

HER CHOICE.

When the Time Came Her Decision Was Quickly Made.

By SARAH BRYCE VAUGHAN.
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"Why it is," said the ranchman, "that some women can't make a straight deal with a lover."
"We had a case out here once where a gal kep' two fellers danglin' after her till she pretty nigh set both on 'em crazy. At last she had to decide all on a sudden, and it didn't take her a second to show which one 'em had her heart. Mebbe she didn't know herself before that which did have it, and mebbe she did know. Leastways there wasn't no hesitation when the time come to make a show down."
"She was a little Mexican gal. Her father had belonged to a big family in Spain, and since most of the big families here in the west are of the blood of the Herrera being the youngest of twelve children he went to Mexico, married and come up to this here territory to raise sheep. He had a daughter, Paquita, born on his ranch. From the time she was able to walk she was out of doors all the while, climb'n fences and trees, and when she was four years ridin' the horses to water."
"When Paquita was sixteen 'em was a terror to her father and mother. She could shoot, ride, swim, play, do anything a cowboy could do. I've seen her toss her handkerchief on the ground, ride by it at full speed and with one spur hooked to her saddle reach down and pick it up. At that time she used to wear her hair down out like a comet's tail—same as little gals do—and it was topped by a sombrero. Her jacket and skirt were Mexican, with lots of gold braid. Her eyes were black and her complexion almost as dark as a quadroon's. She got that from her mother, who had Aztec blood in her."
"There was a Mexican boy whose father owned a ranch near the Herrera property that was brought up with Paquita. He was just the same age, and they were just like brothers. Leastways it seemed to me that Paquita was more like a brother to



THE TWO MEN WERE SINKING LOWER.

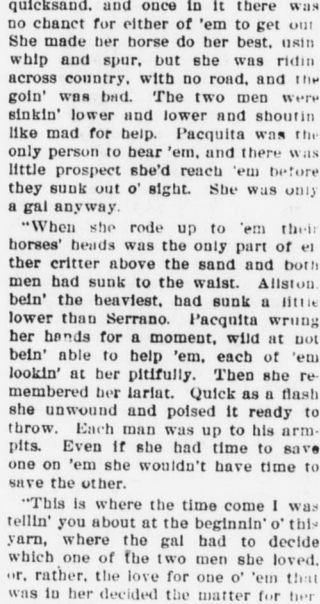
Jose Serrano than a sister. But I reckon they was more like lovers from the very first.
"They was always together till one day a young Englishman come out here to be a rancher. He was the sleekest looking feller I ever see. Edward Allston was his name, and he was a thoroughbred and no mistake. I didn't see him ridin' about with Paquita till some time after his comin' here; then I used to see 'em together often. It didn't seem to me that if the Englishman wanted her the little Mexican would stand a ghost of a chance. But, while she was with the Britisher a good deal, she didn't drop the Mexican. She appeared to be just as fond of him as ever. But what kind of fondness it was, now that Allston had come along, I didn't know. It seemed to me that sooner or later the little chap would find out that he was nowhere and the Britisher had the right o' way."
"I used to meet Paquita ridin' fust with one and then with the other of these men. When she was with Jose he looked sullen, and I reckoned she was trying to make him believe she didn't care nothin' at all about Allston. When she was with Allston I reckoned she was tryin' to bring him under her spell. They was a fine contrast, them two, she a dark Spanish beauty, he a fair haired, blue eyed Britisher. It didn't appear to me that he was more interested in her than if she'd been any other gal. It war the way she slung them big black eyes about that made me think she was trying to lasso him."
"The reason I took all this interest in the matter was that I was as fond o' Paquita as if she'd been my own little gal. One day I overtook her ridin' along the road alone. After awhile I said somethin' against the Englishman just to see how she'd take it. She fired up, you bet. Then I told her I thought Jose Herrera was worth three of Edward Allston. She looked kind o' funny, but didn't say nothin'."
"Well, little gal, I said when I left her, 'better decide between 'em. It would be cruel to keep 'em on the anxious seat always.'
"I don't know," she said, 'that I have the privilege of decidin' between 'em.'
"With that she cantered away, kind of glum."
"I knew well enough that so far as Jose Herrera was concerned she could have him whenever she wanted him. But I didn't know anything about her harin' the Englishman."
"But as time wore on I saw Paquita Allston more and more together, 'rno seemed to be dropped rate. It was perfectly nat-

HAND WITH A MISSING THUMB

It Was Important Evidence, but Came in Late.

