

THAT'S WHY.

I cannot sing the old songs  
With sympathetic strains;  
I cannot sing the old songs,  
So full of grief and pain.  
I cannot sing any more  
With doleful, quivering lip—  
In fact I can't sing anything  
Because I've got the grip.

A LASSO DUEL.

A STORY OF THE SHEEP-SHEARING IN SOUTH AMERICA.

The shearing was in full blast. The creamy, silky fleeces of the Merinos rolled their greasy folds on the boarded floor of the vast shed as they fell under the snick-snick of a hundred pairs of shears. The Gaucho shearers, men and women, chatted merrily to each other in their musical Argentine Spanish as they bent over their work. From the corral came the barking of the well-trained dogs and the low thunder of the flying feet as the catchers deftly raced a new batch of a hundred panting, lazy sheep into the pens. The men behind the long wool tables perspired freely as they passed their neatly tied fleeces to the packers, and the packers perspired more freely still as they carried their burden to the scales before stowing it away on the tops of the already immense piles. Through the narrow doors and windows on the left could be seen the green gloom of the eucalyptus grove which shaded the estancia houses. A way in front, and also on the right, over the corral, as far as the eye could reach, the green, treeless, level expanse of the pampa lay throbbing under the blue sky and the dazzling, fizzling sunshine of late November. The purple haze of the summer blurred the sky-line to the east, while along the horizon in the opposite direction the western sky blazed up a first-class mirage over the blistering thistle clumps.

The major-domo stood in one of the doorways of the shed, riding-whip in hand. He had just come from a gallop of inspection down the camp, and was throwing his practiced eye over the floor to see how matters were progressing. In the midst of the shearers stood the burly Irish-Argentine *capataz* (foreman) vigilantly superintending the work. Seeing that the major-domo had returned, he looked at him for a moment, as etiquette demanded, in order to be informed whether his chief wished to speak with him; and in response to a scarcely perceptible nod, accompanied by a slight gesture of the hand, he left his place and approached the door.

"Well, James," said the chief, "how are the things?"  
"Not so bad, Don Eduardo," replied the *capataz* in accents as round and rich as if he had been born in Westminster instead of on the pampa. "Not so bad. We've cleaned off three thousand already, and we're good for another eight hundred before sundown."  
"That's good," said the chief as he stopped and carefully picked up a curl of wool which the breeze was carrying through the doorway. "Wire in to them like one o'clock, James, while this weather lasts. We must do our best to finish before the end of the month. How are these folks working for you?"

"Fairly well, on the whole. Of course, the two weeks of wet weather and lolling about made them a bit lazy; but to-day they seem to be putting more of their backs into what they do. We had a little unpleasantness here since you went away, but—"  
"Oh—yes? How was it?" queried the manager, his brows knitting.  
"I had to take the shears from Gomez and suspend him for the day."  
"Gomez? Which Gomez?"  
"Esteban."  
"Oh, that fellow, eh? At his old tricks again, I suppose?—gamble all night and skirk all day?"  
"No, Don Eduardo, not that."  
"Drunk then? You don't mean to say that any sounder has been bringing drink about the place?"  
"Not that I know of. Gomez wasn't drunk. The trouble began about the old Josefa's girl."  
"Hum?" growled the chief, pursing his lips and shaking his head. "It is always the same with those girl shearers. They are more trouble than any thing else."

James kept his sharp gray eyes on the shearers, and called to order a lady of color who was about to let go a sheep with the leg-wool unshorn; and after he had eased his mind on the question, he said to his superior:  
"You are partly right Don Eduardo, but what would you have? These folks will not come without their women, and there is no doubt that a few girl shearers, if at all manageable, keep the floor lively, and attract to the place hands that might otherwise remain away."  
"And this Josefa's girl?" asked the chief. "Is she an angel in disguise, then, or what?"  
"Well, I must say," responded the worthy James, shaking his head dubiously, "she's a very mischief. I'm afraid she'll make plenty of trouble for us before the shearing is over. I didn't like the look of that Gomez when he was leaving the floor this afternoon—I didn't like it at all, at all."  
"But what is the history of this Gomez business, anyhow? Who is to blame?" and the chief's jaw split like a trap, and his chin stood out.

