THE LONE STAR RANGER

This is a story about the Texas Plains People

By ZANE GREY

CHAPTER XXIII—Continued.

—13—

"Wal, because there ain't any use for you to git in bed, too. The gang will ride over here any day. If they're friendly I'll light a fire on the hill there, say three nights from to-night. If you don't see it then ride. You hit the trail. If I do what I can, Jim Fletcher sticks to his pals. So long, Dodge."

He left Duane in a quandary. This news was black. At the moment Duane did not know which way to turn, but certainly he had no idea of going back to Bradford. Friction between the two great lieutenants of Chesedine! Generally such matters were settled with guns. Duane gathered encouragement even from disaster. If Knell knew anything it was that this stranger in Ord, this new partner of Fletcher's, was less than Buck Duane. Well, it was about time, thought Duane, that he made use of his name if it were to help him at all. That name had been MacNelly's hope.

He had anchored all his scheme to Duane's fame. Duane was tempted to ride off after Fletcher and stay with him. This, however, would hardly be fair to an outlaw who had been fair to him. Duane concluded to await developments, and when the gang rode in to Ord, probably from their various hiding places, he would be there ready to be deceived by Knell. Duane could not see any other culmination of this series of events than a meeting between Knell and himself, if that terminated fatally for Knell there was all probability of Duane's being in no worse situation than he was now. If Poggin took up the quarrel! Here Duane accused himself again—tried in vain to revolt from a judgment that he was only reasoning out excuses to meet these outlaws.

Meanwhile, instead of writhing, why not hunt up Chesedine in his mountain retreat? The thought no sooner struck Duane than he was hurrying for his horse.

In an hour he struck the slope of Mount Ord, and as he climbed he got among broken rocks and cliffs, and was hard put to it to find the trail. He halted at a little side-canyon with grass and water, and here he made camp. And on this night, lonely like the ones he used to spend in the Nueces gorge, and memorable on account of a likeness to that old hiding-place, he felt the pressing return of old haunting things—the past so long ago, wild flights, dead faces—and the places of these were taken by one quiveringly alive, white, tragic, with its dark, intent, speaking eyes—Ray Longstreth's.

That last memory he yielded to until he slept.

In the morning, satisfied that he had left still fewer tracks than he had followed up this trail, he led his horse up to the head of the canyon, into a narrow crack in low cliffs, and with branches of cedar fenced him in. Then he went back and took up the trail on foot.

Without the horse he made better time. Once, through a wide gateway between great escarpments, he saw the lower country beyond this, vast and clear as it lay in his sight, was the great river that made the Big Bend.

He rounded a jutting corner, where view had been shut off, and presently came out upon the rim of a high wall. Beneath, like a great gulf seen through blue haze, lay an amphitheater walled in on the two sides he could see. It lay perhaps a thousand feet below him; and, plain as all the other features of that wild environment, there shone out a big red stone or adobe cabin, white water shining away between borders, and horses and cattle dotting the levels. It was a peaceful, beautiful scene. Duane could not help grinding his teeth at the thought of rustlers living in quiet and ease.

Duane worked half-way down to the level, and, well hidden in a niche, he seated himself to watch both trail and valley.

The sun went down behind the wall, and shadows were born in the darker places of the valley. Duane began to want to get closer to that cabin. Still he lingered. And suddenly his wide-roving eye caught sight of two horsemen riding up the valley. They must have entered at a point below, round the huge abutment of rock, beyond Duane's range of sight. Their horses were tired and stopped at the stream for a long drink.

Duane left his perch, took to the steep trail, and descended as fast as he could without making noise. It did not take him long to reach the valley floor. It was almost level, with deep grass, and here and there clumps of bushes. Twilight was already thick down there. Duane marked the location of the trail, and then began to slip like a shadow through the grass and from bush to bush. He saw a bright light before he made out the dark outline of the cabin. Then he heard voices, a merry whistle, a coarse song, and the clink of iron cooking utensils. He smelled fragrant wood smoke. He saw moving dark figures cross the light. Evidently there was a wide door, on else the fire was out in the open.