By WILLARD BLAKEMAN.
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William Burch was graduated at the scientific school of the — university and became an assistant in an institution for original scientific research. Having a rich uncle, unmarried and childless, who was intending to make him his heir, he had laid out a career for himself by which he might devote his time to study and investigation.
This uncle, a Mr. Trevor, was cashier in a bank.
One morning young Burch received a note from his uncle asking him to call that afternoon at 3 o'clock. Burch called. Half an hour later he was seen to leave his uncle's house very red in the face and muttering to himself. The only person living in the house with the uncle was an old woman who took care of it. She heard Mr. Trevor say during Burch's visit: "That's the best I can do for you."
Burch replied angrily: "You have placed me in a very trying position. Having advised me to follow a career that pays nothing and promised to back me up, you put me off with—"
Here the door was closed, and the housekeeper heard no more.
Mr. Trevor always went out to dine—usually at his club—at 6 o'clock. Mrs. Morton, his housekeeper, noticed that he did not ride out during the afternoon of his nephew's call, and at 7 o'clock he had not gone to dinner. She went to his room, knocked and received no reply. Entering, she saw his dead body on the bed.
Running to the telephone, she called up William Burch and told him to come at once—something had happened to his uncle. Burch came and with Mrs. Morton went to his uncle's room. He did not speak for some time, being evidently under strong emotion. Then he said: "Mrs. Morton, who has been with my uncle this afternoon besides myself?"
"I have seen no one come or go."



EXAMINED THE CONTENTS CRITICALLY.

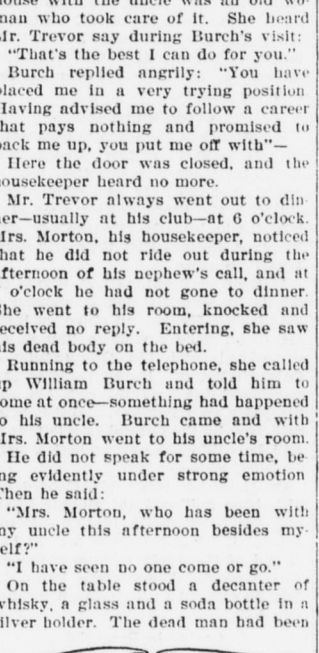
drinking some whisky and soda and had left a part of it in the glass. Burch took up the glass and examined the contents critically. Then, stooping so as to get very near the holder, he examined it closely.
"When was it polished?" he asked.
"This morning. I polished all the silver this morning."
"A part of the surface was blurred. The rest was bright."
"Did you handle it after polishing it?"
"Only by the bottom."
Burch put his mouth nearer the holder and breathed on it. Then, taking a little hand microscope from his vest pocket, he brought it to bear on the blurred surface.
"Um!" said Mrs. Morton interrogatively.
"Where can I lock up this bottle holder?"
"In any of the closets. There's one on each floor."
"No. Every nook and cranny of the house will be searched."
He threw himself into a chair and thought. Mrs. Morton stood waiting. The dead body lay on the bed. Finally Burch rising, said: "I must risk it."
"Risk what?"
"Before reporting my uncle's death I must remove the bottle holder. Promise me that you will say nothing about it."
For the first time Mrs. Morton cast a suspicious glance at Mr. Burch.
"If I'm questioned about it I shall be obliged to tell."
"If you are questioned, yes."
Mrs. Morton gave a reluctant consent.
"Get me a pasteboard box that will hold it."
She went out of the room and presently returned with a box. Burch cut a hole in it large enough to let through the stand of the bottle holder, by which he grasped it, using the box as a protector, so that nothing could touch the silver surface.
"Call a cab."
Mrs. Morton did as directed, and Burch, carrying the bottle holder by its stand part, left the house, promising to return soon. Within twenty minutes he was back. Then he went to the telephone, called up the police and reported that his uncle had died suddenly under very suspicious circumstances. The coroner was not long in coming and, after carefully inspect-

A ROMANCE.

