



CHAPTER V.

Among the many grand houses—or "palatial mansions," as the fashionable house agents in their ornate catalogues love to style them—which have the advantage of overlooking Hyde Park, that of Sir Richard Mortmain was by no means the least splendid or spacious.

Sir Richard was alone. A handsome man enough, so far as form and features went, with no reference to expression, tall, slender and of goodly presence. He was neither old nor young—thirty-three, perhaps—with a pale, resolute face, dark eyes, and very white teeth. But perhaps the most prominent feature, if it may be so called, of the baronet's face, was the long black moustache, carefully trimmed and trained, the arrangement of which often caused the lord of Mortmain to be mistaken for a foreigner. His was, indeed, a countenance rather Italian than English, eminently aristocratic withal, but one that would have suited with the character and the deeds of some subtle contemporary of Borgia and Machiavelli—one of those white-handed patriots who plotted and lied and stabbed and poisoned smilingly.

Sir Richard Mortmain could not afford to live at Mortmain Park, the majestic old manor at which Queen Bess herself had in her time been a guest. But he had a hunting box hard by Market Harborough, and a tiny villa near Newmarket, and kept up the London mansion prettily well. Wages may have been in arrears sometimes, and bills unpaid, but there were liveried servants and carriages and horses and bachelor dinner parties, for all that, while ever and anon there would set in a halcyon period, a sort of financial flood tide, when ready money would abound.

"A person, Sir Richard, wishes very much, if you please, to see you for a minute. From abroad, I believe," said the discreet butler, who had entered quietly. "The man is very pertinacious, and won't go away."

"Tell him to write, then," returned the baronet, arching his eyebrows. "or call the police. One can't afford in London to be open to all comers, as you ought to know."

But the butler coughed apologetically under his employer's rebuke.

"I should not have thought of such a thing, Sir Richard," he said, mildly, "only that the party insisted that his name was well known—name of Crouch, please, Sir Richard, and—"

"I do remember such a name. Show him in," said the baronet, with a frown.

The visitor was promptly inducted into the room. A broad, short man, roughly dressed, in spite of the heat of the weather, in a coarse peacoat, such as North Sea pilots wear, and with heavy boots besmeared by what was certainly not the mud of London withal, a man with a shaggy red beard that fell upon his breast, with a head of unkempt red hair, and with little restless eyes, like those of a wild boar at bay.

Sir Richard Mortmain, leaning against the corner of the massive marble chimney-piece, might have passed for an ideal portrait of aristocratic disdain as he languidly turned his handsome white face toward the importunate visitor.

"You wished to speak to me—Mr. Crouch," he said slowly.

"Crouch, Rufus Crouch," coolly returned the newcomer, as uninvited, he selected an easy chair. "No new name to you, Sir R., now is it? But we may as well make ourselves comfortable before we begin our chat, mayn't we?" And as he spoke he threw himself back in the softly padded chair, and set down his battered hat among the gewgaws on the pretty little table within arm's reach. "We were pals once; thick as thieves, as the saying is, hey, Sir R.?"

The face of Sir Richard Mortmain, as with haughty surprise he looked down upon this extraordinary visitor, would have made the painter who transferred it to the canvas. The sleepy eyes were open now, and there was fire in their regard, while the pencilled brows contracted frowningly, and the well-cut lips tightened beneath the shade of the black moustache. So might Caesar Borgia have looked at a vulgar tool of his who presumed to be insolent.

"Well, Crouch, back again, I see. Why, I thought you fairly settled, under another name perhaps, in Australia," said the baronet, assuming a tone of genuine good nature, and playing his part very well.

"Taint' all of us, Sir R.," replied the man, provokingly, "that have the luck to be baronets, or to have the dirty acres entailed upon us, is it now, Sir R.? I know, and you know, how one chap may get hanged for peeping over the hedge, and another may steal the horse without a question asked; hey, Sir R.?"

The words were offensive, and the manner in which they were uttered was more offensive still. Sir Richard Mortmain was a proud man, apt to resent a liberty on the part of his social inferiors; but he merely laughed now.

"Always the same sort of chap, Rufus, eh?" he said, half playfully—"a crab-apple, as we said in the West-country, as when you carried my second gun in the battues at Mortmain. How did Australia use you?"

