

a pistol ?" "Yes, Minnie with a pistol," said I, nodding triumphantly. "And why not, Messeiurs? That is better than being unhappy all night, don't you think? It is a pistol Jack lent me when he was at home last vacation, and I have learned all about it. I assure you, if any body came in my way. I would not hesitate a minute to shoot him."

Farry. the house after night, hereafter. Your screna-ders had better look out, too-eh, Lucy? But see here, Minnie, where do you look for your burglars of nights?" "Everywhere," answered I. "In all the rooms, and under all the beds, and in all the

"Not to speak of the wine-cooler," said Har-

ry, with a laugh. "And the large clock," said Anna; "I saw her looking at that the other night." "It is best to be on the safe side," said I,

be afraid of, I am sure; but I will go after my pistol, and look over the house, nevertheless." I ran up stairs in the dark, for I knew exactly where the pistol was, but as I went, I could not help wishing that Dick had held his tongue shoot him." "I am glad you have given warning," said farry. "I shall be very careful how I visit house. One does not mind such suggestions in house. One does not mind such suggestions in house. Une does not mind such suggestions in house. One does not mind such suggestions in house. daylight, or in a well-lighted room, with plenty of people to keep one company; but at night, even if one is protected by a pistol, and the proud consciousness of being able to hit the ace of hearts at fifteen paces, one will think of them with sensations the reverse of comfortable. When I came down again, Anna and Lucy were in the sitting-room, where the Christmas tree for the little ones stood ready decked out; and when, having finished my search there, I started for the dining-room, they

both abundantly supplied with means of de-fence—should be quite insensible to the sensa-tion of physical fear. There is so much indeed there is almost everything—in feeling that one can at least make a good fight of it. The unarmed and the weak are nccessarily cowardly; but that anybody could be afraid of anything when armed with a well loaded six-shooter, ten years ago, I would have laughed at the idea. So, having arranged all my charges, I felt quite comfortable, and began to think that I had been very foolish, and that it might

