

HANK SIMMONS

By KENNETH F. HARRIS

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HANK SIMMONS was never reckoned a particularly sociable individual, even when he was in "God's Country," where sociability was possible to some extent. The grocery at "the Corners," which was the intersection of the Vinton, Crosbytown and Blockley roads, in Saline county, Mo., "God's country" aforesaid, never had any great attraction for Hank, and the habitues of that popular resort generally frowned that Hank was right smart of good company—fer hisself. He certainly seemed to prefer spending his evenings on the paternal eighty, mending harness, reading the weekly paper, or even "jess a-settin'" gazing blankly into the fire of hickory logs, to the charms of converse with the sages of the soap box. Equally he shunned "singin' school," and the strawberry and ice cream festivals allured him not. "Not," he said, "by a derned sight."

Therefore, he might have been considered eminently fitted for the solitary life of a sheep herder in the slopes of the Jarillas, whither he had drifted in course of time, but he had to confess at last that he found it "sort o' lonesome" and that meant a great deal for him. An ordinarily gregarious man would probably have gone stark staring mad in from six months to a year, but Hank had now followed the flocks for three years, far from human habitation and the sound of human voices, and he was still reasonably sane.

Once in two or three months the supply wagon came around, and then the driver, Bill Williams, usually stayed with him a day or two and helped him to move camp to pasture. Occasionally a Mexican prospector or a party of Indians on a hunt came into his range, but the rest of the time there was no sound but the ceaseless bleating of his sheep and the quick crunch of their teeth on the grass; no sight but the same old everlasting hills, with their scanty clothing of greasewood and cactus and stunted pine; no occupation but to slouch along after his imbecile charges, or lounge in the shade of rock and tree, no companionship, but that of the misnamed Diablo, the half-bred sheep dog. It was no wonder that he felt it "sort o' lonesome."

It was not so much the solitude, he said afterwards, as the eternal bleating, bleating, bleating. Or, at least, that in some way acted upon his nerves and intensified the feeling of loneliness. It sometimes happens that a herder who is not a Mexican suddenly snaps the cord of his endurance and runs amuck through the flock, with awful slaughter. After this happens he usually kills himself, for the survivors continue to bleat. This is just as well, for he would be an awkward patient to conduct to a lunatic asylum.

But this is beside the story, except to explain that Hank was so anxious to have Bill Williams stay with him for awhile longer on the occasion of his last visit, and why Bill was so genuinely sorry that he could not.

"I'd like to the best kind, Hank," said the driver. "If Long wasn't short of chuck an' waitin' fer me on Madre Chiquita, I'd do it, but I've got to hit the trail shore. It's a cinch that you've gotter come in, though, an' I'll shore bring some home to spell you ther nex' trip. Can you stick it out till then? If you can't, get in the wagon anyhow an' let the sheeps go to hell. A man's worth more'n a herd of snottin'-nosed sheeps."

"Oh, I reckon I kin stand it till then," sighed Hank; "but it's shore lonesome." And so the long whip cracked and the brake ground on the wheels, and the wagon slid after the trotting mules down the trail.

In two days Hank was sorry that he had not climbed into the wagon, and considered whether he would not do well to strike out afoot for the Madre Chiquita; but there were livin' tracks around the spring, and the coral was a frail thing, so he gritted his teeth and stayed, and then in his need came a man and a buckboard to the camp. It is safe to say that no man ever got a heartier welcome.

He stayed two days, and when he went betrayed his eastern origin by asking for the "bill."

"God!" exclaimed Hank, "ef you only knew how tickled I've ben ter have you here! How much do I owe you, pardner? I'd like ter hire you fer the nex' three months jest ter talk ter me."

That gave the parting guest an idea. He may have realized how this solitary herder felt. Perhaps even during his brief journey the dreariness of the desert had entered into his own soul. At all events, he unpacked his big cowhide trunk and took therefrom a small box and a paper parcel. From the box he took a curious little machine, upon which he fitted a glossy hollow cylinder from the parcel; lastly attaching a tin funnel and winding up the arrangement with a key. Then, as Hank gazed in open-mouthed wonder, a curious whirring sound proceeded from the funnel, and then in nasal, vibrant tones a voice which said: "Ladies and gentlemen, fellow citizens: I have no hesitation in declaring to you to-night that in his attitude on the financial question, the president of the United States has placed himself in direct opposition to the letter and the spirit of the constitution." "Know who that is?" asked the traveler. "It's William Jennings Bryan. Here, we'll jerk him out and try another. Sousa's band. How do you like that? Here's 'The Little Old Red Shawl' That Moth-

er Wore.' Another speech. Take the whole lot and be happy. There is a dozen records, and they ought to keep you from getting lonesome, for a while, anyway."

