

THE SPUR OF FATE.

BY ASHLEY TOWNE.

Copyright, 1901, by Charles B. Etherington.

CHAPTER V. VERA'S VISITORS.

THE light of morning was in the sky when Darrell reached the Gordons' house. Mrs. Gordon and Vera met him at the door, having heard the cab's wheels upon the pavement. Before he could tell his story, even in the briefest form, another cab rolled up, bringing Gordon, who had been but a few minutes too late to meet his friend at the station.

Darrell laid the facts before them all, admitting that he was wholly unable to furnish an explanation.

"It would seem to me like one of those accidental crimes that are so hard to trace," said Gordon. "This man Ladislav, after vainly pursuing you, became separated from his companion and encountered an enemy, who took advantage of an unexpected opportunity. Such men have numberless enemies. They carry their lives in their hands. Perhaps this act of private vengeance is connected with the attempt to drag Mile. Shevaloff back to Russia, but probably it isn't."

In regard to this question Vera evaded a direct expression of opinion.

"There are among my friends," said she, "or at least among those with whom I have recently been brought into contact, men who would not regret the death of Captain Ladislav. He was, like almost all spies, as well known and conspicuous as the Eiffel tower. But my closest associates had no idea of his designs upon me. They could not have learned of my capture in so short a time. Therefore I have no suspicion as to who killed Captain Ladislav."

The fruitless discussion which followed was broken off by Mrs. Gordon, who insisted that Vera must seek rest. Indeed there could be no doubt of the



"Old man, you're jealous."

need, for Vera's head was unsteady upon her shoulders with weariness. The acute nervous strain had broken. In the security of this haven, so strangely opened to her, she felt near the demand for action nor the fear of danger. The bright glow of power and resolution had gone out of her eyes. She looked like a pretty child who had been kept up too late.

"The most singular creature that I have ever seen in all my life," said Gordon when the ladies had withdrawn. "and surely one of the most interesting!"

"Interesting?" repeated Darrell dreamily; "that's the precise word. You can't get her off your mind. Upon my soul, I can see her face now as clearly as when she was in the room!"

"A bad sign," replied Gordon, shaking his head. "Tell me, what is she? Did you ever know anything like the way she has veiled her secret throughout her talk with us? Perfectly frank about herself and about her past sorrows, absolutely elusive on matters of the present and future! What is she doing in Paris?"

"I give it up," said Darrell, "but I hope she'll succeed, whatever it is, and if I can help her—"

"Why, you'll plunge into any scrape to do it!" said Gordon.

"I'll not drag you and your wife in after me, however," rejoined Darrell firmly.

"Don't worry about us," responded Gordon, with a laugh. "Any friend of yours is more than welcome, even though her baggage may be full of dynamite. And as to Mile. Shevaloff," he added seriously, "my wife is completely satisfied, and that decision is final hereabout; also it is invariably correct."

Darrell crossed to the eastern window and stood for some time in silence, looking out upon the gray morning. He turned at the sound of Mrs. Gordon's voice.

"I have to thank you, Jack," said she, "for what I believe to be a great and splendid opportunity. This girl you have brought to me is a wonderful creature, full of glorious possibilities, and she stands in great peril. She has birth and breeding, and, unless I am grossly mistaken, she has that which is much better—the instinct of true womanhood. But she is as little fit for vengeance as Hamlet was, and she shall not waste her life upon it if I can prevent."

"Vengeance?" echoed Gordon.

"Beyond a doubt the girl is a conspirator of some sort," said the lady, "committed to an impossible plan that will

result inevitably in her own destruction. Selfish men are probably using her for their own ends, playing upon her father's wrongs, squandering her money. I have no doubt, on the pretense of furthering some mad design of extrajudicial justice. I am going to see what common sense can do for her. She cannot bring her parents back to life. She cannot right the wrongs that have been done. It would be better for her to consider her own life and to accept such happiness as the world offers."

"I hope to heaven that you'll succeed," said Darrell, taking her hand.

