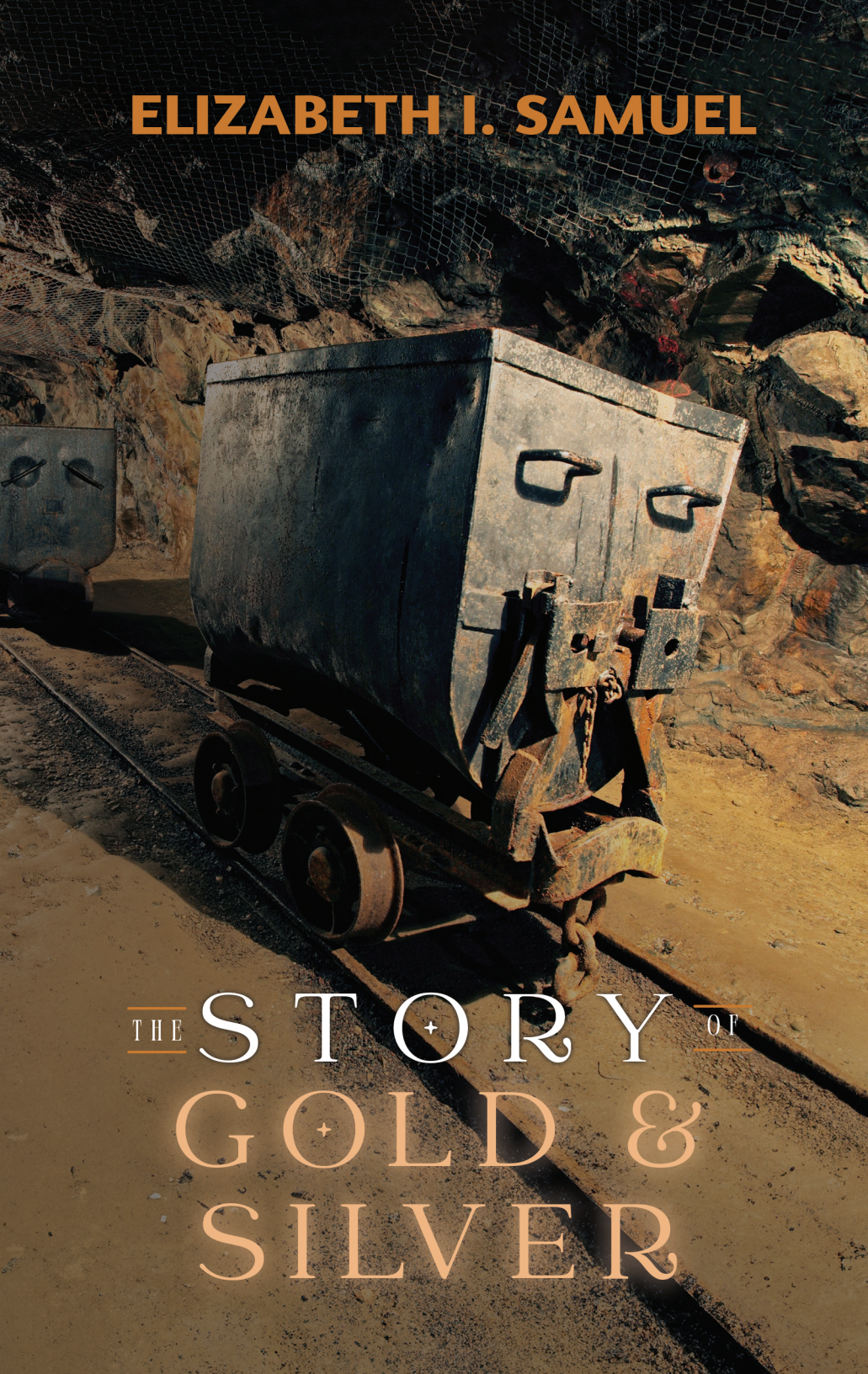
ELIZABETH I. SAMUEL
THE STORY OF
GOLD &
SILVER

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The Story of Gold and Silver

by

Elizabeth I. Samuel

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PLEASE NOTE

These books were written about 100 years ago and show the way people talked, thought, and acted back then. They tell the story of how resources like cotton, lumber, leather, and gold were developed—a process that depended on the hard work of many people. Sometimes the work was done by those who made the profits, and other times it was done by people who were not free, including enslaved individuals.