be as well to go to bed. "You see, Mary Lindsay," said I,—whenever I wish to be severe, I call myself by my proper baptismal—"if you go on in this way, you will become as ridiculously nervous and fanciful as old Mrs. Moore, who calls up her sons and makes them search the house two or three times every night. Don't you know that if to the front piazza, and crouched down on the times every hight. Don't you know that it to the hold plana, and been the doctor. I am sure I don't you encourage yourself, there is really no tell-ing where you will end? Haven't you lived here all your life, and don't you remember that for I would have been thinly clad for a July here all your life, and don't ever since you were born, the rats have been making just such noises ?" A sudden pause. Had I really grown so nervous that, like old Mrs. Moore, I could fancy anything, or was it the dining-room door which opened and shut very softly? I felt confident that it was—confident, that as I stood listening, I heard a stealthy step cross the passage below; yet it was not terror which came over me then, but resolution. If there had been any man in the house upon whom to call for assistance, I might have screamed or fainted, or given the alarm in any of the charming ways peculiar to my sex. But as it was, I felt that all the responsibility rested on my shoulders, and with this knowledge there came to me "strength which equalled my desire." My mother, the girls, the little children—I was their defender for the time being, and I am sure that no knight of old, no Sir Tristram, or Calidore ever felt more chivalry for the weak whom he desomebody had jumped in from the piazza, and pulled it hastily down. While I was making this fast, we were startled by a sound that seem-ed to proceed from the back parlor, and was apparently the fall of some chair or table. I turned round quickly, and we looked at each other with very wide onen eves alarm was false, I should only be laughed at; and if it was well grounded, there would be such a commotion that I would be more apt to shoot one of the family than the midnight disturber of our peace. So with the supreme daring—the daring which would be grandly heroic, if it were not so foolishly rash-of eighteen, I took my stand at the head of the stairs, and listened. For a while I thought I must have been mistaken, everything was so still. I could hear the clock ticking away in the lower hall, and the rats running races and playing football up in the garret, but nothing more. "I shall certainly take pneumonia if I stay here," I thought, and as I thought it, a sudden idea occurred to me. Perhaps the Somebody below had heard my door open, and was wait-ing for it to close again, before making any farther movement. As there was only firelight in my room, I had lett the door ajar, with a vague, irrational sense of security in at least having a port of refuge near at hand. But I now turned back and closed it. "God will take care of me," I thought, as I shut myself out all alone in the dark passage, and yet this was, perhaps, the hardest thing of all to do. It was so cold, so silent, so full of the strange awe of mas tree looked quite spectral in its dim corner. "Now let us go to bed," said Anna, with a yawn; and although I could not conquer a sort falling in a patch through a high window, on the night, with only a few pale gleams of ghostof vague, unsatisfied feeling, I was ashamed to propose another search. So the lamps were into the darkness, and stood quite still, clasping my pistol tightly. I did not think to feel my pulse, but I am sure that if I had done so. I would have found it beating as steadily as it ordinarily did. We came of good stock-we Lindsays-and there was never a man or woman among us who had been a coward. So I had the support which a well authenticated tradition of family courage can give. I may have stood shivering in my ambuscade for three minutes or for thirty, but whatever length of time had elapsed, I heard at last the sound again which had attracted my attention. This time there was no mistaking it. A slow, stealthy step advanced to the staircase, and be-gan to mount. I despair of being able to give any idea of my sensations; indeed I need hard-ly desire to do so, as I stood there listening to remembrance that it was the hour of the harty in y deared have a solution of the harty in y deared have a solution in the highest, and on earth "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will to men," ringing in my would be face to face with it. I am a good deal here have a solution would be face to face with it. I am a good deal here have a solution in the dark, let circumstances be what they might. Nobody but the children had a merry Christmas that year, and Dick had a long atthe negroes are all on their heads. For with hears, put out the candle at last, and sprang would be lace to face with h. I ain a good deal constitue year, and Dick had a long at-have to go to the back door, and call until some-hody hears you, and comes." body nears you, and comes." "You'll have to call pretty loudly, too," said Harry; "for they were dancing away like a set of possessed creatures when I arrived." Unit the next initiate, as if it had been lifted that left the pistol on the mantelpiece, and not in its usual place. The fire was burning very that been lifted that left the pistol on the fire was burning very that been lifted that left the pistol on the fire was burning very that been lifted that left the pistol on the mantelpiece, and not in its usual place. 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sternation wherever I went, for such a panic ensued on my appearance-not wonderful, considering my expression of face and style of costume-that I had great difficulty in gaining sensible attention. At last, however, I succeeded in making them understand that I was not a ghost, and that I wanted a messenger. "Where's Scip?" I said. "Where's anybody? Tell somebody to saddle a horse, and go for the

doctor !" "Lor-a-massy, Miss Minnie! What's the matter?" cried half a dozen voices at once. "I've shot Dick!" I exclaimed in an agony. "He is dead, or dying. Go-go-any of you, go for Dr. Burrill."

go for Dr. Burril." Half a dozen men rushed away at once, pell-mell over each other toward the stables, and every servant who had the faintest excuse for doing so ran to the house. I followed slowly, in a sort of despair. I did not want to go in; I knew there was no need of me, and I download propredictible another eight of Diabis dreaded unspeakably another sight of Dick's pale face and bloody form, so I wandered round

ens were to write another novel, and were to introduce American politicians into its chap-ters, he would select Fernando Wood for one of them. And simply because he is such a peculiar sort of person-a perfect riddle to the ordinary newspaper correspondent, in whose tread-mill life there is little time for the study of such a character, even if the ability for its portrayal were there; but an "inexhaustible bottle" for illustration and development in the hands of the great novelist. There is something about him which I certainly cannot de-scribe, but can only write about in a jerky and unsatisfactory sort of way. First, there is the man himsef, as he sits in his seat or stands on the floor. Straight as as a fishing pole, and I was about to say, nearly as tall; but the reader will at once perceive that that depends very much upon the fishing pole; always dressed in the neatest of black trowsers, and the neatest black coat with the shiningest of velvet collars; never by any possibility letting us know whether he wears a waistcoat or not, but giving us a slight assurance of a shirt in the exhibition of so much of it as can struggle into notice above the third or fourth button of his outer broadcloth.

