

***ALFRED HENRY
LEWIS***



***WOLFEVILLE
NIGHTS***

Alfred Henry Lewis

Wolfville Nights

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NEW YORK CITY,

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August 1, 1902

MY DEAR STERETT:—

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In offering this book to you I might have advantage of the occasion to express my friendship and declare how high I hold you as a journalist and a man. Or I might speak of those years at Washington when in the gallery we worked shoulder to shoulder; I might recall to you the wit of Hannum, or remind you of the darkling Barrett, the mighty Decker, the excellent Cohen, the vivid Brown, the imaginative Miller, the volatile Angus, the epigrammatic Merrick, the quietly satirical Splain, Rouzer the earnest, Boynton the energetic, Carson the eminent, and Dunnell, famous for a bitter, frank integrity. I might remember that day when the gifted Fanciulli, with no more delicate inspiration than crackers, onions, and cheese, and no more splendid conservatory than Shoemaker's, wrote, played and consecrated to you his famous "Lone Star March" wherewith he so disquieted the public present of the next concert in the White House grounds. Or I might hark back to the campaign of '92, when together we struggled against national politics as evinced in the city of New York; I might repaint that election night when, with one hundred thousand whirling dervishes of democracy in Madison Square, dancing dances, and singing songs of victory, we undertook through

the hubbub to send from the "Twenty-third street telegraph office" half-hourly bulletins to our papers in the West; how you, accompanied of the dignified Richard Bright, went often to the Fifth Avenue Hotel; and how at last you dictated your bulletins—a sort of triumphant blank verse, they were—as Homeric of spirit as lofty of phrase—to me, who caught them as they came from your lips, losing none of their fire, and so flashed them all burning into Texas, far away. But of what avail would be such recount? Distance separates us and time has come between. Those are the old years, these are the new, with newer years beyond. Life like a sea is filling from rivers of experience. Forgetfulness rises as a tide and creeps upward to drown within us those stories of the days that were. And because this is true, it comes to me that you as a memory must stand tallest in the midst of my regard. For of you I find within me no forgetfulness. I have met others; they came, they tarried, they departed. They came again; and on this second encounter the recollection of their existences smote upon me as a surprise. I had forgotten them as though they had not been. But such is not your tale. Drawn on the plates of memory, as with a tool of diamond, I carry you both in broadest outline and in each least of shade; and there hangs no picture in the gallery of hours gone, to which I turn with more of pleasure and of good. Nor am I alone in my recollection. Do I pass through the Fifth Avenue Hotel on my way to the Hoffman, that vandyked dispenser leans pleasantly across his counter, to ask with deepest interest: "Do you hear from the Old Man now?" Or am I belated in Shanley's, a beaming ring of waiters—if it be not an hour overrun of custom—will half-

circle my table, and the boldest, "Pat," will question timidly, yet with a kindly Galway warmth: "How's the Old Man?" Old Man! That is your title: at once dignified and affectionate; and by it you come often to be referred to along Broadway these ten years after its conference. And when the latest word is uttered what is there more to fame! I shall hold myself fortunate, indeed, if, departing, I'm remembered by half so many half so long. But wherefore extend ourselves regretfully? We may meet again; the game is not played out. Pending such bright chance, I dedicate this book to you. It is the most of honour that lies in my lean power. And in so doing, I am almost moved to say, as said Goldsmith of Johnson in his offering of *She Stoops to Conquer*: "By inscribing this slight performance to you, I do not mean to so much compliment you as myself. It may do me some honour to inform the public that I have lived many years in intimacy with you. It may serve the interests of mankind also to inform them that the greatest wit may be found in a character without impairing the most unaffected piety." I repeat, I am all but moved to write these lines of you. It would tell my case at least; and while description might limp in so far as you lack somewhat of that snuffle of "true piety" so often engaging the Johnsonian nose, you make up the defect with possession of a wider philosophy, a better humour and a brighter, quicker wit than visited or dwelt beneath the candle-scorched wig of our old bully lexicographer.

ALFRED HENRY LEWIS.

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SOME COWBOY FACTS.

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There are certain truths of a botanical character that are not generally known. Each year the trees in their occupation creep further west. There are regions in Missouri—not bottom lands—which sixty years ago were bald and bare of trees. Today they are heavy with timber. Westward, beyond the trees, lie the prairies, and beyond the prairies, the plains; the first are green with long grasses, the latter bare, brown and with a crisp, scorched, sparse vesture of vegetation scarce worth the name. As the trees march slowly westward in conquest of the prairies, so also do the prairies, in their verdant turn, become aggressors and push westward upon the plains. These last stretches, extending to the base of that bluff and sudden bulwark, the Rocky Mountains, can go no further. The Rockies hold the plains at bay and break, as it were, the teeth of the desert. As a result of this warfare of vegetations, the plains are to first disappear in favour of the prairies; and the prairies to give way before the trees. These mutations all wait on rain; and as the rain belt goes ever and ever westward, a strip of

plains each year surrenders its aridity, and the prairies and then the trees press on and take new ground.