Hank had never seen or heard of anything like this before, and his delight and gratitude knew no bounds. He wanted to pay his benefactor for the machine, but could only get him to accept a tanned wildcat skin. Then this angel entertained unawares got into his buckboard and his team rapidly carried him out of sight.

But Hank's case was different now. At night he could wind up his little phonograph, and music and song and oratory and laughter filled his shack through the medium of the tin horn. There was one record that he used more than any other and swathed more tenderly in its protecting cotton, and as time went on there were evenings when this particular record was the only one that he used. It started off with a storm of handclapping. Then the music of a single violin in a prelude, and a woman's voice, strong and sweet and clear, sang:

"Round my Indiana homestead wave the cornfield,
In the distance loom the woodlands clear and cool;
Oftentimes my thoughts revert to scenes of childhood
Where I first received my lessons—nature's school."

Hank tried to imagine what she would look like, and presently identified her with a colored lithograph of a girl feeding chickens, that had come to him with a month's supply of plug tobacco—a blue-eyed, flaxen-haired maiden with round, white arms and a preternaturally graceful form. And so the singer grew very real to him, and he thought about her as he watched his flock and ever the refrain of the song rang in his ears:

"The moon shines bright to-night upon the Wabash,
From the fields there comes the scent of new mown hay,
Through the sycamores the candle light is gleaming
On the banks of the Wabash, far away."

"Well, you don't seem to have suffered none," said Bill Williams, when he drove up to the camp two months' later. Fat and happy, by Jinks. And I wuz expectin' to need Jesus here to haul you back into El Paso. Reckon you don't need no relief."

"I sure do," said Hank. "Jesus kin tumble out an' take hold, an' I'll pack my waresack an' go back with you. I may be all right, but I ain't goin' to take no chances until after I've taken in the town fer awhile."

So the Mexican "took hold" and Hank went back to El Paso with his phonograph and drew his wages.

The second night of his relaxation he and his friend William were attracted by the lights and the show bills at the door of a theater. They went in. It was about the usual programme—juggling, dancing, singing, dialogue—all the rest of it, and the two men enjoyed it with the abandon of children. But suddenly Bill was aware that Hank was gazing with far more than ordinary interest on a girl who had just come on the stage—a blue-eyed and extremely golden-haired young woman. He nudged his friend and received in return a jolt in the side from Hank's elbow that for the moment robbed him of breath; for a violin was playing the prelude to "The Banks of the Wabash," and the next moment the girl sang in a clear, sweet voice:

"Round my Indiana homestead wave the cornfield,
In the distance loom the woodland clear and cool;
Oftentimes my thoughts revert to scenes of childhood
Where I first received my lessons—nature's school."

It was the voice of the phonograph. "Where you going?" asked William. "The show ain't over yet," said Hank. "I'm goin' ter see that gal." "You kin wait or not, jest as you darn please." He worked his way with some difficulty behind and presently was confronted with Miss Mae St. Clair.

"Well?" said the singer, not unkindly, for Hank was a well-looking man and he showed something of the trepidation he felt, though he had been bluff and peremptory enough with the men who had barred his way. "You want me?"

"That's what," replied Hank, simply. "What is it?"

"I jest told you. I want you. Take a good look at me, an' see ef you think I'll do. I'm a stranger to you, but you hain't ter me. You've ben with me in my shack, singin' ter me for two months stiddy. I'd like the best kind ter have you with me fer all ther rest of the time there is."

Miss St. Clair looked at him for a moment in amazement and then burst into a fit of laughter. "You must be crazy," she said.

"No," said Hank, "I hain't crazy, nuther. You saved me from that. I'll tell you." And he told her, with a rude eloquence that moved her strangely. "I knowed when I seen you an' heard you to-night that I wuzn't mistaken," he concluded. "I knowed that ther breath of ther new-mown hay come to you right there, an' you seen the moon shinin' on ther ripples in ther water an' hankered after ther ol' homestead. You hain't satisfied ter paint up your face this-a-way an' sing ter a mob of whisky-soakin' loafers—are you?"

"N—no," she half stammered.

"Well, then, come with me an' I'll make a home fer you, an' ef it hain't a happy one it won't be my fault."

"You don't know anything about me," she said, quickly.

"Nor you don't erbout me."

"But I know," she said, smiling. For a moment or two they looked at one another very earnestly. Then Hank put out his hand and she put hers within it.

That is how it happened that Miss Mae St. Clair—who is called Polly by her admiring husband—left the "profession" almost at the outset of a promising career.

