



"Scoot, you, or I'll blow your brains out!" roared the Doctor.

## Dr. Cooper Foils a Highwayman

The horse and sleigh stood ready at the end of the front walk and, after a late evening meal, Dr. Sherman Cooper set out to visit a typhoid patient on the outskirts of the village. Wrapped in fur from head to feet, he resembled a great polar bear as he moved ponderously through the door of his snow-covered vestibule.

Outside, it was bitter cold and a full moon, above the church spire, gave a mid-day glow to the white surface of things. Sleigh bells tinkled in the village streets and skaters hallooed to one another on Clark's pond. The doctor took the reins from his negro hostler and turned his horse into Mountain Avenue. He was an absent-minded individual, and, once over the brow of the hill, he gave the horse free rein and resigned himself to reflections far removed from that familiar countryside.

Near a patch of woods, beyond the crossroads, the horse shied suddenly and the doctor, annoyed at the interruption, reached for the whip. The horse continued to back away.

"Steady your hoss, Mister! Steady your hoss!" came a sharp command from the road ahead. "And step out

here and give me your overcoat and money while I holds him!"

The doctor drew rein. He was sure this man was crazy. Who but a lunatic would be holding up people in that snowbound country? Perhaps he had recently escaped from Morris Plains? Perhaps he was unarmed? Being unarmed himself, the doctor proceeded to obey orders warily. As he removed the lap robe, he reached under the folds of his great coat, drew out a long, pistol-shaped object that glistened in the moonlight like a shaft of polished steel, and pointing it at the would-be highwayman, he roared: "Scoot, you, or I'll blow your brains out!"

The man turned on his heels and ran into the woods. . . .

The horse jogged along again, the sleigh bells tinkled faintly and, presently, the air in the vicinity of New Providence Road was rent with peels of laughter, as Dr. Cooper returned to his waistcoat pocket the big silver pencil his friend, Uncle Sam Reese, had given him for Christmas. Later, he told the story to his cronies at John Dorvall's Drug Store.