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An Exciting Adventure.

A FEW years ago, when I was in the cattle business, I started out of the little town of Cuero, Texas, on my return to San Antonio. Cuero was and is still a sort of headquarters for cowboys, and it has been the scene of some of the bloodiest encounters ever witnessed. It was there that two factions frequently met in the wretched, dirty streets, and the minute they caught sight of each other they always began popping away with rifle or revolver.

The most desperate villain connected with this crowd was John Wesley Hardin, the son of a preacher, and a fellow who, to my certain knowledge, has killed more than a dozen men.

There was a good deal of drinking and carousing in the town, and I hurried through my business, mounted my mustang and struck off at an easy gallop for San Antonio. Only a little way out I drew up at the roadside and went into one of those miserable little Texan inns to get something to eat. I had scarcely seated myself at the table when a small, bright-eyed fellow came in, set his gun behind the door and sat down on the other side of the table. We nodded familiarly to each other, exchanged a few words and passed such food as we needed, we being the only two in the room. He asked me which way I was going, and when I mentioned "San Antonio," as it is always pronounced in Texas, he said he would accompany me a short distance, but would have to turn off before going far. We paid our bill, mounted our mustangs and moved off side by side. As my companion, although uneducated, was quite intelligent, I kept my horse down to a walk so as to converse with him during the short distance we were to be companions.

"You're from the North, ain't you?" he asked.

I replied that I was, but that I had been in Texas several years.

"What do you think of the country?" he asked.

"It has grand possibilities before it," I replied, with considerable earnestness; "its area is so prodigious that it is capable of making a dozen good sized states, and its soil, climate and natural facilities mark it as the coming empire. But it has its disadvantages also."

"What's them?" asked my friend, more eagerly than grammatically.

"Well one thing is the need of better government. There is too much out-lawry. Texas averages a murder a day, and I have heard the authorities state that there are a full thousand murderers running at large through her borders to-day."

"That's too bad!" said he, apparently quite struck with my truthful statement.

I concluded I had a native Texan with me, and I would give him a little needed advice, or, more properly, information.

"I never saw any place where crime is viewed with such leniency, if not admiration, as in Texas. The greatest glory of a Texan is to boast of being a 'bad man,' and no one is of much account who has not killed some one. All this has got to change before Texas can make any really material progress. The best thing she can do just now is to hang her Longleys, her Thompsons, and John Wesley Hardins and—"

"Do you know any of those fellows?" interrupted the little horseman beside me.

"No, nor do I wish to, excepting that I would like to pull one end of the rope

that was to hang them. I feel a special hatred of John Wesley Hardin."

"Why so?"

"Well, he's the son of a preacher who named him after the great founder of Methodism, and he is the worst sort of a desperado. He hasn't any redeeming features. He is a cowardly murderer, a man who kills in mere wantonness, and I would give five hundred dollars this minute for the privilege of strangling the life out of him. He is a curse to Texas and there ought to be a reward offered to the first man who will shoot him on sight. The Lone Star State must be purged of such pests before she can thrive."

"That may be so," said my companion quietly, "but all I've got to say, stranger, is that my name is John Wesley Hardin."

Never until that minute was I prepared to believe that a man's hair actually rises on end when he is "struck" with terror, but when that horseman at my side announced himself as the terrible desperado whom I had been denouncing I distinctly felt my hat slide up my forehead as my hair stiffened and literally stood on end. I was transfixed with fear. For a few seconds I couldn't stir hand nor foot, nor could I speak a word. I never had dreamed that the horseman was anything other than a Texan cowboy, rough but hospitable—one who had probably killed his man, but who was not a dangerous character.

Finally I managed to turn my eyes so as to look at Hardin. He was a little back of me, riding at a leisurely gait, and was looking straight at me, with a peculiar smile on his face—a smile which I was sure meant my death. Hardin had shot down a sheriff a short time before in cold blood and he thought no more of a human life than he did of brushing away a fly. I was certain he would shoot me dead within the next three minutes. I had my revolver at my hip, but I did not dare attempt to draw, for the instant I moved hand in that direction he would send a bullet through my brain. In fact I did not dare move at all. I recall that my nose began to itch terribly and yet I was afraid to raise my hand to scratch it, through dread of drawing his fire.

By and by I managed to stammer: "I beg your pardon—but—I—didn't—know—it was you, Mr. Hardin."

"I judge not," he said, with the same horrid grin on his face. "I've only got a word to add. When you're traveling through Texas learn who your partner is. Don't talk too free about your betters. Good day, sir." And he wheeled off to the right, while I took the left. I struck my mustang into a gallop, but for a few moments I was sure Hardin would send a bullet from his rifle after me, and when he did that he never failed to "hit hard." No pen can describe my agony of apprehension for a minute or so, but when I glanced furtively over my shoulder the little horseman was riding leisurely along beyond rifle shot and did not look behind him.

He spared my life that morning merely because the whim happened to take possession of him, for a more heartless desperado and a more deliberate murderer never lived than John Wesley Hardin. He was what might be called the product of the reconstruction days of Texas, as he reached his young manhood at the time when the state was under military rule and when public feeling was such as to develop all the innate devilry in a man's nature.