MAN'S WILL WAS TATTOOED.

Story of a Mexican Miser Who Divided His Wealth in a Singular Manner.

Perhaps it was not parsimony, as his relatives alleged, that led a Mexican miser who recently died to tattoo his last will and testament upon his body. They allege that the decedent, named Moreche, in order to save the cost of pen, ink and paper, imprinted his will indelibly upon his body with some red pigment. When the old miser died his heirs protested against the burial of the body and petitioned the court to have the remarkable "human document" admitted to probate. It was a knotty problem, but the court decided that a copy should be made of the tattooed will, and that the copy should have the full effect of an original will. After the copy had been

THE WESTERN GIRL.

Pronounced Difference When Compared with One from the East Even Though Clothed the Same.

Place the New Yorker beside a typical western girl—one, say, from Kansas—clothe them in identical garments, and the difference becomes even more pronounced, writes H. S. Canfield, in Woman's Home Companion. They may be equally charming, but they are not alike. The westerner is apt to be bigger of bone; her eyes will be more widely open; she will look at the world with franker gaze; she will be slightly more independent or "aggressive," more used to "doing for herself." She will take the rough manners of the hurrying man as a matter of course. No frown will pucker her pretty eyebrows when she is jostled. She walks with less lightness and

PERSONAL AND LITERARY.

Mrs. Burns Thomas, great-granddaughter of Burns, has presented a gift of books and pictures relating to the poet, formerly the property of her mother, Mrs. Everitt, to the Belfast Linen Hall library.

Mr. Frith, the famous royal academician, once painted two pictures for Charles Dickens. The subjects were selected by the novelist and were "Dolly Varden" and "Kate Nickleby." Dickens paid him \$200 for the two and after the novelist's death the former was sold for \$5,000.

Novelists and story writers are not above resorting to real life for material. Octave Thanet made copious notes during the progress of the farcical Posburg murder trial at Pittsfield, Mass., last summer, and Mrs. Wharton is preparing to make use of the affair in a play.

Dr. A. Kuyper, the new premier of Holland, is described as one of the broadest-minded and strongest intellectual forces of Queen Wilhelmina's domain. He was made an LL. D. of Princeton university in 1898, and it was through his influence that a free university, uncontrolled by the state, was founded in Amsterdam several years ago.

John J. Thompson is a state senator in Nebraska and stands six feet six inches in his stockings. While in Kansas City last week he was bewailing the embarrassment which he continually felt on account of his great stature. Mr. Thompson was growing eloquent on the subject when, on glancing through a window into the street, he saw Officer Smith Cook passing. The policeman measures six feet 10 1/2 inches and the sight of such immense proportions calmed the Nebraskan.

Horse racing is about the only thing for which Emperor William has displayed no interest until now, and that he should at length have developed a taste for this form of sport, and have started a racing stable, is ascribed to the influence of his uncle, King Edward. They will be henceforth the only two full-fledged monarchs on the turf, for the ex-queen of Naples, who used to race in France under the name of Count Isola, has lately retired from the turf and has dispersed her stable.

AN ODD CHINESE GAME.

One That the French Government is Trying to Suppress Among the Annamites.

In Indo-China a curious game of chance has long been popular, and recently it has led to so many excesses that the French government is now trying to suppress it. The Annamites, it is said, have an inordinate passion for this game, as the result is that much of their money is passing every year into the hands of the Chinese, who are as a rule the proprietors of the gambling houses in Indo-China, says a London paper.

This game is known as the "game of the 36 animals," and it is played in a large courtyard, in the center of which is a tall flagstaff. Around the courtyard are 36 small huts, and on the top of the flagstaff are various decorations. In each hut there is room for about 20 persons, and in front of each is a sign, on which is painted the picture of one of the animals. When it is announced that a game is to be played, men and women flock from the surrounding villages and gather around the flagstaff, until an official, who is known as the president of the game, appears.

He then solemnly opens a box and, taking therefrom a carefully covered tablet, hoists it to the top of the flagstaff. On this tablet is the picture of one of the 36 animals, and in the box there remain 35 other tablets. This being done, the players separate and go to any of the houses which they please, in order to deposit their stakes. Their aim, of course, is to select the hut appropriated to the animal whose picture is on the tablet at the top of the flagstaff, and those who are lucky enough to do so receive as a reward 30 times the amount of their stakes.

As there are 36 animals, one would suppose that they would receive 36 times the amount, but the president of the game invariably pockets the stakes that are deposited in front of six of the huts, so that no matter who wins or loses he is always ahead of the game. The players spend several hours in making their bets; indeed, a perfect chaos prevails in the courtyard until the president, by ringing a gong, announces that the winning animal is about to be proclaimed.

