

# FRANCISCO'S RIDE.

By Free S. Benzley.  
(Copyright, 1911.)

IN ONE of the lovely valleys of San Luis, Obispo county, Cal., lies the ranch del Santa Theresa, the home of Senor Don Alfredo Rodriguez.

In an easy chair on the veranda sat Don Alfredo himself—a dark swarthy man, whose face was almost the color of mahogany. His hair was a grizzly gray; his mustache and side whiskers were worn after the style of the old Spanish grandees, for Don Alfredo always kept in mind that he came from one of the aristocratic families of Mexico.

Near him was his wife, a lady whose large black eyes, creamy complexion, and a certain dignity of carriage proclaimed her Castilian blood. Don Alfredo seemed to be watching for some one, and glanced impatiently up the valley.

"Look," said Don Alfredo, addressing the lady in Spanish, "look, and tell me if you can see our boy, Francisco; it is time that he was back from Jolon."

"I see nothing, Senor," she said.

"I hear hoofs," said Don Alfredo. "Ah, here he comes right over the hill. See the rascal ride! He will break his neck or kill his horse."

Dashing down the hill at breakneck speed, a handsome, dark-skinned boy of 16, spurred his horse to a flying leap across a ditch, easily clearing it.

The parents watched him admiringly. He was their only son, and all their hopes were centered in him. A few yards from the veranda he reined back his steed. The horse braced himself, jumped stiff-legged, all four feet together, and came to an instant stop. A look of pride came over the father's face, but otherwise he made no sign.

Francisco raised his hat. "Senor," he said, "great news; I have a letter from Clarence Grey. He asks me to come to San Francisco for a long visit, and to bring my horse with me. Clarence writes," said the boy, excitedly, "that the president of the United States is soon to be there. The whole city will be trimmed with flags; there will be music and fireworks, and the launching of a great war ship; it will be a grand festa for a whole week."

Don Alfredo's face colored. "Go put your horse in the corral; we will talk of this afterwards," he said.

"But here is also a letter from Senor Grey to you, papa, and one from Senor Grey to you, mamma," continued the boy. He translated as he read, for his parents were deficient in English. Both notes were very cordial, seconding Clarence's invitation and assuring the parents that a hearty welcome awaited their son if he should come.

The Grey family had formerly been neighbors of the Rodriguez family, living on an adjoining ranch. But during the "great boom," four years previous, Mr. Grey had sold his ranch for a sum that made him a wealthy man, and had removed his family to San Francisco. The two families had been much more intimate than the Spanish and American families generally are, and the two boys were the best of friends.

When the boy rode away the mother looked appealingly to the husband and father. "It would be a great pleasure for him," she said.

"Of course," said Don Alfredo, "but when once he has tasted such pleasure and excitement, will he be satisfied to return and live on the ranch again. I fear not."

"But the chance to see the president, the music, the grand sights; and then the kind invitation of our friends—surely we must not slight them," pleaded the mother.

"Very true," replied Don Alfredo briefly; and the mother said nothing more.

The supper was eaten in silence. Then Don Alfredo turned to his son and said: "Now, Senor, what more?"

"Clarence says," answered Francisco, reading from the letter, "that he is a member of a riding club, and that some of their best riders are to act as escort for the president's carriage; and if I come, I shall be sure to have an invitation to ride with them. Would not that be an honor, Senor?"

All Don Alfredo's pride was stirred at the prospect of his son's riding with the president's escort. On horseback Francisco would be the peer of any of them. "Indeed it would be an honor," he answered warmly, "and we owe it to our good friend, Senor Grey, to accept his kind invitation. To refuse would be an insult. You must go, and you shall take 'the Rabbit' for your horse."

Francisco's eye sparkled. "The Rabbit," a spotted white and chestnut, so named for his great leaping powers, was accounted the best saddle horse in that part of the country.