It would require hours to tell the sanguinary affrays in which he was engaged and in which he emerged the sole survivor. Some of these, perhaps, were defensible, as he was not always the blamable party, but the majority of them were simply cold-blooded murders.

About five years ago a noted bully below Austin shot a young man on the street one evening while he was promenading with a young lady to whom he was engaged. It was done in pure wantonness, and, of course, the fellow was never punished by the law, but a brother of the victim was so infuriated over the deed that he caught up a double-barreled shot-gun and started out for the murderer. Hardin warned him that it would be sure death for him to attempt any such thing. But the young man would not be dissuaded. He meant

to shoot down like a dog the wretch who had done the same to his brother.

"Very well," said Hardin, "I will go along and see fair play."

The young man caught sight of the wretch for whom he was looking on the opposite side of the street and deliberately raised his gun and took aim. Just as he pulled the trigger the criminal observed him, but too late to escape or get the drop on the boy. The latter pulled the trigger and the gun missed fire. The desperado smiled grimly and drawing up his revolver, said:

"Now it's my turn; that's just about my distance, and to prevent any accident, my kid, I won't give you time to say your prayers—"

He had reached that point in his address, when John Wesley Hardin took a hand in the little game and the speaker never completed his sentence, and never will, inasmuch as he dropped dead at the most interesting point, killed by a shot from Hardin's pistol. This was about the best thing Hardin ever did, and yet, when I questioned him about it, he would not admit that he did the killing. The most that he could get to admit was, "they say I did it," and that was all he would acknowledge concerning any of the innumerable shootings in which he was engaged.

Some time after Hardin met the sheriff on the street and asked him whether he had a warrant for his arrest. The officer replied that he had not. "Well, I heard you had," said Hardin, "and it's best to be on the safe side," and drawing his pistol in his lightning like fashion, he shot the officer dead.

This murder was the last feather upon the camel's back. Hardin had been playing the Jim Currie business so long, and unfortunately without the conclusion reached by Currie the other day at Las Vegas, that his last crime roused a strong feeling against him. Additional rewards were offered for his apprehension. As he had committed many similar deeds in Arkansas and Louisiana, the aggregate amount offered for his capture in the three States was \$20,000.

The hunt for Hardin became so hot under this extraordinary temptation that he saw the advisability of emigrating, at least until the excitement should blow over. Texas is a big State, but it was too small for him, and it soon became known that he had disappeared. He might have gone into the Indian nation or beyond the pale of civilization, but no one interested in his capture could form the least idea where to look for him. But the magnificent reward awaiting the man who should deliver Hardin to the authorities, incited the best men to engage in the hunt.

One of these was a member of Lieut. Hall's rangers, as they are called.—Texas, as may not be generally known, is provided with a hundred brave and tried men, who constitute what may be called her mounted police. They are under command of Lieutenant Hall, and roam the State from one end to the other of the settled portion, hunting horse thieves, murderers, and all criminals that are wanted by the authorities. Lieutenant Hall is a prepossessing young man of sandy complexion, and a splendid rifle shot. All his men have been tried by the fire and can be relied on. It was one of these that determined to capture Hardin, and who went about it in the only fashion that promised success. He went off beyond Austin, where the father of young Hardin was running a ranche, and giving out that he was hunting for similar property in the same neighborhood, finally bought the one immediately adjoining that of the retired preacher. This done the officer, as a pretended cattle-raiser, stocked it and went to work.

Month after month he conducted himself in the regular way, and gradually became quite intimate with the old gentleman. "After the day's toil was over they would sit together in front of one of the houses, smoking their pipes and talking about everything that came into their minds, with the exception that John Wesley was never alluded to by either one of them. They spent hours in this fashion, and at other times would gather in the village store near by, which answered as the post office, where they would join in gossip and discussion while smoking their pipes—

in the manner so popular all through our country.

The months passed in this fashion and the summer was pretty well gone, when one day the elder Hardin took a letter to the office to mail. It was a crumpled, yellow envelope, and directed in a scrawling hand. The detective walked to the store with Hardin, who carried the letter in his pocket, and he made up his mind it was intended for his son, John Wesley. This was the very clue for which the officer had been wasting all these months, and this was the first time he had seen the reverend gentleman take a letter to the office. It was necessary to see the directions upon the missive, and not only that, but he must be sure that the discovery was made without attracting the slightest suspicion to himself. He saw no chance to do either while on the road.

Within the office, Mr. Hardin bought a three-cent stamp, solemnly licked it and then pounded it upside down on one corner of the soiled envelope with his horny fist, and finally passed it over to the village postmaster. While he was engaged in this deliberation proceeding the detective approached the counter and asked the postmaster for a newspaper. The official turned to look for it. The instant his face was turned the officer glanced over the shoulder of Hardin and read the superscription on the envelope. He saw it was directed to a Mr. Samuel Jones, of whom he had never heard and whose post office address was a remote town in Florida. It made no difference. The detective was convinced he had discovered the whereabouts of John Wesley Hardin, for whose capture such a large reward was waiting.