The Story as It Was Told by Picture Postals.

By AGNES G. BROGAN.
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"Mike" was not his true name. It had been bestowed by the clerks at "Station D" because of the never failing good humor and ready wit which characterized the stout, red haired, postman, who had been in the service of the United States government as long as the men could remember, and so generally was the name adopted that Mike himself had almost forgotten the proper one.
The picture postals which found their way into his bag were a source of unfailing delight, and often Mike could follow the travels of some favorite by merely reading the cards as they were sent home.
As he neared the stone house with the white rosebush growing beside the veranda the postman unconsciously quickened his steps and searched eagerly among the letters, for he never liked to disappoint Miss Isabel. She was one of the few who had not changed entirely in the process of growing up. Mike ascended the steps,



"I GUESS IT'S FOR THE NURSE."

looking admiringly at the picture of a very blue lake surrounded by very green trees. Upon the opposite side of the card he read:
"Dear Mother—Cousin Robert and his friend met me at the station. I am having a fine time."
"So she's away," Mike mused, a little disappointedly. "Well, she'll have the good time all right." And so it seemed, judging from the many gals postals interspersed with thick letters which were received daily at the stone house.
Miss Isabel wrote constantly of pleasure trips with "Cousin Robert and his friend," who later came to be designated as "Robert's friend Billy," and then when the long summer was drawing to an end the obliging Cousin Robert's company seemed to be dispensed with, for the postals read simply, "Billy and I were here today."
Mike chuckled as he handed one of these cards to the maid. "She won't be coming home in a hurry," he said confidentially. But in this he was mistaken, for she came smilingly to meet him a few days afterward.
"I suppose I will have a bundle of letters for you soon," he remarked.
"I hope so," she answered gayly.
He searched expectantly through his pack next morning, and, sure enough, there it was, "I will write you to-night—yours, Billy," while a printed verse stated the fact that "absence makes the heart grow fonder."
They came thick and fast after that—letters, cards, a photograph or two and bulging little packages, all addressed in the same free, bold hand which Mike learned to recognize instantly. Isabel was always there as he came down the street, apparently absorbed in sewing or hovering about the rosebush with a great pretense of examining its leaves. When Mike presented an offering she would receive it with the open delight of a child.
"It's from Billy," he would say and go away laughing at her confusion. The old postman was vastly interested in the unfolding love story, but there came a time when the girl waited in vain, and he dreaded to meet her questioning eyes, for Billy's letters had ceased abruptly.
Mike pondered deeply. The shrewd eyes could read more than postal cards, and he was sure that she had been too fond of this Billy to send him away. Had the mother interfered or—the fellow himself to blame?
One morning as Mike was preparing to start out upon his rounds the familiar bold handwriting dashed into view as though in answer to his troubled thoughts. The freckled hand trembled as he held the postal up to the light. It was the picture of a great ocean steamer, and the message upon the addressed side danced dizzily for a moment before his eyes. "Have engaged passage for Oct. 5," he read.
"Goodby forever, little Isabel Drew. Billy."
And the old postman fought with the greatest temptation of his life—to destroy a part of Uncle Sam's mail. When he saw the little white lady leaning back wearily in her chair upon the veranda Mike was certain that he would have preferred to pay the full penalty due such a crime than to have been the bearer of this cruel message. He avoided her eyes as he turned away, but there was a tremulous little catch in the voice which thanked him. To his great relief, Isabel no longer awaited his coming, and when he next

NEW ENGLAND TO BOOM CORN CROP

Announces Exposition to Encourage Movement.

THINK GRAIN BELT INFERIOR.