These facts should contain some virtue of interest; the more since with the changes chronicled, come also changes in the character of both the inhabitants and the employments of these regions. With a civilised people extending themselves over new lands, cattle form ever the advance guard. Then come the farms. This is the procession of a civilised, peaceful invasion; thus is the column marshalled. First, the pastoral; next, the agricultural; third and last, the manufacturing;—and per consequence, the big cities, where the treasure chests of a race are kept. Blood and bone and muscle and heart are to the front; and the money that steadies and stays and protects and repays them and their efforts, to the rear.

Forty years ago about all that took place west of the Mississippi of a money-making character was born of cattle. The cattle were worked in huge herds and, like the buffalo supplanted by them, roamed in unnumbered thousands. In a pre-railroad period, cattle were killed for their hides and tallow, and smart Yankee coasters went constantly to such ports as Galveston for these cargoes. The beef was left to the coyotes.

Cattle find a natural theatre of existence on the plains. There, likewise, flourishes the pastoral man. But cattle herding, confined to the plains, gives way before the westward creep of agriculture. Each year beholds more western acres broken by the plough; each year witnesses a diminution of the cattle ranges and cattle herding. This need ring no bell of alarm concerning a future barren of a beef

supply. More cattle are the product of the farm-regions than of the ranges. That ground, once range and now farm, raises more cattle now than then. Texas is a great cattle State. Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri are first States of agriculture. The area of Texas is about even with the collected area of the other five. Yet one finds double the number of cattle in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri than in Texas, to say nothing of tenfold the sheep and hogs. No; one may be calm; one is not to fall a prey to any hunger of beef.

While the farms in their westward pushing do not diminish the cattle, they reduce the cattleman and pinch off much that is romantic and picturesque. Between the farm and the wire fence, the cowboy, as once he flourished, has been modified, subdued, and made partially to disappear. In the good old days of the Jones and Plummer trail there were no wire fences, and the sullen farmer had not yet arrived. Your cowboy at that time was a person of thrill and consequence. He wore a broad-brimmed Stetson hat, and all about it a rattlesnake skin by way of band, retaining head and rattles. This was to be potent against headaches—a malady, by the way, which swept down no cowboy save in hours emergent of a spree. In such case the snake cure didn't cure. The hat was retained in defiance of winds, by a leathern cord caught about the back of the head, not under the chin. This cord was beautiful with a garniture of three or four perforated poker chips, red, yellow, and blue.

There are sundry angles of costume where the dandyism of a cowboy of spirit and conceit may acquit itself; these are hatband, spurs, saddle, and leggins. I've seen hatbands

made of braided gold and silver filigree; they were from Santa Fe, and always in the form of a rattlesnake, with rubies or emeralds or diamonds for eyes. Such gauds would cost from four hundred to two thousand dollars. Also, I've encountered a saddle which depleted its proud owner a round twenty-five hundred dollars. It was of finest Spanish leather, stamped and spattered with gold bosses. There was gold-capping on the saddle horn, and again on the circle of the cantle. It was a dream of a saddle, made at Paso del Norte; and the owner had it cinched upon a bronco dear at twenty dollars. One couldn't have sold the pony for a stack of white chips in any faro game of that neighbourhood (Las Vegas) and they were all crooked games at that.

Your cowboy dandy frequently wears wrought steel spurs, inlaid with silver and gold; price, anything you please. If he flourish a true Brummel of the plains his leggins will be fronted from instep to belt with the thick pelt, hair outside, of a Newfoundland dog. These "chapps," are meant to protect the cowboy from rain and cold, as well as plum bushes, wire fences and other obstacles inimical, and against which he may lunge while riding headlong in the dark. The hair of the Newfoundland, thick and long and laid the right way, defies the rains; and your cowboy loathes water.