"Much as Australia—and England, too, for that matter—uses them that haven't been born with a silver spoon in their mouths, Sir R.," rejoined the fellow, with great asperity. "If I got gold, I spent it; and a dog's life, as a digger, I had of it. Not but what I learned a thing or two as to the lie of the gold and prospecting."

And here the man looked thoughtful, and there was a dash of vanity in his tone.

"Yes," he added, after a pause—"yes, the stuff's lying everywhere, even in England, only you trample over it, and are blind to it. But the days are done now for your independent digger 't'other side of the world. No more nuggeting; no more cradle rocking. It's a master's country now, not a poor man's, in Topsy-turvy land."

"And the bush?" asked the baronet, lightly.

"What do you mean by the bush?" growled Rufus, scowling at him as fiercely as a tiger cat about to spring.

"Nothing, nothing; don't lose your temper," rejoined Sir Richard, equably. "And now, Crouch, what can I do for you? One thing I warn you of—ready money is as scarce with me as leaves on a birch at

white, impassive face of his aristocratic host, was the first of a thousand pounds. It must be a goodish bit more, this, rolling up as it has been for years. Think, Sir R., what such a heap of ready cash would be to you."

There came a flash into Sir Richard's sleepy, dark eyes, and his whole countenance seemed to brighten. "Sure of the sum total, Crouch?" he asked, eagerly. The fellow nodded.

"Now for her surname, then?" inquired the baronet—"though if it were Sneeks or Sniggs I could condone it, if only there's no mistake as to the money."

"No, Sir R.," interrupted the ex-gold digger, emphatically. "And there's just as little mistake as to the young lady that owns it. Miss Violet Mowbray is her name, and from all I hear the Mowbrays are as good as even the Mortmains, so far as pedigree goes. This young girl is an orphan. She has a small income, and her guardian, a tony old City banker, arranged for her to reside with his own niece, our parson's wife, Mrs. Langton. She has grown up in that quiet nook, and knows no more of the thumping sun she is entitled to than I do whether it will freeze or thaw next Christmas."

"How do you know of it, Rufus?" asked the baronet. "Some word of the former part of your spool on leaving your former employers?"

"Not a will," answered Crouch, with a wink. "Wills may be revoked, and codicils added, but this is a snigger sort of thing. This is a trust deed. But that is about all I have to tell gratis, Sir R. Mortmain, baronet."

And, indeed, nothing more by the most skillful diplomacy could be extracted from Rufus. He certainly had not brought the valuable document with him, nor would he give any further information as to the contents of the will, which had been struck, and his own recompense shared or agreed to. Nor would he on that occasion, name his price—nor was a matter for future consideration. What he desired to know was whether Sir Richard would "come into it" heart and soul, and make immediate steps to bring the scheme to a successful conclusion. Sir Richard was ready enough to lend his aid, but he demurred to taking what he called "a leap in the dark."

"I don't ask you to marry, Sir R.," said the former confidential clerk of Lawyer Bowman at last, "without better security than my bare word. But your word is weighted with much gold. My interest and yours go in the same groove, and what I advise is, come down to Yorkshire and judge for yourself."

"Perhaps it would be better so," returned the baronet slowly. "When first you spoke of Somersetshire, I recollected a dreary old place of my father's in those parts that I haven't seen since I was a boy, and never thought to see again—Helston, they call it. The house has been shut up for years, but it belongs to me, after all, and it lies, I remember, just about the upper end of Beckdale and four miles from the sea, in Yorkshire. There, if this prize of yours be really worth winning."

"You never did a wiser thing in your life, Sir R., rely on that, than following up the golden lead that I have put into your hands," said Rufus Crouch, rising from his seat, and next talk, with your leave, had better be in Yorkshire. Meanwhile, your humble servant."

And with no more formal leave taking, the ill-assorted confederates parted.

(To be continued.)

GREED BROUGHT DISASTER.

Vulture Got Away with a Cow's Carcass, but Suffered Capture.

A bird of prey as tall as a man! Such is the prize just captured by the superintendent of Richard Gird's ranch in the hills south of Chino, San Bernardino County.

