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COLUMBIA DEMOCRAT, VOL. LI, NO 1

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SELECT STORY.

THE SENORITA'S SLIPPERS.

This is the story of an adventure which happened to me in a lonely inn in the heart of the Pyrenees. Every year Robert Fortescue and I used to start off for our holiday tour on the continent—that was in our bachelor days, of course. Well, it was the last tour Fortescue and I were destined to have together, as it turned out, and after much hesitation and debating of pros and cons we finally agreed to try quite new grounds, and we started off for the Pyrenees. We stayed for a few days at Pau, and after some preliminary excursions among the neighboring heights, to get ourselves into proper walking trim we made our final arrangements, and having hired one of the best guides I ever knew, Jose Martinez by name, we said farewell to our friends at the Hotel de la Poste, and set off cheerfully for our three weeks' sojourn in the mountains. I won't trouble you with an account of our daily wanderings, but I will go on to the night of the adventure in question. We had, of course, provided ourselves with guns, etc., when we left England, hoping to be lucky enough to get a shot at a wolf at least, or, as our vanity fondly whispered, perhaps a bear; but hitherto, although we had been nearly a fortnight in the mountains, we had seen nothing larger in the way of game than a hare.

Well, one afternoon, Fortescue, Jose, and I held a consultation as to what we should do. We were at a point where we must decide whether to go down to the little village of San Luis where Jose assured us we should find a good inn and a civil landlord, or whether we should go higher up into the mountains and take our chance of whatever accommodation we might find. Of course the latter suggestion proved the more attractive with the half tinge of adventure and uncertainty to the prosaic little inn at San Luis; and so we decided notwithstanding some foreboding shakes of the head from Jose.

We toiled upwards and onwards, traversing a wild and dreary expanse of country, now passing through dark odorous pine woods, now creeping round some bold shoulder of a mountain whence we looked down on dim, unexplored ravines, or farther on saw some higher mountain range, its dark sides wooded with the gloomy cork tree, or rent by some hissing torrent, whose splash was the only sound that broke the silence, and round whose lofty crest wheeled an eagle in majestic solitude.

Talking cheerily to each other, or listening to Jose's inexhaustible stock of legends, we at length found ourselves close upon an inn, and seeing a ruddy and cheerful glow from a grate fire shining through the open doorway, we decided to stay for the night if we could be taken in. Jose told us the house had been much frequented in bygone days by contrabandists, and that once Napoleon, or one of his generals (I could not understand which), had slept there during the flight from Spain.

The host, a stout, good-humored, gay little Bayonnese, came forward at once, and, after a few words from Jose, in the manner of Spaniards placed all that he had at our disposal. All that we wanted just then was supper and bed; and while the former was getting ready we went upstairs to see what the sleeping accommodation was like.

Neither Napoleon nor the contrabandists can have been particular as to their bedrooms. There was but one room with any pretension to comfort or cleanliness, and in that room we both decided to sleep, telling Jose to get a fire lighted and another bed made up while we were having supper.

Thinking over things afterwards, I remember a strange look flitted across the landlord's face when Jose told him which room we meant to have, but he said nothing and slightly shrugged his shoulders. However, he and his wife and daughter got us a very decent supper of stewed hare and a bottle or two of most irreproachable wine, which so far restored our content and good-humor that we sat up until far into the night talking and listening to Jose and our host, who were discussing the chances of sport higher up the mountains on the morrow.

"Come! things look better, said Fortescue as we entered our sleeping-room where now a wood fire crackled and glowed warmly on the hearth. "But look here, the old woman has left her shoes behind her—no! they must be the daughter's; and nicely shaped feet they are too—no abominations of high heels or pointed toes there; and what a beautifully arched instep! the traditional scream of water might safely pass under it," said Bob, who was a great admirer of pretty feet, "I'll have a look at that girl to-morrow."

"Perhaps I had better put them outside the door; she may want them in the morning before we are down," I said considerately; and I suited the action to the word.

"I say, Jack, don't make such a row, you'll rouse the whole house. Jove! what a draught!" said Bob, who was lighting another pipe at the fire.

"Row! I made no row. I put them down as gently as possible," I answered, taking off my shooting-jacket and winding up my watch.

"Well, old boy, don't be crusty; but—hullo! I say, Jack, didn't you put those shoes out, after all?"

"Y-e-s," I answered slowly, for I was unlacing my boots at that moment, "Why, you heard me, didn't you?"

"Well, there they are, standing in exactly the same place."