We know that some parts of these stories include ideas that we now understand to be hurtful and unfair. Our aim in republishing these books is not to support those old views but to share our history so we can all learn from it. By looking at the past, including its mistakes, we hope to learn important lessons that will help us create a kinder and fairer future.

We invite you to read these stories with an awareness of their time and to think about how far we have come—and how much work there is still to do.

Contents


ANNA GORDON

CHAPTER I

THE GOLDEN STATE

LACERVILLE, Placerville!" shouted the big brakeman at one end of the car; and hardly had he stopped, before the little brakeman at the other end seemed to echo the words, as he, too, shouted, "Placerville, Placerville!"

"Here we are at last," said Mr. Stanton, taking down his own suitcase, and then the two small suitcases that belonged to his sons Richard and Henry. Richard was so nearly thirteen that he was beginning to feel very much older than Henry, who was, as his father said, "only half-past ten." The boys were very glad to be in California, because their grandmother had told them many stories about her brother Dick, who had gone to California when she was only a girl. Now that they were in the very country where he had been, they were so eager to see everything about them, that they quite forgot that their father had told them that they must learn to look after their own things.

"Where is that umbrella of yours, Henry?" asked his father.

"I thought it was here, father, but it isn't," answered Henry, looking in the corner of the seat.

"When you've been in California a little longer, you will learn that it doesn't rain here in the summer as it does in New York, so we shan't have to keep such close track of that umbrella," said his father.

"Here it is," said Richard, pulling it out from under the next seat, just as the train reached the station.

"Run ahead, boys, while I count to see whether we have everything: two boys; two suitcases; one umbrella. Yes, we are all here."

"Carriage, sir, carriage!" called a man, coming up to them, as soon as they were fairly off the train.

"Can you take us to the place where Sutter's Mill used to be?" asked Mr. Stanton.

"This way, sir, right this way!"

The carriage proved to be only a two-seated open wagon, and the horse looked as if he could not travel very fast; but the country about them was so beautiful in its summer dress, that Mr. Stanton, and the boys, too, did not mind going slowly.

"Did Uncle Dick live in Placerville, father?" asked Richard.

"I don't know where he did live, when he first came out to California," answered his father, "if you call it living; for, in those days, they had only tents and blankets. I don't suppose there was a house here in '49."

"Did you say '49, sir?" said the driver, turning to look at Mr. Stanton, who sat on the back seat with Henry.

"Yes; my mother's brother came out here in the gold rush of '49."

"And found that nugget of gold father has on his watch chain," said Richard.

"Guess you've never been in the gold region before, young man," said the driver, looking down at Richard. "That isn't just the kind of gold they found here."

"Uncle Dick told me that he found this in a mine," said Mr. Stanton. "The '49 gold was placer gold, little scales or grains of gold, wasn't it?"

"Yes, sir. When they find gold in gravel or in the bottom of a river, they call it placer gold."

"Father," asked Richard, "how could gold get into the bottom of a river?"

"You see that we are at the foot of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, don't you?"

"Yes, father."

"Well, then, the rain and the melting snow got into the cracks in the rocks, and washed out some of the gold; and, when the water froze in the cracks, it broke off pieces of the rock, for water expands when it freezes—you remember how that pitcher broke last winter, when you left it out on the window sill with some water in it?"

"Yes, father."

"Then the brooks brought the gold down to the river. That sort of thing had been going on for a good many years, before the miners came. That's the way, isn't it, driver?"

"Yes, sir. And the gold is so much heavier than the gravel and sand that it sinks to the bottom, and stays there. That's the kind of gold they found here in '49."

"Did they dig the gold up with a shovel, father?" asked Henry.

"Yes, they did; but they got a lot of sand with it; and then they washed the sand out in pans and cradles."

"Cradles, father; what do you mean?" asked Richard.

"I'm right about the cradles, am I not, driver?" asked Mr. Stanton.

"That's what they called them, sir. At first the 'forty-niners' had only common pans, to wash the gold in; but, after a while, they put boxes on rockers, and put pieces of blankets in the boxes, before they put the sand in. Then they put the sand in, and one man rocked the cradle, while the other man poured on the water. Had to keep the cradle moving, too, sir; didn't do to stop."