The prisoner is a magnificent specimen of the California vulture, without doubt the largest ever taken captive. From the crown of its ferocious-looking, red-webbed head to its strong, scaly talons it measures six feet. Its plucky captor is an inch or two shorter in his cowhide boots. The man has the advantage in weight, for the bird weighs 100 pounds. Still, that is a fair fighting weight to carry through the rough upper air. In order to accomplish this feat the vulture is provided with wings that have a spread of twelve feet. Withal, the ornithologists who have seen it say that it is merely a youngster.

Apart from the red wattles already alluded to, the bird's head conveys the idea of a very bald old man of miserly instincts. The back and upper part of the wings are gray and the tail and larger wing feathers are a glossy black. The legs and feet are of a reddish hue.

Altogether Mr. Gird's pet is a formidable-looking customer. Partly for this reason, partly because of his light poll, in contrast to his extreme height and strength and partly because he shows a vicious inclination to deal knockout blows to whoever approaches him, Mr. Gird proposes to match him against any captive wild bird living.

If the match were an eating contest Mr. Gird would probably be on the safe side. Asured by the palatable flavor of a dead cow, the bird devoured nearly every particle of flesh from its bones, so that he was left with a very full stomach, and he was unable to soar away to his eyrie among distant mountain fastnesses.

In this humiliating predicament he was lassoed and dragged, fluttering ponderously but helplessly, to Mr. Gird's stable. His mood just at present is a trifle morose, as might be expected under the circumstances, but Mr. Gird hopes to convert the bird into an affectionate and interesting household pet. Even in the bird's present untutored condition his owner declares that he would not take \$1,000 for him.

Mr. Gird probably does not exaggerate the value of his acquisition. The California vulture is very nearly extinct, owing to the traps laid for birds of prey by settlers. San Francisco Examiner.

Knew His Own Value.

Captain Donegan, a retired lake sailor, was noted for his good nature, an instance of which is given by the Times-Herald.

He once shipped an old fellow named Dougal, merely to give him a place to eat and sleep. Dougal was not expected to go aloft or do any hard work, and he knew it. One day, when it was blowing pretty fresh, the captain, for a joke, called Dougal and told him to go up and furl the top-gallant sail.

"I will na," said the old fellow, looking up in the captain's face in a surprised way.

"Come, come, man, up with you! Don't you see the top-gallant sail will blow away?"

"I will na," reiterated Dougal. "Ye can easily get neither topsail, captain, but my wife canna get neither Dougal."

ODD FEELINGS OF THIEVES

SOMETIMES HAVE NO REASON OR WISH TO STEAL.

Criminals Work for the Excitement of the Thing—Revelations by a Member of the Dark Fraternity.

Thieves are not always mercenary. They do not themselves know very often why they steal, but in talks had with them from time to time, as they have been brought to metropolitan police headquarters they have shown unintentionally that many attractions besides plunder keep them what they are. Except with the kleptomaniac, gain may have been the primal purpose. The experienced thief, however, like the criminal born, is so far beyond the material view of his trade that he seldom reverts to that aspect of it. He has forgotten what he was after.

"If you only could know 'the feel' of 'lifting' a watch when the man what carries it is looking right at you, and hear him apologize for shoving against you when you shove against him to make him not feel the lift."

A pickpocket said this one day, and as he spoke a light came into his eyes not unlike that with which an artist illuminates his praise of a bit of technique. It is an unfinished sentence, but that is the way thieves and politicians have of expressing themselves on such subjects. They assume intelligence in the listener. The politician says: "If you had a chance to do a job easy and no risk," you would steal too, of course, is the conclusion of both.

In fact, thieves assume that if conventional people understood their business from the criminal point of view, they would be less harshly judged and more universal. Let us see.

Captain O'Brien had among his prisoners last week a young man who had been one of three burglars who entered a country house. He was weeping when the interview began. The captain had been trying to make him confess, and the burglar pleaded that the last time he had "give up" (confessed) his comrades in prison had abused him for it. They kicked him when in line, tripped him to get him punished for stumbling, heaved granite chips at him when breaking stone, dropped things on him when in bed, and at last, ostracized him from the various ways made his imprisonment hard. The reporter reassured him; it was an interview, not a confession, that was sought. Why was he a thief? He began by stealing bicycles. His sister had married a "bike-lifter," and there was money in it, so he went into it for a sordid reason. But he related incidents of exciting chances, once, for instance when he was arrested, locked up, and discharged with a reprimand to the cop by the magistrate, and his tears dried. His face became animated. He told about how in search of something not so "dead easy" he and his brother-in-law turned to burglary.