Duane swerved to the left, out of direct line with the light, and thus was able to see better. Then he advanced noiselessly but swiftly toward the back of the house. There were trees close to the wall. He would make no noise, and he could scarcely be seen—if only there was no watchdog! But all his outlaw days he had taken risks with only his useless life at stake; now, with that changed, he advanced, stealthy and bold, as an Indian. He reached the cover of the trees, knew he was hidden in their shadows, for at few paces distance he had been able to see only their tops. From there he slipped up to the house and felt along the wall with his hands. He came to a little window where light shone through. He peeped in. He saw a room shrouded in shadows. A lamp turned low, a table, chairs. He saw an open door, with bright flare beyond, but could not see the fire. Voices came indistinctly. He went on round that end of the cabin. Fortune favored him. There were bushes, an old shed, a wood-pile, all the cover he needed at that corner. He did not even need to crawl.

Before he peered between the rough corner of wood and the bush growing close to it, Duane paused a moment. This excitement was different from that he had always felt when pursued. It had no bitterness, no pain, no dread. There was as much danger here, perhaps more, yet it was not the same. Then he looked.

He saw a bright fire, a red-faced man bending over it, whistling, while he handled a steaming pot. Over him was a roofed shed built against the wall, with two open sides and two supporting posts. Duane's second glance, not so blinded by the sudden bright light, made out other men, three in the shadow, two in the flare, but with backs to him.

Fenced Him In.

"It's a smoother trail by long odds, but ain't so short as this one right over the mountain," one outlaw was saying.

"What's eatin' you, Panhandle?" ejaculated another. "Blossom an' me rode from Fairway Springs, where Poggin is with some of the gang."

"Excuse me, Phil. Shore I didn't see you come in, an' Boldt never said nothin'."

"It took you a long time to get here, but I guess that's just as well," spoke up a smooth, suave voice with a ring in it.

Longstreth's voice—Chesedine's voice!

Here they were—Chesedine, Phil Knell, Blossom Kane, Panhandle Smith, Boldt—how well Duane remembered the names!—all here, the big men of Chesedine's gang, except the biggest—Poggin. Duane had holted them, and his sensitigus of the moment deadened sight and sound of what was before him. He sank down, controlling himself, silenced a mounting exultation, then from a less strained position he peered forth again.

The outlaws were waiting for supper. Their conversation might have been that of cowboys in camp, ranchers at a round-up. Knell sat there, tall, slim, like a boy in years, with his pale, smooth, expressionless face and cold, gray eyes. And Longstreth, who leaned against the wall, handsome, with his dark face and beard like an aristocrat, resembled many a rich Louisiana planter Duane had met.

Panhandle Smith carried pots and pans into the cabin, and cheerfully called out: "If you gents air hungry for grub, don't look for me to feed you with a spoon."

The outlaws piled inside, made a great bustle and clitter as they sat to their meal. Like hungry men, they talked little.

Duane waited there for a while, then guardedly got up and crept round to the other side of the cabin. After he became used to the dark again he ventured to steal along the wall to the window and peeped in. The outlaws were in the first room and could not be seen.

Duane waited. The moments dragged endlessly. His heart pounded. Longstreth entered, turned up the light, and taking a box of cigars from the table, he carried it out.

"Here, you fellows, go outside and smoke," he said. "Knell, come in now. Let's get it over."

He returned, sat down, and lighted a cigar for himself. He put his booted feet on the table.

Duane saw that the room was comfortably, even luxuriously furnished. There must have been a good trail, he thought, else how could all that stuff have been packed in there. Then Knell came in and seated himself without any of his chief's ease. He seemed preoccupied and, as always, cold.

"What's wrong, Knell? Why didn't you get here sooner?" queried Longstreth.

"Poggin! We're on the outs again."

