Her Great Love;

Or, A Struggle For a Heart

CHAPTER XI.—(Cont'd.)

There seemed no single spot in the room on which the eye could rest; it was all color, and glitter of silver and gold.

The dinner was a superb one—not one of Mr. Mershon's guests really knew how perfect it was—but to Decima it seemed endless and wearisome.

And yet Mr. Mershon did his best to entertain her. She was, of course, seated next to him, and he talked to her through all the courses. His topic was the one which has the most interest for most men—himself. He told her how he had started the Great Wheal Mining Company, and made a quarter of a million out of it—before it went smash; how he had bought up town lots in Arizona at a pound a lot and realized at fifty; how he had gained the concession from Turkey for the supply of cocoanut fiber, and netted five hundred thousand for his company in six months, and of similar achievements.

And he did not talk badly, for, while a man talks of what he understands and the thing that is nearest to his heart, he will generally talk well.

Every now and then he glanced at Mrs. Sherborne, and as if in obedience to his glance, she addressed some remark to Decima in the strange, expressionless voice.

When he was not talking to Decima, and her face was turned away from him, Mr. Mershon's restless, shiftless eyes were fixed on her with a curiously intent gaze of which Decima was quite unconscious. He pressed the champagne—it was Wachter, 1865, a rare vintage—on Bobby, and permitted the butler to fill his own glass frequently.

Bobby addressed himself to the dinner, and Mr. Deane ate and drank what was put before him with his usual mechanical acquiescence. And the silent, constrained Mrs. Sherborne sat with downcast eyes, excepting when she raised them quickly with a half-frightened expression at some remark of her half-brother's. At last, to Decima's relief, Mrs. Sherborne looked at her and rose, and they went into the drawing-room. Mr. Mershon got a box of cigars and cigarettes from the side-board, and handed them to Bobby.

"You'll find these Rothschilds pretty fair, Deane," he said.

Bobby chose a cigar and lighted up, and Mr. Mershon drew his chair nearer to Mr. Deane.

"Did you bring those drawings?" he asked.

Mr. Deane, who had been in a brown study during the dinner, woke up instantly.

"Yes, yes," he said, eagerly; "I brought them. I don't know what I did with them, Robert, there is a roll of paper in the hall."

Bobby fetched them, and strolled into the electrically lighted conservatory adjoining the dining-room; he was not eager to hear his father rhapsodize.

Mr. Deane opened out the papers.

"You see—" he began. Mr. Mershon looked at the drawings and then at his guest's face with a peculiar, cynical smile, and listened with his eyes averted.

"Yes; there is a lot of money in it," he said, after a time.

"You think?" exclaimed Mr. Deane, eagerly.

Mr Mershon nodded.

"Yes; I'm ready to make a company of it. But you must put something into it. They'll expect that."

Mr. Deane's face fell.

"Let me tell you how I am placed," he said, with a suppressed excitement. "I have a small independence which produces an income—a narrow income—on which we live."

Mr. Mershon nodded.

"I understand. But that's enough. I'll show you the way to realize a sufficient sum to back this thing. Leave it to me. I'll work it for you. As you say, there's a fortune in this idea of yours."

"My dear sir, there is incalculable wealth," interjected Mr. Deane.

"Quite so," said Mr. Mershon, with a scarcely concealed sneer. "You never let me. You may have heard me telling your daughter about the large sums I have made out of limited companies? It's my forte, my line. You leave it to me. I'll take care of those drawings."

"You understand, you are quite sure you understand?" said Mr. Deane, feverishly.

"Oh, I quite understand. Shall we join the ladies, Mr. Robert?" said Mr. Mershon.

They went into the drawing-room, and Mr. Mershon, with a sharp glance at Mrs. Sherborne, who was bending over some embroidery, went up to Decima.

"Will you play or sing for us, Miss Deane?" he said.

Decima, who had been taught by Lady Pauline to accede to any request, unless it were unreasonable or wrong, went at once to the piano, and Mr. Mershon followed her. She knew all her songs by heart, and she sang "The Message." Sung is not with the professional air which so many women aim at, but girlishly and sweetly. Mr. Mershon stood beside her, leaning on the piano, his small, sharp eyes fixed on her face with the expression which a man wears when his heart is in the look. All unconsciously, she glanced up at him as the song finished, and caught the look in his eyes. It was as if a cold, an icy cold, hand had been laid upon her heart, and she rose and cried a little apart from him.