Sneak robberies occupied them at first, and furnished enough excitement. Then they ventured farther—thieving. There was some adventure in that till the man who afterwards led them to higher work laughed at their proud boast of triumph over women and children in daylight. They must do a "second-story job" if they wished to acquire standing as "good men."

A country house was watched for days till the habits of the occupants were known to the plotters. Observation was supplemented by dirtations with the servants, and at last a night was decided on for the burglary. "Maybe you think it ain't nothing," he said, "to be sneaking through a house you don't know about. Most people are scared of men in the dark come to rob them. But I tell you the people that know the house and belong in it are on top every time. They know the ground. That night I trembled so me brother-in-law took away the candle out of me hand. I was all sweat and cold. The sounds was awful. Everything creaked and the other fellows seen I was dead scared. So Bob he and just to show me picked up a big pot and flung it against the wall. It blew up like a cannon and fell in pieces with a rattle on the wood floor. I stood still as a nail crept over my head, and me knees—oh, my, I'll never forget that. I couldn't run or would 'a'." And they laughed, or Bob did. Me brother-in-law only smiles like. He said afterwards he wasn't scared, but he was."

Bob's bit of bravado was unprofessional. He and his pals are second-rate burglars. They struck a frightened woman in the face with a revolver that night, and the result was the case attracted extraordinary attention, and the burglars were run down and sent to prison. They were out for adventure, and with that purpose was mixed up the idea of having something to brag about to bigger thieves. Even these burglars, however, did not talk about what they stole. That was utterly subordinate to the excitement and the tickle of unity, for they thought, of course, the reporter admired them.

"Good men," in criminal and police parlance, are thieves who do "clean work." That is to say, they plan a robbery and carry it through without noise, without injuring anyone, and without leaving a clue behind them. It is a rule among such men never to shoot. They carry arms and draw them to frighten alarmists into silence, but if a bluff is not successful they prefer to run. Commenting on this rule of criminal practice, a detective once soberly advised that the man who wakes up at night to see a masked face and a revolver over him, shout and jump up as if to fight.

"Suppose the burglar isn't a good man," objected the reporter.

"Then he'd do something so we can send him up for life."

This gave a glimpse of the detective's professional view of crime, which is limited and unconventional like the thief's. To hear a detective and a criminal talk about a crime is to get the facts in much the same light. Both speak of the skill displayed in it. But the detective is only the dilettante after all. The burglar talks with the sensitive appreciation of the accomplishment which is professional in the broadest sense of the word. He has his vanity. Indeed, this weakness is so abnormally developed that it is frequently the cause of his ruin. He must tell the women he knows and other criminals that he has "done a job," especially if it is a good one. The

assumption that it is a rudimentary conscience that stings him to confession is a popular error. His admissions to the police are prompted by a hope to lessen his sentence, and they are not called for till he is caught or believes himself caught. His vanity makes him tell his kind and they repeat what he has said till some stool-pigeon hears it. Then the police know. The police work upon this weakness constantly through their agents. Captain O'Brien has reduced the method to a minimum of sacrifices; he says he makes none. But his staff have their "connections" out all the time. The difficulty is to prove a case after the culprit is known. Captain O'Brien knows, for example, who robbed the Dennett restaurant. The men who did that left a "clean job"; they were "good men," but they had to talk a little, and what they said reached the bureau. That was all the good it did. They could not be convicted. So with the Brentano safe burglary; the thieves were named to the police, who had then sent away to another city for a crime there. Conviction here was impossible. Another difficulty that springs from the same appreciation of crime is that of confessions to "good work" by lesser thieves who do not do it. They would be willing to go to prison if they could go with the glory of such a crime among the convicts who understand such things.

This vanity and the statement quoted of the pickpocket show that there is an aesthetic sense of crime as of other things. It may be pretty hard to turn one's mind far enough around to see crime in such a way as to perceive the applicability of the term, but the nervous excitement of a shoplifter as she is reaching for the object selected for theft is often the sensation that keeps her stealing. Some women not known as thieves at all, not in any need of their stealings, women well provided for in good homes, rob counters daily.