With Mrs. Gordon's amiable attempt to stem the tide of destiny this present record is not intimately concerned. It is sufficient to say that Vera was for several days a member of that household and that she revealed a many-sided and most interesting nature. But she did not reveal the secret of her frankness in Paris. She continued to be frank about herself, disclosing without reserve the facts of her ancestry and earlier life. It appeared that upon her mother's side she was descended from a princely house of Circassia, of which she was almost the sole survivor. Moreover, she had a strain of American blood through an international marriage two generations back, and to that, in her opinion, she owed her chief distinguishing peculiarities both of mind and body. Certainly her appearance was most unusual for a Circassian.

She made no attempt to secure her personal effects, and the Gordons were not aware that she communicated with the persons in whose charge the things then were, but she obtained money from a bank where she had an account under an assumed name. Darrell presented the check for her, and it was for a large sum, which was paid without question. Such things as she required were purchased for her by Mrs. Gordon. Vera herself remaining strictly within doors.

On the second day she asked leave to receive two gentlemen, and as a result of this permission and a note dispatched by a messenger there appeared at the house about 9 o'clock in the evening two persons of a somewhat formidable aspect. They were presented to Mrs. Gordon as M. Kilzlar and M. Korna and were subsequently referred to by Darrell and Gordon in their private conversation as the alliterative duo.

M. Kilzlar was a bulky man, nearly fifty years old, swarthy and keen eyed. He had the air of one inured to physical hardships, familiar with the saddle and the sword. M. Korna was under thirty, slender and graceful. He narrowly escaped being handsome, but the leanness of his visage and consequent unpleasant prominence of his high cheek bones spoiled the effect of brilliant eyes and a fine, firm mouth and chin.

What these gentlemen had to communicate no one but themselves and Vera knew, for Mrs. Gordon retired before earshot when the serious conversation began.

On the day following a gentleman of quite a different type presented himself. He was M. Jules Clerly, a very elegant individual, a Frenchman of distinguished family. During M. Clerly's visit Gordon discovered Darrell in the billiard room, walking around the table, his hands deep in his pockets and his broad and studious brow deeply, almost painfully, furrowed.

Gordon sank into a chair and watched Darrell walk half a mile. Then he said:

"Old man, you're jealous."

Darrell stopped short and for some seconds regarded his friend with that glance of careful, searching inquiry which was so good a mask for the rapidity of his thought.

"Bob," said he, "do you know who M. Clerly is?"

"Certainly," replied Gordon, and he gave a hasty sketch of the man.

"Do you know what he does?" demanded Darrell.

"Does?" repeated Gordon. "What do you mean?"

"I mean for a living," responded Darrell. "I suppose it is not generally known that he does anything, but the truth is that he is a man of business. He is a silent partner in the biggest powder mill in France. He makes all kinds of explosives, Robert, and sells them, sometimes on the quiet. Now, what do you make of that?"

"I don't like it," answered Gordon. "This girl has no right to be mixed up in nihilism and that sort of thing. She's a big hearted, high souled woman. She is out of place as a conspirator."

"Isn't this situation preposterous?" exclaimed Darrell. "Here is this beautiful child—really she's nothing else—plotting heaven knows what atrocities with hardened adventurers like Kilzlar and negotiating for dynamite with this fellow Clerly, who is hand in glove with the most desperate revolutionists on earth, and we can't do anything to save her. We are restrained by the conventionalities of polite society from prying into her affairs."

He laughed in a reckless fashion, as if upon the whole he relished the adventure.

"If she would trust me, Bob," he said, with sudden earnestness, "I'd follow her to the utmost limit and make no end of a fool of myself, of course. But I'd do it gladly for her, and you know why, my friend."

"I'm afraid I do," returned Gordon. "You're caught in the net."

"She has set no snares for me," replied Darrell. "Quite the contrary. She cares nothing for me, either to serve

her in this dangerous business or for my own personal merits. I love her wholly upon my own responsibility and because I can't help it. There's a frank confession. Bob, I love Vera Shevaloff with all my heart and soul!"

Gordon had been pacing the floor. At Darrell's last words he turned as if to speak. Then something seemed suddenly to arrest his attention. He wheeled about and opened a door that was close upon his right hand.