Whether he looks so straight because he is so thin, or looks so thin because he is so straight, I shall not attempt to say, but when to his straightness and his thinness you add his button-up-ness, and then, on top of all these, put a small head, thickly covered with whitening hair, and an emotionless face with a pair of small twinkling eyes, and the largest and whitest moustache on the American continent, you have altogether a very remarkable tout en-semble; so much so that when the proprietor of this strangeness of contour and person rises to address the House, and stands on the floor as the representative of so much of the American nation as is included in his district, there is always a sensation in the galleries. If you never saw him before in your life, and didn't know who he was, you would still join in the feeling of "sensation," and listen in expectation of something quite out of the usual routine. And to a servant who came up. "Show the way, Minnie. Is it Dick Carr who is shot? How he will not disappoint you, for the tome and manner of his speech are quite as unique as his personal appearance. His words are always direct and well chosen, and his arguments forcible and strong. I shall never forget the scene of a few days ago, when he and Ben. Butler had the slight fence of words about General Howard. Butler rose, evidently intent upon crushing Wood with one of his efforts at vituperation; he said something which he considered perfectly conclusive and finishing, and looking, s his custom is, to the galleries with an air of 'Didn't I polish him off?" sat down. There stood Fernando, on the other side of the chamber-a cross between an iceberg and a marble statue, but for the purposes of that debate an iceberg, against which the brig Ben. Butler had voluntarily steered, with the usual sad result of such collisions—the damage of the brig. Wood's manner in reply stood him in infinitely better stead than his words. There was not so much in what he said-which was simply that when the investigation of Howard was completed he should favor the investigation of the gentleman from Massachusetts-but accustomed remorse, so there is no telling what the cold frosty way in which he said it, following upon the cold, frosty way in which he had listened to Butler—never deviating a hair's breadth from his fish-pole straightness all the in my ear. "Come in, honey, to the fire. Don't you be a-takin' on like this. You'll ketch your death a cold out here—Lord knows you will. Don't you grieve so. Mass Dick ain't a goin' to die the cut and thrust of quick repartee, and Butler felt it too, as was manifest from his halting between two opinions, as to whether he should reply or not, and finally deciding to keep his This incident gives quite as good an idea of thinking much more of consoling me than of Fernando Wood as I could give in a whole col-Dick's probable chances for life or death. "Mass Dick may be pretty bad off, but he ain't dead yet, and I don't believe he's goin' to die. Any he shall "bust in ignorance" on that important how, you come into the fire. 'Deed you'll be subject, for aught I can do. But you must add to all this that Wood is quite as polished in takin' plewrisy out here." I submitted very meekly—I was so bitterly cold—and she led me to my own room, where the fire was burning as brightly as when I had loaded my pistol before it, such a short time back. There I spent an hour that seemed to be many hours long, before mamma came in to tell who know him, and is thought quite a goodme that the doctor said that Dick's wound was hearted, a jolly fellow, when you get under the not fatal, and might not even prove dangerous, uppercrust of his icy exterior. His public cathe ball having missed the upper part of the lung, and lodged in his right shoulder. How grateful I was, it would be hard to say, quirer as to me—how he has been accused of all sorts of things, but how he has, notwithstanding all these accusations, been a very successful man, and a very great and successful politician.

