he replied that he supposed an apology would not be received. The boss nodded as though he had guessed aright.

"Well, gentlemen," said Joe, in a clear and manly voice, "her goes for

#### "THE LIFE AND VICISSITUDES OF JOSEPH S. BARTON,

"Your humble servant.

"I am a native of Ohio. I was born within a mile of Sandusky city. My folks were in the farming way, and had made considerable money by laying out their once splendid farm in village lots; for part of the city was built upon the estate. I went to school in due course, and received every kind of preferment that could be bestowed upon a youth. I was considered a very excellent scholar, and my parents, who were staunch old-school Presbyterians, had determined upon making a clergyman of me. I went to Harvard; and proceeded well, both in my theology and general education. My character was considered unimpeachable; and my parents looked forward to my introduction, or installation, into a pulpit, with hope, and expectation of my leading in that serious and splendid mission. I went to the city of Boston, to study under a theologian of great celebrity; and at the church where I used to attend, I became acquainted with a beautiful girl, who used to sing in the chorus."

Here Joe looked down, and hesitated to go on, when the boss said,

"Joe, go on boy; keep her full, and, by —, go ahead."

Joe felt encouraged by the peculiar language of their nautical leader.

"We became very much acquainted," said he, "and, in fact, I loved her with my whole soul. She was indeed a beauty; so serene and lovely that I felt myself grow better and happier in her society; till, at length, she grew sickly. The color left her rosy cheeks, and her rich, full, mellow, ruby lips became parched and dry. I observed all these stages of decay growing upon her. She became a blighted flower, and King Consumption marked her for his victim. The winter came, and the snow reflected upon her cheeks. She was lividly pale. The church had no more charms for me, I grieve to say it, since Lilla had ceased to sing in it. The psalms

seemed indeed without melody, when her voice was missing. I looked upon her successor as a veritable usurper of her position. Till one day Lilla laid herself upon her snow-white pillow, and went to sleep, but never woke again. My poor, poor Lilla had gone to the home of spirits — the abode of angels and rest!

"When I learned that Lilla was dead — for I was insensible for many weeks — I became reckless. Upon several occasions I attempted suicide, but was hindered in my designs upon my life. I became a gay fellow. I mixed with some medical students, and soon became as dissipated a character as I had previously been a moral one. I spent all the money my father gave me, and was finally expelled from studies by my reverend tutor. My father soon came down; but, alas! how changed was he in his manner. He soon learned the tale of my depravity from my countenance, in spite of all I could urge. He entreated me to return home; but I was so dearly attached, so indissolubly bound to my idols, that I could not leave them. Ultimately, my father cut off my supplies; and, desperately placed and circumstanced as I then was, I was prompted by the evil within me to commit forgery. I drew out a note, and signed it with a splendid imitation of my father's signature, for two thousand dollars. I took it to a banker's, with whom my father occasionally did business, and it was paid. When it came to my father's ear, the incident distressed him, but he paid it, and my crime was known only to him. Being a first-rate book-keeper, I found little difficulty in procuring a good situation, at a good salary. I pleased my employers well, and there can be no doubt that, had I conducted myself in a proper manner, at this time, instead of being a member of the Derienni, I should have been one of the prosperous firm of Meredith, Pratt & Company, in Broad street, Boston. But, having contracted a heavy debt for a mistress of mine, for some jewelry and silks, I knew not how to get out of it; so, in an evil hour, I once more forged. This time it was a note upon the firm. I expected this would be unknown, as my first year's salary, of one thousand dollars, would be due before the note, which was only for five hundred and twenty dollars, became due; but it was destined to turn out differently, for the note was negotiated, passed into other hands, and I lost sight of it altogether. The day came, and I was arrested. The firm did not desire to convict me, but a sense of duty compelled them to make an example. I was thrown into prison, but I came out a much worse character than I had gone in; there was no separate confinement then in jails. As I was coming out of the prison walls, I was met by a man, whom I knew not, who shook me by the hand, and asked me whether I was named J. S. Barton. He took me to his house, and treated me very generously. I was surprised at all this, and could not fathom his motives in paying me such generous attention. He supplied me plentifully with money, and I once more dressed in style; and although I could not mix with my old companions, I was, nevertheless, well satisfied with my position, so much better was it than I could have dared to hope for. In about a fortnight more, he said to me that he was a counterfeiter upon a large scale, and that he had met scattered over the Union, to whom he sold bad notes. He then took me under ground, and showed me his apparatus. He was an engraver of the best kind, and his success at counterfeiting was beyond detection. He told me that, as I understood forging signatures, he