"I beg pardon, sir," said a manservant who was standing just without. "Did you ring?"

"No," replied Gordon, regarding the man attentively; "no, Francois, I did not. You may close the door."

He turned again to Darrell as the catch of the door snapped, and the two men exchanged glances.

"I don't like the looks of it," said Darrell in a low tone. "The fellow had a sneaky air."

"You had just spoken her name," rejoined Gordon. "It has never been uttered before the servants, and I trust this man Francois the least of any. Of course we cannot conceal Vera's presence here forever. Miss Lorrimer's new abode will be reported to the police in the usual way, and when the information sifts around to the right place our new guest will have to be accounted for, like every other person who is unknown to the commissaire of the precinct. But that might not happen for a week or even a fortnight."

"With Francois' assistance, however," said Darrell. "It may happen immediately."

At this moment they heard Mrs. Gordon's voice. Gordou crossed the room and opened a door.

"Mille!" he called.

"One moment," she replied, and then to a maid, "You say that the young lady is ill?"

"I do not know, madame," replied the maid, "but I thought best to tell you. A few minutes ago I saw her passing through this hall hurriedly. I thought she was going into the billiard room, but she paused at the door. M. Gordon and M. Darrell were within. Perhaps she heard their voices. Then in an instant she fell back against the jamb of the door and clutched the bosom of her dress. She remained thus for a moment and then ran away up to her apartment. I suppose, I spoke to her, but she did not seem to hear me."

"I will go to her," said Mrs. Gordon.

Her husband laid a hand upon her arm and drew her into the room.

"It is not necessary," he said. "The illness of our guest is beyond cure." Then to Darrell: "Jack, we were overheard from both ends of the room—Francois there, Vera here. She heard you say you loved her, and from what the maid just told us I think you are to be congratulated."

TO BE CONTINUED.

GOT THERE FIRST.

How Mrs. Andrew Simonds Outwitted Her Rivals.

With a woman's wit, Mrs. Andrew Simonds has dealt a fearful blow to the St. Cecilia society. She used President Roosevelt as a cudgel, but he knew it not until the stroke was delivered.

Mrs. Simonds' husband is the president of the First National bank and one of the wealthiest men in Charleston. She traces her lineage well into the mediaeval ages, but not far enough for all that, and the St. Cecilia's look askance upon her aristocracy.

President Roosevelt did not know that it was one of the things his instructors as to South Carolina had overlooked. When he stopped yesterday at Summerville, the banker's wife was one of the first on board to greet the visitor.

"We are certainly glad to see you," she cried. "You must come right up to luncheon with me."

Many St. Cecilia's had climbed aboard the Algonquin, the revenue cutter. All stood back aghast. Some raised their hands in dread at such audacity. A woman not of the St. Cecilia's who dared invite the president to luncheon before the select society had feted him?

It seemed preposterous, but nevertheless it was true. Mrs. Simonds stood smiling happily, and then—oh, horror of horrors! The president accepted her invitation! Like a queen leading a visiting prince among her peasants, Mrs. Simonds conducted Colonel Roosevelt through the gaping St. Cecilia's to her carriage, and a few minutes later he was sitting at one of the daintiest repasts he had ever known.

This wonderful woman had ordered it before she went to the train to meet him.

The war between the St. Cecilia's and Mrs. Simonds is of old standing, but heretofore the organization has had a great advantage in point of numbers and prestige. The society is supposed to be the most select in America, and certain members seemed to take perfect delight in snubbing, or rather trying to snub, the banker's wife.

The most recent engagement between the lone fighter and the St. Cecilia's was a few days before a ball was given by the Colonial Dames to visiting D. A. R.'s. Mrs. Simonds was invited as a matter of course, but the St. Cecilia's went to the chairman of the ball committee and told her that the invitation would have to be revoked. The chairman did not dare disobey, and Mrs. Simonds went to Florida, vowing she would be avenged. She feels satisfied now.—Charleston Dispatch to New York News.

A New Orleans doctor calls attention to a very simple fact which merits attention from medicine takers. If the medicine is mixed with very cold water, and a few swallows of the water be taken as a preparatory, the nerves of the organ of taste become sufficiently benumbed to make the medicine nearly tasteless.