rolling stock at such prices as they choose, thus giving rise to competition on each road between all the common carriers carrying over that road, in addition to the competition between different roads. Illustrations of this common use of the same track by competing cars may be seen on many of the city railroads of our larger cities, where for several miles two, three, or a dozen railroad companies are compelled to use the same track, in order to run their cars for a portion of the way through some leading thoroughfare. This accidental working of our present system produces competition over the same track as to that particular street, furnishing more cars and better service than either of the single companies would render. Upon a steam railroad the Governor's proposition would work a revolution indeed, yet it is one towards which the railroad business seems to be inevitably tending. Already the railroad companies per-mit express companies, fast freight lines, own-ers of sleeping coaches, &c., to furnish cars for their tracks, and run them at private cost and profit, the railroad companies furnishing only the track and the power. It is only needed to apply to the railroads the principle of the common law applicable to turnpikes, ferries; and all other appropriated highways; that whatever privileges are granted to one must be granted to all. Under the application of this principle of the law of highways, all who choose can put on any railroad track cars or coaches, for any purpose, and oblige the company to haul them on terms as favorable as are granted to others. At all events, while it might involve too many complications and delays to convert the rail-roads of the country into common highways for all vehicles capable of running on their tracks, by the entangled and expensive means of suits at law, any Legislature which would pave the way for such a reform would be clearly in the direction of the theory of all our laws, that the railroads are highways and should at all times be kept as open to all forms of competition as possible. In the infancy of the railway business, none owned the cars except the company which also owned the track. But when that business became so extended as to have suspended all other highways of travel over whole continents, and when the prosperity of cities and states might be made to rise or fall, according as these iron tracks were kept open to competition as highways, or closed gainst it as monopolies ; there can be no doubt that the monopoly on the part of the owners of the track, which was tolerable under other con-ditions, becomes intolerable when those conditions have changed. If our own leading railway shippers were permitted to put their own cars on the track, on paying a fair toll to the company for hauling them to their destination; and if whosoever desired to compete for the profits of carrying passengers or freight were at liberty to compete with each other over each and every road, it seems certain that full competition would reduce the charge in all cases to the very lowest sum at which freight and pas-sengers could be carried consistently with the fair value of the labor and capital employed. Governor Palmer's proposition is wholly distinct from all proposals that the State or government shall take possession of or run the roads. To that there may be many objections. He proposes that the railroads shall emerge from their infantile state of private-ways, and shall become, in the full sense, highways, to the end that mutual competition between divers carriers over the same road shall insure a fair reduction and equalization of prices. While we have no information to induce us to believe that any proposition to this end was likely to be adopted by the convention, it is well worthy their thorough consideration, as well as that of the people of the whole State. - A graceful story is told of Lamartine. One day a penniless man of letters called upon him, and informing him of his needy situation, requested the loan of a considerable sum of money. Lamartine, who was much moved by the recital, opened a drawer and gave him the amount. He then conducted his unfortunate visitor to the vestibule. The season was autumn, and as Lamartine opened the street door. the unfortunate author shivered in his shabby coat. A sudden idea struck Lamartine, and calling out, "Monsieur, you are forgetting your overcoat," he quickly took down an overcoat that was hanging in the passage, and assisted his needy visitor to put it on with so much dexterity and grace that the poor man, quite overcome, did not know how to refuse a gift which was so delicately offered to him.

with dignity. "Now that papa is away, I have a responsibility on me, you know. I carry the pistol ready cocked, and if I saw anybody—" "You might shoot yourself, or the door, or the old cat, but not the object of your fright," said Dick.

"You never saw me shoot, sir"-there was always open feud between Dick and myself-'you don't know, perhaps, that I can hit the ace of hearts at fifteen paces."

"You might do that, poverina, and yet not hit a man. Besides, he might be in the house without your finding him."

"That is impossible."

"Impossible ! Not a bit of it ! See here-I'll show you how in a minute. There are four rooms on this floor, and they all communicate with each other, and with the hall. Now, what would be easier than for a man to follow, or rather precede you on your round? Say, for instance, that some one was concealed in the dining-room, while you began your search in here; when it was time for you to go in there, he would slip across the passage, into the back parlor; when you went in there, he would be in the front parlor; when you went there, he he would be here, and when you came here, he would be back in the dining-room, where he had been at first."