"Well, you see," explained James, "the girl was a bit civil to Gomez, and a bit civil to that young idiot Ramon, and during those wet days when there was nothing else to do she played a good deal with both of them. Gomez got jealous of Ramon, and the more jealous he got the more favor she showed to the other. Look at her now! There she is over by the front door with Ramon. Look how she makes sheep's eyes at him. That is the way she has been carrying on since breakfast time. Gomez was trying to get her all to himself, but she flouted him before all the world and took on with Ramon. So then Gomez became sulky, and began locking the sheep in such a way, and giving back answers when I spoke to him about it, that, not to have to knock the daylight out of him, I took his shears until to-morrow."  
"And then?"  
"Then he left the floor in a rage, and swore that he would not shear again for a week. I told him that I would tell you about it, and he said that both you and I could go hang."

"He did, eh?" and the manager ground his heel into the floor with vexation, for authority is everything where there are one hundred Argentine shearers at work, and the man to hold them in order must suffer no loss of prestige. Don Eduardo knew this, and he said:

"This won't do, James. You should have knocked him down right off the reel or sent immediately to look for me. We can't afford to have any love-sick skulkers around this establishment. Where is he now?"  
"He is over there at the corral, where he has just shut in his horses. I expect he is going to do a little work on his own account. I notice that he is training a few young ones of the Teralla mark, and very likely he is going to give them a gallop."

"I'll gallop him presently," said the chief as he turned and strode towards his reeking horse, while James proceeded to heave a well-assorted collection of Spanish expletives at an ill-tempered shearer who was kicking a refractory wether into a properly submissive frame of mind.  
Old Josefa's girl and young Ramon, meanwhile, were carrying on a violent flirtation. They had already begun to shear in partnership. The girl was merely shearing the necks and sides, and Ramon was finishing off the rest. He was doing more than his share, but it pleased him, and it suited the girl. It also suited old Josefa. The shears were paid five dollars per hundred, and she knew her girl would, with less labor, have a larger tally at the end of the day by shearing in partnership with Ramon than if she were to do the work by herself. Of course it was a sacrifice on Ramon's part, for he was doing far more than half of the work, but that was Ramon's affair.

"Que carumba!" said old Josefa to herself, is he not in love? And when the young fellows are in that state they are fools, and fools are to be fooled while their folly lasts, eh? Old Josefa was practical. She had passed through a good deal of camp life, and knew her way about her little world.  
Josefa's girl was not a dazzling beauty, nor did the greasy rags which constituted her shearing costume show off her form and features to the best advantage. She was only eighteen years of age, she was a *morcucha*, which means that her firm, velvety skin was even darker than the olive tinge. Her mischievous, challenging eyes were black, and so was her curly hair. She was a buxom, well-built, hardy young person, who could shear with her left hand just as well as with her right. Some of her blood was Indian and some of it was African. The rest was creole. She was a child of the pampa, and had no wish to be anything else. In the midst of her pamper-born admirers, and they were legion, she was a beauty, and that was enough for her. They were lovers after her own heart, those Gaucho rough riders. She knew they were capable of cutting one another's throats for her sake, and the thought pleased her.

Ramon was just the sort of youth to captivate her fancy—a Gaucho of the Gauchos. He was scarcely twenty years of age, he had graduated with high honors in the school of the pampas. He was by trade a cattle-trooper and horse-trainer like his rival, Gomez, and like most of the men around him. He was a shearer for the moment like them, not because he liked the work, but because shearing is a time of horse-racing, gambling, love-making, dancing and devilment, as well as of toil. He was the best dancer in the district. He could improvise verses and sing them to the accompaniment of his guitar. It was he who had subdued Blanco's *bagual*, the horse that killed two rough riders outright and disabled a third for life. He had trooped cattle to the *hacienda* Ayres market and could talk of having seen the wonderful sights of the city. He was warthy, but the blood of youth and health showed through the brown on his cheeks. Clean-shaven as a young stag, lithe, sinewy, above the middle height, and not yet too bow-legged from the saddle, he was a handsome fellow—a *hombre mozo* from head to foot. The light of innocence was in his flashing black eyes, the guileless ingenuousness of childhood seemed to linger in his smile, and he was as gay as the summer sunlight on the wavelets of the lagoon. Yet, alas for the deceptiveness of appearance, he was one of the most notorious and incorrigible horse-thieves south of the equator.

