

THE STORY TELLER

THE ONE SURE THING.

It's not the girl with reddish hair
Whose disposition's sanniest;
It's not the man who always jokes
Whose stories are the funniest;
It's not the richest millionaire
Perhaps who eats the most;
The babe that has the finest care
May soon give up the ghost.

She may not be the sweetest girl
Who has the waist that's slenderest;
The largest ox may not yield up
The steak that is the tenderest;
The man who holds his head up high
Above the tolling crowd
May have less cause than you or I
In fact for feeling proud.

The deacon with the pious air
May not be quite the holiest;
The child that's born in poverty
May not remain the lowliest;
But this is sure—as sure as fate—
The one who boldly asks
Gets more than those who hope and wait
And just perform their tasks.
—S. E. Kiser, in Chicago Record-Herald.

The Dotted Trail

A Story of the Cattle Ranges.
By W. H. IRWIN.

THE first time that Dudley Latimer kissed Belle Sharp, the half-Spanish "help" at the P. L. Ranch, he was not in earnest; he would have been the last to say that there was any serious intention in it. He did it partly in a spirit of pure bravado, and partly because the morning was as warm and white as new milk and she, smiling back over her shoulder as she emptied her pails, looked a part of it. Equally innocent of any harmful intent, she let him after a formal struggle. He was tall and clean, and as handsome as a young Englishman can be when he is in perfect condition, and has a fine, red coat of tan. Then he bade her goodbye. He had been at the ranch a week, ranging the hills in a vain hunt for antelope, already then, in the early '80s, becoming scarce. His canvas-covered wagon and his "side partner," the Hon. Justin Weymouth, waited by the gate.

The Hon. Justin was taking a parting nip with the "Old Man," and did not see the diversion, and none of the four noticed that Emilio Gonzalez, horse-trainer and man-of-all-work, was coming in through the kitchen yard carrying an antelope so freshly killed that its throat was not yet cut. Emilio stood and watched. He saw the struggle, heard the girl cry "The gall of you!" saw the color torn as she lifted her face with unwilling willingness, saw her throw at young Latimer, walking away, a look of admiration that he took for something else. Then Emilio slipped round the barn with his quarry, and came upon the wagon in front. Dudley was smiling across the fence at Belle, who had found business in the front yard. For half a minute, Emilio looked what he felt; then smiled as he slipped into view, and said: "I make-a present you thees antelope. He ces fresh. Myself, I shoot heem. He come ver' close."

"Careful how you tie it, Emmy," said the Old Man. "Dump it in for 'em. Well, boys, stacking in the north field. Good-by, and luck to you."

While Dudley chatted across the fence with Belle, Emilio was explaining to the Hon. Justin how an antelope should be tied and hung for a journey. "Head down so he bleed—the dust bother ver' little—oh, yes, a lee-tie cut on the throat so he bleed slow. That ces bes'. I cut heem." A slow, read stream trickled over snowy throat and gray jaws. The wagon drove on. Down the road behind it trailed an irregular line of wet dots, the centers for an army of noisy flies.

"Awfully jolly girl," said Dudley, as they bowled easily along through the red dust. The Hon. Justin puffed at his pipe, and made no answer. He might have said that he hastened their going just because his companion was very young and the girl very pretty. A flock of sage-hens started from the olive-green brush to one side. Justin pulled up, took out his shotgun, and followed, Dudley throwing stones to make them rise. A right and left shot brought down a brace. They gathered up the birds, and as they did so, the elder man looked back. Just level with the ranch house, two miles behind, a cloud of red dust veiled the road and lapped far over its edge. Through the thin atmosphere came a muffled rumble, and then a few dots, followed at an interval by another, heaved out of the mass.

"Cattle," said Dudley. "That's jolly. I always wanted to see one of those big droves on the foot. Shall we wait for them to pass?"

"I think not," said the Hon. Justin. "Not until we get to the next ranch. They say that those wild range cattle do singular things." But still they stood and watched, fascinated by the shimmering, shifting, red cloud, the distant rumble, the glint of a blazing sun on the sabred heads of a thousand Texas long-horns.