Down East Farmer Winner of Greatest Yield to Acre Prize in 1908, and Sweetest Species in World Grows in Massachusetts and Connecticut is Boast of Fair Promoters.

NEW ENGLAND BOASTS OF CORN CROP.
Corn is a native of New England.
The yield of corn to the acre in the New England states is higher than in the states of the "corn belt."
A New England farmer in 1908 won the prize for the greatest yield of corn to the acre.
The finest sweet corn in the world is produced in the New England states.

Recognition of the surprising facts cited above has brought about the incorporation of the New England Corn exposition, to be held in Worcester, Mass., in November. The object of the exposition is to demonstrate that New England can grow corn and to impress upon the farmers the value of corn as a product. There will be informative exhibits by the six New England agricultural colleges and seven experiment stations. Daily lectures on corn improvement will be given, as well as demonstrations of seed testing and corn and grain judging. The United States department of agriculture is expected to furnish interesting and valuable exhibits.

Want More Corn Raised.
"One of the weaknesses of farming in New England," says J. Lewis Ellisworth, secretary of the Massachusetts state board of agriculture and one of the charter members of the new corporation, "is the failure of the farmers to raise their own corn."
"Very little corn is raised in Massachusetts. We want to get the farmer interested in this so that he will raise his own corn. Formerly a farmer would buy his corn, since that was cheaper than raising it. Now the price of corn has increased by 100 per cent since 1896, and he is not buying so much."
The officers of the exposition, in urging a more general production of corn, explain that Massachusetts is exceeded in value of product per acre by only one state—Connecticut. Despite the fact that the cost of production is probably higher in Massachusetts than in the corn belt of the Mississippi valley, there is no doubt, they say, that corn can be raised with a profit in this state, for the average price per bushel is higher than in most states.
In 1905 the average farm prices of corn were as follows: In the United States as a whole, 28 cents; in Iowa, 34 cents; in Illinois, 35 cents; in Indiana, 33 cents; in Massachusetts, 70 cents.

Much Fertilizer Needed.
Although fertilizers must be used in greater quantity than in the states named, Professor William P. Brooks, director of the Massachusetts agricultural experiment station, points out that "on many soils in Massachusetts an average expenditure of about \$20 an acre for fertilizers will insure an annual product of sixty to seventy bushels."
"This is at the rate of only about 30 cents a bushel for corn produced, but in Massachusetts the stover is worth more as forage than in the western states."

Chinese Business Honesty.
With due respect for others, the Chinaman is perhaps the most honorable and upright business man in the world today. His business principles are founded entirely upon honesty, and he adheres to the policy with the insistence of a leech. The chase after dollars stops if he has to resort to low tricks to get them. Of course a little thing like telling a falsehood occasionally does not bother him so much, but when it comes to plotting and scheming to defraud some one the task becomes distasteful. The equal of the Japanese in initiative and foresight, he is much their superior when integrity is concerned. A Japanese does not think twice before deciding to get the best of you. He calculates that you are liable to change your mind or get out of reach if he indulges in a little mental debate as to the propriety of cheating you.—Bookkeeper.

BERTILLON STUDIES HAIR.
Thinks He Has New Criminal Identification Plan.
M. Bertillon, well known for his fingerprint system of identification for criminals, is collecting samples of hair from all over the world. He believes he has hit on a new method which will make still easier the identification of any one sought by the police.
Every nation, says M. Bertillon, has a different way of expressing a definite shade of hair, the Swedes, for instance, calling chestnut what the French describe as blond. All samples are classed and graduated minutely according to shade in a large catalogue, and every shade will have a special name which M. Bertillon hopes will be adopted as an international standard.
British Railways Clear \$219,000,000.
The British railways earned \$584,000,000 gross and \$219,000,000 net in 1909 on a mileage of 23,264. Freight carried was 559,000,000 tons, an increase of 9,000,000 tons. Exclusive of season ticket holders 1,264,857,000 passengers were carried, a decrease of 13,275,000 from 1908.

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