"Go you, to-morrow," continued the father, "to San Luis. Have Pedro Sobornes make you the finest saddle that he can; tell him to put ten pounds of silver on it. Take that yellow wildcat skin to line the sweat cloth with; take the belly of the mountain lion skin for stirrup linings. Go to the tailor's and order a new suit of clothes; and get yourself new boots and a fine new hat. I would not have our friends ashamed of our son. And take plenty of money, my boy; go as a gentleman, and remember always that you are 'un caballero Castellano.'"

The trip to San Luis was made, and the several orders delivered. The saddle and bridle came home so covered with silver that even Don Alfredo was satisfied; and on one side, neatly coiled, was a new riata of extra length and great strength.

When all was ready, this was the boy's costume: a white hat, with stiff brim; a blue broadcloth sack coat, with

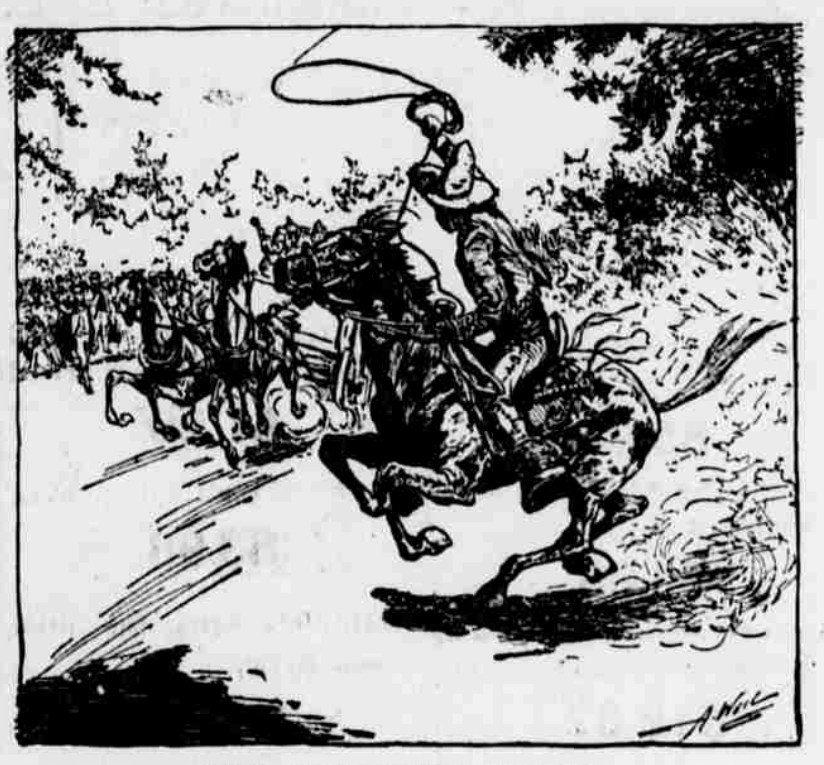
velvet collar; a crimson velvet vest, with goldstone buttons, light fitting pearl colored trousers, with wide spring bottoms, an elaborately embroidered shirt bosom, with a necktie of green, white and red, the national colors of Mexico. But the boots—they were the triumph; so slender, so small, with heels fully four inches high, sloping forward to almost the middle of his foot. A great ruby, a family heirloom, adorned his shirt bosom.

Francisco's journey to San Francisco was uneventful. Clarence met him at the station, and Mrs. Grey welcomed him cordially. Mary, the 21-year-old sister of Clarence, also extended her hand in kindly greeting; and as Francisco looked at her smiling face, flossy blond hair, big blue eyes, and becoming toilet, he thought her a very angel. He made his grandest bow, then pressed her hand to his lips. The others smiled and Mary blushed, but the evident sincerity of his admiration pleased her greatly.

After the boys had retired that night the older people held a short consultation. "How shall we manage to make him change that suit?" said Mrs. Grey. "The vest is bad enough, but that cravat—it is simply impossible."

"I think that I can manage the cravat," said Mary.