"What for? Get it out of your system so we can go on to the new job."

"Well, it began back a ways. I don't know how long ago—weeks—a stranger rode into Ord an' got down in a saddle like as if he owned the place. He seemed familiar to me. But I wasn't sure. We looked him over, an' I left, tryin' to place him in my mind."

"What 'd he look like?"

"Rangy, powerful man, white hair over his temples, still, hard face, eyes like gnives. The way he packed his guns, the way he walked an' stood an' swung his right hand showed me what he was. You can't fool me on the gun-sharp. An' he had a grand horse, a big black."

"I've met your man," said Longstreth.

"No?" exclaimed Knell. It was wonderful to hear surprise expressed by this man that did not in the least show it in his strange physiognomy. Knell laughed a short, grim, hollow laugh. "Boss, this here big gent drifts into Ord again an' makes up to Jim Fletcher. Jim—he an' us! takes this stranger to be the big road-agent an' cottons to him. Got money out of him sure. And that's what stumps me more. What's this man's game? I happen to know, boss, that he couldn't have held up No. 6."

"How do you know?" demanded Longstreth.

"Because I did the job myself."

A dark and stormy passion clouded the chief's face.

"Knell, you're incorrigible. You're unreliable. Another break like that officers you with me. Did you tell Poggin?"

"Yes."

"That's one reason we fell out, he raved. I thought he was goin' to kill me. Several of the boys rode over from Ord, an' one of them went to Poggin and says Jim Fletcher has a new man for the gang. Jim an' Poggin always hit it up together. So until I got on the deal Jim had a pretty good notion what I was lookin' for an' who I wanted to make sure of. At last I found it. An' I knew my man. But I didn't spring it on Poggin. I sent Blossom over to Ord with a message calculated to make Jim hump. Poggin got sore, said he'd look for Jim, an' I could come over here to see you about the new job. Held meet me in Ord."

Knell had spoken hurriedly and low, now and then with passion. His pale eyes glinted like fire in ice, and now his voice fell to a whisper.

"Who do you think Fletcher's new man is?"

"Who?" demanded Longstreth.

"Buck Duane!"

Down came Longstreth's boots with a crash, then his body grew rigid.

"That Nueces outlaw? That two-gun-spaded gun-thrower who killed Bland, Alvarez—?" with more feeling than the apparent circumstance demanded.

"Yes; and Hardin, the best one of the Rim Rock fellows—Buck Duane!"

Longstreth was so ghastly white now that his black mustache seemed outlined against chalk. He cast his grim lieutenant. They understood each other without more words. It was enough that Buck Duane was there in the Big Bend. Longstreth rose presently and reached for a flask, from which he drank, then offered it to Knell. He waved it aside.

"Knell," began the chief, slowly, as he wiped his lips, "I gathered you have some grudge against this Buck Duane."

"Yes."

"Well, don't be a—— fold now and do what Poggin or almost any of you men would—don't meet this Buck Duane. I've reason to believe he's a Texas Ranger now."

"The hell you say!" exclaimed Knell.

"Yes. Go to Ord and give Jim Fletcher a hunch. He'll get Poggin, and maybe even Buck Duane."

"All right. I'll do my best. But if I run into Duane—"

"Don't run into him!" Longstreth's voice fairly rang with the force of its passion and command. He wiped his face, drank again from the flask, sat down, resumed his smoking, and, drawing a paper from his vest pocket, he began to study it.

"We'll I'm glad that's settled," he said, evidently referring to the Duane matter. "Now for the new job. This is October the eighteenth. On or before the twenty-fifth there will be a shipment of gold from the Rancher's Bank of Val Verde. After you return to Ord give Poggin these orders. Keep the gang quiet. You, Poggin, Kane, Fletcher, Panhandle Smith, and Boldt to be in on the secret and the job. Nobody else. You'll leave Ord on the twenty-third, and cross country by the trail till you get within sight of Mercer. It's a hundred miles from Bradford to Val Verde—about the same from Ord. Time your travel to get you near Val Verde on the morning of the twenty-sixth. You won't have to move then but rest your horses. At two o'clock in the afternoon, sharp, ride into town and up to the Rancher's Bank. Val Verde's a pretty big town. Never been any hold-ups there. Town feels safe. Make it a clean, fast, daylight job. That's all. Have you got the details?"