"What was the blanket for?" asked Richard.

"To catch the fine gold, young man. They picked out the coarse gold, then they washed the blanket and got the fine gold."

"Listen to that, Richard," said his father, leaning over the seat. "Didn't one of your Christmas books have something in it about the Greeks that went over into Asia to find the 'Golden Fleece'?"

"Yes, father, but that was a sheepskin made of gold."

"Hardly, my son," said his father, smiling. "It was probably a sheepskin that they used to catch the gold in, just as the miners here used the blanket. I'm inclined to think Jason and his men rushed for the gold that had been found in Colchis, in much the same way that the 'forty-niners' rushed to California. I wonder whether you know who was the richest man in those old times?"

"Croesus, father; I know that!" said Henry.

"Right! And when you read Homer, you'll learn about the river Pactolus, where he got his gold. His gold was placer gold."

"So was the gold they found in Alaska, sir," said the driver.

"And in Australia, too," added Mr. Stanton. "Gold draws men to distant parts of the world where they would never think of going for anything else; and, when they get to the new places, they soon make towns and cities."

"But the first men have a hard time, sir," said the driver.

"Men that open up a new country always have a hard time," said Mr. Stanton. "They deserve much more honor than they generally receive, for they are really heroes of progress."

Richard liked to hear about heroes, for he wanted, more than anything else, to be a hero. So, turning to his father, he asked:

"How could they be heroes? Didn't they just dig gold and work in mines?"

"I rather think, my son," answered his father, "that the kind of heroes that came out here, would be a better kind to imitate than most of the heroes that you read about. The men that work in mines have to be brave all the time; and they have to be unselfish, for they often have to think of other people first."

Richard didn't say anything more, for he remembered, just then, a good many things that his father had said to him about learning to be unselfish.

"I can hardly believe, driver," said Mr. Stanton, "that, only sixty years ago there was nothing but a fort at Sacramento."

"Just Sutter's Fort, sir. He and his men certainly had a hard time, for they didn't have much to eat; and, when their clothes wore out, they had to shoot antelopes to get the skins

for clothes. Couldn't tell a white man from an Indian, till you got up to him."

"Indians!" exclaimed Henry.

"Yes, young man; you wait till I've changed drivers, and I'll tell you about them."

"Who is going to drive?" asked Richard.

"I thought perhaps you would," answered the driver, with a twinkle in his eye.

"Truly?" said Richard.

"Sure," said the driver, handing him the reins. "I want a chance to turn around and tell this brother of yours about the Indians. Besides, I never did like to drive up hill."

"Grandfather lets me drive sometimes," said Richard, without taking his eyes off the horse.

"I thought you handled the ribbons as if you had held them before," answered the driver, turning half around in his seat, and winking at Mr. Stanton.

"Were the Indians real Indians?" asked Henry.

"Real Indians, my boy, dressed in deerskin; and when they dressed up, they wore feathers on their heads."

"Tomahawks, too?"

"They had bows and arrows, but I never heard of their having tomahawks. They weren't so fierce as some Indians; besides, the Spanish missionaries had been here a great many years, and they had made them good Indians. There were Indians all over California when the Spanish came; and there were more Indians than anything else when Sutter came. I don't suppose you know enough about history to know who discovered California, do you?"

"Yes," answered Henry, "I do. I heard a man at the mission tell mother that the Spaniards did."

"Here," said the driver, taking a long flat billbook from his inside coat pocket, "is a picture that I cut out of an old book. It's Sutter's Mill in 1848."

"I'm very glad to see this," said Mr. Stanton, taking the print. "Only a house, some sheds and the mill."

"And a United States Flag," said Henry.

"That flag must have meant a good deal to them. Hadn't been flying here long," said the driver. "Rather handsomer than the Bear Flag."

"The Bear Flag!" exclaimed Henry. "What kind of a bear?"

"One thing at a time, Henry," said his father. "I should like to hear about the flag. I know that Spain turned California over to Mexico, so the second flag must have been a Mexican flag. Did the Bear Flag come next?"

"Yes, sir. The white settlers wanted to be free, so they took Sutter's Fort, and pulled down the Mexican Flag. Then one of the men took some white cotton cloth, and painted a bear on it, with some charcoal and grease, and ran it up on the flag pole."

"Were there any real bears around?" asked Henry.