"O, Dick, how can you say such horrid things—hush !" cried Lucy and Anna, in a breath; but I was stoutly incredulous and unnioved.

"I don't believe it," I said. "It sounds plausible enough, but it is totally impossible. He could not know beforehand where I was coming; he could not time his movements exactly by mine; there would be some noise, some-" "He'd be a precious bungler of a burglar,

then," interposed Dick. "Anyway, I don't believe it; and if you are

trying to make me nervous and uncomforta-

"Make a young lady with a pistol nervous and uncomfortable ! Surely that would be impossible !"

ent it, we can talk on more cheerful subjects. Where do you keep your pistol ?" "Up stairs in my bureau drawer."

"Why, the burglar might walk off with it beforehand. Then what would you do ?" "He would hardly be likely to find it," said

Lucy. "She keeps it in the bottom of her rib-bon-box."

"Her ribbon-box !" said Dick, and then he leaned his head back and laughed, as only a hearty, genial fellow of his stamp can laugh. Harry joined in the merriment, too; and the idea of a pistol in a ribbon-box seemed so very amusing to both of them, that after a while I began to feel rather piqued, as it is only natu-ral to feel, when the point of a joke is against oneself, and one is quite unable to see it.

"I don't know that there is anything to laugh at," said I, stiffly. "I keep it there in daytime, at," said 1, stiny. I keep it there in daytime, but I take it out at night, and it lies on a stand just at the head of my bed; if anybody came—" "Don't talk of it, please," said Dick, with a grimace. "Poor fellow! What a surprise it would be to him to expect a young lady with a

"Certainly it does. There's no good in ringing the bell, though. It is Christmas Eve, and

"Dick was right," I said. "It is possible, though not probable, that some one might clude us, as he described. Now, if we went separately into the different rooms-"

Here I was interrupted by an indignant cry from both. It was very well for me to talk that way, I had a pistol. But to think that they, who were quite defenceless, would go rambling about by themselves in search of burglars, it was absurd. "Very well," said I, with a sigh of resigna-

tion, "come on."

They came on accordingly. Every place was investigated, and nothing larger than a mouse was started. Then I examined the win-dows. It was Scip's business to fasten them down after supper, and he always did it very exactly; still, I generally looked, for caution's sake, and to-night my caution was rewarded. I found one of them unfastened, the shutter loose, and the sash a little raised, just as if

other with very wide open eyes. "Good heavens! What can that be ?" cried

Lucy. "It sounded like some—somebody," said An-

"It must be Tiger or Gray," I said. (Tiger

being a dog, and Gray a cat.) "I don't see how either of them would be in there," said Lucy; "but come, let us see." With a candle apiece, and the pistol in the

van, we went to see. When we entered the room, all was complete silence and solitude. Every chair was in its place; every table rested on its natural legs; and nothing was dis-turbed, except one end of the hearth-rug, which had apparently been turned up by a hasty foot. "Some of the children, of course," said Lu-

possible !" "Laugh at me and my pistol as much as you please, but if your burglar be here, I give you my word he will fare badly." "Let us hope he is not here, then," said he, with a shrug. "Come, petite, don't look so cross. Name my apple for me, and while I ert it we can tak on more cheerful subjects." "Some of the children, of course," said Lu-cy, in her philosophical way, when I pointed to that. "Look behind the curtains, and make haste, Minnie—do. It is so cold." I looked behind all the curtains, and under all the tables, and even into a certain bay win-dow, that I was generally rather prone to shirk-ing simply because it was the best hiding place ing, simply because it was the best hiding place in the house, but I found nothing—not even a mouse this time. Then we went into the front parlor, and thence back into the sitting-room, where the fire was dying down, and the Christ-

