

# THE STORY TELLER

## BEFORE THE START.

Stay, you that proudly plan to dare  
And you that seek to do;  
Before you hurry forth to try  
To proudly plant your standard high,  
An honest word with you.

Who seeks to raise himself above  
The level of the crowd  
Must drag through many a slough of woe  
And suffer many a blinding blow  
And oft sit humbly bowed.

For every little gain he makes  
Who tries to take the lead  
A hundred disappointments leave  
Their impress on him; to achieve  
The heart must often bleed.

Stay, you that plan to gain renown  
Or play a splendid part;  
Ten thousand sore discouragements  
Upon your heart shall leave their dents  
Before you get a start.  
—S. E. Kiser, in Chicago Record-Herald.

## A HAUNTED HOUSE.

An American Woman's Strange  
Experience in Mexico.

BY ELIZABETH GIBERT.

WHEN my husband took over the direction of the Gertrudis and Santa Maria mines, near Pinal, we brought down from "the states" our various goods and chattels, and began an attempt to make ourselves as comfortable as possible in the huge, Spanish-built house, which was the only thing in the way of an abode that could be secured, for love or money, in the very inconvenient new-old town of Pinal.

At first, I liked the queer, rambling old house, with its wide, heavily pillared corridors, thick walls, high-bared windows and enormous carved doors. It had been built, according to a half-effaced date, in the year 1603, and had been the habitat of more than one famous man in its time. But, even after our modern furnishings were put in, flowers and vines arranged about, and everything possible done to brighten it, the house still had a dreary, ghostly air about it, and one always had the sensation that some one else was about—some one unseen, but felt—and altogether there was an indescribable eerie feeling about the place that did not tend to make one very cheerful. However, I consoled myself by remembering that big, old houses generally make one nervous at first; also, the rent was surprisingly low for so large an establishment, with its 15 rooms, corridors and corral. And, as one can get used to very nearly anything in this world, by trying hard, I gradually got over the uneasy feeling which I had mostly felt when entirely alone and put it down to "nerves."

There was the slight drawback, however, that we could not keep servants. In spite of good wages, light work and short hours, our servants would invariably leave after two to five days' service, refusing, under any circumstances, to stop longer. They gave no reason for this, beyond the fact that the situation was not to their liking. So I could only pay them and, with indignant sorrow, view their departing backs, then far forth in search of further criadas, inwardly consigning Mexican servants to a future which it would be unadvisable to put into bald words.

In the midst of these turmoils, "Society" (with a big S) began, slowly and carefully, to call, and pleasantly hinted, in divers ways, that there was something wrong about our house. The leader of Pinal society, Mrs. Isaacstein, was the last to call. She had at first been somewhat dubious about visiting us. As I have before said, she "led" Pinal society (for her husband was the principal grocer of the place), and therefore she could not, as she sweetly explained to me, be too careful about "beobles she galled upon."

Waiving, however, discussion of this excellent lady, for indeed she is "another story," her statement during her call that our house was said to be haunted by evil spirits, and that we would never be able to keep a servant in it, was somewhat dispiriting. In vain did I inquire particulars. No, she knew nothing beyond the fact that servants and "tradespeople" gave the place a bad name; that it was certainly troubled by something and that no one ever lived long in it.

Here was a pretty mess! And, indeed, as if in confirmation of the woman's prediction, the very next day both servants left, after they had been with me four days, and I was on the point of beginning to expect better things of them. I sat down and wept. Then, disgusted with native servants, I hired me forth and wired to the "border" for a couple of old and well-tried Chinese servants, determined that I would not abandon my house and live in hotels to please ghosts, Mexican servants or any one else.

In due course the new servants arrived. One, a sturdy, taciturn Celestial, rejoicing in the name of Ching, was to act as porter, caretaker and general watch dog—the ghost would have to be lively that could get ahead of Ching. Charley, his cousin, was of the same ilk, being besides a splendid cook. But I explained matters duly to the two, and could have warbled for joy over their derisive smiles and grunts when I timidly alluded to "ghosts," and hinted that they might be disturbed by mysterious sights or sounds.