A FEAT OF PENMANSHIP

More than 7,000 Words on One Postal Card.

Walter D. Wellman, a bookkeeper in the employ of Anspacher Brothers, the commission merchants, has performed the remarkable feat of writing in long hand 7,068 words on an ordinary postal card. About two months ago M. C. F. Grincourt, a Frenchman, succeeded in writing 5,554 words in French on a postal card. Mr. Grincourt's feat made a great sensation, and his postal card was for a long time on exhibition at the Examiner office. An account given in the columns of the Examiner represented this as the finest and closest writing ever accomplished.

But Mr. Wellman has far excelled the Frenchman, not only in the number of words he has succeeded in getting upon the postal card, but in the length of the words he used also. Mr. Grincourt copied a portion of one of Victor Hugo's novels, in which the words were notoriously short. Mr. Wellman copied eight columns of the Bulletin, selected from three distinct articles, so that he could not be accused of copying from one writer whose vocabulary consisted chiefly of short words. There were 110 lines on Mr. Grincourt's postal card, and 154 on Mr. Wellman's.

Mr. Wellman also asserts that he had plenty of room to spare and could easily have gotten in 8,500 words. He worked on it for fifteen days, at odd moments, when he could escape from his business duties. He says he could have accomplished it in six hours of steady work. He wrote it at the pace of fifteen words a minute, while his pace in writing the ordinary size is from thirty-five to forty a minute.

The postal card easily be read with a glass, and a person with a good eye can read it without the help of a glass. A fellow-clerk of Mr. Wellman easily read the postal with his naked eye, but begged off from all posts being written in this fashion.

The 7,068 words are written with an ordinary steel pen in violet ink. The ink is a mere matter of change, and has nothing to do with the fitness of the work.

Mr. Wellman has never done any work of this kind before. His only practice was in writing the Lord's Prayer. Without the slightest difficulty he accomplished the feat of writing these seventy-two words in a space no larger than a gold quarter of a dollar.

The writer of this curiosity is a young American, twenty-eight years old. He is near-sighted and wears glasses, but his eyes must be very strong, as he has suffered no pain nor inconvenience whatever from this close work. In fact, his near-sightedness may help him a little, as near-sighted people usually see things at a close range much better than people of ordinary sight.—San Francisco Bulletin.

Well-Considered Verdict.

A coroner in Australia recently reasoned out a verdict more sensibly than one-half the verdicts usually rendered. It appeared that an Irishman, conceiving that a little powder thrown upon some green wood would facilitate his burning, directed a small stream from a keg upon the burning piece, but not possessing a hand sufficiently quick to cut this supply off, was blown into a million pieces, says Pearson's Weekly.

The following was the verdict, delivered with great gravity by the official: "Can't be called suicide, because he didn't mean to kill himself; he didn't die for want of breath, for he hadn't anything to breathe with; it's plain he didn't know what he was about, so I shall bring in—died for want of common sense."

Secret of the Bicycle's Popularity.

Now the bicycle has offered to the great majority of citizens a means of athletic exercise and open-air enjoyment for which they need not be specially equipped by nature, man and woman, weak and strong, dwarf and three-hundred-pounder—all sorts and conditions of men—and do learn to wheel, and with comparatively small perseverance become as proficient for all practical purposes as the most handsomely endowed athlete of them all. This is the true secret of the bicycle's firm hold on the public, and here is its greatest value.—Scribner.

A Philadelphia beggar wears a placard inscribed: "I am married and blind."

A TRAIN-ROBBER'S PARADISE.

Italian Railroads and the Experiences of Travelers on Them.

It is surely time that the attention of the public should be called to the robberies from baggage on the Italian lines of railway, which are now of constant, probably of daily, occurrence, which must be committed by the guards of the trains or with their knowledge, as no one else can have access to the baggage in transit from one place to another, which the Italian railway authorities and the police hear of almost daily, but of which no notice is taken. I will give a few instances, writes Augustus J. C. Hare, the eminent author to the London Times. The well-known Miss L. S. has a residence both in Rome and Venice. Moving last year from the former to the latter, her boxes were opened and various articles taken. A small wooden box in one of her trunks was forced open at the hinges. It mostly contained papers, which were left, but a gold piece of 100 francs was found among them and carried off. This year the same lady moved at the same time from Rome to Venice. She then had her boxes sealed. On receiving them at the Venice station, her servant saw that they were sealed still, and did not observe that the seal of one of them had been broken and replaced by a new (a finger) seal. On reaching home it was found that everything in the box had been turned out and ransacked, and all the contents of a work box thrown out amongst the other things. Several articles were missing. The Venice station-master, informed at once, said that he "saw no reason to suppose that the robbery had been committed by one of the company's servants."