Save in those four cardinals of vanity enumerated, your cowboy wears nothing from weakness; the rest of his outfit is legitimate. The long sharp heels of his boots are there to dig into the ground and hold fast to his mother earth while roping on foot. His gay pony when "roped" of a frosty morning would skate him all across and about the plains if it

were not for these heels. The buckskin gloves tied in one of the saddle strings are used when roping, and to keep the half-inch manila lariat—or mayhap it's horsehair or rawhide pleated—from burning his hands. The red silken sash one was wont aforetime to see knotted about his waist, was used to hogtie and hold down the big cattle when roped and thrown. The sash—strong, soft and close—could be tied more tightly, quickly, surely than anything besides. In these days, with wire pastures and branding pens and the fine certainty of modern round-ups and a consequent paucity of mavericks, big cattle are seldom roped; wherefor the sash has been much cast aside.

The saddle-bags or "war-bags,"—also covered of dogskin to match the leggins, and worn behind, not forward of the rider—are the cowboy's official wardrobe wherein he carries his second suit of underclothes, and his other shirt. His handkerchief, red cotton, is loosely knotted about the cowboy's neck, knot to the rear. He wipes the sweat from his brow therewith on those hot Texas days when in a branding pen he "flanks" calves or feeds the fires or handles the irons or stands off the horned indignation of the cows, resentful because of burned and bawling offspring.

It would take two hundred thousand words to tell in half fashion the story of the cowboy. His religion of fatalism, his courage, his rides at full swing in midnight darkness to head and turn and hold a herd stampeded, when a slip on the storm-soaked grass by his unshod pony, or a misplaced prairie-dog hole, means a tumble, and a tumble means that a hundred and fifty thousand dollars worth of cattle, with hoofs like chopping knives, will run over him and make him

look and feel and become as dead as a cancelled postage stamp; his troubles, his joys, his soberness in camp, his drunkenness in town, and his feuds and occasional "gun plays" are not to be disposed of in a preface. One cannot in such cramped space so much as hit the high places in a cowboy career.

At work on the range and about his camp—for, bar accidents, wherever you find a cowboy you will find a camp—the cowboy is a youth of sober quiet dignity. There is a deal of deep politeness and nothing of epithet, insult or horseplay where everybody wears a gun.

There are no folk inquisitive on the ranges. No one asks your name. If driven by stress of conversation to something akin to it the cowboy will say: "What may I call you, sir?" And he's as careful to add the "sir," as he is to expect it in return.

You are at liberty to select what name you prefer. Where you hail from? where going? why? are queries never put. To look at the brand on your pony—you, a stranger—is a dangerous vulgarity to which no gentleman of the Panhandle or any other region of pure southwestern politeness would stoop. And if you wish to arouse an instant combination of hate, suspicion and contempt in the bosom of a cowboy you have but to stretch forth your artless Eastern hand and ask: "Let me look at your gun."

Cowboys on the range or in the town are excessively clannish. They never desert each other, but stay and fight and die and storm a jail and shoot a sheriff if needs press, to rescue a comrade made captive in their company. Also they care for each other when sick or injured, and set one

another's bones when broken in the falls and tumbles of their craft. On the range the cowboy is quiet, just and peaceable. There are neither women nor cards nor rum about the cow camps. The ranches and the boys themselves banish the two latter; and the first won't come. Women, cards and whiskey, the three war causes of the West, are confined to the towns.

Those occasions when cattle are shipped and the beef-herds, per consequence, driven to the shipping point become the only times when the cowboy sees the town. In such hours he blooms and lives fully up to his opportunity. He has travelled perhaps two hundred miles and has been twenty days on the trail, for cattle may only be driven about ten miles a day; he has been up day and night and slept half the time in the saddle; he has made himself hoarse singing "Sam Bass" and "The Dying Ranger" to keep the cattle quiet and stave off stampedes; he has ridden ten ponies to shadows in his twenty days of driving, wherefore, and naturally, your cowboy feels like relaxing.

There would be as many as ten men with each beef-herd; and the herd would include about five thousand head. There would be six "riders," divided into three watches to stand night guard over the herd and drive it through the day; there would be two "hoss hustlers," to hold the eighty or ninety ponies, turn and turn about, and carry them along with the herd; there would be the cook, with four mules and the chuck wagon; and lastly there would be the herd-boss, a cow expert he, and at the head of the business.

Once the herd is off his hands and his mind at the end of the drive, the cowboy unbuckles and reposes himself from

his labours. He becomes deeply and famously drunk. Hungering for the excitement of play he collides amiably with faro and monte and what other deadfalls are rife of the place. Never does he win; for the games aren't arranged that way. But he enjoys himself; and his losses do not prey on him.

Sated with faro bank and monte—they can't be called games of chance, the only games of chance occurring when cowboys engage with each other at billiards or pool—sated, I say, with faro and Mexican monte, and exuberant of rum, which last has regular quick renewal, our cowboy will stagger to his pony, swing into the saddle, and with gladsome whoops and an occasional outburst from his six shooter directed toward the heavens, charge up and down the street. This last amusement appeals mightily to cowboys too drunk to walk. For, be it known, a gentleman may ride long after he may not walk.