"Will you not sing again?" he said, "Do." And for an instant his eyes sought hers.

Decima unconsciously moved away from him and nearer to Bobby.

"No I will not sing again," she said, almost coldly. "It must be getting late, Bobby."

Bobby came up to her, there was a little more talk, and then she managed to convey to him that she really wanted to go.

Mr. Mershon himself saw them into the fly.

"I hope this won't be your last visit to The Firs, Miss Deane," he said, and his thin fingers closed round hers.

Decima made no response, and the fly drove off. Mr. Mershon returned to the drawing-room and leaning his arm on the carved mantel-shelf, looked at the silent woman who was bending over her embroidery again.

"Well?" he said at last, sharply.

She glanced up at him nervously.

"Well, Theodore?" she said, timidly.

"What do you think of her?" he demanded. "Isn't she beautiful, lovely? Is there any girl, woman, like her in all the world?"

"She she is very beautiful, very sweet," she assented, under her breath.

Mr. Mershon laughed.

"I'm glad you think so," he said; "for I mean to make her my wife."

Mrs. Sherborne raised her head and opened her lips, but no sound came.

"Well, what have you to say? Why the deuce don't you speak?" he said, with the sudden fury of a weak nature; and he looked as evil as a malicious monkey, as he glowered down at her with his small eyes glowing excitedly. "You hear? And you've got to help me. You've got to make a friend of her; get the right side of her. You've got to sing my praises to her. You understand?"

Mrs. Sherborne moistened her lips and cast a deprecatory glance at him.

"She—she is very young, Theodore," she said.

"Young! I like her all the better for that. Hang it, you don't suppose I should be such an ass as to fall in love with an old woman? And I've fallen in love with her, I tell you."

"She—she may not consent. I—I mean, she seems to have some will of her own, Theodore. I have been talking to her."

"Consent! Will of her own!" he said, with a sneer. "You are an idiot! Do you suppose I'm depending upon her sweet will only? Not me. I know a better game than that. She'll consent fast enough. You wait and see. I've got her tight enough; or, if I haven't got her already, I shall have her in my grip presently!"

CHAPTER XII.

A week passed, ten days; but no Lord Gaunt appeared. Decima had ceased to go to the Hall, but she met Mr. Bright every day in the village, and that gentleman's face grew longer and less cheerful each time.

"I can't make it out, Miss Deane," he said on the eleventh day. "He said he would come at the end of the week—he may have meant month; it's just possible that I may have misunderstood him. But I've got everything ready. You'd be surprised at what I've managed to get done in the last few days, you would indeed! And he hasn't come after all."

"He may come in a day or two," said Decima.

She, too, felt a little, just a little disappointed.

"Do you think so?" he said, catching at the hope eagerly. Then he shook his head. "I don't know. It's just as likely that he won't come at all. Though he promised, and a promise is a promise with him. I know that. And he doesn't write; and I don't know where to write to. I've sent word to the lawyers that the place is ready—that is, as far ready as I could get it in the time, and they have written that they don't know Lord Gaunt's address—that he's away from London. I'm almost in despair for, you see, he may have gone to Africa after all."

"I hope not, for your sake," said Decima, gently.

"Say for all our sakes, and his own most," said Mr. Bright. "Well, I am not going to give up hope, and I'm keeping on at the slave-driving. You should see me hounding on the workmen! They think me no end of a brute and bully. Going your rounds? Ah, you've fluttered down on the place like a ministering angel, Miss Deane! I hear your praises sung wherever I go. I've just left the Robins' cottage, and that poor sick girl of hers had the tears in her eyes when she told me of your goodness to her. Well, I won't say any more if you don't like it, and I beg your pardon. I'm off to the Hall. There's a new grand piano just arrived, that looks as if he meant coming."

He bustled off rather more cheerily, and Decima went her way. Perhaps Lord Gaunt would not come after all. Yes; she would be sorry if he did not, she told herself.

But though Lord Gaunt were still absent, the Deanes ought not to have been dull, for they saw a good deal of Mr. Mershon and his sister. Scarcely a day passed but that gentleman strolled down to The Woodbines.