His reputation as a horse-thief did not matter a pin's worth to old Josefa's girl, who was the child of a horse-thief herself. She had smiled upon Ramon, and forthwith he had laid siege to her affections with desperate impetuosity. It is the way of the Gaucho. He burns with a consuming passion until he tastes the joys of possession—and then he burns again, but at the shrine of some other beauty. His love is like the thunderstorm of the summer on his native plains. It is never of very long duration, but while it lasts it is terrific in its fury and force.

That morning Ramon had been one of the first on the floor. He was engaged in picking out a few of the softest-wooled animals from the files of sheep which the catchers had already fettered down, when Gomez came on the scene. The two men had been rivals at the dance the night before for the favors of old Josefa's girl, and Ramon had carried off the honors. The soft-wooled sheep which he was now picking out were for her. Gomez knew this, and it added fuel to the flame of his jealous fire. He caught one of the sheep which the other had parted out and began pulling it across the floor by the fettered legs. It was a direct challenge, and was accepted as such.

"Stop that!" sang out Ramon in his sonorous Spanish, and there was a ring in his voice that was not of peaceful promise.  
"What is it, boy?" asked the other.  
He was older than Ramon by at least ten years, and flung the word "boy" at him in pure derision. Gomez was a noted *compadre* (bully). He was credited with having put three men out of the way, and was always ready for trouble. A big scar ran across his face from his left nostril, and was swallowed up near the high cheekbone, in the black, bushy beard. As he spoke the taunting word "boy" to his rival he placed his left foot on the neck of the sheep which he had annexed, and stood there tiger-like, peacefully poised, his eyes ablaze, beautiful in his own way, and entirely dangerous.  
Ramon did not flinch. He looked Gomez squarely between the eyes and said:  
"You are not treating with a boy. That sheep is for your better; leave it alone."  
"If you consider it yours, come and take it," retorted Gomez, and he waved his left hand gracefully towards the floor, while he placed his right on his hip, where the tips of his fingers touched his knife-haft.

Ramon made a step forward, but a strong hand grasped his knife-arm and swung him round in the opposite direction. It was James, the Irish-Argentine *capataz*, and he vetoed the fight.  
"Drop that knife!" he said sternly, shaking the arm he held in a grip of iron. The iron dropped to the floor, and stood in the floor. James represented the *patron*. In his command lay the delegated authority of the employer—the only authority that the Gaucho cares a fig for.  
As the knife fell, the *capataz* released the arm of the shearer, and turning round, he said to Gomez:

"You're at your old game of bullying again, but it won't do here—see?"  
"But, Don Santiago," said the other half apologetically, "that fellow over there," pointing to Ramon, "that saucy youngster has no right to take half the sheep on the floor to himself. It's against the rule. He can only shear one at a time."  
"I know that, but you're not the boss of this shed, all the same, and there must be no fighting here. Leave that sheep and take another. Here, you, Pablo!" (calling to a graybeard who had just entered the shed), "shear this sheep, and now all hands to work. You, Gomez, must shear at the other end of the floor to-day. Do you hear?"

"Si, senor," answered the bully, and walked to his appointed place without a word. There was no disputing with the *capataz*. He carried neither knife nor pistol, but his word was law. They knew him, and knew what it meant to cross him.  
The work proceeded briskly, but the incident was not forgotten. When Josefa's girl came into the shed Ramon captured her, and they began to shear in partnership. Their heads were nearly together, and it was evident that Ramon was in clover. Gomez made several attempts to get her and her mother to go down to his end of the shed, but in vain. At breakfast time Gomez renewed his attentions, but she cut him through and through with a few words.  
"You're not a beauty," he said, "but I'm a man. I have a beard. I'm not a mere boy."  
"You have a man's mark on your face anyhow," she said with a sneer, alluding to the scar. He reddened under the stinging gibes, and showed how keenly he felt it.