If a theatre be in action and mayhap a troop of "Red Stocking Blondes," elevating the drama therein, the cowboy is sure to attend. Also he will arrive with his lariat wound about his body under his coat; and his place will be the front row. At some engaging crisis, such as the "March of the Amazons," having first privily unwound and organised his lariat to that end, he will arise and "rope" an Amazon. This will produce bad language from the manager of the show, and compel the lady to sit upon the stage to the detriment of her wardrobe if no worse, and all to keep from being pulled across the footlights. Yet the exercise gives the cowboy deepest pleasure. Having thus distinguished the lady of his admiration, later he will meet her and escort her

to the local dancehall. There, mingling with their frank companions, the two will drink, and loosen the boards of the floor with the strenuous dances of our frontier till daylight does appear.

For the matter of a week, or perchance two—it depends on how fast his money melts—in these fashions will our gentleman of cows engage his hours and expand himself. He will make a deal of noise, drink a deal of whiskey, acquire a deal of what he terms "action"; but he harms nobody, and, in a town toughened to his racket and which needs and gets his money, disturbs nobody.

"Let him whoop it up; he's paying for it, ain't he?" will be the prompt local retort to any inquiry as to why he is thus permitted to disport.

So long as the cowboy observes the etiquette of the town, he will not be molested or "called down" by marshal or sheriff or citizen. There are four things your cowboy must not do. He must not insult a woman; he must not shoot his pistol in a store or bar-room; he must not ride his pony into those places of resort; and as a last proposal he must not ride his pony on the sidewalks. Shooting or riding into bar-rooms is reckoned as dangerous; riding on the sidewalk comes more under the head of insult, and is popularly regarded as a taunting defiance of the town marshal. On such occasions the marshal never fails to respond, and the cowboy is called upon to surrender. If he complies, which to the credit of his horse-sense he commonly does, he is led into brief captivity to be made loose when cooled. Does he resist arrest, there is an explosive rattle of six shooters, a mad scattering of the careful citizenry out of lines of fire,

and a cowboy or marshal is added to the host beyond. At the close of the festival, if the marshal still lives he is congratulated; if the cowboy survives he is lynched; if both fall, they are buried with the honours of frontier war; while whatever the event, the communal ripple is but slight and only of the moment, following which the currents of Western existence sweep easily and calmly onward as before.

A. H. L.

WOLFVILLE NIGHTS

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CHAPTER I. The Dismissal of Silver Phil.

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"His name, complete, is 'Silver City Philip.' In them social observances of the Southwest wherein haste is a feacher an' brev'ty the bull's eye aimed at, said cognomen gets shortened to 'Silver Phil.'"

The Old Cattleman looked thoughtfully into his glass, as if by that method he collected the scattered elements of a story. There was a pause; then he lifted the glass to his lips as one who being now evenly equipped of information, proposed that it arrive hand in hand with the inspiration which should build a tale from it.

"Shore, this Silver Phil is dead now; an' I never yet crosses up with the gent who's that sooperfluous as to express regrets. It's Dan Boggs who dismisses Silver Phil; Dan does it in efforts he puts forth to faithfully represent the right.

"Doc Peets allers allows this Silver Phil is a 'degen'rate;' leastwise that's the word Peets uses. An' while I freely concedes I ain't none too cl'ar as to jest what a degen'rate is, I stands ready to back Peets' deescription to win. Peets is, bar Colonel William Greene Sterett, the best eddicated sharp in Arizona; also the wariest as to expressin' views. Tharfore when Peets puts it up, onflinchin', that this yere Silver Phil's a degen'rate, you-all can spread your blankets an' go to sleep on it that a degen'rate he is.

"Silver Phil is a little, dark, ignorant, tousled-ha'red party, none too neat in costume. He's as black an' small an' evil-

seemin' as a Mexican; still, you sees at a glance he ain't no Greaser neither. An' with all this yere surface wickedness, Silver Phil has a quick, hyster'cal way like a woman or a bird; an' that's ever a grin on his face. You can smell 'bad' off Silver Phil, like smoke in a house, an' folks who's on the level—an' most folks is—conceives a notion ag'in him the moment him an' they meets up.

"The first time I observes Silver Phil, he's walkin' down the lick room of the Red Light. As he goes by the bar, Black Jack—who's rearrangin' the nose paint on the shelf so it shows to advantage—gets careless an' drops a bottle.

