

"My princess," said he again, this time in Spanish, "ever since I first saw you my love for you has grown with the days. All this year since I have toiled that I might win you for my prize. Can the princess learn to love me?"

"A blush spread over her face, she raised her soft dark eyes to his an instant, then dropped them and answered softly, 'The princess needs not to learn.'

"There was no sudden thrill, but a feeling of great happiness filled his heart, and in a moment she had given him her first kiss of love.

"If Gertrude Grey had had more of this true simplicity in her heart, Dale's life would have been far different, and a rare wild flower would have been born to blush unseen in the South American forest.

"The toquis was in a rage when he heard that the successful suitor was only a bogus Araucanian, and would have taken his head off in a minute, but he loved Nakomis more than his life, and she made him consent to their marriage. However, he was reconciled when Dale explained that he was not a Spaniard but an American, and promised to stay and be chief next in power to himself."

"Now isn't that a crazy story, Perkins?" said Jaimeson, as he finished. "I knew you wouldn't believe a word of it."

Perkins settled back in his chair and gazed over toward the lake a moment.

"In the main, I believe it's true."

"Every word of it is true," said Jaimeson.

"Then you haven't told me all. The man Dale didn't keep his promise to the toquis, but is traveling in the United States at present under the name of Jaimeson."

If lightning had struck Jaimeson he could not have looked more surprised. He stared hard at Perkins a moment, and then he said, slowly, "And you are that Chicago reporter."

With a triumphant smile, Perkins replied, "I am."

Jaimeson laughed long and merrily, his wife joining.

"What a joke," he said. "I didn't dream that your New York correspondent would be foolish enough to believe me. A funny thought struck me, and I told him I was a South American chief going to Chicago. As to the story, it's a yarn my sailor uncle told me when I was a boy. Personally, I repeat, I have nothing for publication."