He generally went straight to the laboratory, and Decima could hear her father talking—Mr. Mershon always appeared to play the listener's part—in his rapid, nervous way.

Once or twice she went in—not knowing Mr. Mershon was there—and found him sitting on the bench as she had seen him on his first visit, his chin in his hands, his attitude like that of a monkey, and his big cigar in his lips.

Sometimes she met him in the garden, and he would stop and talk to her in short, disjointed sentences, his small, sharp eyes scanning her face when she was not looking at him, to be quickly averted when she turned her frank, guileless eyes upon his face.

Several times The Firs carriage, in all its magnificence and newness, dashed up to the gate, and Mrs. Sherborne would come in and sit in the drawing-room and talk to Decima in her nervous, constrained fashion, and on all the visits she begged Decima to go for a drive with her.

Decima did not very much care for Mrs. Sherborne, though she pitied her—why, she could scarcely have told—and several times refused the drive; but one afternoon Mrs. Sherborne bored so hard, that Decima accompanied her.

But she was sorry that she had done so, for all Mrs. Sherborne's talk was of her brother.

"Theodore is so—so clever," she said, glancing at Decima nervously and yet ecstatically. "He was always, even as a boy. We all used to say that he would make his mark and do great things. I don't suppose there is any one in the city more successful and respected"—she paused a moment—"more admired than he is."

Decima did not know what to say, and so remained silent; and after another glance Mrs. Sherborne went on still more nervously.

"He has made a great deal of money. Theodore is immensely rich—but I dare say you can see that."

"Oh, yes," said Decima. "It must be very nice to be rich—for those who care for money," she added.

"You don't care for it, my dear?" said Mrs. Sherborne, with some surprise.

Decima smiled.

"Oh, why should I? Does money bring happiness?"

As she spoke, she thought of Lord Gaunt. He was immensely rich, and—well, his sad, weary face rose before her, and she sighed.

"I don't think it does. Of course, I do not know very much about it."

"No; you are very young and inexperienced," said Mrs. Sherborne. "But you know that everybody wants to be rich; everybody struggs, and strives for money—more money."

"Yes, I know," said Decima; "and it seems so foolish. If it does not bring happiness, what is the use of it? Why, see how happy some, most, of the poor people here are! They are always cheerful. I hear the women, even the poorest, singing as I go into the village, and the men whistle as they go to their work."

"Then you wouldn't care to marry a rich man, my dear?" asked Mrs. Sherborne.

The speech jarred upon the girl. She had not thought of marriage, and her innocent heart shrunk from the woman's questioning.

"I don't know—I have not thought. Not if it were only because he was rich. Oh, I do not know! See how lovely that tree looks with the red sunset upon it!"

"Yes," said Mrs. Sherborne; and she was silent a moment; then she said, as if she felt constrained to continue the subject: "We have often wondered why Theodore has not married. Of course, he is quite a young man still, but—well, men, especially very rich men, marry at an earlier age than his. And he must have met so many nice—so many beautiful women, who—who would have been glad to marry him. Don't you think it is very strange?"

"Is it?" said Decima, growing very weary of the topic. "Perhaps he has not seen any one he cares for."

Mrs. Sherborne glanced at the lovely face with its unclouded eyes.

"Perhaps that is it," she said. "But he will some day. I hope she will be a—nice girl."

"I hope so for your sake," said Decima.

"She—she will be able to have everything she wants—everything she can desire," said Mrs. Sherborne, in a dry, mechanical tone, as if she were repeating something she had carefully rehearsed. "Theodore is liberal enough when—when he cares for any one. He will spend money like water to—to gain his object. Yes, his wife will be able to buy anything she may fancy."

"That will be very nice for her," said Decima, unsuspectingly. "And now may we turn and go back, please, Mrs. Sherborne? I like to be in some little time before dinner."

Mrs. Sherborne looked at her sideways, sighed, and ordered the coachman to drive back to The Woodbines. She had done her best, but against the girl's absolute innocence and unconsciousness Mrs. Sherborne's hints and suggestions glanced off like arrows from a coat of mail.

"Halloo! been out in the Mershons' chariot?" said Bobby, as Decima came into the house. "What's it feel like, sitting in such a gorgeous vehicle, and staring at the backs of two richly dressed flunkies? Did you fancy yourself a duchess, Decie?"