"Regular grizzlies, young man, plenty of them; some of them weighed as much as a horse. The settlers had pretty lively times with the grizzlies."

"Wasn't there a Bear Flag War?" asked Mr. Stanton.

"That's what they called it, sir. Don't think there was much bloodshed, for the Mexicans didn't care to have much fighting with the settlers and Indians. Marshall, the man that found

the gold, fought in the Bear Flag War; then he went back to the fort to work for Sutter."

"Where did Marshall come from, in the first place?" asked Mr. Stanton.

"From New Jersey; but he came here on horseback from Missouri."

"Please, driver," said Richard, "there's a team coming, and I don't believe I can turn out. It's pretty narrow here."

"Just pull on the right rein, young man; Tom will understand, and do the rest."

Richard pulled hard on the rein. Somehow the horse found room enough and they drove safely past.

"That was well done," said the driver. "If you would like to have me, I'll take the reins now. I notice that we haven't heard from you for some time. Perhaps you would like to have a chance to talk, now that this brother of yours has asked all that he wants to about bears and Indians."

"Thank you, driver," said Richard, giving him the reins. "I think, when you're driving a horse; you have to keep your mind on it."

"You do, at any rate, till you and your horse get as well acquainted as Tom and I are. We understand each other pretty well, now, don't we, Tommy?" said the driver, touching Tom with the whip.

"Father," asked Richard, turning around, "did Uncle Dick come out on horseback?"

"No, he came in a ship around Cape Horn. He went to sea when he was a boy."

"Did most of the miners come on horseback?"

"No," answered the driver, "they came in wagons drawn

by oxen. The 'Merchants' Express' had twenty thousand yoke of oxen to freight across the country."

"Did they bring letters, too?" asked Mr. Stanton.

"Letters came by the 'Pony Express.' What do you suppose, young man," said the driver to Richard, "they used to charge to bring a letter from New York?"

"Fifty cents!"

"Guess again."

"One dollar!"

"Two dollars!" called Henry from the back seat.

"You guess, too, father," said Richard.

"I know," said Mr. Stanton, "for I found an old letter that Uncle Dick wrote grandma. He said that it cost five dollars."

"Five dollars!" exclaimed both the boys at once.

"And what do you think of a man that could ride almost four hundred miles, without stopping for anything but to get something to eat and to change horses?"

"I don't see how he could," said Richard.

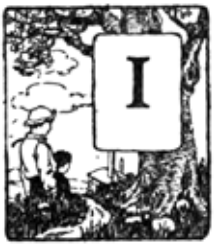
"But 'Pony Bob' could do it, and did it," said the driver, with a flourish of his whip. "Did it, too, in just about a day and a half."

"I think," said Mr. Stanton, "that the men of those days were not afraid of work. I'm glad they were willing to ride so fast and so far, for letters must have meant a great deal both to the miners and to their friends at home. Aren't we almost at the place where the gold was found?"

"Yes," answered the driver, "in a few minutes we shall come to the statue of Marshall."

CHAPTER II

THE MAN WHO FOUND THE GOLD



"I'VE brought a good many people out here," said the driver, turning toward Mr. Stanton, as if he thought it was time for him to find out something more about his passengers, "but I never brought any boys before. I don't see but they are almost as much interested in the trip as you are."

"I had to come West, just now, on business for my firm in New York, and I'm having a vacation, too," said Mr. Stanton, "so I brought the whole family with me. Mrs. Stanton and our little daughter, Edith, are in Sacramento. I'm hoping the journey will teach the boys to see things when they look at them."

"How funny that sounds, father!" said Henry. " Don't people always see things when they look at them?"

"The kind of seeing that I mean," answered his father," means knowing something about a thing after you have looked at it. I expect that you boys are going to learn a great

deal from what you see this summer. That's why I brought you along."

"I see the statue!" exclaimed Henry, pointing ahead, as they turned a corner.

"Yes," said the driver. "That is Marshall, the man that found gold at Sutter's Mill in '48. Down there by the river is where the mill used to be."

"So this is really the man!" said Mr. Stanton, when the driver stopped in front of the big, bronze statue. "I feel like taking off my hat to him, and to the river that started twenty thousand men on a rush for gold in '48."

