

"Well," sez he, a chucklin' like a prairie-dog. "I propose we paint up the goat with phosphorous, an' put him up in the barn an' me an' you get up in the trees an' watch."
 "What's the goat done?" sez I.
 "The goat ain't done nothing," sez he; "but he'll scare the Chink to death, an' when he comes out we can shoot him in the leg or somethin'."
 "No," sez I, "it won't work. The Chink knows the goat better'n we do, an' it'll be the goat that'll come out an' get shot in the leg, an' the Chink'll get away."
 "Oh, rats!" sez Ches kind o' hasty like. "He won't even know it's a goat. Can't ya see that?"
 "I don't know what phosphorous is," sez I; "but you'll have to do a mighty

little pause, we heard a queer scratchin' noise. 'Twas gettin' interestin', an' I got out my guns an' held 'em ready. Ches had a whole gun store spread out around him, an' I could easy see a week's work ahead o' me a-policin' up the premises.
 The sky was just literally soggy with stars, an' you could see the outlines o' things pretty plain. It was one o' those silent nights when everythin' is so still 'at you hear with the inside o' your head, an' any little real noise puts a crimp in ya.
 We was leamin' on the rail o' Ches's platform, when all o' a sudden we hear the greatest bleatin' an' jabberin' ever a man heard. A goat an' a Chinaman speaks the same language, an' goodness only knows just what Billy Buck was a-tellin' 'im. I had my ears stretched out to catch every sound—an' sounds wasn't nowise scarce jest then. Squeals and groans, an' wrastlin' an' blows kept a feller all keyed up, an' we was bitin' our lips to keep from laughin'—an' then it happened.
 The door o' that mow swung open as though it had been struck by eleven engines, a dark form shot out, folloered by two more, an' then the devil himself poked his head out through that mow window. Talk about faces! Lord! I attended a ghost dance over in the Sioux country once, but it was a Sunday-school picnic alongside the face that poked its way out the huzmow door.
 The' was rings o' fire around the eyes an' nose an' mouth, an' the whiskers was one long, waverin', ghastly flame, an' the horns was two o' others. The' was a blue gritchetty sort o' smoke curlin' up around the face, an' my heart laid right down in its tracks an' rolled over on its back. I only saw that face a second, but I kin shut my eyes an' see it right now. Gosh!
 I ain't much superstitious 'cept when I'm gamblin', but o' course. I know the such things as ghosts an' devils an' sich, an' I don't never take no liberties with 'em. I screeched out, "Great Scott! what's that?" My hands shut up voluntary; both o' my guns went off in the air, the rail broke, an' me an' Ches sort o' chuck-locked to the ground. We didn't miss any limbs, ner the guns didn't neither. Every time they bumped a limb, they went off, an' it sounded like Custer's last stand.

We weren't hurt none, an' scrambled to our feet in a second. The' was an awful squawkin' goin' on under the hay-mow window, an' that horrible, three-faced devil seemed to be eatin' the heads off the Chinamen. I got a better view of it this time, an' I see it was one o' the dragons they worship, an' I felt a little better, 'cause I dun't think he'd have any grudge against a Christian. Still, I wasn't takin' no chances, so I grabbed Ches by the arm, an' headed for the kitchen door, him stickin' his heels in the ground, an' tryin' to stop. I thought he had probably lost his mind, so I didn't pay much attention to him.
 We threw ourselves against the kitchen door, an' I hammered on it with my knuckles while Ches kicked me on the shins an' tried to get away. Finally Mrs. Cameron raised an up-stair window, an' began shootin' with her bean bowler. I had no iddy what she was aimin' at; but she hit me twice in the leg, an' blame if it didn't sting like a whip. Ches jerked loose while I was rubbin' the sore spot, an' as I glanced up, I saw the three dark forms comin' after us, folloered close by the devil-dragon, his face fairly drippin' with liquid fire. The three forms in front looked about fifteen feet high, an' I felt about as massive an' stiff as an angle-worm, but at that I managed to open the cellar door, an' tried to get Ches to come in, too. "Ches," I whispered, "for I hadn't strength enough to yell; 'Ches, come on in an' save yourself,' but he never gave no heed. He just stood crouchin' over in the shadow while they headed for him, devil-dragin' an' all.

I wanted to crawl into the cellar alone, but lacked jest one grain o' havin' enough moral courage, so I stood up with my knees beating together, watchin' 'em come. My heart was achin' to think that he was out o' his head an' fairly throwin' himself away, an' then all of a sudden it flashed upon me that the blame fool was playin' football. On they charged like a stampeded herd, a-screechin' like a runaway freight-wagon, while that pink-faced tenderfoot stood in his tracks as calm an' cool as the North Star until they arrived at the proper place; an' then he sorted out the big

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"We threw some water in their faces, an they began to jabber enough to give a horn toad the headache."

fine job o' paintin' to make that William goat look like a moth-miller. Still, this is your projec', an' if you want to play the wheel one whirl, why, I'll help stick up the stake.
 So that night as soon as I had my dishes washed an' the kitchen red up, we caught the goat, an' took him out to the barn. He was considerable of a goat, this one was, with horns on him a foot long, an' a fright of a temper.
 Ches had brought a lot o' stuff out with him in cans an' bottles. He had had the wood-bed cleaned out, and used to amuse himself by mixing up all kinds o' messes. They always used to smell something ter-

smothered yet; an' then we went into the house an' handled the lights in jest the regular way; but when the time came, instead o' goin' to bed, we went out a' cooned up into a big tree, about on a level with the mow window, an' waited for developments. Ches had nailed up a kind o' a platform, an' first thing I knew he was wakin' me up. He had his hand over my mouth, an' whispered, "He's in the yard now."
 I ain't one o' them what yawns an' grunts an' stretches; I wake up like an antelope—all in a bunch.
 The' was a little rustlin' back in some bushes over by the fence. Then, after a

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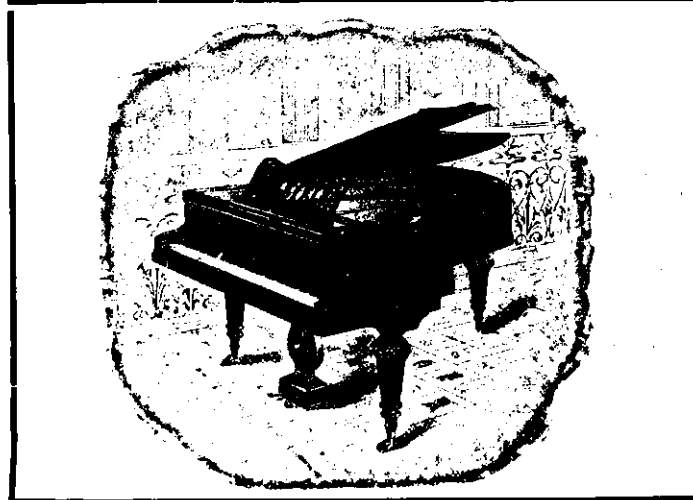
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