Miscellaneous Reading.

RULES OF THE HOUSE.

Republican Congressman Makes an Interesting Protest Against Them.

The rules of the house, whereby no bill public or private, can be brought up for consideration except with the consent of the speaker, are growing intolerable to many members of the Republican majority. Representative Cushman, of South Dakota, Republican, registered a vigorous kick against this condition of affairs last Thursday that was heartily approved by the Democrats.

"I make the statement on this floor now," he said, "that no member who introduces a bill—not a private bill, but a public bill—can get it considered or brought forward for final determination unless it suits the speaker, and if anyone wants to deny that, I am in a personal position, and in a peculiarly happy frame of mind right now, to give a little valuable testimony on that point." [Applause and laughter.] He continued:

"Who is the speaker of this house? Is he a mortal man like the rest of us? Who is the speaker of this house that he sets up his immaculate judgment to judge on every bill that is introduced? When a member introduces a bill in this house, not a private bill, but a public bill, what happens? It is referred to a great committee of this house. They pass their judgment on it, recommend it for passage, and then it goes on the calendar. Calendar? That is a misnomer. It ought to be called a cemetery. [Laughter.] For therein lie the whitening bones of legislative hopes. [Laughter.]

"When the bill is reported, what does the member who introduced it and who is charged by his constituency to secure its passage, do? Does he consult himself about his desire to call it up? No. Does he consult the committee that recommended it? No. Does he consult the will of the majority of this house? No. What does he do? I will tell you what he does. He either consents that that bill may die on the calendar, or he puts his manhood and individuality in his pocket and goes trotting down that little pathway, that leads where? To the speaker's room. Ah, the speaker's room. All the glory that clustered around the Holy of Holies in King Solomon's Temple looked like thirty cents [prolonged laughter and applause]—yes, looked like twenty-nine cents, compared with that jobbing department of this government. [Applause and laughter.]

"I have a high regard for the speaker of this house personally, and for him politically; but the fact is that we have adopted a set of rules in this body that are an absolute disgrace to the legislative body of any Republic. [Democratic applause.] They are un-American. [Democratic applause.]

We need the patriotic duty in this body today of rising up and formulating a new Declaration of Independence. We need to restore this house to the great patriotic plane on which the fathers of the republic placed it, where every individual member on this floor stands on an equal and an exact plane with every other. [Applause.] We operate here under a set of rules confessedly designed to belittle the hopes the dwarf the ambitions of the individual members of this body, and at the same time vest more power in the hands of one or two men than was ever enjoyed by Oriental despot or ten-button Mandarin. I say to you, my friends, that the system is rotten at both ends. It is rotten at one end because it robs the individual members in this house of the power that the constitution of the United States and his credentials as a member on this floor entitle him to; it is rotten at the other end because it vests power in men that have no right to it, and ordines places on them duties that they have no capacity to fulfill. [Applause and laughter.]

"Let no man charge me now with trying to tear down the Republican party. I am not trying to tear down the Republican party, but I confess that I sometimes feel that I would like to put my hand upon the throat of one or two men who conceive that they are the Republican party. [Applause and laughter.] The true friend of his party is not the man who sits by and watches his party drift into disrepute and toward destruction, but the man who rises up and calls attention to the evils that exist.

"Now in the three years that I have been a member of this body, I have always approached that little machine with the deference due to its age and its station; but I hope you will excuse my frankness when I tell you that from this time on I will devote a little of my time and a little of my energy to putting a few spokes in the wheel of that machine that the designers of the vehicle never ordered. [Laughter.] I realize that in my brief time allotted to me I cannot do adequate justice to the injustice of the subject. I will leave it with the final observation that some time between now and the close of this session I will get a little time at a suitable opportunity, and I will make a speech on the subject of the rules of this house, and I promise you that that speech will be so hot that it will have to be printed on asbestos paper and tied to a hand grenade for distribution." [Laughter.]