The conversation went on as usual through the evening. The same parties congregated night after night and the detective and the Rev. Mr. Hardin met and smoked their pipes as before, while the weeks and months passed by. Finally Mr. Hardin's neighbor said he guessed he would take a run up to Austin to see about selling some of his cattle.

Accordingly he bade his friend goodbye for several days, mounted his mustang and galloped off. He never stopped traveling—dispensing with his horse as soon as possible—until he reached a certain remote town in Florida, where, gotten up as an ordinary everyday laborer, he took a little tramp through the surrounding country. He was fortunate enough that day to catch sight of the mythical personage at work in the field of a farmer. One searching glance was enough. The high, broad cheek-bones, the small piggy eyes, the beardless face and slight muscular figure belonged to John Wesley Hardin, and no one else. That young man walking about was a moving treasure box of \$20,000, waiting for some one to come and turn the key and walk off with the contents. Did the officer do it? Not by any means. He simply took the one all-sufficient glance and passed by and out of sight. He would no more have ventured over the fence into the field to arrest the desperado than he would have attempted to put a bit in the mouth of a raging Bengal tiger.

In a desultory talk with the station agent, who was also the telegraphist near by, the officer learned that Sam Jones was accustomed once or twice a week to take the cars and ride to a station about twelve miles above, where he was paying his addresses to some lady. The officer made an arrangement by which the agent agreed to telegraph him at the upper station whenever the mythical Sam Jones should board the train. Of course the agent could be trusted to keep the secret, as that was a part of his business, though he was far from suspecting the importance of the case. Having done all he could the detective took the cars to the station above, where he spent several days in lounging about and smoking bad cigars while waiting for the dispatch. At the end of three days it came.

—: Jones has just boarded the train; sits in last car; man with him; nobody else in car. —, Agent.

The officer had just enough time in which to complete his arrangements. It was a warm, sultry day, even for that season, and as the little locomotive came wheezing into the depot, with two rickety cars behind it, there were five passengers waiting at the depot appar-

ently to get on board, but as the cars slowed up one of these men with a Winchester rifle at full cock, stationed himself at the side window, assuming such a position that neither of the two young men, who sat in their shirt sleeves, noticed him.

The next minute two other men, fully armed, boarded the rear platform and entered the door; at the same instant the detective and a friend entered the front door and moved carelessly down the aisle in the direction of the two passengers. The latter glanced up sharply, but saw nothing to cause misgiving and continued talking. The next moment the officer reached a point in the aisle directly opposite the couple. Stopping suddenly, he exclaimed:

"How are you, John Wesley Hardin?"

As quick as lightning the desperado threw his hand back to his hip to draw his revolver. As he did so one of those behind him grasped his arm and the fight began. The two strong men precipitated themselves upon Hardin, who though unarmed, fought like a wild cat. They overpowered and put the nippers on him. While they were doing this the other two officers were engaged in a deadly struggle with the other desperado, who showed an over-weening ambition to mingle in the business. The only way convenient to dissuade him was to shoot him dead, which was done. All this time the other friend held his position on the outside with his cocked Winchester, rather more than willing to fire if only a suitable pretext should present itself.

Hardin was taken back to Texas, tried, found guilty and sentenced to twenty-five years imprisonment. He is now in the State penitentiary at Austin, where I saw him three years ago. He told me he was suffering from a wound in his side, but is not without hope that he will be pardoned by the governor after serving a few more years. Judging from the fashion in Texas, this hope is likely to be gratified, though the crimes he has committed could not be expiated by a dozen such worthless lives as his.

Patient and True.

The Chicago Inter-Ocean relates the following story that, notwithstanding the many obstacles in the way, had a happy termination: "Twelve years ago a young couple fell in love as they journeyed on shipboard from Sweden to America. They were poor, and resolved to get a little start in the world before marrying. She went into service in Chicago, and he sought his fortune, in the far west. During all these years of struggle they remained true to each other. The blooming Swedish girl has donned her glasses, and it is safe to believe that John is not as young as he was, but success has attended his work, and yesterday the expectant bride, fitted out with all comforts by many loving friends, left for Denver, where she is to meet her expectant groom and take possession of the new home his industry has prepared for her. This little romance is all truth, and is a good lesson of patience and fidelity."

Queer Advertisements.

Some of our advertisements are as comical as *Punch*. One landlady, entirely innocent of grammatical knowledge, advertises that she has "a fine, well-furnished bed room for a gentleman twelve feet square;" another has "a cheap and desirable suit of rooms for a respectable family in good repair;" still another has "a hall bed room for a single woman 8x12." An English widow became rather mixed by her grief, but when announcing the death of her husband she was not so mixed that she lost sight of the main question: "His virtues were beyond price, and his beaver hats were only seventeen shillings. He has left a large stock to be sold at the old stand. He was snatched to the other world just as he had concluded an extensive purchase of felt which he got so cheap that his widow can sell felt hats a fraction less than any other house in London. Peace to his ashes; the business will be carried on as usual."—*Ex.*

Energy will do anything that can be done in the world; and no talents, no circumstances, no opportunities, will make a two legged animal a man without it.