"Nonsense!" I said, for I knew Bob was somewhat given to playing practical jokes, but I raised my head, and sure enough there were the shoes that I had a minute before thrown out.

Bob and I looked at each other for a second, then—

"Put them out yourself this time, Bob," I said, "if you don't believe me," and quietly, without a word, he took them up and gently placed them outside. I watched him keenly. As he closed the door a shrill moaning noise floated through the room, and a sudden draught seemed to blow the candles almost out.

"How cold it is," said Robert with a shiver, "I almost wish we had taken Jose's advice and gone down to San Luis. I don't—"But he stopped abruptly, and touching me on the arm, pointed to the spot whence he had taken the slippers, *and there they were again!*

Now I think you will admit that I am not a superstitious fellow, or yet easily frightened; but I certainly did feel a thrill of nervousness run through me at the mysterious re-appearance of those horrid slippers, as I now began to think of them. Moreover, I knew Fortescue had a very sensitive temperament, and had been advised by his doctor to avoid all mental excitement. Therefore I had a double reason for treating the occurrence as a joke; first, to persuade myself that it was absurd to regard the incident as supernatural, and secondly, that by so believing I might sufficiently influence Fortescue to think the same.

While these thoughts flashed through my mind Fortescue still had his hand on my arm, grasping it unconsciously with an evertightening grasp; his other hand was outstretched, pointing to the slippers, and his eyes were fixed on them with an expression of horror impossible to describe.

"Come, Fortescue," I said with an effort, trying to laugh easily, "don't be so tragic, man; remember it is late and we must be up early if we want to have a try for a bear," and I gently shook him by the shoulder.

The action seemed to rouse him from the trance of horror he had fallen into and with a great gasp for breath he passed his hand over his eyes and in a weak voice said: "O, Jack, is it you? What do you want?"

"I want you to get to rest like a sensible man instead of striking attitudes," I returned crossly.

"I could not sleep if I did go to bed," he answered. "I shall have another pipe and sit by the fire awhile. Deliste," he continued slowly and with great emphasis, "there is somebody standing in those slippers. In a short time I should have seen her face."

"Are you mad or drunk, my friend? Or do you take me for a fool?" I exclaimed, turning to look at him before lying down.

"Neither the one nor the other," he returned so gently that I felt ashamed of my rude speech; and after again reminding him of the hard day before us, I pulled the bed-clothes over my head in such fashion that I could watch him, for, in spite of myself, I did not feel easy about him. But so much for good intentions, my head no sooner touched the pillow than I fell fast asleep.

It could not have been more than half an hour before I woke suddenly and completely with a start, and the feeling that some one in desperate need had shouted to me by name. So suddenly had I awakened, that for an instant I could not recollect where I was. Then I sprang out of bed, and I saw Fortescue lying back in his chair, apparently in the last agonies of strangulation; his eyes starting from his head, were fixed in an intense and horrible stare at something just above him, and his hands were fighting and tearing to remove something, invisible to me, from his throat. Also I noticed that the slippers were now close beside his chair, and the heel of one of them was raised, as a woman stands when bending over something.

I seized the water-jug and dashed the contents in his face. Then I flung the door wide open and taking him in my arms with a strength which astonishes me now to think of, bore him out of that accursed room, shouting wildly the while for Jose. The uproar which I made quickly brought not only Jose, but the landlord and his family on the scene.

Good heavens! how they chattered and crossed themselves and muttered charms against the power of the evil one! And in what an inexplicable mixture of French and Spanish and English I endeavored to tell them what had happened. I would not give it you if I could.

At length Fortescue seems to be recovering, and fearing that the sight of the room might have an ill effect on him I made Jose take a blanket from the bed, and placing my poor friend on it, we together carried him down the narrow stairs to the little room where he had supped. Here the fire was fortunately still alight, and the landlord, who was most anxious to do all in his power for us, hastily threw on some logs of wood, and telling his wife to boil a can of water, left the room. He presently returned, a bottle of cordial under his arm. Then sending his daughter for various condiments, he skillfully concocted a mixture, the like of which I never tasted before or since, and handed us two glasses, under the influence of which I saw to my satisfaction that Fortescue gradually regained his strength.

"Come, landlord," I said peremptorily, having asked Fortescue whether he would care to talk about the mysterious affair—"come landlord, you must tell us the meaning of those ghostly slippers; for twice we placed them outside the door, and twice they were returned to the same spot by some invisible agency, and when my friend was taken ill, they were standing close beside his chair."

Here our host glanced uneasily at Fortescue, and, crossing himself, respectfully asked of Jose his name.

