

A FIGHT WITH CACTUS

A RISKY STORY OF A WESTERN MISADVENTURE AT NIGHT.

A Ludicrous Adventure of a Party Hunting Indians in Southwestern Mexico. The Bravery of a Leader Brought Into Jeopardy Upon Himself.

"Halt! What's that?" said our leader in a sharp whisper.

It was a clear moonlight night in the extreme southwest of Mexico.

I was visiting a friend who conducted a large ranch and hacienda there.

A local revolt had just been quelled in the neighborhood and a spirit of lawlessness still pervaded the atmosphere. Only the night before my friend had been fired upon and one of his storehouses robbed by a band of Indians some fifteen or twenty strong. Early in the morning four of us, under the leadership of our host, had set out upon the track of the robbers.

We were well mounted, and resting only a few hours at noon had followed hard after them till nearly midnight. If we met them in a fair field we could drive them into quarters like cows to a pen, but we had no mind to run into a trap in the dark with five against fifteen; hence caution.

"Halt! What's that?" our leader had whispered. We had come to the edge of a dense woods, and across an open space, upon the brow of a low sand hill, clearly outlined in the moonlight against the sky, we had discovered a dozen or more half naked fellows, with their arms extended in every direction, engaged in some sort of a weird, fantastic dance.

We could not see their legs, for the tops of the trees beyond the hill rose waist high, making a black background, but their arms moved slowly to and fro and we could easily imagine their legs keeping company.

"Those are the thieves!" our host muttered. "I know them, even at night. You fellows just come to the edge of the wood, where they can see you without knowing how many there are of you, and I'll have them down here in no time."

He rode out alone to the foot of the hill.

We required no little courage, and he watched him with proportionate admiration.

The figures did not cease their dance or notice him. Suddenly, with his rifle at his shoulder, he called to them: "I have you there! If one of you moves I'll shoot him dead!"

The wind had been blowing through the trees, so that we could not have heard their response, but fortunately at that moment it ceased, and in the deep silence which settled down upon the forest in such a momentary lull we waited for the result.

Every Indian suddenly ceased his dancing and stood like a statue outlined against the sky.

"Come down here now," shouted our host. "Come quietly, too, for the first man who makes any trouble drops dead."

We could hear a sound, as of a hurried consultation of some sort, going on upon the hill for a moment, but the wind sprang up again before we could distinguish a single voice, and to our utter astonishment the fellows actually began their solemn dance again.

"Come down or I'll shoot!" roared our host, but they kept on dancing and he did shoot.

Then there was commotion enough. A wild cry, followed by a cloud of dust, rose from the brow of the hill.

"Fire!" yelled our host, and we responded with a well aimed volley, while he whipped out his heavy revolver and gave them another peppering.

There was a perfect bedlam of screams from the hill, and the dust hid everything from view. They were either coming down upon us in an unexpected horde or running for their lives.

For us it was either fly or follow. We waited irresolutely for the word of our leader, when the dust settled and there stood the Indians, silently going on with their fantastic dance as though we were a hundred miles away.

With a fierce ejaculation our host put spurs to his horse and dashed up the hill. We followed, without command, to find him upon the summit, sitting on the ground beneath a line of gaunt and ghostlike prickly pears—the ungainly cactus of Mexico.

They extended along the brow of the hill, their naked, skeleton branches spreading out in every unaccountable way and swaying solemnly in the breeze. Among the roots a multitude of burrows in the dry dust showed where the sandbirds had been lying, half buried, and quietly sleeping; and it was their noisy yelp we heard when they were frightened away by our host's duel with the cactus.—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Russian Discipline.
During the review of the army recruits in Vilna the general in command, turning to one of the new soldiers, asked him, "What is military discipline?"

"It is that a soldier has got to do just what he's told by his superior officer, only nothing against the czar," was the answer.

"All right then; you take your cap, bid your comrades good by and go and drown yourself in that lake there. Look sharp!"

