

MINIONS OF THE MOON.

[CONCLUSION.] "What is the matter ?" asked Captain Guv.

"My keys! They have taken my keys."

And sure enough, while Sophie Tarne had been talking to the captain, some one had severed the keys from her girdle and made off with them, and there was only a clean-cut black ribbon dangling at her waist instead

"That villain Stango," exclaimed the captain. "I saw him pass a minute ago he leaned over and whispered to you, Kits. You remember ?"

" "Stango ?" said Kits, with far too innocent an expression to be genuine.

"Yes, Stango. You know he did !"

"I dare say he did. I don't gainsay it, captain ; but I don't know where he has gone."

"But I will know," cried the captain, striking his hand upon the table and making every glass and plate jump thereon. "I will have no tricks played here without my consent. Am I your master, or are you all mine ?"

And here, we regret to say, Captain Guy swore a great deal, and became perfectly unheroic and inelegant and unromantic. But his oaths had more effect upon his unruly followers than his protests; and they sat looking at him a half-sullen, halfshamefaced manner, and would have probably succumbed to his influence had not attention been diverted and aroused by the reappearance of Stango, who staggered in with four or five great black bottles heased high in his arms. A tremendous shout of applause and delight heralded his return to the parlor.

"We have been treated scurvily, my men," cried Stango, "exceedingly scurvily; the best and strongest stuff in the cellar has been kept back from us. It's excellent-I've been tasting it first, lest you should all be poisoned; and there's more where this comes from-oceans more

the long, black, flowing hair, and pale face, "I did. But the host has returned and standing by Sophie's side-his Sophie !- I distrust him. I am waiting now to see in a suit of soiled brocade and tarnished the end of it."

lace, with a Ramalie cocked hat under his "No-no-I hope not. Pray go, sir." arm and a pistol in his hand ? The leader "Is there danger ?"

of these robbers, the very man who had "Yes." stopped him on the King's highway three "I thought so. I am fond of danger, hours ago and taken every stiver he had I have told you. It braces me up, it-

brought away from Barnet; who had, why are so pale ?" with the help of these other scoundrels "You have been kind to me, and you getting mad drunk on his brandy, taken have saved me from indignity. Pray take away his horse and left him bound to a your men away at once."

gate by the roadside, because he would not "They will not go, and I will not desert be quietly robbed, but must make a fuss them."

over it, and fight and kick in a most un-"For my sake-do !" becoming fashion, and without any regard "A song, a song. No more love-makfor the numbers by whom he had been ing to-night, captain. A song from the farmer's pretty lass," cried out the men.

"I did not think you could sing like And then Sophie began to sing again, that," said the captain quietly, and in a this time a love-song, the song of a maiden low voice, when Sophie had finished her waiting for her soldier-boy to come back song, and a great shout of approval was from the wars, a maiden waiting for him,

echoing throughout the farm-house, and listening for him, hearing the tramp of his regiment on the way toward her. She "You have not got the horses ready," looked at Captain Guy as she sang, and said Sophie, becoming aware that he was with much entreaty in her gaze, and he still at her side. "You said-you pro- looked back at her from under the cock of his hat, which he had pulled down over

"I could not leave whilst you were his brows; then he wavered and stole out singing. Did you know that was my of the room. Kits was at the door, still with his mug of brandy in his hand. Guy seized him by the ear and took him out "No-no. But how strange-how-ah! with him into the fresh air, where the there is your brother at the door. I have white frost was, and where the white moon