"The man who gave me that," he growled, "is dead—I killed him."  
"While he slept, no doubt," laughed old Josefa's girl, and left him with the wound rankling in his wicked heart.  
After breakfast Ramon and the girl were still shearing in partnership, and their heads were closer together than ever. Gomez, however, went completely into the tantrums, and showed such a well-developed tendency toward nastiness of all kinds that the *capataz*, as has already been said, suspended him for the day.

The major-domo found Gomez venting his ill temper on a young horse which he was saddling sorely against the will of that animal. Don Eduardo never wasted words; so stooping from his saddle, with out dismounting, he pulled down the cross-bars of the corral and rode in.  
"I want to know, Gomez," he said in his stern, even tones, "if you have anything to say regarding your conduct this morning?"  
Gomez looked a wicked, sullen look on the rough rider's face, and his eyes were bloodshot. He did not meet the manager's glance, but shrugging his shoulders, he replied in a growling, unobsequious way: "What am I to say, senor? Your *capataz* took my shears from me, and that is all. No doubt he can give you his reasons."  
"I know that you were skinning the sheep as well as shearing them, and that you were doing it for spite. But what I want to talk about is your insolence as you left the floor, and I want to know if you are disposed to take back your impertinence."

Gomez was silent.  
The chief looked him over for a moment, and repeated his query in more peremptory tones. "You are not going to sleep here, my man, with that insolence to your debit. Take it back or leave. Is that plain?"  
"Yes, it is plain, as sententia the other bled his teeth, and with a contemptuous shrug of his shoulders. "As plain as I want it. I am not one to eat my words, senor, and there is no one here capable of making me do it."  
"Very well, then. Go to the office and get your money, if there is any due to you, and let me not find you about the place by sundown. You know what that means, eh?"

"Esta bien," senor, he said doggedly; "I am a wise man, and there are other flocks of sheep in the country than yours. I'll go."  
The manager rode away, and Gomez smothered a string of bloody oaths in his beard as he stripped the frightened animal which he had been about to deal with, slashed it viciously over the eye with his heavy whip-handle, and cursed it as it staggered away from him.  
He saddled his best horse, and did it carefully, muttering savagely to himself the while.  
"We shall see, my bold Ramon! We shall see, my devil's whelp! We shall find out who is the better man! Oh yes, we shall! And the girl! Ho, my beauty—you are not going to get away from me, eh? Very well, we shall see about that presently!"

He retied the slip-knots that fastened the *bolsas* and lasso to the saddle, and made sure that they could be undone at a moment's notice. Then he led the horse close to the shearing sheds, where there was a row of stakes, and tied to them. In a few minutes he presented himself at the office and got the money due to him.  
He was now ready to start, and he went to the shearing floor to take his leave of the crowd. No one could object to that. It was his right. It was Gaucho etiquette. Besides, had he not to ask some of his friends to look after the horses he was leaving behind him for a few days until he should return for them? The sun was high yet, and there was plenty of time. So he strode with a swagger into the shed, and hanging his whip on the haft of his knife, proceeded to roll a cigarette.

He talked meanwhile in the very freest way about his plans. He did not address himself to anybody in particular, but he gave more than one meaning look to where old Josefa's girl and Ramon had their heads together, and every one knew his remarks were meant for them.  
Was he going? Somebody asked him. Oh yes, he was. He was off to see how the girls looked at the Pachoeco offering. He was that kind, look you—a rover, a fellow who liked to have his thing, a flashing blade who was on the lookout for his match. Some fellows, young beardless whelps especially, imagined that they could teach him how to court a girl, or ride a horse, or handle a lasso, but, bless you, he had a contempt for that sort of cob. He would take the pride out of such insolent brats, but not till they grew up. He knew—not till they had been there. For after all, was it not so? None but he who has heard is a man?

The lean, bent back of Ramon quivered inside his greasy singlet, but otherwise he made no sign. He would settle it all with Gomez afterwards, no doubt, but not now.  
And then as to the girls, Gomez went on his comprehensive way. Look you, he had known scores of them, could pick and choose among the best of them, need not, for his part, pay court to the daughter of any horse-thief, nor make a fool of himself shearing in partnership with the child of any nigger hag. It was so! *Caramba!* it was so! He was Esteban Gomez, look you

a man with a beard, a rider who acknowledged no master, who, who scorned sukkering children—ha—ha—ha! And the fellow laughed immoderately at his own not very brilliant joke.