would transfer that branch over to me, the only one in which he occasionally failed, and would give me half what he had in the world, and half his profits. I should mention that all the persons he had here were ourselves and an old lady, his own mother, who was in perfect ignorance of what her son did for his living. I was very successful in the business, and our affairs went along most prosperously; till, about a year afterward, the police became aware, by some means we could not determine, of our operations, and as we were one night working in our shop under ground, we were alarmed by a rush to the door, which we, confident of our security, had left carelessly ajar. A rush was made by four police. They came, two to each of us, and we were, after a brief resistance, beat, and dragged off to the police station; but not before I succeeded in throwing into the face of one of the officers, the contents of a bottle of oil of vitriol, which was standing upon the bench, and which we used in our business. The officer's eyes were burnt out of his head, and his face was a chawed, crisp circle of blackness. I felt horror-stricken at the deed I had committed. We were tried, convicted, and sent to the state prison of Massachusetts for a period of three years each. When we came out again, my companion and I betook ourselves to New York city, where, with the aid of an exchange broker, supposed by the world to be a highly respectable, moral and religious member of society, we once more carried on a successful career of counterfeiting; until our place was broken into one night in our absence, and every thing smashed; but, gaining scent, through a friend, we did not return, but took to a retired neighborhood. The California fever broke out about this time, and my friend and I thought it would not be a bad spec' to counterfeit steamboat passage tickets. This was a very profitable game, until it was exposed by some of the newspapers, and then it blow'd up. We were pursued hotly by the police, and I took steamer for Panama, whither I arrived, and then fell in with the Derienni.

"This, as far, boys, as I know; but God knows what may be the termination of my career, as I am only twenty-seven years of age now. I hope to God that there may be some change! for, great rascal as I have hitherto been, I believe that, I shall yet live to do penance for my great crime, in having caused the breaking of my mother's heart, and the ruining of my parents' domestic hearth."

\* \* \* \* \*

Roda listened with varied emotions to the life of Barton, now of pity, then of sorrow, anon in anger, then in contempt and fear. That night a vile proposal was made to the young lady, which we would not repeat, lest it might offend the ear; but it is sufficient to say that the contaminating influence of such society was lost upon Roda. No, rather let us say that her religion and chastity were established upon a firmer basis than before; her love of goodness was more solidly rooted in her heart.

The Derienni harkened with pleasure to the recital of Joe Barton's story; but Mat broke in upon their reveries by saying:

"Gentlemen, prepare; we're off to the road in half an hour from this. Joe and the Spaniard will do duty at home to-night. Boys, stand by."

There was a movement directly. Mules were brought out, arms loaded, clothes put on; and all being ready for a start, Mat gave a whistle. The Derienni jumped into their saddles, and were off like a whirlwind.

Roda, left alone with Barton, spoke the first word of conversation that had escaped her since she had been a prisoner in the cabin.

"Sir," said she, "I have listened with pain and anguish to your story. I am sorry for you; and when, once more, I get back into the world, I shall pray for your reformation. Why do you not leave these horrible men? oh why?" asked she, in an imploring tone.

"I can not," he answered. "If I were to go back into the world, I should be a still worse criminal than I am;" and Joe's manner seemed to undergo a change, while conversing with the fair Roda.

Here there was a pause, when Joe, looking up, said:

"Would you escape?"

"Why do you ask me?" said his fair companion.

The Spanish member of the Derienni lay sleeping while this conversation was going on; but if he had been awake, his utter want of knowledge in the English language would have left him in as profound ignorance as his heavy sleep enwrapt him.

"Would to Heaven that I could!" murmured the girl.

"You shall. Follow me, softly; softly, mind; or you will alarm the Spaniard, and perhaps our old colored fellow, the cook. Can you ride?"

"Yes," gently replied Roda, evidently astonished at this strange freak in the robber's career.

They then went to a barn, and Barton led forth a splendid mule, which, by a circuitous route, he brought to the summit, when Roda mounted. The night was soft and gentle, chaste and grand, and the girl, like a caged bird scenting the air of liberty, longed to fly to her native home. She said to Joe:

"Farewell! God will reward you for this act. I can not sufficiently thank you nor reward you."