LEWIS OUT OF POLITICS.—That picturesque statesman, J. Hamilton Lewis, who came to congress from the state of Washington, and first astonished the capitol with his extremely fashionable appearance, and then by proving a thorn in the side of the Republicans when he got the opportunity, notwithstanding the efforts of Reed to suppress him, is back here looking

over his old colleagues, says the Washington correspondence of the Philadelphia North American. He is better dressed and more suave than ever; but he shakes his head when any one suggests that he ought to come back to congress.

"It cost me," he said, "\$5,000 every time I got the nomination in my district. It then cost me \$15,000 more to be elected, and I had to come to Washington and live on my wife's money.

"When I tried to help out my income by practicing law in Washington men came around and borrowed more from me than I could possibly make in fees. In addition to that, people refused to pay me for my services. There may be some men who know how to run politics upon an economical basis, but I do not. I found the expense of a campaign exceedingly heavy, and I always had to foot all the bills."

COMMON BUT SELDOM SEEN.

A Shrew, Not the Human Kind, Found in the Daytime in Washington.

Most people are familiar with Shakespeare's "Taming of the Shrew," and few there are who are not aware that the shrew is a little animal not much larger than a mouse with habits similar to those of a ground squirrel and a temper like that of a red-haired woman; but how many ever saw one of those animals? The shrew is indigenous to the United States from Maine to Florida, and from the Atlantic ocean to Omaha; but owing to the fact that it is a night prowler, remaining in its underground habitation during the day, it is seldom seen. Cats and dogs will not prey upon these curious little animals, owing to their peculiarly strong and offensive odor, and for that reason they seldom or never form part of the spoil of the farmhouse cat after a night's hunt.

Bearing the foregoing facts in mind, the reader will be the more surprised to learn of a very curious thing that occurred on Saturday, March 22, in the heart of Washington, which may result in the reading of a scientific paper on the subject at some forthcoming meeting of one of the scientific societies of this city.

On the date mentioned, Jim Perry, a colored bootblack, who has a stand on Tenth street Northwest, only two blocks distant from Pennsylvania avenue, caught one of these little animals running about in the gutter not far from his stand. He succeeded after some difficulty, and not until the pugnacious little animal had bitten him several times, in placing it in a box. Where for several hours it remained the centre of attraction for passersby, who crowded around Jim's stand to "rubberneck" at the little creature and ventilate their opinions as to its name and nature, until a policeman came along and made them disperse.

Jim was born and raised in Virginia, where shrews are unusually common, but this, it seems, was the first he had ever seen. He decided that it was a new variety of rat. For two hours after he caught the shrew fully 20 people must have looked it over, yet of all that number not one had ever seen a shrew or knew the name of the animal that Jim had captured. Finally some one told Jim that he ought to take the animal, whatever it was, up to Mr. Schmidt's dog, cat and bird store, on Twelfth street, and that if any one knew, he would be most apt to know the name of the little beast.

Jim acted on this advice, and a few minutes later submitted the shrew to Mr. Schmidt for inspection. After looking the animal over closely, Mr. Schmidt confessed that he had not the faintest notion of what it could be, but advised Jim to take it to Dr. Gerritt Miller, zoologist in the National Museum, saying that he alone would know the name and nature of Jim's find.

About 30 minutes later Jim returned up in Dr. Miller's office, where he had the satisfaction of learning the name of the strange animal. With true scientific patriotism Jim presented his shrew to the government, and when it appears on exhibition (stuffed and mounted) Jim's name will appear on the label as the finder. Of this Jim is very proud. Speaking of Jim's find Dr. Miller said:

"This is the first instance that ever came under my observation of the finding of a shrew in daytime and in the heart of a large city. How the little animal came to be where the colored boy found him is what puzzles me. I am inclined to think that he came in from the country in a load of hay, wood, vegetables, or, possibly, sand or soil, for I am quite sure they have never adapted themselves to city life."—Washington Post.

MOOT POINT OF LAW.—An English writer gives a good example of those quibbles in legal practice that have a sort of fascination for certain minds, says the Youth's Companion. Some time he met the principal lawyer for the government of one of the principalities, who told him of a curious legal question. It had reference to a railway station on the boundary between two principalities.