But now, then, also laughed. Every one there knew that the man was up to mischief, and there was murder in his mirth. The shears shook in Ramon's hand, but that was all. He would wait, no doubt, until Gomez left the shed—time enough for a time enough!

"Well, then, senores all," said Gomez loudly as he threw away his cigarette and gave his belt a hitch. "Adios! I'll see you again some of these days."  
And with that he took his whip from where it hung behind his back and moved towards the door. With one swift bound he reached Ramon and old Josefa's girl, his eyes flashing and his teeth striped. The girl saw him coming, but there was no time to prevent him doing what he did. It all happened, too, so rapidly and unexpectedly that every one was taken by surprise. He struck Ramon on the head where he was stooping and knocked him flat on the floor. Then, with a single leap, he had the girl in his arms, though the door was through the door; in another he was at his horse's side; in another he was in the saddle, the girl held before him screaming with terror, and then, with a defiant yell, he turned towards the open pampa and galloped madly away with his captive through a few words.

Yellow with rage and with a screech he fled to his feet just in time to see Gomez gallop off with the girl. He was a little stunned and dazed and did not seem at first to realize what had happened, until old Josefa caught him by the arm, and shaking him violently, shrieked:  
"Fool, coward, stupid! Are you afraid to go and bring my girl back? You want her. I heard you say so. She promised to give herself to you. I heard her. And now you stand there like a sucking lamb—you are no man! You are a sheep, afraid of a dog—see? Afraid, coward! I spit on you!"

It all broke in on Ramon then like a flash. He flung the old woman violently from him and darted through the door with a curse. A saddle horse was tied in the shade of the trees. He ran towards it, and in an instant, the reins were over the neck and his hand twisted into the mane.  
"The cinch! the cinch!" shouted a score of voices; "tighten the cinch!"—for it hung loosely under the horse's flank. With a few quick tugs he tightened it, and then vaulted into the saddle. As he rode through the gate a coiled lasso hanging on one of the posts caught his eye, and he snatched it up as he passed. As he galloped in pursuit he buttoned the lasso on the cinch ring, and then used the coils as a whip to urge the horse into racing speed. Others followed, but Ramon led by full a hundred yards. He turned in the saddle as he rode madly ahead, and shouted at them to go back. "This is my affair," he yelled. "Leave him to me. I don't want your help. Go back and tell them I'm coming with that bound at the end of the lasso," and he flourished the coils over his head, bringing the whip down once more with a resounding crack on the ribs and quarters of the frantic horse.

Gomez was mounted on the best horse he owned—a fleet, strong, tireless brute that could gallop at half rein for leagues—but the extra weight of the girl told. Moreover, Ramon was riding the better horse—a raking, clean-limbed, three quarter bred—mercy's sake to stop. They tried to head him off, but the fiends had not possession of him. James O'Reilly, the *capataz* who never sated anything but the cream of the breed. A straight chase is a long chase as a rule, but in this instance the pursuer rapidly gained on the pursued. Before the first half mile had been covered Ramon had gained three hundred yards on Gomez, and at every leap he saw with savage joy that the odds were diminishing. Gomez threw a swift, fierce look over his shoulder and saw that the desperate game was against him. His left arm crushed the girl in a savage embrace, and in his free right hand he held his unsheathed knife. He thought of killing her, she had, however, already heard the triumph shout behind him, and the reckless, untamed blood that flowed in her veins had asserted itself. The terror and stupor of the first moments had passed and now as the Gaucho's knife gleamed in the sun above her the Gaucho girl laughed.