Knell did not even ask for the dates again.

"Suppose Poggin or me might be detained?" he asked.

Longstreth bent a dark glance upon his lieutenant.

"You never can tell what 'll come off," continued Knell. "I'll do my best."

CHAPTER XXIV.

Like a swift shadow and as noiseless, Duane stole across the lighted window to the dark wall of rock. Every nerve was a strong wire. For a little while his mind was cluttered and clogged with whirling thoughts, from which, like a flashing scroll, unrolled the long, baffling order of action. The game was now in his hands. He must cross Mount Ord at night. The feat was improbable, but it might be done. He must ride into Bradford forty miles from the foothills, before eight o'clock next morning. He must telegraph MacNelly to be in Val Verde on the twenty-fifth. He must ride back to Ord to introduce Knell, face him, and while the iron was hot strike hard to win Poggin's half-won interest as he had wholly won Fletcher's. Failing that last, he must bet the outlaws alone to hide their time in Ord or the free to ride to their new job in Val Verde. In the meantime he must plan to arrest Longstreth. It was a magnificent outline, incredible, alluring, unfathomable in its nameless certainty. He felt like fate. He seemed to be the iron consequences falling upon those doomed outlaws.

Under the wall the shadows were black, only the tips of trees and crags showing yet he went straight to the trail. It was merely a grayness between borders of black. He climbed and never slipped. It did not seem steep. His fear might have had echo. He surmounted the wall, and, looking down into the chaos gulf pierced by one point of light, he lifted in menacing arm and shook it. Then he strode on, and did not falter till he reached the lower level being office. Here he left the trail; there was some but he remembered the shape, the points, the notches of rock above. Before he reached the ruins of splintered ramparts and jumbles of broken walls the moon topped the eastern slope of the mountain, and the unsolving blackness he had dreaded hung to no depth of silver light. It seemed as light as day only soft, mellow, and the air held a transparent sheen. He ran up the bare ridges and down the smooth slopes, and, like a goat, jumped from rock to rock. In his light he knew his way, and lost no time looking for a trail. He crossed the divide, and then had all downhill before him. Swiftly he descended, almost always sure of his memory of the landmarks. He did not remember having strolled them in the moonlight. Yet here they were, even in changed light familiar to his sight. What he had once seen was pictured on his mind. And, true as a deer striking for home, he reached the canyon where he had left his horse. Bullet was quickly and easily found. Duane threw on the saddle and pack, clinched them tight, and resumed the descent.

Hours passed as moments. Duane was equal to his great opportunity. But he could not quell that self in him which reached back over the lapse of lonely, searing years and found there in him, in the light, knew he was not just right in part of his mind. Small wonder that he was, not insane, he thought! He cramped on downward, his marvelous faculty for covering rough ground and holding to the true course never before even in flight so keen and acute. Yet all the time a spirit was keeping step with him. Thought of Ray Longstreth as he had left her made him weak. He saw her white face, with its sweet sad lips and the dark eyes so tender and tragic.

The moon sloped to the west. Shadows of trees and crags now crossed to the other side of him. The stars dimmed. Then he was out of the rocks, with the dim trail pale at his feet. Mounting Bullet, he made short work of the long slope and the foothills and from the tracks, tied his horse, and then crossed over to the station. He heard the clicking of the telegraph instrument, and it thrilled him. An operator sat inside reading. When Duane tapped on the window he looked up with startled glance, then went swiftly to unlock the door.

"Hello. Give me paper and pencil. Quick," whispered Duane.

With trembling hands the operator complied. Duane wrote out the message he had carefully composed.