In the morning Mary called Francisco to the parlor, and taking his hand in hers, said: "Frank, when you write to



THEY SAW IT FLY FROM HIS HAND.

your mother, you may tell her that I am to be married soon; and as they say a piece of the bride's dress brings good luck, I have made for you this cravat from a piece of my wedding dress. It is ashes of roses—just the color for you; you'll wear it for my sake, won't you?"

Francisco thanked her warmly. He would gladly have risked his life for that charming girl.

After breakfast the boys went to the depot for "The Rabbit." Clarence was disappointed to see a medium-sized scrubby-looking horse, blotched over with chestnut and white—the sure sign of Arabian ancestry still seen among the horses of Spanish Californians.

"A regular bruno!" was Clarence's mental comment. "The Rabbit's" eyes were his greatest peculiarity; the right one was brown, soft and pleasant; the left one was a light blue and white—what is known as a "wall eye"; and seen from that side a more vicious-looking brute than the Rabbit could hardly be found. His character was fairly indexed by his eyes, good and pleasant at times, unruly and treacherous at others.

Ben, Mr. Grey's negro coachman, was to lead the horse home. For a block the Rabbit walked as meekly as a lamb; then a street car attracted his attention.

There was a rearing and a plunge, and the Rabbit went flying down the street toward the depot. A sharp cry of "Runaway! Look out!" startled the boys, and they saw the Rabbit coming back on the run, making vicious kicks at every team, his ears laid back and his teeth snapping.

Francisco ran out and called him by name. Immediately the horse stopped and allowed himself to be caught. Black Ben came running up, breathless and indignant. Again he took the halter to lead the horse away, but the Rabbit braided himself stiffly and refused to move.

A crowd began to gather. Clarence was greatly mortified, but Francisco took it as a matter of course. According to a truckman, he politely asked the loan of a blacksnake whip. Taking the halter from Ben, he laid the whip over the Rabbit's head and flanks most unmercifully. To the surprise of the spectators, the horse made little effort to escape the blows. Finally, giving the halter back to Ben, Francisco slapped the Rabbit under the flank and spoke sharply: "Anda, pronto!" The horse immediately stepped off. "He'll go all right now," said Francisco.

The next two days were spent in sight seeing, and to the Spanish lad it seemed as if all the wonders of the world were to be viewed. On Saturday afternoon the riding club were to take a canter out to Golden Gate park. The riders started, and the Rabbit, with the idea that it was to be a "go as you please" race, immediately started off on a keen run, and had to be held down and whipped soundly before he would jog slowly along with the others.

The band had just finished a selection with a grand flourish, when sharp cries startled everyone. "Look out! Runaway! Stop them!" Coming down the driveway at a furious rate was a pair of bay horses with a carriage containing two ladies. The driver's seat

was empty, and the reins were dragging on the ground. The horses were dashing directly towards the space in front of the music stand, which was closely packed with carriages, all containing ladies and children. As the team passed the Riding Club, Clarence cried out in anguish: "Oh! boys, it's our team!" and he started after in a vain hope that he might be able to do something. A wall of terror went up from all the spectators. Behind the flying carriage came a couple of mounted park policemen, but too far away to be of any assistance.

But as they passed there came the sharp "click, click, click," of hoofs that hardly seemed to touch the ground, and the Rabbit shot by like a flash, his ears laid back and his nose straight out in front. He was fairly flying, and his rider was driving the spurs at every jump. The horse seemed to know instinctively what he was going after, for the bridle lay loose upon his neck; and Francisco was uncoiling the riata, gathering a large loop in his right hand. Just at that moment a little two-year-old child ran in front, and again a cry of horror was raised. Then the Rabbit showed himself worthy of his name; a pulling lift on the bridle from his rider, and he went flying over the child's head.

The carriage and its occupants were now frightfully near the crowded thoroughfare. But Francisco was al-

most up to them, and around his head, swinging in a wide circle, was the loop of the riata. As the people looked, they saw it fly into the air and settle down over the heads of the runaway horses.