With a swift, snake like wriggle she caught him on the neck, and put the tip of her bit into the wrist until the weapon fell from his grasp. The oath which the pain wrung from him had scarcely died on his lips when the hoof beats of Ramon's horse were heard.  
"Pull up, pull up," she cried, as she struggled and panted in his grasp. "She'll kill you, and if you dare—coward that you are. It is only a girl you have the courage to fight."  
He looked behind him once more. Ramon had made his lasso ready. A bunch of coils was in his right hand, and the long ten foot loop dragged behind him, snipping the tops from the clover and grasses through which he swept like the wind.  
Gomez with a powerful jerk slackened the speed of his horse. "I am going to put you down, my beauty," he hissed while his hot breath stirred her hair. "Stay you here for a moment and watch how I shall kill this boy before your eyes."

As he handed or rather shoved the girl to the ground Ramon was only fifty yards away, and Gomez did not waste any time in useless words. With a shower of whip-outs to left and right on the neck, breast, and flanks of his horse, he loosed the reins and galloped away at right angles to the course which he had until then held. This he did in order to allow his pursuer to pass. Ramon was going at a pace too furious to turn very quickly, and by the time he had checked and faced around again, Gomez was galloping in a circle towards him fully prepared. The half minute's grace had sufficed for him to make ready his lasso, and as he wheeled, keeping his horse on a tight rein, and approaching his enemy, he shook the coils over his head, and glanced approvingly at the trailing loop. It was in perfect order. Ramon threw up his right arm and swung his lasso around his head from right to left. Gomez did the same. Neither spoke, but there was more in the glance they darted on each other than could be put into words.

It was to be a lasso duel to the death. On this both had already decided. The girl remained where Gomez had left her, watchful of their slightest movements, the passions of her untutored nature in her eyes, but as quiet as a statue. She wanted Gomez killed; she wanted Ramon to kill him; and she would as soon have thought of praying for Gomez as interfering. The men had joined the chase were still five hundred yards away, and the fight would be decided before they could arrive.  
The duellists galloped in a circle round each other, whirling their lassos and waiting, lynx-eyed, for a favorable moment to throw. They sat as easily and as gracefully in their saddles as if they were riding for mere amusement. The legs were rigid; the

toes pointed outwards and upwards from the stirrups; and, as if the hip joints were delicately made swivels, the bodies swayed to left or right, backward or forward, unconsciously yet perfectly keeping the balance, while the horses plunged or checked to the touches of the reins or the pressure of the knees. Each right hand was held aloft, the inside of the elbow close to the ear, the arm straight and firm, but with the sinewy, supple wrist moving as if on a pivot and making the lasso hum and whistle and whine as it cut through the air in long, sweeping, undulating loops.

Round and round they galloped, now closing in, now withdrawing to longer range, now swiftly turning outward or inward while the lassos were reversed and swung from right to left, always bordering on throwing distance, yet never quite passing inside it.  
"Come on," shouted Gomez, hurling a few of his foulest words at Ramon. "Come on. That girl over there is waiting for you or for me. He who leaves here alive shall have her. Throw, then, thou cut-throat; throw, I say, swine-fed pup that thou art; throw, and get thy reward!"

"Throw thou first, and teach me," cried Ramon in fierce derision. "Thou shalt find me anxious to learn. Thou art a man with a beard, no? Very well, render a man's account of thyself. Thou art skillful in capturing girls, eh? Come on, and see if thou canst catch a boy."  
Gomez stood in his stirrups and pretended to let fly his loop. It was a clever feint enough, but it failed. Instead of ducking or swerving to save himself from the threatened danger, Ramon pulled with all his strength and weight on the reins, and as the chestnut reared under the strain of the cruel Spanish bit, he airily kept his balance in the saddle, while with a lightning like twist of his arm he reversed the swing of the lasso. This feat surprised Gomez. It was far more than he had thought the youth could do, and it disconcerted him for a moment—only for a moment. Ramon's face, hard and set in hate, wore a grim smile as it lay pressed against the mane of the rearing horse. He saw that his chance was coming. He saw that Gomez was riding straight into his power, and that by the time he came round almost of his lasso stirrup he would be well within range. Gomez saw his peril and drove home his spur in a desperate attempt to take himself clear away. It was too late. Ramon's quick eye had already made the distance to be less than he needed, and with a cry of savage joy he gave one final back hand swing to his lasso and let it go. Upward and outward it curved for a good five yards, uncoupling its snake like folds with easy grace as it soared and sped through the sunshine on its errand of death. The big loop quivered for a fleeting instant over the head of the doomed horseman, and as it fell over his shoulders, despite his wild effort to escape its deadly embrace, the iron ring rattled along the hard, rawhide plaiting. Ramon gave his horse a rein, and urged him to the utmost of his speed. With a mighty plunge the high spirited horse leaped forward, and as the end of the lasso was reached the tough strands twanged under the strain. There was a cry of rage and despair answered by a yell of hate and triumph; an awful jerk; a still more awful thud; and then a helpless, choking, struggling, gasping wretch was dragged away at a gallop, bumping, crashing, tumbling, writhing, dying.