Some one standing outside the window of the ticket office had put his hand through and robbed the till in where the thief stood and the till, so that he was actually in one territory while the crime was committed in the other. Here was a nice nut for the gentleman learned in the law to crack. Which of the principalities should undertake the prosecution of the culprit?

At it they went in good earnest, and the arguments on either side were long and vehement, till the whole case was embalmed in many volumes. At last one side yielded so far as to say:

"We will permit you, as an act of courtesy, to prosecute, while at the same time reserving all our sovereign rights."

At this point of the recital, I asked, "And how did the prosecution end?" "Ah! that is quite another matter," said my friend. "There was no prosecution; we were only arranging what we should do when we caught the robber; but we never caught him."

DADE'S RISE TO FAME.

Ten Strike of a Deputy Sheriff in a Texas Town.

"Never heard of Deputy Sheriff Alvah Dade, of Tenuacana?" asked Colonel Quarles, of Waco, Texas. "He's not a deputy sheriff now. He's an oil-tumbler-cotton-bale plutocrat, with the governorship of Texas in his vest pocket, by all accounts. But I guess he'll go down in history as Deputy Sheriff Dade."

"When I tried to help out my income by practicing law in Washington men came around and borrowed more from me than I could possibly make in fees. In addition to that, people refused to pay me for my services. There may be some men who know how to run politics upon an economical basis, but I do not. I found the expense of a campaign exceedingly heavy, and I always had to foot all the bills."

"Alvah was working a cotton patch down in the bottoms, when his uncle, Lem Dade, was elected Sheriff of Tenuacana county. Lem brought him up to the city and appointed him deputy."

"Alvah was as big as a couple of steers, with light hair and eyes like a baby. And he was certainly the uncombedest, greenest specimen that ever struck the town."

"A fellow by the name of Beet Welch had been counting on being deputy sheriff and he was terrible sore when Alvah got the job. All you had to do to make Alvah believe a thing was to tell it to him, and Welch and his friends didn't lose any time taking advantage of this."

"First week Alvah was on duty a man rushed into the office and gasped out that old Job Conger over on the Bosque had killed four of his neighbors. Alvah ran his horse nearly to death over those six miles and found old Conger quietly cutting up four hogs."

"A few days later a kid came up to Alvah with a note saying that a stranger had got into Mrs. Powell's house, out on the edge of town, while her husband was away, and she couldn't get rid of him. Alvah chased out and found that Mrs. Powell had just had a baby."

"Something like that would happen every week or two, mostly put up by Welch and his friends, and before long the whole county was laughing at Alvah. But Alvah didn't seem to catch on. He just looked out of his baby eyes and was earnest and thoughtful."

"One day Welch met Alvah on the street and said that old man Campbell wanted to see him up at his house right away. Campbell was the richest man in central Texas. He had a lumber yard in every sizeable town in the state and people said he was worth a million."

"He had been troubled a good deal about that time by thieves and Alvah thought that was what he wanted to see him about. So he posted and found Campbell's daughter, who had got home from school in the east that day, sitting on the front piazza in a white dress with yellow ribbons."

"Alvah would rather have crawled into a barrel of wildcats, but he marched up and told his business. The girl said her pa wasn't at home, but that if he had sent for Alvah he'd probably come on. So she made Alvah sit down on the piazza and wait."

"It was then 4 o'clock. She was a mighty pretty girl and she kept Alvah there till after 6. Alvah had business downtown, but he didn't know how to get away. So he sat for two hours breathing through his nose and perspiring, and gurgling whenever it came his time to say something."

"Quarter-past 6 Campbell came home and looked tired when he heard Alvah's story."

"It's too bad," he said, "breaking in to a respectable man's house this way. You'd better take to the woods before you disgrace the county."

"Alvah backed down to the gate and the girl looked sorry. Fifteen minutes later he laid his gun and his badge on his uncle's desk and said he wanted to resign. The sheriff listened to what he had to say and thought it might be a good thing."

"Five minutes later Alvah came up the street to where Welch and his gang were sitting out in front of the Palace hotel. Alvah walked over to Welch and picked him. Then he licked him."

"Welch pulled a gun and Alvah took it away. Then the licking went on. Then Alvah went down to the sheriff's office and his uncle reappointed him."