Within a very few days of this, the Countess of Kenmare had her boxes opened between Bologna and Venice and various objects stolen. About the same time an Italian princess, coming from Bologna to Venice, lost all her jewels in the same way. Mr. Ralph Curtis, resident of Venice, had his boxes opened and half his clothes taken. Two valuable dresses were abstracted from the boxes of the Queen of Italy during her last journey from Venice to Monza. A precious bracelet, inherited from Sir J. Outram, set with large Indian diamonds, was taken from the trunk of Mrs. —, and when the authorities were informed of it, they only expressed polite regret that any one should have had "cool paca delicatessa" as to steal her jewels!

A gentleman traveling on the line from Genoa to San Remo, got out at a small station. Before he expected, he saw the train in motion. He had no time to regain his place but jumped into an open baggage van. He was surprised to see the look of consternation with which a guard in the van and his companion received him. Then he perceived that several trunks were open and their contents piled upon the floor of the van. He had presence of mind to light his cigar, turn his back and look as if he had observed nothing. Otherwise, "Mysterious discovery of the body of an English traveler on a railway line" would have headed a paragraph in next day's paper.

Another crying evil is the state of Florence railway station. Always the worst managed station in Europe, it is now a perfect bear-garden. Any one can obtain access to the platform on the payment of one soldo, and at the time of the departure of the evening train for Rome it is crowded by all the worst characters in Florence.

On the evening of March 12 I was about to leave Florence for Rome. From unavoidable circumstances I had nearly £100 in my pocket, £70 being in English banknotes. The money was in an inner breast pocket of my coat, with a great coat over it. I thought it absolutely safe. I had kept out enough money for my ticket, but unfortunately my baggage cost more than I had calculated, and to get a five francs note I was obliged to take out my pocket-book. It was safely replaced, but it must have been seen then. There was the usual crowd on the platform, and great confusion when the multitude of travellers, penned up in the waiting-room, were let out into it. I put my hand-bag to keep a place in an already crowded carriage, and then went to look for something better, but failed to find it. Returning to the first carriage, I found two men on the step, who, with loud Italian vociferation, rudely opposed my entrance—"You cannot come in here, this is not your place," etc., and they pushed violently against my chest.

I contended that my hand-bag was already in the carriage and my place taken, and eventually got in, the men pushing against me to the last, and then disappearing. Immediately the train was in motion, I found that in those pushes my inner pocket was torn out, and my pocket-book and money gone.

I telegraphed back to the Florence station from the first stopping place, and wrote to all the authorities at Florence. Two days afterwards I was summoned to the Roman railway station and had the usual silly examination (afterward six times repeated on six different days at different Roman police offices) as to my exact age, occupation, and place of birth, the Christian name of my father, etc. Then I was asked if I should recognize my robbers if I saw them. Of this I felt doubtful, as on the March evening on which I was robbed it was already almost dark. But the police official said: "A group of men will come into the end of this room—see if you recognize any of them."

I said: "Yes, the second from the wall on the left." Then he said, "Now another group will come in," and again I pointed out a man, and it proved that those were the two men who had just been arrested for other flagrant robberies at Florence station. I saw their booty which had been taken—a mass of purses and pocket-books, a large pile of watches, chains, and ladies' ornaments. The authorities said that no English notes had been found.

A fortnight later I was summoned to the Roman prison of the Carceri Nuove. There again I picked out my two robbers, each out of a group of other men, and each time proved right. Though I have never had any hope of recovering my money, I have since lingered on in Italy, expecting to be summoned to give evidence at their trial; but I have heard nothing; the case is probably dropped.