Tears glistened in the soldier's eyes; he gazed earnestly and prayerfully at his commander, turned suddenly about and rushed off to the lake. He was on the very brink before he was overtaken and stopped by the sergeant sent to prevent the involuntary suicide.—Exchange.

When Death Is Welcome.
"There was great pathos," says a missionary in Honolulu, "in a story I heard from a friend who had just returned from a visit to Molokai. He suddenly heard the joyous strains of a band strike up in the leper settlement. 'What is it for?' he asked. The answer was, 'Two lepers have just died in the hospital.'"
—New York Tribune.

Following Their Advice.

There was not long since a venerable and benevolent judge in Paris who, at the moment of passing sentence on a prisoner, consulted his associates on each side of him as to the proper penalty to be inflicted. "What ought we to give this rascal, brother?" he said, bending over to the one upon his right. "I should say three years." "What is your opinion, brother?" "I should give him about four years." The judge, with benevolence: "Prisoner, not desiring to give you a long and severe term of imprisonment, as I should have done if left to myself, I have consulted my names, brothers, and I shall take their advice. Seven years!"—Tit-Bits.

Beyond It.



"Do you mean to say, Mr. Drybird, that you don't carry a latchkey? I should think, of all men in the world, you would need one." "It's no use to me. I couldn't use one if I had it."—Life.

Chipper Chestnuts.
This is the season of the year when the farmer goes out to examine the mowing machine, and comes into the house with two fingers missing and reports to his wife that the cutter bar is all right.—Belast Age.

F. L. begs to invite the attention of the public to the exquisite workmanship of his ladies' boots. N. B.—Every purchaser will receive a box of ointment free of charge.—Neueste Nachrichten.

You never know much about the unattainable until you get up in the middle of the night and reach for the mosquito with the wet end of a towel.—New York Evening Sun.

An editor kept his tailor's bill "under consideration" for twelve months, and then returned it to the author with a lithographed note saying, "The editor regrets that he is unable to avail himself of the enclosed manuscript."—Tit-Bits.

Always pass the fruit to everybody else before helping yourself. Common politeness will induce your company to leave the choicest specimens upon the plate, and when it comes to your turn you can eat them without exciting remark.—Boston Transcript.

It is a great shock to a young married woman to realize that when her husband comes home it is not to tell her how much he thinks of her, but to get something to eat.—Chicago Times.

For a full crop on the farm commend us to the old hen.—Lowell Courier.

Many people say they go away to get rid of their business letters, but the summer girl relies implicitly on the daily mail.—Philadelphia Times.

Persistence is a great virtue, but it is hard to admire it in a fly.—Somerv Journal.

Thanks to the mosquito, the angler can never complain of not getting a bite.—New York Evening Sun.

How to get inside information: Use a stomach pump.—Truth.

It is a wise child that knows his own father when the old man is dressed in a hired bathing suit.—Texas Sittings.

Want of Sense.
Great learning is not always accompanied by large measures of "common sense." The celebrated Dr. Chalmers came home on horseback one evening, and as neither the man who had charge of his horse nor the key of the stable could be found he was puzzled as to the best temporary residence for the animal.

At last he fixed on the garden, and leading the horse thither placed him on the gravel walk. When Miss Chalmers, who had been away from the house, returned, and her brother told her he had been unable to find the key of the stable, she inquired what had been done with the horse. "I took him to the garden," said the doctor.

"To the garden?" she exclaimed. "Then all our flower and vegetable beds will be destroyed!"

"Don't be afraid of that," said Dr. Chalmers. "I took particular care to place the horse on the gravel walk."

"And did you really imagine that he would stay there?"

"I have no doubt of it," replied the doctor, with calm assurance. "So sagacious an animal could not fail to be aware of the propriety of refraining from injuring the products of the garden."

"I am afraid," remarked Miss Chalmers, "that you will think less favorably of the discretion of the horse when you have seen the garden."

True enough, the horse had rolled in and trampled upon the beds till they were a scene of pitiful devastation.