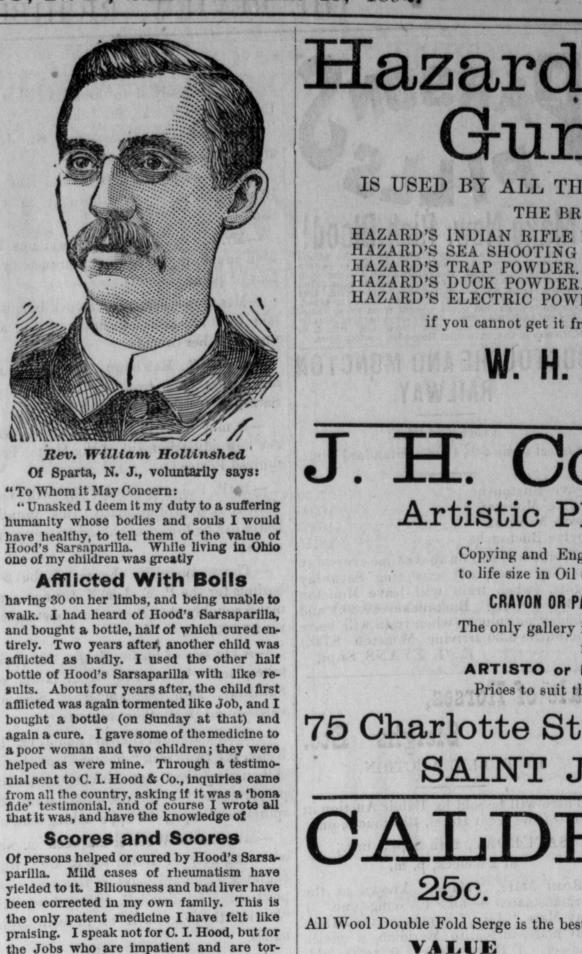
had the honor of meeting Master Pemberwas shining now. thy of Finchley earlier this evening, I "The soldiers are after us, and know think. A brave young gentleman ; you where we are, Kits. Pitch that stuff away."

"My bro-oh! it is Reu. Oh! Reu, "Not if-"

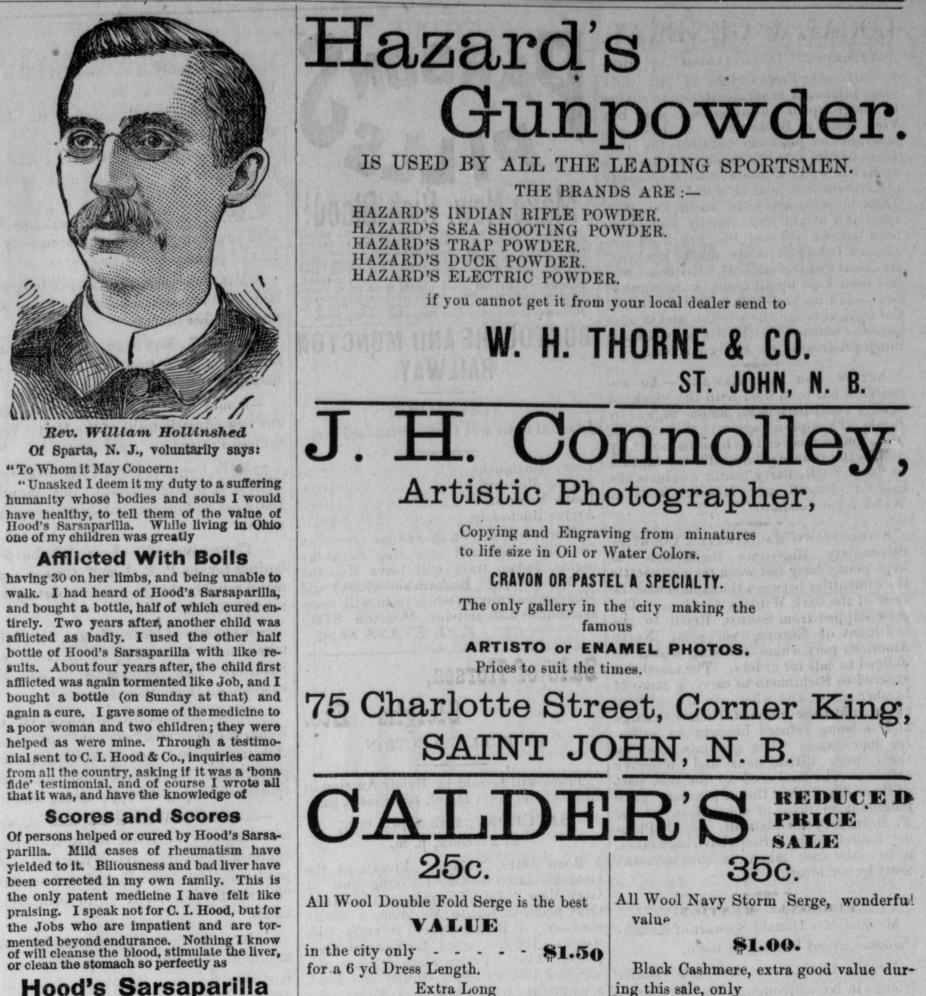
Reu, where have you been ? Why did "And get the horses ready-quick. you not come before to help us-to tell will be with you in a moment."