Decima laughed and shook her head.

"I felt like the lord mayor I once read of, who, being a simple-minded man, confessed that he longed to get out of his state coach and take a cab," she said, running up to her room.

"No news of Lordsl Gaunt yet." Bobby remarked at dinner. "Bright wears a face of despair, and I'm inclined to suspect that Gaunt has been playing a game of spoof."

"What do you mean?" said Decima.

"My poor child, how terribly your education has been neglected, for all you can speak French and Hitalian, and play the piano! You don't know your own language yet! Learn, you young dunce, that 'to spoof' is synonymous with 'to deceive,' only it's a better, because a more expressive word. Depend upon it, Lord Gaunt has been having a lark with the simple Bright—and a young lady who shall be nameless; and having had his fun, is off to other climes. Shouldn't wonder if he is on his way to Africa by this time."

(To be continued.)

THE GOLDEN COLUMN.

How Annibale Tosci, the Beggar, Became Wealthy.

The strange happenings are not always inventions in story-books. In commenting on the recent death of a certain Annibale Tosci, at Mantua, Italy, the Manchester Guardian retells a tale of buried treasure that has the mystery and romance of the most imaginative stories about the famous Captain Kidd.

Near the Monastery of San Vito in Naples stood a marble column that had been erected by an eccentric Frenchman about the beginning of the last century. On it were written in French the following enigmatic words: "On May 1st, every year, I have a golden head."

The inscription sorely puzzled the inhabitants of Naples. On May 1st, the year after the erection of the column, a great crowd came to it in the hope of finding the top covered with gold pieces. Needless to say, they went home with their pockets as empty as they were when they came.

For several years people came to see the promised wonder, and went away disappointed. At last the authorities had the column taken down, in the belief that treasure would be found beneath it. Nothing but earth was found, and so the column was set up again. Obviously, the words had a mystic meaning, but no one was clever enough to guess it, and for years the riddle remained unsolved.

Finally, in 1841, a ragged beggar named Annibale Tosci noticed the inscription. He stood looking at it for a long time, while he pondered its meaning. Then suddenly the solution of the puzzle flashed into his mind. He waited patiently until May 1st before he tested the accuracy of his interpretation of the mystic words.

On the day mentioned in the inscription, Tosci, bearing a pick and shovel, set out at daybreak for the column. He arrived before any chance visitors, and as soon as the monastery bells tolled six, he started digging in the ground covered by the shadow of the top of the column. He had not dug long before he came on a satchel that contained 50,000 francs. The inscription was a true one; the head of the column covered the golden treasure every year on May 1st.

Annibale Tosci, the beggar whose sharp guess had given him comparative wealth, became a landowner near Mantua. He died recently at the age of ninety-four.

TAUGHT SCHOLARS TO SMOKE.

Children Went to School With Pipes in Their Satchels.

Although Lord Methuen finds the habit of smoking on the increase among women, it is not so prevalent among children as it used to be. According to John Aubrey, in the reign of Charles I., "it was not only usual for women to join the men in smoking, but in Worcestshire the children went to school with pipes in their satchels, and the schoolmaster called a halt in their studies while they all smoked—he teaching the neophyte."

Thomas Hearne records that in the time of the plague of London in 1665, "children were obliged to smoak. I heard Tom Rogers, who was yeoman beadle, say that when the plague raged all the boys were obliged to smoak in the school every morning, and that he was never whipped so much in his life as he was one morning for not smoaking."—London Chronicle.

Overheated Polar Engines.

Both the Shackleton and the Scott antarctic expeditions carried motor-sledges, and both found them unsatisfactory. Curiously enough, says a writer in the Engineer, the chief cause of their failure was the overheating of the engines. Water-cooling is out of the question in polar regions, since water would freeze and crack the cylinders; and the expeditions therefore had to use air-cooled engines. The fact that the speed of the sledges was not great enough to cause a strong current of air, may explain the overheating; for the efficiency of air-cooling depends somewhat on the speed attained. It is not unlikely, however, that the extreme dryness of the air or some peculiar atmospheric condition had to do with the tendency of the engines to become overheated.

AN EYE-OPENER.

