

After Seifridge had gone, the woundgram. Not for a moment did he doubt room there was Wally Selfridge and that he was going to live, and his brain another was already busy planning for the fu through [sapers at the deak. Wally ture. He knew now that in the vio- put a stack of them in his pocket and lence of his anger against Elliot he they wern out, locking the door behind had made a mistake. To have killed them." his rival would have been fatal to the allenated his best friends, and would an offer of the law." have prejudiced hopelessly his chantes with Sheba. Fate had been kind to what I thought. So I followed them. him. He had been in the wrong and it They went to Macdonald's offices. At had put him in the right. By the same ter o while Wally came out and left the thrust down from an impregnable po- lights went out. The man is camped credited suspect. With all this evi- why?" dence to show that he had conspired / "Why?" repeated Diane with her

Diane came into the sickroom stripping her gioves after the walk. Macdonald smiled feebly at her sind fired the first shot of his campaign to de- course." feat the enemy.

department would be labor lost.

"Has Elliott been captured yet?" be asked weakly.

The keen eyes of his hostess info tened upon him. "Captured! What do you mean? It was Gordon Elliot that brought you to and saved your life."

"Brought me from where?" "From where he found you unconoctons—at the ford."

"That's his story, is it?" The young woman stood with her gloves crushed tight in both hands. It was her nature to be always a partisan. Without any reserve she was for Gordon to this new fight upon him. What had Wally Betfridge been saying

to Macdonald? Did the mine owner mean to suggest that he had identified Elliot as one of his assailants? The thing was preposterous. And yet-that was plainly what he had meant to imply. If he told such a story, things would go hard with Goragainst him by supplying the one miss-

ing link in the chain of circumstantial evidence. down upon the wounded man. seemed already to have failed into a light sleep. She told herself that this was some of Wally Selfridge's devil-Anyhow, she would talk it over

with Peter.

straws what Elliot said to his official statement to the land office.

CHAPTER XVI.

Gordon Spends a Busy Evening. Paget smoked placidly, but the heart within him was troubled. It looked as if Seifridge had made up his mind to frame Gordon for a prison sentence. The worst of it was that he need not invent any evidence or take any chances. If Macdonald came through on the stand with an identification of Elliot as one of his assailants, the help."

going man would go down the river to serve time. There was enough corroborative testimony to convict \$1. Peter himself.

"I'm just teiling you what he said." Diane explained. "And it worried me. His smile was cynical. I couldn't belp thinking that if he wants to get even with Gordon---"

Mrs. Paget stopped. The maid had

Strong? Take this big chair." Hanford Strong accepted the chair and a cigar. He came promptly to the

object of his call. "I don't know whether this is where tolks for young Elliot or are you for

Selfridge?" he demanded. "If you put it that way, we're for El-

got," smiled Peter. "All right. Let me put it another way. You work for Mac. Are you on

Me side or on Elliot's in this matter of the coal claims?" Diane looked at Peter. He took his time to answer.

"We hope the coal claimants will win, but we've got sense enough to we that Gordon is in here to report the facts. That's what he is paid for. He'll tell the truth as he sees it. ble superior officers decide on those facts against Macdonald, I don't see

that Elliot is to blame." de't do. Fact is, I like him. He's So I've come to tell you some-

Two got no evidence in his favor, into momething a little the that didn't look good to me.

"They had no business doing that," have burnt dut Diane, "Wally Selfridge ton't

Strong nedded dryly to her. "Just cut of the cards young Elliot had been other man there. Then presently the Elliot commanded sition to one in which he was a dis- there for the night. Will you tell me

against Macdonald, his report to the sharp eyes on the miner. "Because Wally has some papers there he don't want to get away from

"You've said it." "All his notes and evidence in the case of the coal tlaims, probably," contributed Peter. "Maybe. Wally has stolen them, but

he hasn't nerve enough to burn them till be gets orders from Mac. So he's papers in his hands for safe-keeping. holding them safe at the office." guessed Strong. "It's an outrage."

"Surest thing you know. Wally has ants. fixed it to frame him for prison and to play safe about his evidence on the own room. Gordon slept like a school-

It?" Dinne asked her husband sharply, bed in a broad ribbon of warm gold.

shackle building that served as a jail. together and whispered.

the last thing that Gordon said before ture.

As soon as the place was dark again. knew already it was so decrept that

wide the yard of Belfridge.

"To begin with, you walk straight home and go to bed, Peter," the young man announced. "You're not in this You're not invited to our party. don't have to tell you why, do I?"

The engineer understood the reason He was an employee of Macdonald, a man thoroughly trusted by him. Even though Gordon intended only to right a wrong, it was better that Paget should not be a party to it. Rejuctantly Peter went home.

Gordon turned to Strong. "I owe you a lot already. There's no need for you to run a risk of getting into trouble for me. If things break right, can do what I have to do without

"And if they don't?" Strong waved an impatient hand. "Cut it out, Elliot. I've taken a fancy to go through with this. I never did like Seifridge any how, and I sin't got a wife and I don't work for Mac. Why shouldn't I have some fun?"

Gordon shrugged his shoulders. "All

right. Might as well play ball and get things moving, then."