""Crash!" it goes onto the floor.

"With the sound, an' the onexpected suddenness of it stampedin' his nerves, that a-way, Silver Phil leaps into the air like a cat; an' when he 'lights, he's frontin' Black Jack an' a gun in each hand.

""Which I won't be took!" says Silver Phil, all flustered.

"His eyes is gleamin' an' his face is palin' an' his ugly grin gets even uglier than before. But like a flash, he sees thar's nothin' to go in the air about—nothin' that means him; an' he puts up his hardware an' composes himse'f.

""You-all conducts yourse'f like a sport who has something on his mind," says Texas Thompson, who's thar present at the time, an' can't refrain from commentin' on the start that bottle-smashin' gives Silver Phil.

"This Silver Phil makes no response, but sort o' grins plenty ghastly, while his breath comes quick.

"Still, while you-all notes easy that this person's scared, it's plain he's a killer jest the same. It's frequent that a-way. I'm never much afraid of one of your cold game gents like

Cherokee Hall; you can gamble the limit they'll never put a six-shooter in play till it's shorely come their turn. But timid, feverish, locoed people, whose jedgment is bad an' who's prone to feel themse'fs in peril; they're the kind who kills. For myse'f I shuns all sech. I won't say them erratic, quick-to-kill sports don't have courage; only it strikes me—an' I've rode up on a heap of 'em—it's more like a fear-bit f'rocity than sand.

"Take Enright or Peets or Cherokee or Tutt or Jack Moore or Boggs or Texas Thompson; you're plumb safe with sech gents—all or any. An' yet thar ain't the first glimmer of bein' gun-shy about one of 'em; they're as clean strain as the eternal granite, an' no more likely to hide out from danger than a hill. An' while they differs from each other, yet they're all different from sech folks as Silver Phil. Boggs, goin' to war, is full of good-humoured grandeur, gala and confident, ready to start or stop like a good hoss. Cherokee Hall is quiet an' wordless; he gets pale, but sharp an' deadly; an' his notion is to fight for a finish. Peets is haughty an' sooperior on the few o'casions when he onbends in battle, an' comports himse'f like a gent who fights downhill; the same, ondoubted, bein' doo to them book advantages of Peets which elevates him an' lifts him above the common herd a whole lot. Enright who's oldest is of course slowest to embark in blood, an' pulls his weepens—when he does pull 'em—with sorrowful resignation.

"'Which I'm shorely saddest when I shoots,' says Enright to me, as he reloads his gun one time.

"These yere humane sentiments, however, don't deter him from shootin' soon an' aimin' low, which latter habits

makes Wolfville's honoured chief a highly desp'rate game to get ag'inst.

"Jack Moore, bein' as I explains former, the execyootive of the Stranglers, an' responsible for law an' order, has a heap of shootin' shoved onto him from time to time. Jack allers transacts these fireworks with a ca'm, offishul front, the same bein' devoid, equal, of anger or regrets. Tutt, partic'lar after he weds Tucson Jennie, an' more partic'lar still when he reaps new honours as the originator of that blessed infant Enright Peets Tutt, carries on what shootin' comes his way in a manner a lot dignified an' lofty; while Texas Thompson—who's mebbly morbid about his wife down in Laredo demandin' she be divorced that time—although he picks up his hand in a fracas, ready an' irritable an' with no delays, after all is that well-balanced he's bound to be each time plumb right.

"Which, you observes, son, from these yere settin's forth, that thar's a mighty sight of difference between gents like them pards of mine an' degen'rates of the tribe of Silver Phil. It's the difference between right an' wrong; one works from a impulse of pure jestice, the other is moved of a sperit of crime; an' thar you be.

"Silver Phil, we learns later—an' it shore jestifies Peets in his theories about him bein' a degen'rate—has been in plenty of blood. But allers like a cat; savage, gore-thirsty, yet shy, prideless, an' ready to fly. It seems he begins to be homicidal in a humble way by downin' a trooper over near Fort Cummings. That's four years before he visits us. He's been blazin' away intermittent ever since, and allers crooel,

crafty an' safe. It's got to be a shore thing or Silver Phil quits an' goes into the water like a mink.

"This yere undersized miscreant ain't ha'nted about Wolfville more'n four days before he shows how onnecessary he is to our success. Which he works a ha'r copper on Cherokee Hall. What's a ha'r copper? I'll onfold, short and terse, what Silver Phil does, an' then you saveys. Cherokee's dealin' his game—farobank she is; an' if all them national banks conducts themse'fs as squar' as that enterprise of Cherokee's, the fields of finance would be as safely honest as a church. Cherokee's turnin' his game one evenin'; Faro Nell on the lookout stool where she belongs. Silver Phil drifts up to the lay-out, an' camps over back of the king-end. He gets chips, an' goes to takin' chances alternate on the king, queen, jack, ten; all side an' side they be. Cherokee bein' squar' himse'f ain't over-prone to expect a devious play in others. He don't notice this Silver Phil none speshul, an' shoves the kyards.