"In another hour I shall be a dead man," said Joe, forcibly.

"How!" asked his companion, her eyes streaming with tears of pity.

"The Derienni punish traitors with instant death."

"O, let me then return," said Roda.

"No, no," said he, hurriedly. "Keep straight ahead, and go on. Good bye. May God preserve you!" and, with a bounding step, he hastened down the circuitous path to the cabin.

Roda looked up, and hesitated whether to go on or not; but, at length, she started the mule, and the faithful beast seemed to make light of his bargain, and sped on with more than his usual fleetness; and Roda was soon in her own house. She retired to her bed, without awaking the domestics; but she could not sleep, for her mind was wandering in thought — now here, now there — till, at length, fixing her mind upon her deceased parent, she gave vent to her feelings in a torrent of tears.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Derienni had fallen in with some travelers, who were encamping for the night, and whom they succeeded in robbing of a large stock of clothes, bedding, provisions, etc., but of little money or merchandise, as they were adventurers to the gold regions. They returned to the cabin, and Mat, seeing Joe in a study, he immediately asked where the gal was.

"Gone," laconically answered the other.

"Escaped, by —," shouted the party.

Joe then stood up. He said—

"Fellow Derienni. I was touched with remorse and pity at the poor girl's position. Her virtue was jeopardized among us, and my better heart told me we had better let her go; so I gave her my mule, and she is, ere this, in the house of her father. I know my punishment; it is death. I am prepared to meet it. The review of my own career, as told by me, has made me sick of myself, and hate life. So, do your duty;" and Barton calmly resumed his seat.

Then followed a short consultation and arguing; but Mat called Joe. He said—

"We do n't like to make a target of you, Joe. You have been a good fellow, and a faithful man; though this last act will undoubtedly sew up the Derienni. Another day may see our best men food for ravens. The gal is sure to blow upon us. Suppose we give you money, will you leave us, and not inform?"

"I will not promise," said Joe.

"Then," said Mat, authoritatively, "he must die; and the sooner it is over, why, the better for him and the rest of us. Joe, you are the last man whom I thought would turn informer."

"I am none," replied he; "but I desire to die at peace with my God, and end at once this valueless life of mine."

The men then walked around to an open place; and Joe Barton, kneeling upon one knee, after shaking hands with his old companions, cried aloud—

"May God forgive you for your sins! May this sinful soul be accepted of Christ!" and then, folding his arms, he cried,

"Fire, boys, and together."

Then followed the rattle of several guns in rapid succession, and Joe Barton lay pierced with many balls.

## CHAPTER VII.

THE PLAN — THE ATTACK UPON PANAMA — THE RETREAT — THE CAPTURE — THE EXECUTION.

The Derienni, in its various branches, heard of several organizations which were raising, for the purpose of driving them from their stronghold. They knew that a *coup de main* could alone save them. They felt that the end of their successful career was drawing near. Their only hope for the present, then, was in destroying the band which was equipping itself for the work of extirpating the Derienni from the fruitful scene of their labor, the grand highway to the gold regions. Mat, in a council of war, decided that all the men should make an attack upon the quarters of the committee of public safety, as it was called, where the men and arms were located; and, thought they, if they could succeed in routing their antagonists for the present, before another and more formidable army could be raised against them, they would have the means of escape opened to them. This

course was then decided upon; that their whole force, which now numbered twenty-six, having lost many and received some few additions, should meet in Panama, and take the committee depot by surprise, on the Tuesday of the next week.

The death of Joe was more painful to the minds of the men than all the blood they had spilled, separately and collectively; and those pleasant evenings which they enjoyed were forever departed, and the Derienni locked around them with fear and distrust of each other.