The little miner knocked at the door. just brought into the room a visitor. Wally himself opened. Eillot, from the came to the edge of the porch. He had set himself. gave a gasp and his hands went trembling into the air. The six-gan of the miner had been pressed hard against his fat paunch. Under curt orders he yard to the tree.

At eight of Gordon the eyes of Wally stood out in amazement. Little swent beads burst out on his forehead for he remembered how busy he had been collecting evidence against this

"W-w-what do you want?" be asked.

"Got your keys with you?" Y yes.

"Come with us." Walty breathed more freely. For a noment be had thought this man had

come to take vengeance on him. They led him by alleys and back

ders he knocked on the door and called "I'm for a wide-open Alaska, close to the log wall, Strong behind say it."

The door opened, and a man stood on the threshold. Elliot was on top of him like a panther. The man went down as though his knees were offed nlow with the barrel of a revolver was

shoved against his teeth. "Take It casy, Olson," advised Gor-"Get up-slowly. Now, step back



Was on Top of Him Like a Panther. up your keys and get them for me,"

Wally did not need any keys. He opened it. From an inner drawer he drew a bunch of papers. Gordon looked them over carefully. Strong sat on a table and toyed with a revolver which be jammed playfully into the stomach of his fat prisoner.

"All bere," appounced the field agent. The safe-robbers locked their prisoners in the office and disappeared into the night. They stopped at the house of the collector of customs, a genial young fellow with whom Elliot had played tennis a good deal, and left the After which they returned to the hotel and reached the second floor by way of the back states used by the serv-

Here they parted, each going to his boy and woke only when the sun "What are you going to do about poured through the window upon his

He got up, bathed, dressed, and went down into the botel dining room. We may be gone The watters looked at him in amagement. Gordon ate as if nothing were for me if you get through your stint the matter, apparently unaware of the excitement be was causing. He paid Gopher Jones let them into the ram not the least attention to the nudging and the whispering. After he had fin-

was Gopher Jones. Near the rear Wal-"I'll meet you outside the house of ly Selfridge lingered modestly. He Selfridge in half an hour. Strong," was was not looking for hazardous adven-

> "Whad you doing here?" demands Gepher, bristling up to Elliot.

"Don't you know we just got in from

too had. There's a telephone in m. room, too. Why didn't you call up? I've been there all night."

But I want to tell you that you'll pay for thin.

"Ind you want me for anything in particular or just to get up a poker game Y asked Elliet suavely.

The leader of the posse gave himwas spurred on to outdo himself be-

cause be had beard a titter or two beformed a procession. He, with Eithor head of it. It marched to the mil.

CHAPTER XVII.

Sheba Does Not Think So. The fingers of Sheba were busy with the embroidery upon which she worked. but her thoughts were full of the gnan who ing asleep on the lounge. His strong body lay at case, relaxed.

Already health was flowing back into his veins. Beneath the tun of the thin, muscular cheeks a warmer color was beginning to creep. Soon he would Dinne moved forward and shook hands shelter of the pine, saw the two men be about again, vigorous and forceful, to talk. Selfridge shut the door and striding over obstacles to the goal be

Shebs had sent him a check for the amount he had paid her and had refused to see him or anybody cise.

Shamed and humiliated, she had kept moved down the steps and out of the to her room. The check had come back to her by mail.

Across the face of it he had written in his strong handwriting : "I don't weish on my bets. You can't give to me what is not mine.

"De not think for an instant that

shall not marry you." She moved to adjust a window blind and when she returned found that his steady eyes were fixed upon her. "You're getting better fast," she

The girl had a favor to ask of him and lest her courage fail she plunged

"Mr. Macdonald, if you may the word Mr. Elliot will be released on ball. am thinking you will be so good as to

"You must know he is innocent. You happy or not, O Cave Man?"

my attackers. From the first blow was desed. But everything points to it that he bired-

"Thank you. It's a bargain."

"Then sing to me."

"What shall I sing?" "Sing 'Divided.' " The long lashes veiled her soft eyes while she considered. In a way be bad tricked her into singing for him love-song she did not want to sing. But she made no protest. Swiftly she turned and slid along the bench. He

fingers touched the keys and she be Sheba paid her pledge in full. After the first two stanzas were finished she

sang the last ones as well: An' what about the wather when I'd have ould Paddy's boat. is it me that would be afeard to grip the

or moon or etar: But there's caulder things than sait waver between us, so they are.

love to wild as any wave that wan "Tto the same if he is near me. 'tie

same if he is far His thoughts are hard an' ever hard between us, so they are

Her hands dropped from the keys their jobs. I tell you that they are in and she turned slowly on the end of a dangerous mood." the sent. The dark lashes fell to her



"I'm Going to Marry You, Sheba."

In self-defense she looked at him The puller of his face lent access

There was infinite pit

are," she quoted.

thing that comes between us. She knew the tremendous driving In her heart that he would sweep her make in the grass, and as such every from the moorings to which she clung Secent man ought to hold him in scorn.