"Two months later when Welch crawled out of the hospital on crutches he was crazy for revenge. His idea was to get Alvah into some scrape that would be so foolish and scandalous that he'd be fired from his job and hooded out of town."

"Welch was an ingenious man, but he worked and studied for three weeks without turning anything up. Then one day his idea came to him."

"Central and southerly Texas was being torn up at that time by a road agent named Sam Bolo, who was the smoothest artist that Texas had produced in a long time. One day he'd clean out a bank in some big town, and by the time the officers had him all but run down he'd be holding up a mail train a hundred miles or so in the other direction."

"He always worked alone, but descriptions of him differed. After he had made two or three rich clean-ups he'd drop out of sight for a month or so until people began to think he was dead or had skipped. Then some day he'd break loose worse than ever."

"Within six months there were eight murders charged to him, and it was reckoned that he had stolen right up a million dollars. The state, two counties, five banks and three railroads were offering rewards for him that aggregated \$34,000."

"Just after Welch got out of the hospital Bolo ripped up a bank down in Corsicana for \$7,000 and he hadn't been heard of since. Welch's idea was to get it into Alvah's poor innocent head that some highly respected and inoffensive Bolo in hiding. Of course, he'd arrest his man, and there'd be such a big scandal that Alvah would have to take to the brush."

"Alvah wasn't thinking about any plots. People noticed that Campbell's daughter had arrands that took her past the court house about twice an afternoon, in the new high-wheeled cart her pa had bought her east. Somehow Alvah would generally be somewhere

on the horizon having sort of deaf, dumb and blind stagers.

"One night he up and took her from church, and people said he spent the rest of the night romping around on the prairie. But finally Campbell heard of these doings and told the girl he'd send her to a convent if he ever caught her speaking to Alvah."

"At first Welch and his crowd thought they'd fix it up that the Baptist minister was Bolo in disguise. But finally Welch slapped his leg and said: "By cricky, the Willie dentist!"

"Then the crowd laughed. The Willie dentist had come to town about four months before. He was a little, slender, soft man, who read from morning to night in his office because he hadn't got many patients. On the infrequent occasions when he did appear on the streets he had a shrinking, timorous manner as though the horses and rough men scared him, and his voice was as gentle as a girl's."

"One day a stranger came in Alvah's office and asked for five minutes' private conversation. The man looked important and scared. There was no reason Alvah should know the his visitor didn't lose any time taking advantage of this."

"First week Alvah was on duty a man rushed into the office and gasped out that old Job Conger over on the Bosque had killed four of his neighbors. Alvah ran his horse nearly to death over those six miles and found old Conger quietly cutting up four hogs."

"A few days later a kid came up to Alvah with a note saying that a stranger had got into Mrs. Powell's house, out on the edge of town, while her husband was away, and she couldn't get rid of him. Alvah chased out and found that Mrs. Powell had just had a baby."

"Something like that would happen every week or two, mostly put up by Welch and his friends, and before long the whole county was laughing at Alvah. But Alvah didn't seem to catch on. He just looked out of his baby eyes and was earnest and thoughtful."

"One day Welch met Alvah on the street and said that old man Campbell wanted to see him up at his house right away. Campbell was the richest man in central Texas. He had a lumber yard in every sizeable town in the state and people said he was worth a million."

"He had been troubled a good deal about that time by thieves and Alvah thought that was what he wanted to see him about. So he posted and found Campbell's daughter, who had got home from school in the east that day, sitting on the front piazza in a white dress with yellow ribbons."

"Alvah would rather have crawled into a barrel of wildcats, but he marched up and told his business. The girl said her pa wasn't at home, but that if he had sent for Alvah he'd probably come on. So she made Alvah sit down on the piazza and wait."

"It was then 4 o'clock. She was a mighty pretty girl and she kept Alvah there till after 6. Alvah had business downtown, but he didn't know how to get away. So he sat for two hours breathing through his nose and perspiring, and gurgling whenever it came his time to say something."

"Quarter-past 6 Campbell came home and looked tired when he heard Alvah's story."