And now did I begin to be acquainted once more with peace, and the coming of Ching and Charley, who feared neither "hog, dog nor devil," and certainly seemed able to deal with anything in the way of terrestrial or supernatural beings.

In fact (for such is the inconsistency of woman), I rather began to wish that the ghosts would walk, or otherwise make themselves known; or that anything exciting would happen. For, after the advent of my two Celestials, my occupation was entirely gone; no longer did I daily wrestle with the kitchen braser, and harangue the fruitman and the other purveyors to our inner needs. In other words, matters waxed dead, dull and boring, so that I complained bitterly to my other half, who only laughed uproariously, and gave me little sympathy. (You see, he had his work.) And said he: "My good wife, you don't know a fine thing when you see it. Here you are with plenty of leisure and all the chance you want to shine in the 'American colony of Pinal,' yet you let it slip. Put on your gaudiest gown (if you have one); all the jewelry you can beg, borrow or steal; go and pay your calls and I'll wager you a Virof hat that you'll have all the diversion you can stand."

Meekly, but without the jewelry, I did as I was told. I called on many ladies, and I opened up a new horizon to myself in the way of topics of conversation. For in Pinal, you always discuss your servants, and other people's servants; your own and other people's position in society; and the fact that "society in Mexico is not what it is at home." To hear the wives of grocers, cheap clerks and machinists discussing "social position" gave me rather a sort of "Alice-in-Wonderland" feeling, but I held my peace.

Not many weeks passed before society and I mutually dropped each other, and I gave my husband no peace until he decided upon and arranged a nice, long ducking trip to the lakes, some 40 miles from Pinal. And, oh me, how enjoyable it was. But when we returned, with sunburned faces and hands showing traces of powder and hard work, the ladies of the American colony shook dubious heads over me and my probable fate. A woman who actually went hunting with her husband, could ride 30 miles in a day, and was reported to shoot as well as a man, was a paradox to them. For their parts, they wondered why any man wanted to marry such a woman so unfit for society.

To tell the truth, I rather regretted the tan and sunburn myself, when I found upon our return invitations to the usual yearly big baile at the Casino. I hadn't been to a dance of any sort since our last country house visits on Long Island. I had a particularly pretty gown, knew that the floor would be good and slippery, the native Mexican band fair and that there would be plenty of presentable men to dance with, mostly delegations from the outlying camps. But how in the name of all that was consistent could I appear in an evening gown, topped off by a face, neck and arms that were about the consistency of color of burned leather? My husband unfeelingly suggested whitewash, but I applied lemon juice and mourned. It really was disappointing, you know.

Three days before the dance the partner of my joys and sorrows was called away to inspect the installation of some new machinery. He left with reluctance; for, while our big, old house seemed absolutely safe, there had nevertheless been some burglaries of late, and he dreaded leaving me alone with the servants for a couple of nights. But I urged him to go, saying that the doors were perfectly robber-proof, the servants trustworthy and that I would keep a shotgun handy, so that he need have no fears. In point of fact, for once I preferred his room to his company, having a face-bleaching process in view, the which I knew he would never consent to, did he come to know of it. So he departed, and, feeling relieved and sneaky by turns, I set about preparations for the surreptitious whitening of my unlucky countenance. Most schoolgirls will recognize the beautifier which I hastened to apply, as soon as my light dinner had been dispatched, that night. With doors carefully locked, and a revolver handy, in case of burglars, I experimented with a piece of chamols-skin until it amply covered my face, concealing even the ears. Then I cut very small holes for my eyes, nose and mouth, so that I could barely breathe comfortably. Then, sewing on strings to hold the contrivance in place, I proceeded to smear it liberally with good, strong Mexican leeks—and how they did smell to high heaven!