"Silver Phil wins three or four bets; it's Nell that catches on to his racket, an' signs up to Cherokee onder the table with her little foot. One glance an' Cherokee is loaded with information. This Silver Phil, it seems, in a sperit of avarice, equips himse'f with a copper—little wooden checker, is what this copper is—one he's done filched from Cherokee the day prior. He's fastened a long black hoss-ha'r to it, an' he ties the other end of the hoss-ha'r to his belt in front. This ha'r is long enough as he's planted at the table that a-way, so it reaches nice to them four nearest kyards,—the king, queen, jack, ten. An' said ha'r is plumb invisible except to eyes as sharp as Faro Nell's. The deceitful Silver Phil will have a

stack on one of 'em, coppered with this yere ha'r copper. He watches the box. As the turns is made, if the kyards come his way, well an' good. Silver Phil does nothin' but garners in results. When the kyards start to show ag'in him, however, that's different. In sech events Silver Phil draws in his breath, sort o' takin' in on the hoss-ha'r, an' the copper comes off the bet. When the turn is made, thar's Silver Phil's bet—by virchoo of said fraud—open an' triumphant an' waitin' to be paid.

"Cherokee gets posted quick an with a look. As sharp as winkin' Cherokee has a nine-inch bowie in his hand an' with one slash cuts the hoss-ha'r clost up by Silver Phil's belt.

"'That's a yoonique invention!" observes Cherokee, an' he's sarcastic while he menaces with the knife at Silver Phil; 'that contraption is shorely plenty sagacious! But it don't go here. Shove in your chips.' Silver Phil obeys: an' he shows furtive, ugly, an' alarmed, an' all of 'em at once. He don't say a word. 'Now pull your freight,' concloods Cherokee. 'If you ever drifts within ten foot of a game of mine ag'in I'll throw this knife plumb through you—through an' through.' An' Cherokee, by way of lustration lets fly the knife across the bar-room. It comes like a flash.

"'Chuck!'

"Thar's a picture paper pasted onto the wooden wall of the Red Light, displayin' the liniaments of some party. That bowie pierces the picture—a shot in the cross it is—an' all with sech fervour that the p'int of the blade shows a inch an' a half on the other side of that individyool board.

"'The next time I throws a knife in your presence,' remarks Cherokee to Silver Phil, an' Cherokee's as cold an'

p'isonous as a rattlesnake, 'it'll be la'nched at you.'

"Silver Phil don't say nothin' in retort. He's aware by the lib'ral way Cherokee sep'rates himse'f from the bowie that said weepion can't constitoot Cherokee's entire armament. An' as Silver Phil don't pack the sperit to face no sech flashlight warrior, he acts on Cherokee's hint to *vamos*, an fades into the street. Shore, Cherokee don't cash the felon's chips none; he confiscates 'em. Cherokee ain't quite so tenderly romantic as to make good to a detected robber. Moreover, he lets this Silver Phil go onharmmed when by every roole his skelp is forfeit. It turns out good for the camp, however, as this yere experience proves so depressin' to Silver Phil he removes his blankets to Red Dog. Thar among them purblind tarrapins, its inhabitants, it's likely he gets prosperous an' ondetected action on that little old ha'r copper of his.

"It's not only my beliefs, but likewise the opinions of sech joodicial sports as Enright, Peets, an' Colonel Sterett, that this maverick, Silver Phil, is all sorts of a crim'nal. An' I wouldn't wonder if he's a pure rustler that a-way; as ready to stand up a stage as snake a play at farobank. This idee settles down on the Wolfville intell'gence on the heels of a vicissitooode wherein Dan Boggs performs, an' which gets pulled off over in the Bird Cage Op'ry House. Jack Moore ain't thar none that time. Usual, Jack is a constant deevotee of the dramy. Jack's not only a first-nighter, he comes mighty clost to bein' a every-nighter. But this partic'lar evenin' when Boggs performs, Jack's rummagin' about some'ers else.

"If Jack's thar, it's even money he'd a-had that second shot instead of Boggs; in which event, the results might have been something graver than this yere minoote wound which Boggs confers. I'm confident Jack would have cut in with the second shot for sech is his offishul system. Jack more'n once proclaims his position.