"Send this—repeat it to make sure—then keep mum. I'll see you again. Good-by."

The operator stared, but did not speak a word.

Duane left as stealthily and swiftly as he had come. He walked his horse a couple of miles back on the road and then rested him till break of day.

When Duane swung into the wide, grassy square on the outskirts of Ord he saw a bunch of saddled horses hitched in front of the tavern. He knew what that meant. Luck still favored him. If it would only hold! But he could ask no more. The host was a matter of how greatly he could make his power felt. An open conflict against odds lay in the balance. That would be fatal to him, and to avoid it he had to trust to his name and a presence he must make terrible. He knew outlaws. He knew that qualities held them. He knew what to exaggerate.

There was not an outlaw in sight. The dusty horses had covered distance that morning. As Duane dismounted he heard loud, angry voices inside the tavern. He removed coat and vest, hung them over the pommel. He packed two guns, one belted high on the left hip, the other one swinging low on the right side. His neither looked nor listened, but boldly pushed the door and stepped inside.

The big room was full of men, and every face pivoted toward him. Knell's pale face flashed into Duane's swift sight; then Boldt, then Blossom Kane, then Panhandle Smith's, then Fletcher's, then others that were familiar, and last that of Poggin. Though Duane had never seen Poggin or heard him described, he knew him. For he saw a face that was a record of great will and boldness.

There was absolute silence. The outlaws were lined back of a long table upon which were papers, stacks of silver coin, a bundle of bills, and a huge gold-mounted gun.

"Are you gents lookin' for me?" asked Duane. He gave his voice all the ringing force and power of which he was capable. And he stepped back, free of anything, with the outlaws all before him.

Knell stood quivering, but his face might have been a mask. The other outlaws looked from him to Poggin, who looked from Jim Fletcher flung up his hands.

"My Gawd, Dodge, what 'd you bust in here for?" he said, plaintively, and slowly stepped forward. His action was that of a man true to himself. He meant he had been sponsor for Duane and now he would stand by him.

"Buck, Fletcher!" called Duane, and his voice made the outlaw jump.

"Hold on, Dodge, an' you all, everybody," said Fletcher. "Let me talk, seein' I'm in the wrong here."

His persuasions did not ease the strain.

"Let who ahead. Talk," said Poggin.

Fletcher turned to Duane. "Pard, I'm talkin' it on myself that you meet enemies here when I swore you'd meet friends. It's my fault. I'll stand by you if you let me."

"No, Jim," replied Duane.

"But what 'd you come for without the signal?" burst out Fletcher in distress. He saw nothing but catastrophe in this meeting.

"Jim, I ain't pressin' my company none. But when I'm wanted bad—"

Fletcher stopped him with a raised hand. Then he turned to Poggin with a rude dignity.

"Poggy, he's my pard, an' he's riled. I never told him a word thet 'd make him sore. I only said Knell hadn't no more use for him than for me. Now, what you say goes in this gang. I never failed you in my life. Here's my pard. I vouch for him. Will you stand for me? There's goin' to be hell if you don't. An' us with a big job on hand!"

While Fletcher tolled over his slow, earnest persuasion Duane had his gaze riveted upon Poggin. There was something leonine about Poggin. He was tawny. He blazed. He seemed beautiful. But looked at closer with glance seeing the physical man, instead of that thing which shone from him, he was of perfect build, with muscles that swelled and rippled; bulging his clothes, with the magnificent head and face of the cruel, fierce, tawny-eyed jaguar.

Looking at this strange Poggin, instinctively divining his abnormal and hideous power, Duane had for the first time in his life the inward quak-

"Are You Gents Looking for Me?"

ing fear of a man. It was like a cold-tongued bell ringing within him and numbing his heart. The old instinctive firing of blood followed, but did not drive away that fear. He knew. He felt something here deeper than thought could go. And he hated Poggin.

That individual had been considering Fletcher's appeal.