When ready for bed I carefully applied this odorous mask, and tied it on so that it could not be by any possibility come off. As I put out the candles I caught a glimpse of myself and came near shrieking at the sight, for I looked more like a first-class ghost than anything else. I had twisted my hair back tight, and, to protect it from the leeks, covered it with an old white bathing cap. The mask entirely hid my face and I looked like some unearthly, tall, white thing, with a flat nose and no eyes and mouth. I assure you that I was as ghastly an object as one could well imagine; so hideous, in fact, that I precipitately shut out the view, blew out the lights and hastily sought my couch.

My "beautifier" murdered sleep; I tossed about for hours, vainly endeavoring to doze off. Now and then a whiff of the fragrance of leeks would steal up through even the small pinholes I had cut to breathe through, and more often the tightly knotted strings caused me great discomfort as I moved my head, vainly seeking that rest in slumber which seemed denied me. At last, however, some time after

the nearby bells had chimed midnight, I dozed off, despite leeks and strings. The next thing I knew I was sitting up in bed, my heart beating wildly, while I listened breathlessly for a repetition of the sudden wild cry that had thrilled through the great, empty house, waking me from deep sleep. Motionless, I waited there in the dark, not daring to light the candles, and wondering at the sang froid with which I had assured my husband that "no burglars could worry me." In a moment, there it was again—a cry for help, not so loud as it had been at first, and half strangled, choking, this time.

Without stopping to put on more clothes, my feet bare, and my husband's loaded 38-Colt in my hand, I noiselessly opened my door, passed through it, and crept down the corridor toward the back entrance of the house, where Ching and Charley had their rooms. As I went, I concluded that burglars had got in and had killed the two Chinamen; next, they would dispose of me, and then rob the house. So furious did the thought make me that I lost all fear, and fairly ached to get at the wretches.

Noiselessly stealing along, close to the wall, my pistol cocked and ready for work, I caught a glimpse of what was happening before I myself was seen. The light of several lanterns set about showed me poor, old Ching, evidently dead, lying almost across the back entrance door, which was wide open; Charley, bound and still moving, had been flung over him, while several men in peon blouses were busily hauling my mysterious boxes and cases through a hole which gaped in the middle of the paved corral. (I gaped myself, in my astonishment, for I had never seen the hole before.) But that was all I did see just then, for at that very moment one of the men caught sight of me, and glared, aghast, as I advanced upon them. Then he gave a loud yell that fairly terrified me in to standing still for a moment, dropped his boxes, and took to his heels, yelling that the devil was upon them.

As he fled, the other men stared about, and seeing me, also emitted screams of terror, and made wildly for the back door, dropping their burdens as they went. I fired twice only, for their terror had somewhat taken me aback, and had the supreme pleasure of seeing two of the miscreants clap hands to their legs, and fall with grievous groans. (I had fired purposely at their legs, for I didn't want to kill them—Mexican jails aren't overly comfortable.) Then, allowing the two to groan and pray alternately where they had fallen, I went over to attend to the two poor servants.

Neither of them were dead; Ching was badly cut and unconscious, but Charley wounded my feelings by shutting his eyes tight, and trying to wriggle away from my touch. "Go 'way," he moaned; "me good Chinaman—no stealee, like Mexican boy—go 'way, devil!"

So they had all taken me for a ghost, or the devil. I could hardly contain my laughter as I enlightened and untied Charley, and left him to revive his unconscious cousin. Then, having relieved myself of my ghostly attire, I sent out for two gendarmes, to whom I confided the wounded burglars, and told my tale of woe.

Next morning, as soon as it was sufficiently light, we inspected the scene of the night before, and found out that the burglars had not been burglars at all, but the members of a famous counter-terfing band who had simply flooded northern Mexico with bad money, and whom the police had never been able to locate. It seemed that they had made unto themselves a secret place under our old house, with a secret entrance covered by stones just inside our back patio wall, and there had stored their contraband goods during many past months. In this way, with their mysterious movings about, it had gotten out that the house was haunted, and I myself was pleased to verify my past feeling that some one, unseen, was present.