Ma.—"Tommy, you have been fighting again! Didn't I tell you that if anyone insulted you you were to return a soft answer?"

Tommy—"So I did, ma. I hit him in the eye with a lump of mud!"

HOME

Selected Recipes.

Soft Cooked Eggs.—Heat a quart of water to boiling, move from the source of heat, lower in four eggs gently, cover and let stand from six to eight minutes, according to softness desired.

Ginger Ice Cream.—One pint of cream, yolks three eggs, one-third jar (small size) preserved ginger. Scald the cream and pour it gradually over the beaten yolks. Return to double boiler and cook until thick. Chop the ginger fine. Add it and a third of the syrup to the custard. Freeze the mixture, using three parts ice and one part salt.

Ginger Cookies.—One-half cup molasses, one-half cup brown sugar, one tablespoon ginger, one-half cup drippings, one-half teaspoon soda, salt, flour to make a stiff dough. Mix in the order given, rubbing the soda with the salt. Make into small balls. Flatten with a tin-cup, sprinkle with a small amount of cinnamon and sugar and bake in a moderate oven.

Stuffed Cabbage.—Cut out the stalk end of a head of cabbage, leaving a hollow shell. Grind two pounds uncooked round steak with a slice of bacon and an onion. Add one cup bread crumbs, soaked and wrung dry, one beaten egg, salt, paprika and mace. Shape into balls, arrange in the cabbage and steam until cabbage is tender. Serve with tomato sauce.

Cornmeal Muffins.—Three-quarters cup cornmeal, three-quarters cup flour, three teaspoon baking powder, one tablespoonful sugar, one-half teaspoon salt, one egg, three-quarters cup milk, one tablespoon butter. Mix and sift the dry ingredients; beat the egg until very light and add the milk to it. Then mix with the dry ingredients. Melt the butter and add it last, stirring into the mixture. Bake in buttered muffin pans from twenty-five to thirty minutes. This quantity makes six muffins.

Tomato Soup.—One can tomatoes, one pint water, twelve peppercorns, bit of bay leaf, four cloves, one slice onion, two tablespoons sugar, one teaspoon salt, one-half teaspoon soda, two tablespoons butter, two tablespoons flour, one-eighth teaspoon pepper. Cook the first seven ingredients thirty minutes, strain, add the soda and salt. Melt butter, add the flour and seasoning, then the strained tomato, cook ten minutes and serve hot.

Salmon Timbales.—One pound canned salmon, one-half cup soft bread crumbs, one tablespoon melted butter, one tablespoon lemon juice, four eggs, paprika. Remove the bones and skin and break the salmon into small pieces. Mix together all the ingredients and pack closely in small buttered timbale tins or cups. Set them in a pan or hot water and bake until firm. Turn out and serve with a sauce.

Nougat Ice Cream.—Three cups milk, one cup sugar, yolks five eggs, one teaspoon salt, one and one-half cups heavy cream, whites five eggs, one-third cup each pistachio, filbert, English walnuts and almond meats, one tablespoon walnuts, one teaspoon almond extract. Make a custard of first four ingredients, strain and cool. Add heavy cream, beaten until stiff; whites of eggs, beaten until stiff; nut meats, finely chopped; flavoring and then freeze.

Corn Cake.—One and a quarter cups cornmeal, two cups sour milk, one teaspoon soda, one teaspoon salt, two eggs, two tablespoons butter. Sift dry ingredients. Add milk and beaten eggs gradually. Heat frying pan, grease sides and bottoms of pan with butter, turn in the mixture. Bake in a hot oven for twenty minutes.

Macaroon Ice Cream.—Scald one pint milk, reserving enough to make a smooth paste with one-fourth cup flour; mix with the hot milk and cool in the double boiler half an hour; add beaten yolks of three eggs; cook five minutes longer, stirring constantly; then add one cup sugar, a few grains of salt and strain. When cool mix with a pint of thin cream; add one cup crushed macaroons and freeze.

Useful Home Hints.

Common mignonette grown in a pot is very disagreeable to flies.

Cotton crepe is now being used for covers for summer pillows.

If sandwiches are served with afternoon tea, they must be small and dainty, and minus crust.

Plain custard, cold and poured over three cupfuls of sliced oranges makes a delicious summer pudding.