Of a sudden the dust cloud, which had spilled over the road only to the right, away from the ranch fence, widened out, shifted to the left. They had passed the fence corner and were on open range. No dust arose on that wing; it was hard prairie, tied

close by sage brush. And inexperienced as were their eyes, the two Englishmen could see some commotion running through the mass; the units composing it were spreading hither and thither; two compound dots, mounted men, were swinging wide about them. The rumble grew louder, lulled, rose again, and above the noise came the sound of a dozen shots, fired in quick succession. Away back in his consciousness, Dudley began to regret that they had chosen, in their young British insolence, to travel without a guide, who might explain to them the strange happenings of this incomprehensible country.

Justin started at the sound of a frightened snort in his ear. He turned to see his horses quivering in every nerve. Almost before he could catch its bridle the near one was plunging and pitching. "Get the reins!" yelled Justin; "we'd best be out of here."

The team broke into a dead run. Looking back, Justin saw the cloud ominously, frightfully near. A struggling advance guard of long-horns heaved out before, and ahead of them were two men, riding like demons, yet ever beating backward as they rode. Then the red veil fell, and there was nothing but a dust cloud, rolling on nearer and nearer.

When the Englishmen were gone Belle looked after their retreating wagon and sighed. She was just realizing, now that the week was past and these clean, courteous, easy-moving beings of another world were gone, that she had been dreaming dreams. Emilio looked also, sometimes after the girl. When he bent his gaze on Belle he was serious enough, but when his eye ran down the track of bloody dots, he drew his lips back from his white teeth and smiled. He was holding the reins of his roan bronco; he dropped them to lean over the fence and look up the road, away from the wagon.

"What is it that you see up there?" she asked, carelessly, in Spanish.

"Something that your white-haired friend will be glad to see," he answered. She looked, saw the dust cloud coming, saw the little, caking pool of blood, and went white in a moment.

"That," she cried, "that is what your antelope meant! You knew that cattle were coming this way today."

"A thousand head passing up to the White river country. And wild, very wild."

"They will trample them; kill them!"

"You thought about that when you kissed him," he sneered; "the blood goes straight and the wind is right. He will have a run for it—your lover."

Then the roar of padding feet was louder and the herd was coming. They were 50 yards away—and a great, white steer, horned in splendor, lowered his muzzle and bellowed and tore the earth and shot out in advance. Another followed, and still another, each breaking into that rocking run, each one stretching out his nostrils to taste the polluted air. They plunged together over the little pool of blood; they rolled over and over, horns tossing, feet stamping, throats acclaim. The leaders crowded against the corral until its foot-wide posts bent and cracked. A deafening roar, the bellow of a thousand mad cattle, and then nothing but a tangled riot, speeding on and on down the scent, a thousand great, horned hounds after their quarry.

It was the blood stampede that makes half-wild cattle wholly demons. A clap of lightning, a sudden shot, even the appearance of a dismounted man, will send the mercurial herd rushing in panic fear; but let them once scent blood and all hell is loosed in them. No pack of wolves follows with the relentless fury of range cattle on the trail of blood. Huddled by the barn, still showing his teeth, but half in fright, at the box of demons that he had opened, the man who laid the trail knew all this. And the girl knew it best of all. She was between him and his horse as she turned on him.

"You did this—you murderer!"

"I will go," he said; "I will cut it loose—it will stop the cattle."

"Yes—you! I will go myself." He jumped at her as she sprang into his saddle. She saw the movement. His lariat hung at the saddle-horn. She brought it down on his wrist. The same movement started the high-strung little roan, already a-quiver with fear. His heels clattered against the bars; Belle, astride like a man, her calico skirts tucked about her hips, was riding after the red cloud, swinging wide into the sage-brush to pass them.

The roan had a dash of the thoroughbred. He was the swiftest thing coursing that day in the four-cornered race between cattle, cowboys, hunted team, and woman, yet he had 200 yards the worst of his start. But, like a thoroughbred, he caught the bit and shook out his dapple mane, and laid his belly to the earth as he skimmed. Over sage-brush, over treacherous ant-hills, tangling gopher-holes he sped, the reins loose, for he knew his work. Two cowboys, caught in the press, fighting, swearing, striking brutally at heads and horns as they were borne on, called to her in warning; but the roan rounded the pack, shook himself free, and galloped on.