Well, they all went to prison for several years, and the secret entrance to our house was securely stopped, thus doing away forever with its reputation of being haunted by evil spirits.

As for my providential mask, I threw it away, and went to the ball regardless, with my brown face and hands. And the Pinal social leaders, sitting out, wondered audibly "how that woman could have the heart to dance and enjoy herself, after having actually shot with her own hands two poor, helpless human beings!"—San Francisco Argonaut.

**Loyalty to the Mikado.**  
It is tolerably certain that but for the veneration in which the emperor is held, Japan would long ago have been at war with Russia, or there would have been a revolution in the country. Happily, the intense patriotism of the people is kept in check by a reverence for the ruling sovereign which it is scarcely possible for the western mind to understand. The Japanese people are not religious in a conventional sense. Their religion takes the form of a childlike belief in the "son of heaven." If the mikado were to issue a decree to-morrow that all the Russian demands should be conceded, the nation would acquiesce, though many would commit suicide, just as happened when Japan was robbed of the fruits of her victory over China.—London Chronicle.

**Had a Way with Him.**  
Jane Seymour was boasting to Anne Boleyn.  
"Henry has just asked me for my hand," she remarked.  
"That's nothing," retorted the queen. "he has just asked me for my head."  
Subsequent events showed both ladies granted the request.—N. Y. Tribune.

# FARM AND GARDEN

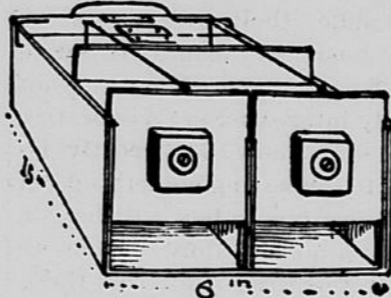
## HOW TO CATCH MICE.

Here Is a Trap Which Has Stood the Test of Forty Years on an Ohio Farm.

Of course we have a cat and a dog, but they cannot always get at the mice whenever and wherever they wish. The corner, the smokehouse and the cellar are places where we cannot leave a cat or a dog for any length of time. Therefore we must use traps.

There are several kinds of traps manufactured of more or less efficiency, of which we have used only one kind—the round wooden trap with holes in the sides and the choker arrangement.

FIG. 1.



FRONT VIEW OF TRAP.

They are, to a certain extent, fairly efficient, but last only a short time, as the wire springs rust easily. The best thing we have in the way of traps is a homemade contrivance which has been in use for about 40 years, and which has caught its thousands of mice. After so many years' use, the trap is somewhat the worse for wear and has been repaired many times and also shows the marks of many mice's teeth.

Fig. 1 is a front view of the completed trap. Fig. 2 shows side-view of the trap doors and triggers. Fig. 3 gives the triggers in detail. The triggers and levers are made of ordinary bale wire. If hard wood is used for top, sides and doors the mice will not gnaw very much when inside of it, but

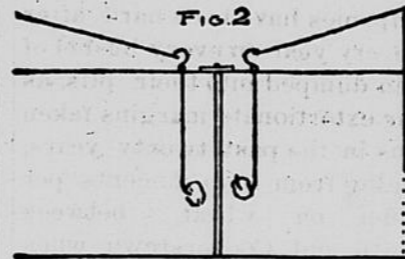


FIG. 2.

TRAP DOORS AND TRIGGERS.

If soft wood must be used it is well to line the covers and doors with tin, which needs only to be tacked on. The doors must slide very easily or they will swell up in wet weather and render the trap inoperative. The weights for the doors are bolt nuts (about one-half inch bolts) and must be heavy enough that no mouse can lift them.