Once more the powerful and daring band are together. They rise in their saddles, proudly and nobly; their steeds paw the ground as though they were impatient for the fray. The men are equipped in their peculiar and picturesque manner, and are plentifully supplied with arms and ammunition, concealed beneath their blanket cloaks. At a given signal, they start off in their full full force, having just met, from various points, by appointment, and dash along over the almost impassable roads with a speed quite bewildering. Their eyes roll with watchfulness; their eyebrows are knit, and their hands upon their stillets, ready at any moment for action. They approach the city in compact mass; and as the population did not exceed five thousand, and it was night, dark as pitch, they had no difficulty in reaching the front of the depot of the citizen soldiery without any alarm. The time was about nine in the evening. They were sitting in a large room, playing at cards, when one of them, observing a number of men riding about opposite the building, gave the alarm to his fellows, who readily understood that this was intended to be a surprise. In another moment the hot shot was pouring in upon them from the street. They made faint return, and this emboldened the Derienni, believing that their opponents were weak; but the facts were, that a few were keeping up the fire, while the balance were preparing themselves for a grand onslaught. As many had betaken themselves to the barns at the rear, and were saddling their beasts, a buckling on of swords, a shouldering of all sorts of muskets went briskly on, and in another moment the Derienni saw at least thirty well-equipped men facing them. They were obliged to turn their attention to this new force, and they desisted from firing at the windows; they engaged with the new comers; but their old adversaries now were quietly at the casement, picking out their marks among the Derienni, and doing more damage than the cavalry. The noise of firing and fighting brought out the residents from the more crowded avenues; they returned for their guns and revolvers, and soon were on the spot, engaged with the work of death. One by one the men and their mules fell; till, at last, a retreat was made by one of the Derienni, for the first time since they had been a band; but now, so far as valor was concerned, it was not dishonorable, for their blood stained the streets, and many of their opponents' carcasses were laying in the confusion of war and carnage around them. Others soon followed, and then after them, with a wild shout of victory, followed the citizens. The chase was carried on for more than an hour. Several of the Derienni escaped; others were shot in the retreat. A ball struck Mat's shoulder, and disabled him from continuing his course. He was captured and brought back. In another minute, Hank's mule was shot under him, and he was overpowered and captured. Gus Randall was the last one who gave in; his mule, weary and tired, refused to go further, and he took to his heels;

but he was soon turned back, and brought into Panama, a prisoner. The three who were captured, Mat, Hank, and Gus, have been introduced to our readers before. The two former have given their lives in their own language, while the latter has been cursorily alluded to. He was a rough and hardened villain, a native of Baltimore, and, while there, one of its most feared characters. He was the author of many fires and other crimes; and he had this night fought with more energy than any of his fellows. He had dealt death and wounds around him with an unsparing hand, and his retreat was one of the hardest and most destructive to his pursuers.

At length these three terrible fellows were made captives. They were placed in the same room from whence they received their first fire. The safety committee is organized, and are keeping them company; such is the primitive state of justice in our more southern latitudes. Cigars and drinking are the order of the night, and the committee do all they can to make their captives comfortable, until their death follows upon the following morning. The remainder of the men are engaged in picking up the corpses and few wounded men, and arranging the former for burial. Bonfires are lighted before the hotel, as an emblem of success; and the place seems all hilarity, at having successfully met the desperate band, whom they thought was more numerous.

Early in the morning the committee room is filled with townspeople, eager to catch a glimpse of the three terrible Derienni; till, at length, at about twelve o'clock in the day, it was decided that the execution should take place in the street, in front of the depot. Mat entreated that they might be shot, instead of hung, and this was granted, after much cavil and talk. The men were brought out, and a circle was formed, which was very difficult, for the people would rather have had the ferocious pleasure of tearing them piecemeal, than to have summarily dispatched them by shooting. But the committee did its duty, and although it was an execution by lynch law, yet no sentence could have been more satisfactorily carried out than this was. The Catholic priests were present, but the three men refused any spiritual assistance, and died as they had lived, full of wickedness, awfulness and crime. The citizens fired in great numbers upon the men, so as not to prolong their sufferings; and after the immense roar of some dozen rifles, the mangled corpses of the three men were carried to a retired spot, and there interred.

To live the life that these wretches did was bad enough; and to die without one spark of contrition in their hearts, or one prayer upon their lips to their God, may be called fortitude or fearlessness, but it is the fortitude of demons.

That day was a day of much rejoicing in Panama, for, towards the night, two others were shot. These were the negro cook and the Spaniard, who were in the cabin when Roda escaped. The others escaped by the Chagres river, it is supposed; but, as robberies and murders are not unfrequent in those parts, even now, we rather incline to the belief that they still inhabit the same log hut of the Derienni in their prosperous days of crime.

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