us what to do !" And Sophie Tarne ran He walked along the garden path in to him and put her arms round his neck front of the big old farm, swung wide and burst into tears. It was not a wise the farm gates and propped them open. step on Sophie's part, but it was the re- Then he went down on all-fours and put action at the sight of her sweetheart, at a his ear to the frost-bound country road and listened. "Yes," he added, "two "There, there, don't cry, Sophie, keepa miles away, and coming on sharp. Why stout heart," he whispered ; "if these vil- not let them come ? What does it matter lains have robbed us, they will not be tri- how soon ?" He strode back, however,

umphant long. It will be my turn to with quick steps. Five minutes afterward he was at the door of the farm parlor again, with his cloak over his shoulder



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of it." "Hurrah for Stango !"

The captain's voice was heard once more above the uproar, but it was only for a minute longer. There was a rush of six men toward Stango; a shouting scrambling, fighting for the spirits which he had discovered ; a crash of one black bottle to the floor, with the spirit streaming over the polished boards, and the unceremonious tilting over of the upper part of the supper table in the ruffians' wild eagerness for drink.

"To horse, to horse, men ! Have you forgotten how far we have to go ?" cried the captain.

But they had forgotten everything, and did not heed him. They were drinking strong waters, and were heedless of the hour and the risks they ran by a protracted stay there. In ten minutes from that time saturnalia had set in, and pandemonium seemed to have unloosed its choicest specimens. They sang, they danced, they raved, they blasphemed, they crowed like cocks, they fired pistols at the chimney ornaments, they chased the maid-servants from one room to another, they whirled round the room with Mrs. Tarne and Mrs. Pemberthy, they would have made a plunge at Sophie Tarne for partner, had not the captain, very white and stern now stood close to her side with a pistol at full cock in his right hand.

"I shall shoot the first man 'down who touches you," he said between his se teeth.

"I will get away from them soon. For heaven's sake-for mine-do not add to the horror of this night, sir," implored Sephie.

He paused.

"I beg your pardon," he said, in a low tone of voice, "but-but I am powerless to help you unless I quell these wolves at once. They are going off for more drink." "What is to be done?"

"Can you sing, Mistress Pemberthy?"

"Yes, a little. At least, they say so," she said, blushing at her own self-encomium.

"Sing something-to gain time. I will slip away while you are singing and get the horses round to the front door. Do not be afraid. Gentlemen," he cried, in a loud voice, and bringing the handle of his pistol smartly on the head of the man nearest him to emphasize his discourse, "Mistress Pemberthy will oblige the company with a song. Order and attention for the lady."

crow presently.

assailed.

mised-"

mother's song ?"

"I-I don't understand."

glimpse, as it were of deliverance.

many hundred yards beyond it.

"How should I know that ?"

should be proud of him."

"I can't explain now. Keep a good and his riding-whip in his hand. face-ply them with more drink-watch me. Well, my friends," he said, in a loud shouted. "Each man to his horse." voice, "you have stolen a march upon me this time ; but I've got home, you see, in and not likely to cry over spilt milk. More liquor for the gentlemen, you

are thirsty after their long ride."

Reuben drank to the healths of the gening party being celebrated there. The down his keys and run for it. highwaymen were too much excited to see

Pemberthy's sentiments, all but the cap- that Sophie did not readily forget. although bowing very low when his health waymen had put spurs to their horses and was drunk.

"My cousin and my future bride, gentlemen, will sing you another song. And cried Sophie.

the chance."

Sophie whispered back to him.

ward Finchley in search of these robbers, safer than it used to be, and people talk here as my guests till morning. That was their promise." "Oh !"

"Boys, the red-coats are upon us !" he "We are betraved, then !"