The other horsemen dashed up, but they arrived too late. They called to Ramon for mercy's sake to stop. They tried to head him off, but the fiends had not possession of him, and they dodged them all. One of them tried to lasso his horse; another tried to ride him down. It was all in vain. When at last they closed on him, the bruised and shattered thing which they found at the end of the lasso was beyond all human aid.

Away in the distance old Josefa's girl still stood in the fall glare of the sun. Ramon went to her.—By William Bullfin, ("Che Buona.") in *Everbydy's Magazine*.

**Prince and President.**  
Took a Gallop of an Hour and a Quarter Through Rain Yesterday in Washington.

Prince Henry yesterday afternoon according to a special in the *Pittsburgh Gazette*, enjoyed one event not on his official itinerary when he and President Roosevelt went in a rainstorm on a horseback ride of an hour and a quarter through Crook Creek Valley and the suburbs in the northwest section of Washington City. The ride was arranged personally between the two men during one of their talks at an official function.

The Prince returned from Annapolis between 3 and 4 o'clock in the afternoon and went direct to the White house to pay a farewell visit, the members of his suite accompanying him. The farewell call was entirely informal. Captain Gilmore, of the artillery, met the Prince and his suite at the door and escorted them to the blue room, where they were received by the President and Mrs. and Miss Roosevelt, each of whom gave the Prince a hearty welcome and good-bye.  
The ceremony lasted only about five minutes, and then the Prince drove to the Embassy and exchanged his Admiral's uniform for a riding suit of dark blue, with buff leggings and a Fedora hat. The Prince smoked several cigarettes and chatted with Ambassador von Holleben in front of the Embassy about fifteen minutes while waiting the arrival of the President. Mr. Roosevelt's riding garb was similar to that of the Prince, save for a slouch hat of the Rough-Rider style.

While the Prince was mounting his horse, which was a handsome chestnut bay belonging to Senator Lodge, Ambassador Holleben stepped forward to greet the President, and as he did so the President remarked:  
"Ambassador, I am sorry to put the Prince to this trouble. I only hope he is not being too good-natured."  
In a drizzling rain, which later turned into a downpour, the two started off for a ride, accompanied by a sergeant of artillery. As they were leaving the President waved his hand to Ambassador Holleben and in a voice loud enough to be heard across the street said:  
"We will be back in an hour and a-half."  
A large crowd in front of the Embassy greeted the distinguished pair as they rode off. They returned to the Embassy at 6:00, having been gone an hour and a quarter. Rain fell a large part of the time, but both riders seemed to enjoy the outing.

**Our Beautiful Language.**  
A highwayman in Albuquerque  
Stole a horse, a mule and a turque.  
They chased him a mile  
Till they caught him in style,  
And his ending was sudden and jurque.

—Seed peas may be dipped in hot water for a few minutes, or exposed to the gases of bisulphide of carbon in order to destroy the pea weevil. The late peas are not so subject to attack as those sown early.

The Metamorphosis of the Commercial.

*The Growth of a Country Telephone—How the Modern Beginning Made by W. L. Goodhart Has Grown to be a Great System Which Ramifies All Parts of Pennsylvania.*

Few people thought when W. L. Goodhart, of Millheim, came to Bellefonte a few years ago and talked about a new telephone system that the great pictures he painted then would ever be any more than the creation of fancy. Some were even rude enough to ask him what he knew about the telephone business, but they didn't know that he had been working on a little country line down in the vicinity of his home and in the quiet, undisturbed atmosphere of Millheim he had been working out the practical as well as the theoretical side of telephoning.