> put out, and we went up stairs. All the chambers were occupied except one (Jack's), so I had only to examine this and the garret steps, before taking myself to my rest. Having ac-complished this, we said good night and sepa-rated, for, although Lucy and Anna adhered to the time-honored custom of sharing a room in common, I had made "a strike" for indepen-dence quite early, and shocked all the family by refusing to share my sovereignty-that is,

my chamber-with any one whatever. After I went in, I shut the door-papa had grimace. "Poor fellow! What a surprise it would be to him to expect a young lady with a scream, and be met by an Amazon, with a pis-tol 1 By the by, this fire is very low; don't you think it needs some wood ?" the negroes are all on their heads. You will heart, put out the candle at last, and sprang

night except that on occasions of great excitement we all do such things, and rarely suffer from them. I was, however, as nearly frozen as possible, when, after an age (that is about half an hour,) a horse came at a hard gallop up the avenue, and shied in the most unexpected manner at sight of the ghostly white object

perched on the steps. "Soh, Charley !" said a voice, I had known all my life. "Gently, my good fellow ! There's no use in this behavior. It is only—what the deuce is it ?"

"It's me, doctor !" cried a weak, half frozen voice. "Please don't stop. Come on-do. He may be dead by this time. Oh, please don't

stop." "All right," said the doctor, "I'm not stop-ping," and he sprang down, and threw his rein ping, "and he sprang down, and threw his rein ping," and he sprang down, and threw his rein ping, "and he sprang down, and threw his rein ping," and he sprang down, and threw his rein ping, "and he sprang down, and threw his rein ping," and he sprang down, and threw his rein ping, "and he sprang down, and threw his rein ping," and he sprang down, and threw his rein ping, "and he sprang down, and threw his rein ping," and he sprang down, and threw his rein ping, "and he sprang down, and threw his rein ping," and he sprang down, and threw his rein ping, "and he sprang down, and threw his rein ping," and he sprang down, and threw his rein ping, "and he sprang down, and threw his rein ping," and he sprang down, and threw his rein ping, "and he sprang down, and threw his rein ping," and he sprang down, and threw his rein ping, "black down, and threw his rein ping," and he sprang down, and threw his rein ping, "black down, and threw his rein ping," and he sprang down, and threw his rein ping, "black down, and threw his rein ping," and black down, and threw his rein ping, "black down, and threw his rein ping," and the sprang down, and threw his rein ping, "black down, and threw his rein ping," and the sprang down, and threw his rein ping, "black down, and threw his rein ping," and the sprang down, and threw his rein ping, "black down, and threw his rein ping, "bl

did he do it ?' "He didn't do it. I did it !"

"You !"

The doctor absolutely stopped to stare at me,

but to my great relief, mamma came hurrying down stairs at the moment. "Oh, doctor, I am so glad you have come !" he said, breathlessly. "We are all frightened she said, breathlessly. "We are all frightened to death, for we don't know what to do; and the poor boy scents so weak, I thought he would bleed to death before you got here.'

"Where is he ?" asked the doctor, hastily. And then they vanished up the staircase together, leaving poor forlorn me alone in dark-

"There's plenty more charges in the pistol," I thought leaning my head down on one of the steps. "The best thing I can do is to go and steps. shoot myself. The matter will only get worse instead of better, and it is bad enough now. I wonder if he will die to-night? Oh! what made me shoot him? I'm sure I wish I had

never been born-" I was quite desperate under my weight of un-

-not he !"

"Oh, mammy, don't you think so?" cried I, clutching eagerly at the first gleam of consolation offered me, and looking up-oh !, so wist-fully-into the kind black face above.

"I knows it, honey," said mammy, who was yet, and I don't believe he's goin' to die. Any

- "Guilty or not guilty ?" said a judge to a native of the Emerald Isle.

- It is said that the ivy will not cling to a poisonous substance. What a pity that the tendrils of a woman's heart have not the same wholesome and salutary instinct.

- "My son," said an old lady, "how must