"There is semething class I haven't told you." The embarrassed lashes ing for the Willow Creek camp. He self to a job of scientific profamity. He 'lfted bravely from the flushed cheeks to meet steadily his look. "I don't think -that 1-care for you. The I that an shamed at my -- fickteness. But I

lon't -- not with the full of my heart." His bold, possesserve eyes yielded no traction of all they claimed. Time enough for that, Sheba. Truth is that fou're afraid to let yourself love me. You're worried because you can't measure me by the little two-by-four foot-rule you brought from freiand

Shebs nodded her dusky little head in naive candor. "I think there will be some truth in that. Mr. Macdonald.

You're inwiess, you know." "I'm a law to myself, if that's what you mean. It to my business to help nammer out an empire in this Northand. No need for me to brag. What have done speaks for me as a guide-

post to what I mean to do." "I know," the girl admitted with the impetuous generosity of her race. I hear it from everybody. You have built towns and railroads and deve ped mines and carried the twentieth sentury into new outposts. You have given work to thousands. But you so so fast I can't keep step with you. am one of the little folks for whom

laws were made." "Then I'll make a new code for you. be said, smiling. "Just do as I say and everything will come out right."

that. But we live in a new world for women. They have to make their own Sectations. I suppose that is a part the penalty we pay for freedom." Diane come into the room and Mac-

Sonald turned to her. "I have just been telling Shebs that I am going to marry her-that there to no escape for ber. She had better get used to the idea that I intend to

The older county glapced at Sheba His narrowed eyes held a cold glit- and laughed with a touch of ceabarget a chanct." "I'm going to make her want to."

inlatration might at any time jettison Macdonald and his backers as a sop to public opinion.

It was not hard for Gordon to guess how unpopular he was, but he did not let this interfere with his activities. He moved to and fro among the mining amps with absolute disregard of the growing hatred against him. Paget came to him at last with a warning. "What's that I hear about you being simost killed up on Bonanza?" Peter

wanted to know. "Down in the None Such mine, you

admitted his friend. "Were the hammers dropped on pur-

Gordon looked at him with a grim mine, Peter. What do you think?"

Peter answered seriously. "I think tion't cafe for you to take the chances you do, Gordon. I find a wrong impression about you prevalent among the men. They are blaming you for stirring up all this trouble on the outside, and they are worried for fear the mines may close and they will lose

"Sorry, but I can't help that." "You can stay around town and not

go out alone nights." "I dare say I can, but I'm not going "I think you had better use a little

sense, Gordon. I dare say I am exaggerating the danger. But when you go around with that jaunty devil maycare way of yours, the men think you are looking for trouble-and you're

likely to get it. "Am 17" "I know what I'm talking about. Nine out of ten of the men think you tried to murder Macdonald after you had robbed him and that your nerve weakened on the job. This seems to some of the most lawless to give them a moral right to put you out of the way. Anyhow, it to a kind of justification according to their point of view. I'm not defending it, of course. I'm

have done your duty, then,

tolling you so that you can appreciate

you what I told you last u warned me. I'm going ich the job I've been hires

In my place. I don't think I'm in much danger. Men in general are law-abiding. They growl, but they don't go as for as murdes."

Peter gave him up. The next tesue of the Kusiak Sun contained a bitter editorial attack upon Billot. The occasion for it was a press dispatch from Washington to the effect that the premure of public of

top had become so strong that Wiston, commissioner of the general land office, might be forced to resign his vitriolic innguage that the reports of Elliot were to blame. He was, the those who had come to Alaska to earn power of the man and she was afraid an honest living there. He was a

Ellitot read this just as he was leavthrust the paper impatiently into his coat pecket and swung to the saddle. Why did they persecute him? He had told nothing but the truth, nothing not required of him by the simplest, elemental honesty. Yet he was treated as an outcast and a criminal. The in-

justice of it was beginning to rankle. He was temperamentally an optimist, but depression rode with him to the gold camp and did not lift from his spirits till be started back next day for Kustak. The news had been flashed by wire all over the United States that he was a crook. His friends and reintives could give no adequate answer to the fact that an indictment hung over his bend. In Alaska be was already con-

victed by public opinion. In the late afternoon, while Gordon was still fifteen miles from Kusiak. his borse tell lame. He led it itmping

to the cabin of some miners. There were three of them, and they had been drinking heavily from a jug of whicky left earlier in the day by the stage-driver. Gordon was in two minds whether to accept their surly permission to stay for the night, but the lameness of his horse decided him.

Not caring to invite their hostility. he gave his name as Gordon instead of Elliot. He was to learn within the hour that this was mistake number From a pocket of the coat he had thrown on a bed progruded the news-

paper Gordon had brought from Kustak. One of the men, a big red-headed fellow, pulled it out and began sulkily to read. While he read the other two bickered and drank and sparled at each other. All three of the men were in

quarrel is likely to flare up at a moment's notice. "Listen here," demanded the man with the newspaper. "Tell you what, boys. I'm going to wring the neck of

that stage of drunkenness when a

He read aloud the editorial in the un. After he had finished, the others joined him in a chorus of curses. "I always did bate a spy-and this ne's a murderer too. Why don't some

string at the table. He flat so hard that the "Otmme a crack at

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