"It's too bad," he said, "breaking in to a respectable man's house this way. You'd better take to the woods before you disgrace the county."

"Alvah backed down to the gate and the girl looked sorry. Fifteen minutes later he laid his gun and his badge on his uncle's desk and said he wanted to resign. The sheriff listened to what he had to say and thought it might be a good thing."

"Five minutes later Alvah came up the street to where Welch and his gang were sitting out in front of the Palace hotel. Alvah walked over to Welch and picked him. Then he licked him."

"Welch pulled a gun and Alvah took it away. Then the licking went on. Then Alvah went down to the sheriff's office and his uncle reappointed him."

"Two months later when Welch crawled out of the hospital on crutches he was crazy for revenge. His idea was to get Alvah into some scrape that would be so foolish and scandalous that he'd be fired from his job and hooded out of town."

"Welch was an ingenious man, but he worked and studied for three weeks without turning anything up. Then one day his idea came to him."

"Central and southerly Texas was being torn up at that time by a road agent named Sam Bolo, who was the smoothest artist that Texas had produced in a long time. One day he'd clean out a bank in some big town, and by the time the officers had him all but run down he'd be holding up a mail train a hundred miles or so in the other direction."

"He always worked alone, but descriptions of him differed. After he had made two or three rich clean-ups he'd drop out of sight for a month or so until people began to think he was dead or had skipped. Then some day he'd break loose worse than ever."

"Within six months there were eight murders charged to him, and it was reckoned that he had stolen right up a million dollars. The state, two counties, five banks and three railroads were offering rewards for him that aggregated \$34,000."

"Just after Welch got out of the hospital Bolo ripped up a bank down in Corsicana for \$7,000 and he hadn't been heard of since. Welch's idea was to get it into Alvah's poor innocent head that some highly respected and inoffensive Bolo in hiding. Of course, he'd arrest his man, and there'd be such a big scandal that Alvah would have to take to the brush."

"Alvah wasn't thinking about any plots. People noticed that Campbell's daughter had arrands that took her past the court house about twice an afternoon, in the new high-wheeled cart her pa had bought her east. Somehow Alvah would generally be somewhere

on the horizon having sort of deaf, dumb and blind stagers.

"One night he up and took her from church, and people said he spent the rest of the night romping around on the prairie. But finally Campbell heard of these doings and told the girl he'd send her to a convent if he ever caught her speaking to Alvah."

"At first Welch and his crowd thought they'd fix it up that the Baptist minister was Bolo in disguise. But finally Welch slapped his leg and said: "By cricky, the Willie dentist!"

"Then the crowd laughed. The Willie dentist had come to town about four months before. He was a little, slender, soft man, who read from morning to night in his office because he hadn't got many patients. On the infrequent occasions when he did appear on the streets he had a shrinking, timorous manner as though the horses and rough men scared him, and his voice was as gentle as a girl's."

"One day a stranger came in Alvah's office and asked for five minutes' private conversation. The man looked important and scared. There was no reason Alvah should know the his visitor didn't lose any time taking advantage of this."

"First week Alvah was on duty a man rushed into the office and gasped out that old Job Conger over on the Bosque had killed four of his neighbors. Alvah ran his horse nearly to death over those six miles and found old Conger quietly cutting up four hogs."

"A few days later a kid came up to Alvah with a note saying that a stranger had got into Mrs. Powell's house, out on the edge of town, while her husband was away, and she couldn't get rid of him. Alvah chased out and found that Mrs. Powell had just had a baby."

"Something like that would happen every week or two, mostly put up by Welch and his friends, and before long the whole county was laughing at Alvah. But Alvah didn't seem to catch on. He just looked out of his baby eyes and was earnest and thoughtful."

"One day Welch met Alvah on the street and said that old man Campbell wanted to see him up at his house right away. Campbell was the richest man in central Texas. He had a lumber yard in every sizeable town in the state and people said he was worth a million."

He had been troubled a good deal about that time by thieves and Alvah thought that was what he wanted to see him about. So he posted and found Campbell's daughter, who had got home from school in the east that day, sitting on the front piazza in a white dress with yellow ribbons.