Grapes and apples are among the most nutritious fruits and should be freely eaten, even by the most delicate.

Pyrethrum powder burned in a room stupefies flies until they can be swept up and put where flies ought to be.

In the summer delightful informal entertaining may be done with the help of paper tablecloths, dishes and napkins.

Before starting to can fruit, see that the tops of your fruit jars fit, and that you have a good supply of rubbers on hand.

A bit of fine mosquito netting placed under the hole in a stocking, and used as a foundation for the darn, is a great help.

In washing cotton crepes and crepons, have grease stains removed with naphtha or gasoline before putting the crepe into water.

Tongue for sandwich filling should be mixed fine and rubbed to a paste with mashed boiled eggs, seasoned with vinegar and butter.

A baby's bottle ought never be washed with soap, but the moment it is empty it should be washed in cold water, then filled with a weak solution of boric acid.

When iced tea is desired for luncheon or dinner it should be prepared in the morning. When ready to serve, pour it on the sugar, ice and lemon already in the glasses.

Nothing is more helpful in dusting polished floors than the absorbent broom bag, which can be purchased for a few cents or may be made at home from a piece of cotton flannel.

If threads draw hard and break easily when preparing a piece of fancy work, a little white soap rubbed on the wrong side of the linen will be of advantage. It does not harm the linen.

A delicious sandwich filling is made from one part chopped almonds and two parts of shredded or grated celery, with a dash of salt. Moisten the mixture with mayonnaise.

When making apple pie the flavor is much improved and the apples will keep in good color if a few drops of lemon juice are squeezed over the apples just before the crust is put on.

Remove grease stains by saturating the spots with alcohol rather than benzine, as the alcohol will not leave the ring around the spots that is left by the benzine. Wash with cold water.

All the left-over vegetables, such as string beans, peas, beets, carrots, etc., will make a delicious luncheon salad. They should be chilled and laid on salad leaves with French dressing.

The remnants of a chicken can be converted into delicious shortcake. Make the biscuit crust the same as for old-fashioned shortcake. Spread the chicken between and pour gravy on the whole.

Borax makes an excellent wash for the hair; a teaspoonful to a basin of water being a good proportion. A solution of it is also good as a mouth wash. The dry powder may be used as a dentifrice.

If you desire to remove the skin of peppers drop them into boiling water and simmer for five minutes, or scouring them slightly and placing on the broiler over hot coals, a few minutes will loosen the skin.

Tomato sandwiches are made with slices of tomato between buttered bread; spread mayonnaise over the tomato, and be sure the sandwiches are not made until just before serving or the bread will become soggy.

In buying combs and brushes, the woman with due regard for her hair will choose combs with smooth teeth and bristles not too stiff. White celluloid is one of the best materials, for the simple reason that it shows the dirt at once and is easy to clean.

To clean white veils, lay them in luke warm soap suds made with white soap. Let them soak an hour or two, then squeeze them softly and put them through clean suds in the same way. Rinse in warm water, then in cold, and pass through water stiffened with a little gum arabic or rice water.

CLIMBING A WALL OF ICE.

Terrible Experience in the Rocky Mountains.

At the close of a winter trip among the Rockies, Mr. Enos A. Mills and his collie, "Scotch," started across the continental divide in the face of weather conditions that indicated a snow-storm. He tells the story of their experience in "The Spell of the Rockies." While the wind blew a steady gale, they went forward over snowy, icy ledges, on which there was not the sign of a path, until they reached a cliff of ice that they must climb.

The last one hundred feet or so rose steep, jagged, and ice-covered before me. There was nothing to lay hold of; every point of vantage was plated and coated with ice. There was only one way to surmount this icy barrier, and that was to chop toe and hand-holes from the bottom to the top. Such a climb would not be especially difficult or dangerous for me, but could Scotch do it?

I grasped my ax and chopped my way to the top. Returning for Scotch, I started him climbing just ahead of me, so that I could boost and encourage him. We had ascended only a few feet when it became plain that sooner or later he would slip, and bring disaster to us both. We stopped, and descended to the bottom for a new start.

I determined to carry him. His weight was forty pounds, and he would make a top-heavy load. But as there seemed to be nothing else to do, I threw him over my shoulder and started up.