And then Belle saw what she had feared. Knowing their peril, but ignorant of the cause, the two Englishmen were hurrying on ahead with the carcass still bumping on the tail-board. The cattle in the road, where the running was freer, had gained upon those on the flanks. They were going in a wedge, with the

speed of an express train. The cows, flecter and fiercer than their males, were leading on. Half a dozen cowboys skirmished before, shooting and lashing out desperately, trying to back-fire by a counter-panic, taking chances of life with every gopher-hole. But there was no checking that mass; when a steer flinched before the heavy whip, he was pushed on from behind. And ever they bellowed, with a note of tigers in their voices.

A moment Belle ran before the herd; then calling to the roan, who understood as only a cow-horse can understand, she cut an oblique course across the herd's face. She gained the road; the herd was behind her, and the roan, gathering his nerve for a final spurt, made for the wagon. She shouted, but the roan behind drowned her voice, and so she reached for the holster, where Emilio kept his knife. As she whipped it out and drew even, reaching for the carcass, the wagon slackened and stopped. Her own horse swerved in his course, and shot past before she could check him.

The off-horse, what with fear and exhaustion, had stumbled and fallen dead. And the wedge was coming on, now but a quarter of a mile away. Deadly as was their fear, the two Englishmen, who had jumped to the ground, stood and stared to see her turn in beside the standing horse and, without any ceremony, cut his traces and reins. He reared and plunged; Justin caught his bridle.

"Mount quick!" she shouted. And before he could grasp the situation she had pushed Dudley to her roan, almost thrown him into the saddle, and mounted behind.

As the snorting horses bounded away the roan was almost on their flanks. It rose to its climax in a great, dull crash. Looking back, the girl saw that they were no longer followed. The dust cloud was a whirlpool that rolled and tumbled over the spot where the wagon had been. For only a minute; the cowboys closed in and the panic was over. Slowly the men beat back the sullen, sated demons. And when the press split there was no wagon at all—only broken wheels and scattered bits of woodwork, and flattened belongings and blood—blood and gleaming gray hairs trampled into everything.

The two men dismounted and turned to the girl. Then was she first aware of her skirts tucked about her hips, and of the manner in which she had ridden. Her color rose and she jumped down. She turned redder a moment later when Dudley Latimer took her in his arms and, for the second time that morning, kissed her.

And that time he kissed her in deadly earnest.—San Francisco Argonaut.

The Eternal Feminine.

Cleopatra, in the brilliance of her beauty, spoke thus to the wizard: "We are but mortals, O Graybeard." "Unto dust after the allotted span," quoth the sage, "unless—"

"I divine thy meaning. It is the custom that the rulers be embalmed, and thus defy the ravages of time, as a mummy."

"Even so!"

Then the queen spoke commandingly, and there was a strange gleam in her eyes:

"Bring forth thy powders, burn thy herbs, and mumble thy spells in haste and gaze ye into the distant future to see if any fool scientist will try to calculate the ages of the mummies they discover!"

The palace was filled with the ruby vapor of necromancy. "Ah!" trembled the wizard, "tis even so. Those prying scientists of the twentieth century will calculate the mummy's age down to the half month."

"To the block with him!" roared Cleopatra; "just to think that I should come so near to having the world know my age!"

Thus woman's ruling passion has prevented the mummy of the Enchantress of the Nile from ever being found.

Their Thirteenth Quarrel.

They had been married three months and were having their thirteenth quarrel—an unlucky number, by the way.

"You only married me for my money," he said, with exceeding bitterness.

"I didn't do anything of the kind," she retorted.

"Well, you didn't marry me because you loved me."

"I know I didn't."

"In heaven's name, what did you marry me for, then?" he cried in despair, for he had not expected this.

"Just to make that hateful Kate Scott you were engaged to cry her eyes out because she had to give you up and see me get you."