But at table d'hôte, in railway carriages, omnibuses, etc., the last railway robbery is now always the topic of conversation.

variation. All experienced Italian travelers set out on their journey feeling that their boxes are likely to be robbed, and Italians themselves bring the very utmost possible baggage into the carriage with them. Lace and jewels intrusted to travelling trunks are more than likely to disappear. Small articles, such as pocket handkerchiefs, scarfs, etc., are very generally taken. There is no redress. The underpaid guards are practically allowed and encouraged to add to their salaries in this way.

A LOG CABIN WOOLING

Sue and Joe Sot and Sot Until Sue's Mother Took a Hand In.

It was only a two room cabin, and after supper Mrs. Coots and I sat down in the front room and left her daughter Sue, a girl about eighteen years old, to clear away and tidy up. Sue had just finished when a young man slipped into the kitchen. His head gear was a coon skin cap, the bottoms of his trousers were tucked into his boot legs, and as he was awkward and ungainly as a cow on ice.

"Howdy, Joe?" saluted the girl as he entered.

"How—howdy?" he replied, as he sat down on the edge of a chair and fumbled with his cap.

"That's her beau," whispered Mrs. Coots to me over her knitting. "Joe's pearl 'nuff, but powerful shy. Bin coting Sue for nigh a yar now, but hain't dun axed her to marry him."

The girl took a seat on the far side of the room, and for ten minutes not a word was spoken between them. Then she finally queried:

"How's Dars, Joe?"

"Hain't seen a bar in three months," he replied.

There was another painful interval, and then Sue asked:

"How's coons, Joe?"

"Coons is plenty," he replied, as he avoided her glance.

"That's the way it goes!" whispered the mother. "They jist sot and sot, and talk 'bout bars and coons and sich, and I do declar 'I'm gittin' all up-sot!"

Five minutes later, just as the young man seemed on the point of leaving, Sue kindly inquired:

"Killed any 'possums lately, Joe?"

"Nary one," he replied, as he stared at his boots.

"I can't abide that no mo'!" muttered the mother, as she laid aside her work and rose up.

"What are you going to do?" I asked.

"Git 'em together, or skeer him off!"

She walked out into the kitchen and stood before the young man and sternly demanded:

"Joe Skillman, did yo' dun cum over yere to borrow any ax?"

"N—no, num," he stammered.

"Did yo' dun cum to cote Sue?"

"Y—yes, mum!"

"Sue, do yo' want to be coted?"

"Reckon I do," answered Sue.

"Then yo' all jist listen to me! Joe, yo' git on 't'other side. Sue, yo' snuggle up to him. I's gwine to blow out the candle and leave yo' in the dusk, and me 'n the stranger's gwine to sot on the fur side of 't'other room and talk loud. I's got mighty tired of this fussin' around, and yo' all has either got to fix or unfix things this very night!"

An hour later, when Joe went home, Sue called her mother out and held a whispered conversation with her, and when Mrs. Coots returned to me she smiled grimly and explained:

"They'll ar' gwine to be married next week!"—A. B. Lewis in Truth.

WATCHES.

Some Facts Concerning the Styles—The Great Number of Watches Used.

In this country almost everybody carries a watch. Probably nine-tenths of the men, and great numbers of women, and many young people carry watches. In the best trade of the city many more watches of gold are sold than of silver; of all the watches sold throughout the country about 25 per cent. are of gold. The percentage of gold watches is increasing.

The fashionable watch of the day is open faced. The sale of open-faced watches is increasing, especially in fine watches, but it is increasing also in watches of other grades. Of fine watches sold in this city probably two-thirds are now made open faced. Of all the watches sold in the United States, gold and silver, probably from a quarter to a third are now made open faced.

The modern watch has for one of its characteristics thinness. A man's watch, which is now made more especially to wear with evening dress and is all the time growing in favor, is a plain, thin, open-faced gold watch which takes up but little room in the pocket. Perfect in its simplicity, this watch is at the same time of fine workmanship and great beauty. It sells at \$190. A gold watch not so thin nor so finely finished, but a very handsome modern watch and an excellent timekeeper, by the same makers and bearing their name can be bought in open face, the case of 18 carat gold, for \$65; in double case for \$70.

But gold watches and good watches, too, can be bought for very much less than these prices; in fact there never was a time when watches generally were made in such tasteful shapes, or when they were so good for the money, or so cheap as now.

Taking all the grades together, the American production of watches