"We won't go and leave all the good time to welcome you to Maythorpe, and things in this house," cried Stango ; "why, share in your festivity. I'm a Pemberthy it's like the Bank of England up-stairs, and I have the keys-I-"

"Stango, I shall certainly put a bullet wenches, and be quick with it. Captain, through your head if you attempt to do here's to you and your companions, and anything more save to thank our worthy next time you catch a Pemberthy, treat host for his hospitality, and give him up him more gently in return for a welcome his keys. Do you hear ?" he thundered here. More liquor, girls-the gentlemen forth : " will you hang us all, you fool, by your delay ?"

The highwaymen were scurrying out of tlemen by whom he was surrounded; he the room now-a few in too much haste was very much at home in his own house; to thank the givers of the feast, the others very cool and undismayed, having recov- | bowing and shaking hands in mock burered from his surprise at finding an even- lesque of their chief. Stango had thrown

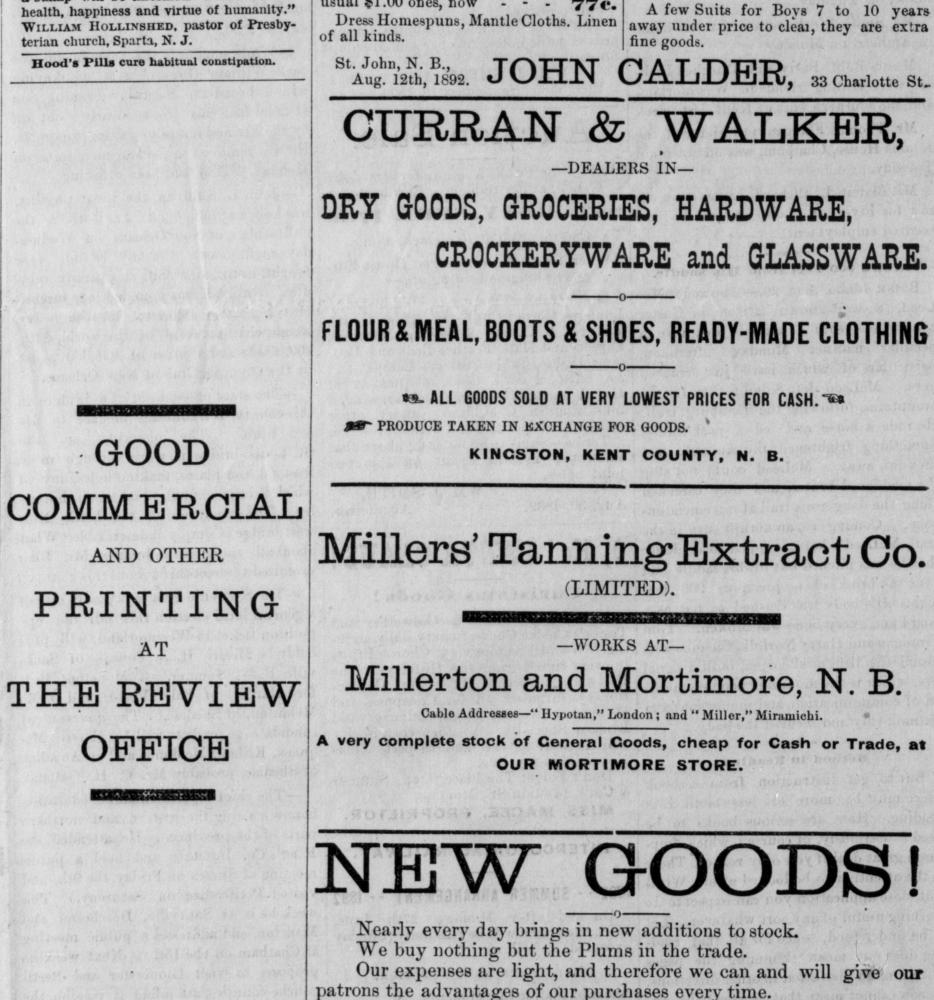
"Sorry we must leave you, Master anything remarkable in the effusion of Pensberthy," said the captain, "but I cer-Reuben Pemberthy's greeting ; these were | tainly have the impression that a troop of lawless times when farmers and highway- horse soldiers is coming in this direction. men were often in accord, dealt in each | Pure fancy, probably; but one cannot other's horses, and drove various bargains | risk anything in these hard times. Your at odd seasons and in odd corners of the purse, sir, which I took this afternoon-I market-places, and Reuben Pemberthy shall not require it. Buy Mistress Sophie was not unknown to them, though they a wedding present with it; good-night." had treated him with scant respect upon a He bowed low, but he did not smile till lonely country road, and when they were he met Sophie's frightened looks ; then impressed by the fact that he was riding he bowed still lower, hat in hand, and homeward with well-lined pockets after a said good-night, with a funny break in his day's huckstering. They cheered Mr. voice and a longing look in his dark eyes tain, who regarded him ver critically, It was all like a dream after the high-