When I came to a place where it was not very steep, I stopped to transfer Scotch from one shoulder to the other. The wind was at its worst; it would fall quiet one moment, and then bluster at me with the suddenness of an explosion. I was just moving Scotch, when it suddenly shifted, and rushed upon us with the force of an ocean breaker. It threw me off my balance, and tumbled me heavily against the icy slope. Fortunately I managed to get two fingers into one of the chopped holes, and held fast. I clung to Scotch with one arm; we came to a jarring stop, both saved.

Gripping Scotch with one hand and clinging to the icy hold with the other, I shuffled about until I got my feet into two holes in the wall. Standing in these, and leaning against the ice, with the wind pushing and tearing at me, I managed to lift Scotch again to my shoulder. A few minutes later we paused to breathe on the icy ridge of the summit, between two oceans and amid seas of snowy peaks.

A LONG RABBIT FENCE.

One of Twelve Hundred Miles in Australia.

The havoc that rabbits have wrought in Australia has cost the country millions of dollars. Until a few years ago, however, the western part of the continent, protected by a bulwark of seemingly impassable desert, was free from the pest. Then one day a solitary rider on the edge of the arid land saw something scuttle across its path. It was the advance scout of a vast invading army of rabbits. The government immediately determined to build a twelve-hundred-mile fence to shut out the devastating horde.

This fence, says the Wide World Magazine, is the longest that has ever been constructed. It traverses an inhospitable country where the rain may fall once a year, or perhaps not at all for three years. It was necessary to carry materials for the fence and supplies for the workmen hundreds of miles, on carts and on camel-backs. The work had to be pushed with feverish haste, for countless thousands of rabbits, pressing westward steadily, were eating the country as they came.

When the workmen had nearly finished the barrier, the news came that the rabbits had rounded the end. Without hesitation, they began a second fence 100 miles to the westward, and before the farming region was safely enclosed the two fences extended over 2,500 miles.

In appearance, the barrier resembles the woven wire fences that are seen in all parts of the world. The netting is stretched between posts sunk deeply into the ground and treated with tar to make them less likely to be destroyed by the white ants. The lower edge of the netting is sunk into the ground to prevent the rabbits from burrowing under it, and along the top runs a heavy wire capable of withstanding the shock of charging kangaroos and emus.

Without constant attention and patrolling, however, the fence would be useless, for outside of them the rabbits keen eyes are ceaseless watch. A boundary-rider patrols each section of the fence twice a week, and he carries enough material and tools to make ordinary repairs. In some parts the riders are men on bicycles; in others they are horsemen, and in the arid districts the men use camels. There is a sort of "flying squad" assigned to each half-dozen sections, and the boundary-rider can call on them when the fence is badly broken, or when the incursions of rabbits are especially threatening.

PLAN TO CURB MILITANTS.

English Clergyman Finds Inspiration in Nero's Methods.

The latest suggestion for dealing with the militants who "manage strike" comes from the Rev. F. B. Meyer, of London, England. He recalls the method adopted by Nero of dealing with people who, like the Apostle Paul, were centres of disturbance to the existing order, and says:

"Why should not the sentence of these persons, who cannot be let scott free, be that of being arrested by a hand-cuff for so many months to female warders, who would need to be relieved at stated intervals, but should maintain a constant vigilance on their correspondence and actions such as would practically put them hors de combat! It would not cost more than our present method."

Mr. Meyer says that if he were Home Secretary he should certainly have recourse to this method.

Telling a Secret.

It is doubtful whether the person who asserted that secrets were made to tell foresaw, even in his most cynical mood, anything like the following conversation:

"Lottie tells me that you told her the secret that I told you not to tell any one."

"Oh, isn't she mean! I told her not to tell you that I told it to her."

"Yes, I told, her that I wouldn't tell you if she told me, so please don't tell her that I told you."

Watching the Operation.

During the progress of the morning bath of a few months' old infant a neighbor's little girl came into the room carrying a doll and stood watching the operation for some time. The little girl's doll was much the worse for hard usage, being minus an arm and a leg. Finally she said to the mother of the child, "How long have you had your baby?" The child was informed, and, looking from her doll to the baby, she said, "My, but you have kept it nice!"

When misfortune overtakes a hustler it has to go some.

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