"El Senor Fortescue," was the answer.

He shook his head as though puzzled then muttered something to himself in Spanish, of which I could catch nothing but the French name "Lamonte."

"Come now," I repeated impatiently, "there is something to tell, I am convinced; draw up to the fire and tell us all about this mystery."

Seeing that we were determined to hear all, the landlord, with an expressive shrug of the shoulders, sat himself by the fire, and the two women, who had been listening attentively the while, expressed an opinion that it was not worth while going to bed again for the short night which yet remained, with the greatest sang-froid, took each a Spanish cigarillo from our host's store, lighted them and commenced smoking, an example we had no scruple in following. And this is the story we heard from the landlord and interpreted by Jose when we could not follow the Franco Spanish patois.

Manuela Garcia was the beloved and only daughter of a famous guerrilla chief, who at one time lent considerable aid to the Spanish government during the French invasion of that country. Among his many followers, Manuela, who was remarkable for her great beauty, even in a land where most girls are beautiful, was worshiped and adored by all; but none with such hopeless intensity as by young Miguel Cortez, one of the youngest members of the band, with nothing to recommend him but a handsome face and figure, and the reputation of being an unerring marksman. Of course Manuela was not insensible to the devotion paid her by Miguel; but her father, who knew most things that went on around him, gave the young man to clearly understand that he had other views for his daughter than to let her marry one of the poorest of his followers.

However, time went on; Pedro Garcia and his men gained universal notoriety by their daring reprisals on the hated enemies and invaders of their beloved country. Many were the expeditions sent out against them for the purpose of surprising them in their mountain fastnesses, only to return to camp beaten and disorganized, with marvelous tales of their strategy and ferocity. One young man especially was always mentioned as though he bore a charmed life; and to such an extent had this belief grown that the French commandant, to encourage his men, offered a large reward should he be taken or killed. Needless to say this was Miguel Cortez.

Now, none of all this was lost upon Manuela for Miguel's fostermother, who was also her duenna and humble companion, would pour forth her praises and recount all his deeds of daring and the dangers he ran into Manuela's not unwilling ear, until at last her heart fairly melted and she told Miguel, when next he pleaded for a kind word, that let her father try to dispose of her hand as he liked, she would never wed any other than Miguel Cortez. Some little time after the guerrilla scouts brought Pedro Garcia word that an attacking force of unusual strength was being sent against him. Carefully selecting his most trusted followers he posted them in places where almost invisible themselves any one approaching their camp was at their mercy; and to the one who should succeed in capturing the leader he promised that he should receive Manuela as his bride, and be made second only to himself in the band.

How proud Manuela felt of her handsome lover, when he stepped forward and begged his chief to let him have the foremost post, and ere he departed he bent before her, and, kissing her hand, murmured:

"With such a prize before, Senorita, I shall succeed."

What a time of suspense did Juana and her charge endure all that day and night! and when the sound of heavy firing was heard echoing through the hills, Manuela's anxiety became almost uncontrollable, and with difficulty was she restrained by Juana from rushing down the steep pathway to try to gain intelligence.

At length she heard the steady tramp of a number of armed men coming up the mountain. "Oh! they are coming! they are coming, mia madra!" she cried; and the two women ran to the edge of the parapet, which had been built for the better protection of the hut—for it was little better—should it be attacked unawares.

Juana listened, then shook her head. "That is not the way our men generally come back," she said doubtfully. "Oh, holy Virgin, what is that?" for as she spoke a sharp volley rang through the wood simultaneously with a piercing cry for "Manuela."

"Child, child!" she continued, "remember your father's commands, do not leave this plateau! come back, Manuela!" striving to hold the girl, who flung off her restraining grasp, and with distracted looks disappeared down the mountain.

No one could tell exactly how it had happened; among some of the guerrillas who escaped there were whispers of treachery. At the moment when Garcia and his chief men imagined they had driven back the enemy, a fresh force attacked them in the rear. Thus surprised panic seized them and Garcia and Miguel were, after a desperate resistance, made prisoners. By order of the Commandante Lamonte they were marched to an open place and there shot.

Such was the sight which met Manuela's eyes, as like a mad woman she burst through the row of French soldiers who had fired the fatal volley. They were resting on their muskets, while the commandant and two sergeants examined the lifeless bodies of Pedro Garcia and Miguel Cortez, and the smoke from the late discharge still hung in a faint wreath over the little group. With a wild scream of agony, that thrilled the hardened hearts of the French soldiery, Manuela flung herself on the ground beside what had been so lately her brave, handsome young lover, who had left her a few hours ago filled with such high hopes and the certainty of success, and in heartbreaking accents implored him to speak to her.