But the main thing with catching mice is the bait. We use either corn (ears) cut into discs, bacon rind, or cheese, according to where we wish to set the trap. We use corn in the smokehouse or cellar, and bacon rind in the corner. The trap has been in use since November 1, 1903, and was baited with bacon rind and set in a corner adjoining the barn, where it has caught 69 mice up to this time, January 4, 1904. We let the cat or dog take the mice out when they are caught.—Joseph B. Bell, in Ohio Farmer.

**Don't Buy Cheap Fertilizers.**  
High grade fertilizers are the cheapest. The Connecticut station, summarizing its analyses last year, said: "Dollar for dollar, the buyer gets more than twice as much plant food in special manures, which cost \$3 to \$40 per ton than in those which he can buy for \$25. Goods which are cheap are made cheap by taking out nitrogen and potash and filling with phosphoric acid." The same truth is emphasized by other experiment stations and state fertilizer inspectors. In other words, when buying from reputable concerns, you get just what you pay for, whether it's fertilizers or anything else.—Orange Judd Farmer.

**A Study in Vegetable Nature.**  
Vegetable nature is very much like human nature, it will steal from its neighbor, and in vegetable life we must give back to the tree that which has been taken from it. Lack of moisture may prevent bearing the following year. The full annual duty of a tree is to perfect its fruit and prepare for next year's crop. A continuous moisture supply is necessary to maintain activity in the tree, as it will make a large draft upon soil moisture, while making new wood and large fruit, and if moisture falls then it may be forced into dormancy before it can furnish good strong buds for the following year's bloom.—Epitomis.

**The Farmer's Rubber Boots.**  
To dry out a pair of rubber boots is an all absorbing theme with those who wear them. Dry oats placed in them in the evening and left in over night, will absorb most of the moisture. Another method is found in making a paper tube, like a funnel, that will reach the toe of the boot; invert it and place it over a lighted lamp, making all secure. The heat will circulate through the tube to the extreme part of the boot, and will dry it out nicely.—Midland Farmer.

## FOR WOMEN.

Such That Every Woman Desires to Know Is Found in Cuticura— "Cuticura Works Wonders."

Too much stress cannot be placed on the great value of Cuticura Soap, Ointment and Pills in the antiseptic cleansing of the mucous surfaces and of the blood and circulating fluids, thus affording pure, sweet and economical local and constitutional treatment for weakening discharges, ulcerations, inflammations, itchings, irritations, relaxations, displacements, pains and irregularities peculiar to females, as well as such sympathetic affections as anaemia, chlorosis, hysteria, nervousness and debility.

**Knocked Out by Time.**  
A Cleveland woman threw an alarm clock at a burglar and knocked him out of the window. That burglar is now in a position to acknowledge that a woman can throw straight enough if you give her time.—Indianapolis Journal.

**Don't Get Footsore! Get Foot-Ease.**  
A wonderful powder that cures tired, hot, aching feet and makes new or tight shoes easy. Ask to-day for Allen's Foot-Ease. Accept no substitute. Trial package FREE. Address A. S. Olmsted, Le Roy, N. Y.

A Pennsylvania farmer has had his wife arrested for cruelty because she insisted on grinding out "Hiawatha" on a phonograph. There are limits beyond which it is unsafe to go even in torturing an agriculturist.—Rochester Union.

**Washing Machine Only \$2.70.**  
Save your wife's health and daughter's beauty by using our great Star Washing Machine—Worth its weight in gold. Price only \$2.70; with wringer \$3.90. John A. Balzer Seed Co., La Crosse, Wis.

"Heads I lose, tails you win," said the nobleman to the novelist as he went to the guillotine.—Cornell Widow.

I am sure Piso's Cure for Consumption saved my life three years ago.—Mrs. Thos. Robbins, Norwich, N. Y., Feb. 17, 1900.

The best clubhouse for boys is home.—N. Y. Tribune.

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