"Jim, I ante up," he said, "an' if Phil doesn't raise us out with a big hand—why, he'll get called, an' your pard can set in the game."

Every eye shifted to Knell. He was dead white. He laughed, and anyone hearing that laugh would have realized his intense power equally with an assurance which made him master of the situation.

"Poggin, you're a gambler, you are—the ace-high, straight-flush hand of the Big Bend," he said, with stinging scorn. "I'll bet you my roll to a grenser peso that I can deal you a hand you'll be afraid to play."

"Phil, you're talkin' wild," growled Poggin, with both advice and menace in his tone.

"If there's anything you hate, it's a man who pretends to be somebody else when he's not. Thet so?"

Poggin nodded in slow-gathering wrath.

"Well, Jim's new pard—this man Dodge—he's not who he seems. But I know him. An' when I spring his name on you, Poggin, you'll freeze, an' your hand will be stiff when it ought to be lightnin'—all because you'll realize you've been standin' there five minutes—five minutes alive before him!"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

"NEW TOLSTOY" IN RUSSIA

Litterateurs Have Become Excited Over the Work of Ivan Alexeivitch Bunin.

The May issue of the Russkaya Mysl (Moscow), a leading Russian monthly, contains a remarkable review of a story that had been published in Russia some months ago, according to the American Review of Reviews. The author of the story is Ivan Alexeivitch Bunin, a widely known Russian poet, and its title is "The Gentleman From San Francisco."

It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that no other story that has appeared in Russiain recent years has been accorded such a warm welcome as "The Gentleman From San Francisco." And this is the more remarkable when it is considered that Bunin is by no means a young or unknown figure on the Russian literary field. His reputation as a poet of high quality was made long ago. He is now in his late forties. In 1912 the honorary degree of academician was conferred upon him, and during the last twenty-five years Russian critics have had opportunity to study Bunin's literary powers and to learn their potentialities and limits. This, however, did not prevent him from taking the literary world by storm with his latest production.

The Bulletin of Literature and Life, a monthly of high literary standard, was the first to break to the Russian world in a recent issue the news that Bunin's new story is nothing like any of his former works. As soon as attention was attracted to it, the periodical press began to write about it, commending "The Gentleman From San Francisco" in glowing and enthusiastic terms. It became clear to the Russian public that Bunin was just entering his golden era, that the creative genius of the poet had just found itself and that the numerous literary productions of Bunin constituted but the ladder of gradual self-perfection that led him to the apogee of his career. And it is in this spirit that A. Derman, a noted critic, writing in the Russkaya Mysl, hails Bunin as a new Tolstoy.

Japanese Life Insurance.

In a few weeks Japan will start a universal life insurance scheme. Anybody can take out $124 or more of insurance without a medical examination, Girard writes in the Philadelphia Ledger.

However, the estate of a policy holder who dies within two years of a disease other than typhoid, typhus, scarlet fever, diphtheria or plague will be unable to collect the full amount of insurance.

The insurance is cheap, and the government is the insurer. It is expected to encourage thrift and reduce the number of pauperized families.

Some day we shall have big companies in America writing policies in a smaller fashion as we shall have sound banks lending $10 to honest men as they do in France.

What She Needed.

Helen, aged seven, was showing a visitor how first she could run, when she suddenly stopped and said: "But I can't show my best running unless something is happening back of me."

Skins of the Damson plum are being utilized in England to produce a blue dye.

DADDY'S EVENING FAIRY TALE

By MARY GRAHAM BONNER

HEARING SANTA CLAUS.

"I have told you," said Daddy, so many Stories of the Different Christmas Days that little Girls and Boys have had, and I Think I will have to tell you about one of my very own Christmas Days."

"Goodie," said Nancy.

"That will be splendid, Daddy," said Nick.

"I am Glad you both want to hear it," said Daddy, "for this Christmas time was very Lonely, I Thought.