The change in the Rabbit was wonderful. When the riata shot out his head came up, his ears were erect, and his eyes fairly flashed. The instant the riata landed Francisco caught two or three turns around the horn of the saddle, while his horse jumped stiff-legged sideways, and braced himself for the strain.

The noose tightened instantly on the necks of the runaways, brought their heads together, and checked, but by no means stopped them. The rawhide rope spun smoking around the horn of the saddle, and nothing but the skill of Francisco in letting the slack run prevented him and his horse from being overturned.

The Rabbit, still braced stiffly, was plowing the ground with all his hoofs. The riata ran out and the loose end went flying. Again the Rabbit darted ahead. Francisco, bending down, caught both the reins of the runaway team and the riata; in an instant they were over the saddle horn, and the little mustang was again braced and his hoofs plowing. The jerk threw the carriage horses down; they were up at once and plunging wildly, but not before the Spanish boy had leaped from his horse and grasped each by the bridle—the Rabbit meanwhile tugging bravely in the opposite direction.

All this occurred in a few seconds. Strong hands grasped the refractory steeds and subdued them. Francisco, breathless, dusty and bruised—for he had not entirely escaped the striking hoofs—was the hero of the hour. The Rabbit, too, came in for his full share of admiration, as he stood there with panting nostrils, heaving sides and bleeding flanks.

That evening there was a grateful group around the fireside at Mr. Grey's house; thankful to a kind Providence that a strong arm and cool head, joined with trained skill, had prevented a terrible disaster. Francisco affected to treat the matter lightly. "My friends," he said, "there was nothing else to do. My wife's cravat has brought me good luck. I will never part with it."

At the Rancho del Santa Theresa, three weeks later, there was great excitement. The young "patron" had returned from the great city. Not only had he seen the president of the United States, but he had actually shaken hands with him! And he had shown the city people how to ride, and had saved the lives of his friends. Don Alfredo's pride knew no bounds.

"Call all my people; they must know what my son has done," he said.

So all the vaqueros and herdsmen were called to the house, and a keg of wine was set out for them. With many "vivas," "saludes," and "gloriosos," they drank health and prosperity to "El Senor Francisco," and long life to his wonderful horse, the Rabbit.

So Different.  
Sarienne—Reginald, how that bear in the museum hugs that post. I like him Reggy.  
Reginald (suspiciously)—You do? (Fondly)—Yes, Reggy, he reminds me so much of you.  
Of me?  
(Coldly)—Yes; he's so different.—De-troit Free Press.

## THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

International Lesson for January 20, 1911.—How to Pray.—Matt. 6:5-15. [Arranged from Peloubet's Notes.] GOLDEN TEXT.—Pray to thy Father which is in secret.—Matt. 6:6. THE SECTION includes verses 1-5—instructions as to heart-worship, with the emphasis on Prayer. TIME.—In the summer of A. D. 28. PLACE.—The Mount of Beatitudes, or Horns of Hattin.

THE LESSON.  
I. Heart Worship.—Vs. 5-8. In the first half of this chapter Jesus gives us a lesson on heart worship, and applies the principle He lays down to giving, to praying and to fasting. The principle is that of absolute sincerity, without sham, without pretense, without unworthy motive concealed under the apparently good object.

The Principle Applied to Giving.—One should give aims for the sake of helping others, because it is right, because it is pleasing to God, because it is the natural outflow of love. So far as aims are given for the purpose of being honored and admired, it is hypocrisy and not virtue.

The Principle Applied to Prayer.—Vs. 5-8. "Thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are," who do not really pray, do not desire or expect what they ask, or hold communion with God; but desire to appear very religious to men, and hence stand apart like the Pharisee in the parable, as if absorbed in devotion. "In the synagogues," the proper places of worship, where the worshippers can see them, "and in the corners of the streets," where they could be seen from four directions. "That they may be seen of men," who will praise them for their piety and think them very good. "They have their reward." The reward they sought. They got no answers, for they did not seek anything from God.