He fell down on the white bear rug at her feet and rolled over on it until he looked like an animated snowball.

"Great Caesar, woman!" he shrieked, "what have you done? Why, I married you just because she threw me over."

And by the time dinner was ready their sweet young hearts were once more so full of sunshine that awnings were absolutely necessary.—Stray Stories.

A Serious Drawback.

One of the worst things about city life is that it affords people so few opportunities for wearing out old clothes.—Woman's Home Companion.

Helping Him Along.

He (admiringly)—You're not that sort of girl to give yourself away.

She (instinctively)—No, but you might ask father.—Stray Stories.

FARM AND GARDEN

USEFUL TREE INDEED.

Its FRUIT IS BEING USED AS A CATTLE AND SHEEP FEED BY FARMERS IN THE ANTIPODES.

We herewith reproduce from the Australasian a cut of the "bottle tree," which is now being used as fodder in Australia. According to some reports only the pith of the tree is used as feed; according to others all of the tree inside the bark is edible for cattle, and the branches also are utilized in this way. We quote from a Brisbane (Queensland, Australia) paper: The value of the bottle tree as fodder for stock during times of drought has been brought under the notice of the agricultural department by Mr. E. Bowman, of Bauhiniavale, Taroom. He states that a trial was first made by



AUSTRALIAN BOTTLE TREE.

a neighbor. Mr. Bowman was cutting down a tree for the leaves, when the sheep began to run after the chips, and so the tree was opened up with the result, he says, that every head of stock "went mad over it." Mr. Bowman, although he has no grass, has bought 900 merino ewes on the strength of the discovery. Lambs eat it as well as the old sheep. An instance is given of a 15-year-old pet wether, without a tooth, growing fat since eating the tree. Any kind of stock will eat the wood after a little use of it. Mr. Bowman considers that it will soon be carried on the railway at fodder rates. He stated that cows which were almost dry from want of condition are now not only fat and strong, but are giving a good yield of milk. Bottle trees often contain from 50 to 100 tons of fodder. There are plenty of bottle trees within easy reach of the railroads. Mr. Bowman believes that hundreds of stock can be saved with it. The trees will keep for months in the log with the bark on. The tree is allied to the Gouty stem tree (Adansonia Gregoria), being thickened below, tapering upwards, or often swollen in the middle to the extent of 30 to 40 feet in circumference, with an apparently small tree growing out of its apex, so that it has been compared to the neck of a bottle. The gouty stem is soft and porous, and contains much mucilaginous gum, which is readily obtained by pressure, and is used as an article of food by the natives. It is also called barrel tree.

Farmers Need a Moss.

The implement dealers have organized; the beef packers are following suit; the steel producers, the sugar makers, the millers, the butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker, every profession and every trade has its association or its union. What are the farmers of this country going to do in this direction? Will they be the last to get together for mutual protection and welfare? And after every citizen in the United States is a member of a trust, union or mutual benefit association, how much better off will we be than in the old days of individualism and free competition? Let the farmers take this up before it is too late to do them any good except defensive. What is first needed is a leader. Where is there a Moses?—Colman's Rural World.

It Pays to Use Scales.

Every farmer should have its scales and the farmer should use them. Experience proves that in marking hay, grain, live stock, etc., one cannot always rely on the figure he must take from the dealer. Then, where he is feeding stock, he is running great risk if he does not weigh the amount of feed put into the lot, and determine the rate of gain the animals are making by weighing at least once a week. It pays, as many successful feeders know, by experience, to know as soon as a loss in the rate of gain begins. It pays to know on what feed the animals do best, and to figure out the amount of profit. You cannot do this without a pair of good scales.—Midland Farmer.

Where the Profit Comes In.

If it takes 20 bushels of corn to the acre to pay the expenses of raising a crop, and we raise but 20 bushels per acre, we are not making any headway. But every bushel we raise above the 20 bushels per acre is that much more to be added to the profit side of the ledger. And there is where the farmer or merchant must do his best thinking and use his best efforts to increase his crop yield or trade, above and beyond the point of expense.—Farmers' Voice.