"I never could have imagined," remarked the doctor in deep disgust, "that horses were such senseless animals."

A retort about the surprising ignorance of a certain order of animals must have been on Miss Chalmers' tongue, but no doubt she kept it back.—Youth's Companion.

A Hungry Man.
Tramp—Madam, will you please give me a bite to eat? Chicken, for instance.
Lady—Do you love chicken?
Tramp—Do I, madam? Have you even a wing of chicken?
Lady—No, sir.
Tramp—Heart?
Lady—No.
Tramp—Gizzard?
Lady—No.
Tramp—The head?
Lady—I gave that to the cat.
Tramp—Where's the cat?—Boston Courier.

Depends Upon Circumstances.
Uncle Erastus—I doesn't believe in counting yo' chickens befo' dey is hatched, judge, does yo'?
Judge Twinkle—No, Uncle Erastus; but experience has taught me that in this neighborhood one can't begin too soon afterward.—New York Herald.

A Good Day.
Rev. Dr. Primrose—How is it your father always comes home from fishing on a Friday?
Little Johnny—Cause he's then sure to find a good assortment of fish in the market.—New York Evening Sun.

Surprised Pig.

Little Pete never intends to misstate things, but his very figurative imagination sometimes gets the better of his facts. He starts out to tell something which is perfectly true, but before he is done he has generally drifted off into some picturesque exaggeration. The other day he exclaimed to a companion: "Just think, Billy! Out in Chicago they aren't going to be cruel to the pigs any more when they kill them. They're going to chloroform them." "How do they do it?" asked Billy. "Why, they just put a sponge in front of the pig's nose and he goes right to sleep, and when he comes to himself he says, 'Why, my ham's gone!' And by and by he says, 'Goodness! Somebody's saved my leg off!' and then he finds out that he's all out!"—Youth's Companion.

Badinage.



(These three girls are exchanging confidences, and telling each other what sort of men they like best.)

First Girl—I like a man with a past. A man with a past is always interesting.

Second Girl—That's true; but I don't think he's nearly so interesting as the man with a future.

Third Girl—The man who interests me is the man with a present.—Judy.

Inadvertently Old Fashioned.
They were lingering in the deepening twilight of the front hall. It was hard for him to leave. Standing together there, with a soft glance directed into eyes that spoke back love divine, they presented a pretty picture.

"And will you always love me?" The confidence of his hearing indicated that he had canvassed the situation previously, yet the trusting girl seemed rejected to reply.

"Until death do us part!" she cooed. She rested her brown curls trustfully upon his shoulder.

"No, Emeline. No." She started as if an iron had been thrust into her heart. Pale with astonishment, trembling in every limb, she contemplated her lover.

"Billy."

Her tone expressed a world of anguish. "Do you doubt me, Billy?"

"No, my darling, but—"

As he spoke the clouds parted, and through the rift the moon sent its rays to bathe his brow in silver light.

"You forget!"

He gazed upon her with ineffable tenderness. "that we live in a progressive age."

Slowly the color returned to her beautiful face, but there remained a look of perplexity and doubt.

"Why, Billy?"

He raised his hand appreciatingly. "Emeline, don't you know that it is not until death do us part, but?"

Her lips moved as if to utter a reproach. "But, according to modern usage, until you have me adjudged insane and shut in an asylum."

With a glad cry she threw herself into his embrace.

"Oh, Billy, how!"

A kiss temporarily interrupted her discourse. "could I be so old fashioned as to say until death do us part?"

The moon was lost to sight, and in the darkness he effected his departure.—Detroit Tribune.

Little Johnny Was All Right.
Mrs. Terwilliger had the misfortune to occupy the flat directly underneath the Browns, and every day she was driven to the verge of distraction by the noise made by little Johnny. She was just on the point of making a complaint when she met Mrs. Brown, who was engaged in tying a piece of crape on her doorknob.

"Goodness, gracious!" she exclaimed. "Is there a death in your family?"

"Yes, my dear," sobbed Mrs. Brown. "It is my poor old grandmother."