"'By every roole of law,' says Jack at epocks when he declar's himse'f, 'an' on all o'casions, I, as kettle-tender to the Strangers, is entitled to the first shot. When I uses the term 'o'casion,' I would be onderstood as alloodin' to affairs of a simply social kind, an' not to robberies, hold-ups, hoss-larcenies, an' other an' sim'lar transactions in spec'latif crime when every gent defends his own. Speakin' social, however, I reasserts that by every roole of guidance, I'm entitled to the first shot. Which a doo regyard for these plain rights of mine would go far to freein' Wolfville upper circles of the bullets which occurs from time to time, an' which even the most unconventional admits is shore a draw-back. All I can add as a closer,' concloods Jack, 'is that I'll make haste to open on any sport who transgresses these fiats an' goes to shootin' first. Moreover, it's likely that said offender finds that when I'm started once, what I misses in the orig'nal deal I'll make up in the draw, an' I tharfore trusts that none will prove so sooicidal as to put me to the test.'

"This Bird Cage Op'ry House evenin', however, Jack is absent a heap. Dan Boggs is present, an' is leanin' back appreciatin' the show an' the Valley Tan plenty impartial. Dan likes both an' is doin' 'em even jestice. Over opp'site to Dan is a drunken passel of sports from Red Dog, said

wretched hamlet bein' behind Wolfville in that as in all things else an' not ownin' no op'ry house.

"As the evenin' proceeds—it's about sixth drink time—a casyooal gun goes off over among the Red Dog outfit, an' the lead tharfrom bores a hole in the wall cllost to Dan's y'ear. Nacherally Dan don't like it. The show sort o' comes to a balk, an' takin' advantages of the lull Dan arises in a listless way an' addresses the Red Dogs.

"'I merely desires to inquire,' says Dan 'whether that shot is inadvertent; or is it a mark of innocent joobilation an' approval of the show; or is it meant personal to me?'

"'You can bet your moccasins!' shouts one of the Red Dog delegation, 'thar's no good fellowship with that gun-play. That shot's formal an' serious an' goes as it lays.'

"'My mind bein' now cl'ar on the subject of motive,' says Dan; 'the proper course is plain.'"

With this retort Dan slams away gen'ral—shoots into the flock like—at the picnickers from Red Dog, an' a party who's plenty drunk an' has his feet piled up on a table goes shy his off big toe.

"As I remarks yeretofore it's as well Jack Moore ain't thar. Jack would have corralled something more momentous than a toe. Which Jack would have been shootin' in his capacity as marshal, an' couldn't onder sech circumstances have stooped to toes. But it's different with Dan. He is present private an' only idlin' 'round; an' he ain't driven to take high ground. More partic'lar since Dan's playin' a return game in the nacher of reproofs an' merely to resent the onlicensed liberties which Red Dog takes with him, Dan, as I says, is free to accept toes if he so decides.

"When Dan busts this yere inebriate, the victim lams loose a yell ag'inst which a coyote would protest. That sot thinks he's shore killed. What with the scare an' the pain an' the nosepaint, an' regyardin' of himse'f as right then flutterin' about the rim of eternity, he gets seized with remorse an' allows he's out to confess his sins before he quits. As thar's no sky pilot to confide in, this drunkard figgers that Peets 'll do, an' with that he onloads on Peets how, bein' as he is a stage book-keep over in Red Dog, he's in cahoots with a outfit of route agents an' gives 'em the word when it's worth while to stand-up the stage. An' among other crim'nal pards of his this terrified person names that outlaw Silver Phil. Shore, when he rounds to an' learns it ain't nothin' but a toe, this party's chagrined to death.

"This yere confidin' sport's arrested an' taken some'ers—Prescott mebbby—to be tried in a shore-enough co't for the robberies; the Red Dog Stranglers not bein' game to butt in an' hang him a lot themse'fs. They surrenders him to the marshal who rides over for him; an' they would have turned out Silver Phil, too, only that small black outcast don't wait, but goes squanderin' off to onknown climes the moment he hears the news. He's vamoosed Red Dog before this penitent bookkeep ceases yelpin' an' sobbin' over his absent toe.

"It ain't no time, however, before we hears further of Silver Phil; that is, by way of roomer. It looks like a couple of big cow outfits some'ers in the San Simon country—they're the 'Three-D' an' the 'K-in-a-box' brands—takes first to stealin' each, other's cattle, an', final, goes to war. Each side retains bands of murderers an' proceeds buoyantly to lay for

one another. Which Silver Phil enlists with the 'Three-D' an' sneaks an' prowls an' bushwhacks an' shoots himse'f into more or less bloody an' ignoble prom'nence. At last the main war-chiefs of the Territory declar's themse'fs in on the riot an' chases both sides into the hills; an' among other excellent deeds they makes captive Silver Phil.