6. "But thou, when thou prayest," your real purpose being to pray, "enter into thy closet," or secret chamber, where others can neither see nor hear. "Shut the door;" to keep out all other persons, as well as to shut out worldly thoughts. "Pray to thy Father," who is your friend, who loves to aid his children. "Which is in secret." The invisible spiritual God. "Which seeth in secret;" Knows every secret place, every hidden desire. "Shall Reward thee openly;" Better, as in R. V., recompense thee, answer your prayers. Give you the things you ask for, or, if these are not good for you, give you the better things you would have asked for, had you seen as God sees.

7. "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions;" The repeating over and over of set forms, as if there were some virtue in the mere act of praying; as if God would do something for them, on account of "their much speaking."

8. "Your Father;" No earthly father cares for a lot of heartless repetitions. Nor does our Heavenly Father. "Knoweth;" Appreciates; He feels for you, therefore you can come to Him with freedom, and ask what you will.

II. The Lord's Prayer.—Vs. 9-13. 9. "After this manner therefore pray ye;" With no vain repetitions, but as children asking of a father the things they need. (1). The fact that Christ gave His prayer in two different forms shows that no exact form of words was required; and the fact that Luke, writing at least 25 years after the formation of the church, gives one form, and Matthew another, shows that no obligatory form was in use in the churches.

Note that first in this prayer are the petitions for others—for God's honor, and the coming of His kingdom among men. After that, both in place and importance, come the petitions for ourselves. The very act of praying such a prayer enlarges and broadens the soul, and is an antidote to selfishness. In the two most important recorded prayers of Christ—at the institution of His supper (John 17), and in Gethsemane, He begins His prayer with petitions for Himself, but the spirit is precisely the same as in the first petition of the Lord's Prayer. He would be glorified in order that His Father might be glorified; and He would have the cup pass from Him, but only if the Lord's will could be best done in that way. He that does not want first of all to have the kingdom come within himself, and to do God's will as it is done in Heaven, cannot sincerely pray that others may do God's will, and belong to the kingdom.

An Enforcement of the Fifth Petition.—Vs. 14, 15. This marks the importance of this point. 14. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses;" The word indicates reckless and willful sin, conscious violations of right. The hardest sins to forgive. "Your Heavenly Father will \* \* \* forgive you;" Because it shows that we are in that penitent condition which makes forgiveness possible for us, and good for us.

15. "But if ye forgive not;" God cannot forgive under such circumstances, without by the very act increasing sin, and injuring the one forgiven.

—Each one of us is bound to make the little circle in which he lives better and happier; each of us is bound to see that out of that small circle the widest good may flow; each of us may have fixed in his mind the thought that out of a single household may flow influences which shall stimulate the whole commonwealth and the whole civilized world.—Dean Stanley.

—One who has reached the age of 40 has been living 14,000 days, or 336,000 hours, or 21,024,000 minutes, or 1,261,440,000 seconds. If for just one of these seconds God had forgotten him he would have perished. "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?"

—Good work has no wages, because it is priceless; it is its own wage; only bad work has wages; so "the wages of sin is death, but eternal life is the gift of God."—Rev. Frank Crane.

—In judging another's honor we often place a valuation upon our own.

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Mr. Doley—Do you suppose that there is such a thing as a woman later?  
Miss Flynn—Yes; I am a woman and I hate you.—Harlem Life.

### THE "OLD MAN" OBJECTED.



Jimmy—Say, Billy, why don'tcher let yer hair grow long an' look like a football player?  
Billy—Well, I started to, but de old man said if I went around de house lookin' like a mop he'd wipe de floor wid me.—Up To Date.

### HIS IDEA OF IT.



Teacher—Sammy Sassafras, you may give a definition of the word "farm."  
Sammy—A farm is a body of land entirely covered by a mortgage.—N. Y.

## THE INFLUENCE

of the Mother shapes the course of unborn generations—goes sounding through all the ages and enters the confines of Eternity. With what care, therefore, should the Expectant Mother be guarded, and how great the effort be to ward off danger and make her life joyous and happy.

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