"Must have been pretty exciting for Marshall, that day when he found the gold," said the driver. "He walked forty miles to tell Sutter about it; and then Sutter hardly believed him."

"Did you ever see Marshall, driver?"

"I saw him once, when I was a boy, and heard him tell about his finding gold."

"I wish you would tell the boys the story."

"You see, Marshall came up the river to find a place for a sawmill to furnish lumber for Sutter down at his fort. Marshall was a wagon-builder by trade, so he made a good carpenter, when he got here.

"He looked a long time, before he found this place; but this suited him, and he got some Indians and a few white men to help him build a mill.

"When they tried to start the wheel, it stuck in the sand, and wouldn't turn round. Then they went to work to dig a deeper place. They dug in the daytime, and turned the water on at night, so as to wash out as much sand as they could.

Every morning Marshall went to look at the millrace; and, one morning, he saw something yellow, down in the water. When he got it out, it was a piece of gold, half the size of a pea."

"Did he know that it was gold?" asked Mr. Stanton.

"He thought it might be gold, but he wasn't sure. He pounded it, and it didn't break, so that made him pretty sure. After that he found a lot of small pieces, dust they call it; and then he went back to the fort, and he and Sutter tested it with nitric acid. That was the way the thing began, sir."

"How could he test it with acid?" asked Richard.

"That's one way that they test gold," answered the driver. "You see, nitric acid will dissolve a good many things, but it doesn't affect the gold at all."

"Didn't the Indians know that there was gold here?" asked Mr. Stanton.

"Yes, sir. When Marshall showed them the gold, they told him that their ancestors knew all about it; but that it belonged to a demon who ate up everybody that tried to get it."

"I can hardly wonder at the story," said Mr. Stanton. "So many men have died in the search for gold, that the Indians might easily believe that they had been devoured by a demon. But we mustn't stay here any longer; for, if we don't hurry, we shall miss our train."

"We haven't any post cards, father," said Richard.

"That's so. Seems to me I see some over in that window. Hurry as fast as you can!"

In a few minutes, the boys came back, and climbed into the wagon.

"See, father," said Henry, "here is a card almost like the

picture the driver showed us; and here is one of that pretty house on the hill over there, all covered with vines."

"And here is one," said Richard, "of the place where the river comes out of the mountains. See how high the rocks are on both sides! I never saw anything like that before. It isn't a bit like our rivers at home."

"We haven't any such mountains as these," said his father. "The banks of the Sierra rivers are very high, almost as if the rocks of the mountains had opened to make a place for the rivers to run in. Some of the canyons, as they call them, are hundreds of feet deep. The trees here are very beautiful, aren't they? Just look at that grove of pines, over on the slope."

"Father," said Richard, after they had ridden some distance in silence, "did all those miners that you talked about get rich?"

"No, my son; they were rich one day, and poor the next. They had to pay so much for food and clothing, that they had little left in the end. Uncle Dick told me that he once paid thirty-six dollars for a pair of boots."

"I don't doubt that," said the driver. "It was hard work to get anything to wear. The miners used to patch their clothes with old flour sacks. It took most of what they earned to keep them in food. Marshall himself died poor."

"After all," said Mr. Stanton, "gold isn't worth much, if you don't have a chance to buy what you need with it. But, even if they didn't make much money, they did a good work; for they opened up a beautiful country, so their work wasn't lost."

"How about you?" asked the driver, turning to Henry. "Any more questions about bears and Indians?"

"No," answered Henry, "but I should like to see a bear. I've seen several Indians."

"I have one more question," said Mr. Stanton. "May I ask whether you were ever in the mines yourself?"

"Yes, sir. When I was young, I worked in the Comstock—that was where the silver rush began, you know, sir. After a while they struck gold—lots of it. Those were great days, sir; but I gave up mining, because I like to be out of doors, not underground. If you want to see mining, sir, you'd better go over there."

"I am going there next week," said Mr. Stanton. "I've heard a good deal about the Comstock."

"May we go, too?" asked Richard and Henry, almost in the same breath.

"What!" said their father, "are you youngsters going to turn prospectors? We shall have to talk that over with mother. Just now we must make that train for Sacramento."

CHAPTER III

ACROSS THE SNOWY MOUNTAINS

NOW, boys," said their father, a week later, when they were on their way to Nevada, "what do you think gold prospectors do?"

"They bore down into the ground until they find the gold," answered Henry.