"It's a great error they don't string this Silver Phil instanter. But no; after the procrastinatin' fashion of real law, they permits the villain—who's no more use on the surface of Arizona that a-way than one of them hydrophoby polecats whose bite is death—to get a law sharp to plead an' call for a show-down before a jedge an' jury. It takes days to try Silver Phil, an' marshals an' sheriff gents is two weeks squanderin' about gettin' witnesses; an' all to as much trouble an' loss of time an' dinero as would suffice to round-up the cattle of Cochise county. Enright an' the Strangers would have turned the trick in twenty minutes an' never left the New York Store until with Silver Phil an' a lariat they reepairs to the windmill to put the finishin' touches on their lucoobations.

"Still, dooms slow an' shiftless as they shore be, at the wind-up Silver Phil's found guilty, an' is put in nom'nation by the presidin' alcade to be hanged; the time bein' set in a crazy-hoss fashion for a month away. As Silver Phil—which he's that bad an' hard he comes mighty clost to bein; game—is leavin' the co't-room with the marshal who's ridin' herd on him, he says:

"'I ain't payin' much attention at the time,'—Silver Phil's talkin' to that marshal gent,—'bein' I'm thinkin' of something

else, but do I onderstand that old grey sport on the bench to say you-all is to hang me next month?'

""That's whatever!' assents this marshal gent, 'an' you can gamble a bloo stack that hangin' you is a bet we ain't none likely to overlook. Which we're out to put our whole grateful souls into the dooty.'

""Now I thinks of it,' observes Silver Phil, 'I'm some averse to bein' hanged. I reckons, speakin' free an' free as between fellow sports, that in order for that execootion to be a blindin' success I'll have to be thar personal?'

""It's one of the mighty few o'casions,' responds the marshal, 'when your absence would shorely dash an' damp the gen'ral joy. As you says, you'll have to be thar a heap personal when said hangin' occurs.'

""I'm mighty sorry,' says Silver Phil, 'that you-all lays out your game in a fashion that so much depends on me. The more so, since the longer I considers this racket, the less likely it is I'll be thar. It's almost a cinch, with the plans I has, that I'll shore be some'ers else.'

"They corrals Silver Phil in the one big upper room of a two-story 'doby, an' counts off a couple of dep'ty marshals to gyard him. These gyards, comin' squar' down to cases, ain't no improvement, moral, on Silver Phil himse'f; an' since they're twice his age—Silver Phil not bein' more'n twenty—it's safe as a play to say that both of 'em oughter have been hanged a heap before ever Silver Phil is born. These two hold-ups, however, turns dep'ty marshals in their old age, an' is put in to stand watch an' watch an' see that Silver Phil don't work loose from his hobbles an' go pirootin' off ag'in into parts onknown. Silver Phil is loaded with fetters,—

handcuffs an' laig-locks both—an' these hold-up sentries is armed to the limit.

"It's the idee of Doc Peets later, when he hears the details, that if the gyards that time treats Silver Phil with kindness, the little felon most likely would have remained to be hanged. But they don't: they abooses Silver Phil; cussin' him out an' herdin' him about like he's cattle. They're a evil-tempered couple, them dep'ties, an' they don't give Silver Phil no sort o' peace.

"'As I su'gests yeretofore,' says Doc Peets, when he considers the case, 'this Silver Phil is a degen'rate. He's like a anamile. He don't entertain no reg'lar scheme to work free when he waxes sardonic with the marshal; that's only a bluff. Later, when them gyards takes to maltreatin' him an' battin' him about, it wakes up the venom in him, an' his cunnin' gets aroused along with his appetite for revenge.'

"This Silver Phil, who's lean an' slim like I explains at the jump, has hands no bigger than a cat's paws. It ain't no time when he discovers that by cuttin' himse'f a bit on the irons, he can shuck the handcuffs whenever he's disposed. Even then, he don't outline no campaign for liberty; jest sort o' roominates an' waits.

"It's one partic'lar mornin', some two weeks after Silver Phil's sentenced that a-way. The marshal gent himse'f ain't about, bein' on some dooty over to Tucson. Silver Phil is upsta'rs on the top floor of the 'doby with his gyards. Which he's hotter than a wildcat; the gyards an' him has been havin' a cussin' match, an' as Silver Phil outplays 'em talkin', one of 'em's done whacked him over the skelp with his gun.