

so favorable to him by half; and you see the drawing across of a knife — so — would keep the first one in force. And that is all we have to do before pocketing the blunt. But then the old fellow is as brave as a lion, and there are two servants with him, worn-out soldiers like himself, that would, I am sure, be rough customers. With your help, however, we shall get on primely. The old boy's house stands much alone, and we shall be five to three.'

"'Well, well,' said Bill; 'we shall give your proposal a night's thought, and tell you what we think of it in the morning. But remember, no tricks, Tom! If we engage in the work, we must go share and share alike in the booty.'

"'To be sure,' said Tom; and so the conversation closed.

"About eight o'clock or so, master, I stepped out to the door. The night was dark and boisterous as ever, and there had come on a heavy rain. But I could see that, dark and boisterous as it was, some one was approaching the house with a dark lantern. I lost no time in telling the Curlits so.

"'It must be the captain,' said they, 'though it seems strange that he should come here to-night. You must away, Jack and Bill, to the loft, for it mayn't do for the captain to find you here; but you can lend us a hand afterwards, should need require it.'

"There was no time for asking explanations, master, and so up we climbed to the loft, and had got snugly concealed among some old hay, when in came the captain. But what captain, think you? Why, just our old acquaintance Captain Turpic!

"'Lads,' he said to the Curlits, 'make yourselves ready; get your pistols. Our old scheme is blown, for the colonel