"But I will have to go back and tell you that days and days before Christmas I had Written Notes to Santa Claus and had called up the Chimney to him—for we had a big Fireplace in my Home. You know Santa Claus can always get the Notes Children Write him, no matter where they Post them. He is such a Wise old Fellow!

"And the thing I had asked for over and over and over again was a Hockey Suit and Outfit. I wanted Skates, Knee Pads, a Hockey Stick, and it was a Big Bundle, I'll say.

"Well," laughed Nick, "I would call that more than asking for a thing, I would say 'Several Things.'

"So should I," agreed Nancy.

"I do Believe you are both Right," Laughed Daddy. "And it was true I had a Very Long Letter every time to Santa Claus.

"It was the Day before Christmas. And I almost wanted Bedtime to come, because then there would be just a Nice Dream or two—and at last I would see what Santa Claus had brought me.

"I was very ready to go to Bed as soon as I had had my Supper and my Stocking had been Hung up.

"And then I fell Asleep. I slept for a time, and had the most Wonderful Dreams! I thought I saw the Reindeers; and Santa Claus Driving them over the Cities and Towns—right over the Chimneys and Roofs.

"But I woke up suddenly! And it was still quite Dark. 'Oh dear,' I thought to myself, 'it is not time to get up yet. And I thought I wouldn't Wake up until Morning.'

"Then I Wondered if Santa Claus had been Here. I got out of Bed, put on my Wrapper and Slippers and quietly went to look at my Stocking. It was Hanging there quite Empty.

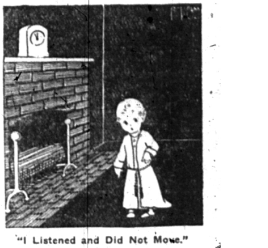
"'Dear me,' I thought, 'I haven't been Asleep any time at all.'

"And then I heard a Sound, and still more Sounds. They all came from the Direction of the Chimney. And on the Roof I heard Queer Stamping of Feet.

"'The Reindeers!' I thought.

"I hurried across my Room, and went to the Fireplace Room. There certainly was a very Queer Sound around the Chimney.

"I Listened and did not Move. I stood so still that I was Afraid almost that my Breathing would be Heard. And at last I heard a Voice up the Chimney saying, 'I can't go on yet, my pretty Reindeers. There is a small Boy down here who wants to have a Look at us—



"I Listened and Did Not Move."

and you know we mustn't be Seen. We like to do our Work, and go Flying off again, don't we, my Pretty Reindeers?'

"For Santa Claus was Leaning over the Chimney, and he had seen me! And then I Thought that Santa Claus would be late for his Rounds, and that maybe, maybe some little Boy or Girl might miss their Christmas because of me.

"I hurried back to Bed. And then what Sounds and Noises I heard, but as I Heard them, Mr. Sandman threw some of his Magic Sand into my Eyes, and I went Fast Asleep.

"When I awoke my Stocking was Filled! And everything I had asked for was there for me!

"I heard some Queer Sounds last night,' said my Daddy. 'They lasted for, ever so long.'

"I didn't like to say that I had kept Santa Claus Waiting because I wanted to see him, and that the Reindeers had grown Impatient and Stamped in a hurry to be off.

"But at least I heard Santa Claus come that night, and of all the Christmas Eves I ever had, that one was the most Wonderful, and my Christmas Presents the next day the Finest ever a Boy had."

Gives Boy Experience.

Poultry keeping in a small way is not what might be termed hard work, and yet it is work that must be done systematically, carefully and diligently. The experiences gained in this way will greatly benefit the boy in his future career, even though another field of endeavor is chosen in after years.

Revised Natural History.

"Does anyone know what a cow is?" asked a teacher in a city school in the slum district. A dingy hand waved wildly in the back of the room.

"I know, I know, teacher. A cow, she lays milk!"

Good Plan.

A little girl told her mother she had decided to get married. Her mother laughed and asked her why. "I'm going to get married," said Mary, "and have five children—three white and two colored—to do the work."