Then starting to her feet with the fury of one possessed, she stood before Lamonte, and, cursing him and his descendants and followers, fortold the destruction and ruin that would shortly befall the French in Spain.

It was after the decisive battle of Victoria; the French were flying terror-stricken across the Pyrenees. In the panic many became separated from their comrades, and, strange to say—indeed, it might almost be called fate—one night Lamonte and two or three of his soldiers found themselves cold, weary and hungry close to this inn, where after the death of Garcia, Manuela and Juana had fled. A violent storm had commenced, and, rendered desperate by their misfortunes, they resolved to spend the night here, trusting that the loneliness and seclusion of the spot the news of the French reverses would not be known. Telling his men to be on the watch in case of a surprise, Lamonte retired to rest.

When Manuela discovered who was an inmate of their house a deadly resolve filled her mind. "Surely the Virgin and the saints have at last delivered him into my hands," she thought.

On one pretext and another she waited until the soldiers, having eaten and drunk, had fallen asleep. Then she quietly made her way to Lamonte's room and walked in. He was lying back in a chair, more than half asleep, when she entered, and she stood in the middle of the room motionless, gazing at him, her great eyes blazing with rage, her lips drawn and tight with the intensity of her passion. At length the fixed gaze seemed to rouse him; he stirred uneasily, opened his eyes, and recognized her.

"Ah, ha! ma belle" he exclaimed, with brutal insolence, "What are you doing here? Have you come to tell me you prefer a living French lover to a dead Spaniard?"

"I have come," she replied, coldly, her fingers working convulsively the while—"I have come to kill you—to avenge my father and my betrothed's cruel deaths. You need not look for help," she continued; "no one can come to your aid; your men are asleep and you are at my mercy! Yes coward and insolent that you are, saints have at last delivered you into my hands, and if you escape me now, may my soul never rest in paradise until you and all of your name are exterminated!"

So saying, she sprang to the side of his chair, and before he could resist she had him by the throat. A fearful struggle followed. He, weakened by hunger and privation, was no match for the strong mountain-bred girl, wrought to frenzy by the memories of her dead father and lover, and her blazing eyes, gleaming teeth and set face as she stood over him, pressing the breath of his lungs, made her look like a fiend incarnate.

At this point of the narrative I happened to look at Fortescue—he was leaning forward, listening intently. He drew a deep breath.

"Jove!" he said, "how exactly it describes the face that was bending over me before I fainted! But go on, padre; I shall have something to say after you have finished. Did she kill him outright?"

"No. Old Juana, who also had her suspicions raised, finding Manuela did not follow her to her room, went by instinct, as it were, to the guest chamber, and hearing the sound of a desperate struggle for life going on, rushed down to the hall where the soldiers were lying about, roused them, saying their captain needs them, and led the way to his room. They were but just in time; another minute and it would have been too late. Lamonte barely escaped with his life, but the excitement destroyed Manuela's reason, and it was a mad woman that Juana led out of that accursed chamber. She only lived a very short time after; and they say," added our host, "that owing to her vow her soul cannot rest. I am sorry it should have happened to you, gentlemen; but when you chose that room I thought you would be quite safe, being English and not named Lamonte, though it is a common enough name about here."

"Well," said Fortescue, "it is a queer coincidence, but I suppose the reason why I was selected as the object for the ghost's ministrations was that my father was a Lamotte, and on marrying my brother he had to take her name with the property; consequently the gentleman we have just heard about was my grandfather. I say, Jack, is there any more of that mixture left?"

There is not much more to tell. We did not go higher up the mountains next day, but went down to San Luis, though Fortescue would not admit it, his nerves were much shaken by his adventure.

It was the last excursion we took together, for before the next summer, circumstances over which we had no control, and never shall have, put an end to our bachelor wanderings.

Such is my ghost story; what do you think of it?—*London World.*

Mollie Maguire Days.

HOW A DRUNKEN FUNERAL PROCESSION LOST THE CORPSE OUT OF A SHROUD.