"I'm so sorry," sympathized Mrs. Terwilliger. "I thought it was that mischievous little boy of yours."—New York Evening Sun.

She Needed a Clasp.
"William," she sighed, and he hung upon her words with the grip of a freshman testing his strength for an anthropometrical chart. "William, why am I like a broken locket?"

"Because, William," she murmured, and her voice had the faraway sound of the wind moaning on the freshman fence, "I need a clasp."

And then, bang it, the Hibernal Hebe came in to light the lamps.—Yale Record.

FOR LITTLE FOLKS.

Dolly Was 'Fraid.
We slipped thro' the gate this afternoon When Bridget forgot to latch it; A cricket fiddled a queer little tune, And we hurried along to catch it. I wish we'd staid in the yard and played, For we've wandered and turned and crossed Up and down all over the town, Till Dolly is 'fraid we're lost.



I wish I'd minded mamma just right And thought of her smiles and kisses, For if we were forced to spend the night In any such place as this is, My Dolly would die—and so should I— But the only plan I see Is just to stay till they come this way And find my Dolly and me.

—Eudora S. Bumstead in St. Nicholas.

A Rich Miser and His Son.
A merchant died at Ispahan in the earlier part of this century who had for many years denied himself and his son every support except a crust of coarse bread. On a certain occasion he was overtempted to buy a piece of cheese, but reproaching himself with his extravagance he put the cheese into a bottle and contented himself and obliged the boy to do the same with rubbing the crust against the bottle, enjoying the cheese in imagination.

One day, returning home later than usual, the merchant found his son eating his crust, which he constantly rubbed against the door.

"What are you about, you fool?" was his exclamation.

"It is dinner time, father. You have the key, so I could not open the door. I was rubbing my bread against it, as I could not get to the bottle."

"Cannot you go without cheese one day, you luxurious little rascal? You'll never be rich."

And the angry miser kicked the poor boy for not being able to deny himself the ideal gratification.—Cassell's Journal.

Growing Plants in Water.
To grow an acorn, a hyacinth glass or a pickle jar is suitable. Choose a fine, healthy looking acorn, and crochet with moderately coarse cotton a network case just large enough to hold it. Take off the cup and put the acorn, point downward, in this little bag, closing it at the top, and make a loop of cotton of chain stitch about two inches long, according to the depth of the jar, to hang it up by. Cut a narrow piece of wood of the size that will lie across the top of the jar without slipping in; pass it through the loop and thus hang the acorn, point downward, in the glass, which must have just enough water in it so the tip of the acorn scarcely touches it.

Keep the jar in a dark cupboard till the acorn has sprouted, and then put it in the light, just as you would a hyacinth, being careful that you keep the water always at the same level. This will live a long time if properly managed. An ordinary sweet chestnut can be grown in the same way.—Philadelphia Times.

How George Saved His Melon.
George had come from the city to spend the summer with relatives on a New England farm. To his delight he had been given a melon patch to "call his own." He was carrying the first ripe melon in triumph to the house one day, when he met his uncle. Here was a dilemma! He felt bound by common courtesy to offer a share of his treasure, and at the same time he was unwilling to divide it. The riddle was solved, however, and his reputation for generosity saved by his asking: "Uncle Ed, do you want some of my melon? Say no!"—New York Tribune.

Kites with Lanterns.
At the rural points in Maine, where they know how, flying kites to which lighted Chinese lanterns are attached is a very popular amusement. A good sized kite will carry a number of lanterns, and the effect when it is at some distance in the air is very striking. Where it has not been tried it ought to be, as the feat is not a difficult one and it causes no end of sport.—Exchange.

To Astonish Your Friends.
With some lycopodium powder the surface of a large or small vessel of water; you may then challenge any one to drop a piece of money into the water, and declare that you will get it with the hand without wetting your skin. The lycopodium adheres to the hand and prevents its contact with the water. A little shake of your hand after the feat is over will dislodge the powder.

For the Heathen.

For the heathen.

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