THE INTELLIGENT FARMER.

He Gets the Best There is Out of the Farm Because He Feeds His Own Best Into It.

E. L. Vincent says in Farm and Fireside: "Few of us get the best there is in our farms. That is because we do not put the best there is in us into them. There isn't much use in expecting great things on the farm unless we are willing to plan, work and study how to get those great things. How shall we go at it to do that? In the first place, the soil must be in a good state of fertility. This means that we have carefully saved up every particle of barnyard manure we have, and have seconded this effort by a judicious use of commercial fertilizer. It means, too, that we have not previously cropped the land to death. Then we will plow thoroughly. Not one man out of ten in this country knows how to plow; or, if he does, he has not the grit and the gumption to do it. Once in awhile we meet a farmer who insists that this part of the farm work shall be done thoroughly. He is on the way to success. It was an old Scotchman who said: 'Ye dinna ken how to plow in this country; ye on'y scratch the groon.' And that is about what most of us farmers do—we scratch the ground. And again, to get the best there is in our farms we must use the harrow more faithfully. The farmer has no better tool than a good harrow. I say a 'good' harrow, because hosts of farmers have not such a thing as a first-class harrow on the place. They are working away with the same old V-shaped 'drag' their fathers used, or else have picked up at some sale a worn-out thing not worth bringing home. No good work can be done with such a tool. Harrows of an up-to-date pattern are reasonable in price nowadays, and every farmer ought to have one or more. Good, clean seed is a requisite, too. No use to sow seed that will not grow, or that is full of weed seed. This may mean the purchase of a fanning mill, to be used in recleaning seed. We may better do this than to seed our farms down with foul weeds. But, finally, we will fall after all if we do not keep the weeds down in every crop that can be cultivated. This means steady work for a few weeks in the spring of the year, until the potatoes have been hilled up and the corn is too large to admit of working a horse through it. But the end tells the story. Other things being equal, the man who puts himself into his work as I have here described may rest assured of a good crop—the best the soil will produce. And that ought to make him happy."

Improved Plank Drag.

An Implement Which Is Needed on Every Farm and Can Be Made at Small Expense.

We get from the Practical Farmer the illustration of an improved plank drag. The rear plank, A, is set flat instead of sloping and has

two rows of straight, narrow teeth set in it. The teeth project three inches. A block of wood, B, is used at each end of plank as shown in cut and this may be taken out to vary the depth of the teeth. The rear of each plank also is shod with iron strips two inches wide and one-eighth inch thick. This adds to the life and efficiency of the drag.

Mature Birds for Layers.

Maturity is an important thing, says a writer in Farmer's Advocate. The bird that is to be pushed for eggs must be thoroughly mature or she cannot stand the pace. When I began to keep hens I was pleased down to the ground whenever a little misguided pullet began to lay at the age of four or five months, and I would send an item about it to the local paper. But I have learned better now. A precocious pullet never makes a phenomenal layer. She lays one litter of eggs in September or October and then shuts up shop until February or March. I want a bird that has got her growth, a bird that is thoroughly mature; and I will keep her busy from the time she lays her first egg, about Thanksgiving, until she goes into moult the following fall.

Here of Cabbage Field.

An old English soldier tells how he missed the Victoria cross: "I was once sent out to India with a regiment to be pushed forward to the front, as a fierce war was going on. But one night we were suddenly attacked and I got separated from my comrades and wandered about in the thick scrub for nearly three hours, until I suddenly came into the open. I then laid myself flat on the ground to listen, as it was very dark. But I suddenly fancied I could see the enemy in front of me kneeling. I sprang to my feet, determined to cut some of them down before I was overpowered and shot, and, dashing forward, I slashed right and left until daylight broke over me, when I found that I had beheaded 350 red cabbages!"—Pearson's Weekly.

Roup is unusually prevalent this year. Keep the chickens in a dry house free from draughts, and look out for colds, which may develop into roup.—Commercial Poultry.



Mrs. F. Wright, of Oelwein, Iowa, is another one of the million women who have been restored to health by Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

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