"Sometimes they bore into the side of a mountain," said Richard.

"Right, so far; but the next question is, how do they know where to bore? Suppose we began to bore anywhere, what should we find first?"

"Dirt," said Henry.

"The men that bored grandfather's well found water," said Richard.

"Then, if we bored and bored and bored, what should we find?"

"Rocks," said Henry.

"We should get down to 'bedrock,' as the miners say," his father went on; "but, if we could go down deep, as some

of the mines do, it would grow warm, and the water down there would be hot; and, if we could go way, way down, the geologists tell us that we should come to hot melted rock."

"Our teacher told us that when we studied about volcanoes, in the geography," said Richard.

"That's right," said his father, "and the hot springs that are sometimes found, tell us the same kind of story, so we know that the center of the earth is hot; and we call the outside of the earth the crust of the earth.

"Long, long ago, the whole earth was hot, like the sun. When it began to cool, and the crust was thin, it shrank up and made ridges and hollows, 'like the skin of a dried-up apple.'"

"Then that's where the mountains came from," said Richard.

"That's the way they began; and then there were earthquakes, and the melted rocks that had gold and silver in them, were forced up into the cracks, and the gold and silver stayed there.

"Sometimes the water that had minerals in it came up to the surface, and then the water dried up and left the gold behind. And volcanoes, too, helped to give us gold, for some of the best mines, today, are in what seem to be the craters of old volcanoes."

"Is there gold in water, father?"

"Yes, Henry, there is gold in the sea, now; and men have tried to get the gold from the sea. Perhaps the chemists will be able to do it some day. If it weren't for the chemists, we shouldn't be able to get gold out of the rocks, for many rocks have only a little gold in them. Getting gold, now, isn't so

easy as it was when Uncle Dick came to California. When we reach Nevada, we shall find men working down in the earth."

"Dick, what are you watching?" asked Henry.

"I'm watching the mountains. See, father, aren't they grand? They're all pointed at the top, and some of them are covered with snow."

"Yes, there's always snow on some of them. The Spanish called them sierras, because they look like the teeth of a saw."

While the boys and their father were watching the mountains, a young man opposite them, who had been smiling in a friendly way, as he now and then caught Henry's eye, left his seat and went to the end of the car.

When he came back, he lifted his hat and said:

"I'm Bailey, prospector. Wouldn't you like to go with me to the rear of the car, where you can get a look at the mountains?"

"Thank you," answered Mr. Stanton; "I should like to, if they will allow us to do so."

"I have been over this road so many times that they give me certain privileges," said the young man, turning to lead the way.

Stepping out on the platform, they found that the train was beginning to climb the mountain; and they saw, as they reached a curve, the chain of pointed mountains rising up from the beautiful valley below.

Henry, standing a little behind the rest, held his father's hand close; but Richard stood with both hands on the brake, and did not seem to hear his father, when he said: "I think we had better go back into the car."

"I want to go in," said Henry.

The Train Was Beginning To Climb

So, his father, feeling that he could trust Richard with the tall young man, went back to his seat.

When the next bend hid the mountains, Richard turned. Just as his hands left the brake, he stumbled and fell forward.

Before his head struck the door of the car, the tall man had caught him, and put him on his feet.

His sudden jump for Richard had thrown off the young man's straw hat, so it was dangling by the cord; and his glasses were so twisted that he looked very queer. But his eyes were smiling, as he looked down at Richard; and something in them seemed to say:

"Nothing bad really happened. I'm game, are you?"

Perhaps it was because Richard had been thinking about what his father had said about being brave all the time, perhaps it was something else; but whatever it was, though he was not over his fright, Richard's brown eyes telegraphed back to Mr. Bailey's blue eyes:

"I'm game, too!"

Mr. Bailey took Richard's hand, and they stood quietly together, looking down the track. After a moment, Richard looked up at Mr. Bailey, and they both smiled, as if they understood each other. Then they turned, and went back into the car.

"I should be glad to have you sit here with us," said Mr. Stanton, "but, if these boys begin to ask questions, they may prove lively company."

"Then," said Mr. Bailey, sitting down by Henry, "I'll ask a question first, for I couldn't help overhearing some of your talk with your sons. Are you interested in mines?"

"I'm very much interested in mines," answered Mr. Stan-