It would make a long story to publish the details of Mr. Goodhart's ups and downs in the effort to get the little line he had built in the lower end of Pennsylvania connected with the outside world, but the object was attained though he, as so many earnest promoters before him have been, has been entirely lost sight of and his name is rarely heard of in connection with the great enterprise that has sprung up in our midst.

The matter of an independent telephone line in competition with the long established and magnificently equipped Bell system was a much mooted question, but the success of independent companies in other places finally induced a lot of local capitalists to take it under advisement, with the result that the Central Commercial Telephone Co. was organized in June, 1898. A system of lines to reach all parts of the county was at once mapped out and a great force of men put to work erecting them. With a growth that was almost Aladdin-like in its completion trunk lines were built and exchanges installed in Bellefonte, Centre Hall, State College, Millheim, Snow Shoe and Lock Haven, giving service to over seven hundred customers, and establishing a free talking rate between all these points.

The Central Commercial company kept improving its service wherever possible and equipped itself for the great break into state territory that was made July 1st, 1901, when it was merged with the United Telephone & Telegraph Co. and by that stroke secured service from Pottsville on the east to Johnstown on the west. And the work of extension is just in its infancy, for by the close of the coming summer the new company will have over eight thousand telephones in Pennsylvania and New York in service. It is now reaching Pottsville, Ashland, Girardville, Mahanoy City, Shenandoah, Tamaqua, Bloomsburg, Berwick, Duaneville, Lewisburg, Milton, Mt. Carmel, Shamokin, Sunbury, Williamsport, Lock Haven, Jersey Shore, Bellefonte, Tyrone, Altoona, Hollidaysburg, Johnstown and numerous other intermediate points.

An immense amount of work is being planned for this summer. The most important to the local patrons of the concern is a trunk line of four sets of wires that is to be run from Mill Hall to Tyrone. This will relieve the State College and Pine Grove Mills lines of all the western traffic they are now compelled to carry and obviate much of the personal annoyance of that too frequent answer: "The lines are all busy." Then the Snow Shoe line is to be extended to Philipsburg and Clearfield and the completion of a seven mile line south of Potter's Mill will carry the United into Lewisport.

These are the improvements that will directly benefit the local patron ere long, but outside of this district even greater ones are to be made. The Lancaster and Lebanon districts are to be added, the independent company in Harrisburg, with seven hundred phones, will be taken in, the franchises of the Cumberland valley system taken over, Chester, Coatesville, Conshohocken, Downingtown, Kennet Square, Media and Norristown connected with the United's lines and a traffic arrangement completed with the Keystone company in Philadelphia. All this and more, for a trunk line is to be started up into New York from Williamsport, gathering in a great number of small companies about Elmira, Rochester, Buffalo and Syracuse.

These are some of the many promises the United intends to fulfill with the coming summer and with it done it will have service in central and eastern Pennsylvania that will be most comprehensive. But with it all we look for most of our satisfaction from the local exchange at Bellefonte which is the operating center of the fifth district. A. C. Savidge, district manager, and H. W. Smith, resident manager, are both capable telephone men. The latter has at his call inspectors George Barclay and Fred Owen and has lately introduced a system whereby phones can be put into service with a minimum of inconvenience and delay to patrons.

In the exchange here there are five operators: Misses Clara Robb, Elizabeth Longwell, Regina Rapp, Blanche McGarvey and Mand Woomer who work day and night, Sundays included, at one of the finest interchangeable switch boards made by the Western Telephone Construction Co. They have in direct service 275 phones in Bellefonte, 96 of which are on private lines, 98 at State College, 57 at Centre Hall, 48 at Millheim, 58 at Snow Shoe and 260 at Lock Haven and to give you an idea of how busy they are on last Friday they say they had a very light day yet there were 257 calls to Centre Hall alone.

It is really remarkable that a concern that is not yet four years old has grown to such proportions already and we hope that with its continued extensions will come a realization that its duty to Bellefonte, where it has been treated so fair, is to remove the line of poles that an indifferent council permitted it to plant across the "Diamond". That is the one black mark the new corporation has and it will surely see that it is wiped off ere long.