galloped away from Maythorpe Farm.

It will be fifteen years come next win-I don't mind following suit myself, just to ter-time since the "Minions of the Moon" show there is no ill-feeling between us. held high carnival at the farm of Reuben And our worthy captain, he will oblige Pemberthy. Save that the trees about the after me, I am sure. It may be a good homestead are full of rustling green leaves many years before we may meet again." and there is sunshine where the white "It may," said the captain laconically. frost lay, the farm looks very much the "I-I cannot sing any more, Reuben," same ; the great thatched roof has taken a darker tinge, and all the gold in it has "Try, Sophie, for all our sakes. Our | turned to gray, and the walls are more home's sake-the home they would strip | weather-beaten than of yore ; but it is or burn to the ground, if they only had the old farm still, standing "four-square," with the highroad to Finchley winding "Why do you wish to keep them here?" off the green hill yonder like a great, white dusty snake. Along the road comes a "I was released by a troop of soldiers horseman at full speed, as though anxious who were coming in this direction," he to find a shelter before nightfall, for the said hurriedly. "They have gone on to- King's highway in this direction is no

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"A song ! a song !" exclaimed the highwaymen, clapping their hands and stamping their heels upon the floor ; and then, amidst the pause which followed, Sophie Tarne began a plaintive little ballad in a strength as she proceeded.

It was a strange scene awaiting the re- him. turn of Reuben Pemberthy, whose tall form stood in the doorway before Sophie had finished her sweet, simple rendering of an old English ballad. Reuben's round blue eyes were distended with surprise, and his mouth, generally very set and close, like the mouth of a steel purse, was on this special occasion, and for a while, wide open. Sophie Tarne singing her best to amuse this vile and disorderly crew, who sat or stood about the room, halfdrunk, and with glasses in their hands, pipes in their mouths, and the formidable ing to sing, again. I am glad." old-fashined horse-pistols in their pockets. And who was the handsome man, with since."

sweet, tremulous voice, which gathered had left her side, and was talking and horse, and stands under the broad eaves of

"Your sweetheart, then, this cock-'o-the- flowers. game," said the captain to Sophie, as he approached her once more. " Yes."

"'I had need wish you much joy, for I not make you a good husband." "You cannot say that."

"It's a hard face that will look into somewhat older than his years, his hair yours, mistress, and when trouble comes, being very gray. He stoops a little beit will not look pleasantly. You are go- tween the shoulders, too, when off his guard, though he can look straight and "You promised to go away-long stalwart enough when put to it. He is very dark-a fiercer sun that that which

but failing to find them they will return of Abershaw and Barrington, and with sixteen strings to his hat, who are busy in BRITISH, FOREIGN and this direction. But the days are long now, and it wants some hours before sun-Sophie could not say more. Reuben down, when the traveller leaps from his Dry

laughing with Stango as though he loved the porch, where the creepers are growing luxuriantly and are full of fair white

The traveller is a good horseman, though CANTERBURY STREET, ST. JOHN, N. B he has passed the hey-day of his youth. It is not for some three minutes afterward that his man-servant, hot and blown see but a little toward it,' as the poet and powdered thick with dust, comes up says," he remarked bluntly. "He will on horseback after him and takes charge of his master's steed. The master is a man of forty years or more, and looking FIRST-CLASS TEAMS

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