Mayor Jones was a resident of Tamaqua in the days when the Mollie Maguires held full sway and men's lives were worth little in the eyes of the cut-throats of the hard-coal region. The Mayor's description of the mode of conducting funerals in the vicinity of Tamaqua is excellent and well worth listening to. He says that the people who followed a corpse to the grave in that place usually got as drunk as lords and it was not an unusual thing to see a crowd of one hundred or two hundred intoxicated people staggering along and howling like demons, while the corpse, tied in a large sheet and hung on a pole, was carried along on the shoulders of a couple of men. On one occasion, he remembers, a funeral procession of this character started to the cemetery and the gang was so drunk that it lost the corpse. A little doctor coming by shortly afterwards saw the corpse lying in the road and, whipping up his horse, overtook the crowd about a mile or more away. When he told them they had left the corpse behind they were so angry at him for not bringing it along with him that they forthwith proceeded to give him such a beating that he was unable to leave his bed for nearly a month after. One day the Mayor volunteered to play the drum in a procession that was being held to celebrate St. Patrick's Day in the morning. He marched through the streets at the head of a crowd about two miles long and in the evening, after a hard day's work, he was invited to a dance in one of the halls of the town. He accordingly dressed in his best toggery and, feeling proud of his plug hat, felt certain that he would have a good time. Being rather modest he at first contented himself in sitting back and watching the others, but after awhile he concluded to take a hand himself. Selecting one of the best looking girls in the room he led her to a place in one of the sets and was preparing to trip the light fantastic. But alas for human hopes! He had scarcely taken his place when he felt a hand on the nape of his neck and one on the other appropriate place and then he described a semi circle, passing clear through the window and landing outside the house minus his silk hat and with his dignity completely shaken up. He didn't go back to get his hat or see who his muscular friend was, either, but rested satisfied that the girl he was about to dance with belonged to some other fellow who had been celebrating St. Patrick's Day for all it was worth. That was the last time he furnished free music to the unappreciative residents of Tamaqua.—*Williamsport Sun and Banner.*

Keep on gathering and planting nuts, it is the coming industry. The alleged difficulty of transplanting nut trees is nothing more or less than false alarm sounded by the careless operator.

The Cost of Smoke.

LOSS OF PROPERTY BY FIRE LESS THAN THE CONSUMPTION OF TOBACCO.

From the American Grocer.

Last year the losses by reported fires in the United States reached a total of $120,000,000, or an average monthly loss of $10,000,000. This is regarded as an enormous waste and is largely due to incendiarism and carelessness. How to reduce the amount so lost is a matter of constant study. Legislatures, local governments, insurance companies, make regulations and exercise the greatest care to prevent fires. And yet the loss they occasion is $800,000 per annum less than the amount paid by consumers for cigars and $86,500,000 less than the total cost of tobacco consumed in smoke.

Last year tax was paid upon 4,510,898,488 cigars. The average smoker is content with a cigar worth $30 per thousand, or one that retails for five cents. On that basis there annually goes up in smoke, $180,000,000, or $15,000,000 every month, or half a million dollars every day. In addition, boys waste on cigarettes $6,500,000, and those who prefer a pipe a further sum of $20,000,000.

How many smoke? If we deduct from the total population as non-smokers all children under 15, constituting forty per cent. of the total population of 60,000,000, it leaves 36,000,000, of whom one-half are females, deducting these gives a male population above the age of 15, of 18,000,000. If six out of every ten males above the age of 15 smoke, it means that 10,800,000 persons consume 3,510,898,488 cigars, or an average per smoker of 325 cigars per annum. This is less than one cigar per day. The average smoker, however, is not apt to be contented with a daily allowance of one cigar, demanding at least two. If the latter basis is the nearer correct, the army of cigar smokers would be 4,800,449, being eight per cent. of the total population above the age of 15.

Whatever the number of smokers, it is a moderate estimate to place the cost of smoking to the people of the United States at $205,500,000. If the cost of chewing tobacco is added the total expenditure for tobacco reaches $256,500,000; that is a sum that represents a per capita tax of $3.44 per annum. If the number of smokers is 4,809,499, the average expense of smoking is $42.09 each per annum; if the number is 7,000,000, the cost is $28.64 per individual; if 10,800,000 it falls to $18.12, a sum sufficient to afford one five-cent cigar daily and leave a balance of eighty-seven cents for extras.

What relation the expenditure for the smoking habit bears to the consumption of a few other articles more or less of a luxury is seen by the following exhibit, the figures showing the estimated cost to the consumer, averaging coffee at twenty cents per pound tea at fifty cents, cocoa and chocolate at forty cents, sugar at six cents:

Alcoholic and malt liquors,	$700,000,000
——Tobacco,	256,500,000
——Sugar,	187,000,000
——Coffee, tea and cocoa	130,000,000
——Schools	110,000,000

Sugar is the only article that is universally used, and is properly regarded a staple and necessary article of diet. About