"Though the Annamites spend much of their time at this curious game," says Charles Clemencet, "they really do not gamble with the object of making money. The men care for nothing but pleasure, and the women seek nothing except personal ornaments, and hence the former gamble only in order that they may obtain the means of enjoyment, and the latter in order that they may buy the jewels, silks and glassware with which they love to adorn themselves. We naturally think that these motives are silly, and that it would be well to teach the Annamites the virtues of hard work and economy."

Terrible Predicament.

"Why is that man acting so queerly?"

"He wrote all the things that his wife wanted down on his shirt bosom."

"And can't he read the memorandum?"

"No; in his hurry to get downtown he put his shirt on wrong side out."—Chicago Daily News.

Never Satisfied.

However rich or elevated we may be, a nameless something is always wanting to our imperfect fortune.—Horseoe.

MRS. MARY HARTWELL CATHERWOOD.



This talented woman, now a resident of Chicago, is recognized here as well as in Europe as one of the foremost novelists of our time. In her various works she has illumined the pages of history of Canada and the middle western states with characters truthful as they were historical, and at all times interesting. Indeed, some of her romances of the days of the French occupation, discovery and settlement might easily be read in conjunction with and aids to the understanding of the history of these sections. Her latest novel, "Lazarre," takes place in the early part of the nineteenth century.

made the old miser was buried by his legatees, the original will being "filed for reference," as it were.

This case is another instance of the imaginations of authors being realized in fact. In one of Rider Haggard's stories the plot hinges upon the existence of just such a tattooed will, only in the case of Rider Haggard's man the will was tattooed on his back because he was shipwrecked and there were no pens, ink or paper handy for the drawing up of the "last will and testament." In the case of the Mexican miser the tattooed will could be read easily, and the copy of it was attested by four witnesses before being admitted to probate.

The Surrender of Metz.

The greatest surrender in the annals of warfare was that of Metz on October 27, 1870. As a fortified place, Metz, with its surrounding forts, was prac-

more sturdiness. She outbreathes an air of accepting things as she finds them and making the best of them. In all probability she is the daughter of a man and woman who were among the west's winners. Her parents found life hard, she finds it easy; but the result of their long battle against untamed nature and restricted social conditions is shadowed in her.

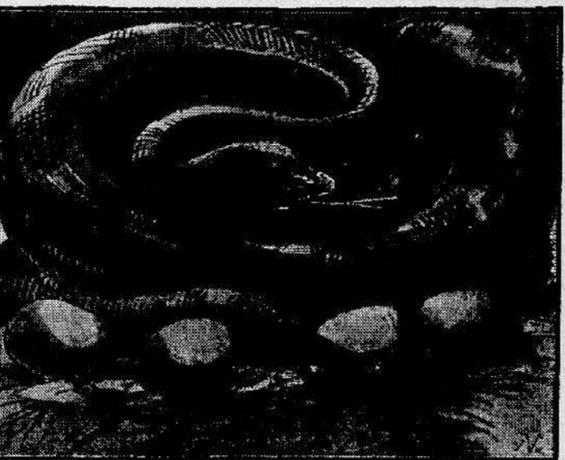
SHE HAD THE LAST WORD.

Her Husband Tried to Pacify Her by Wire But Made a Failure of It.

"It is proverbial that woman will always have the last word," said the confiding man, "and my wife is no exception from the rest, as I have discovered to my cost."

"We started to visit some friends the other day who live some distance from

A PYTHON AND HER EGGS.



The python is one of the few snakes that incubates her eggs. The method is shown in our picture, which is taken from Cassell's Magazine. The python arranged the eggs and then coiled herself around them. The temperature of the reptile mother during incubation was taken at Regent's park, London, and found to be some degrees higher than that of the surrounding air. In the case illustrated the serpent sat for nearly seven weeks, but no young were brought off. In the Jardin des Plantes at Paris a python, not many years ago, was more fortunate, by hatching nine out of a clutch of 15 eggs.

tically impregnable, but bad generalship permitted it to be completely surrounded and cut off. The surrender included three field marshals, 66 generals, 6,000 officers of the lower degree, over 400 guns, 100 mitrailleuses, nearly 90 standards and 173,000 rank and file.

Our First Carriages.

Albany, N. Y., claims the honor of having made the first carriage manufactured entire in this country. Several were built in the year 1814, and the event was duly noted at the time as an evidence of the spread of United States enterprises.

Dogs That Bark.

There are at least three varieties of dogs that never bark—the Australian dog, the Egyptian shepherd dog and the "lion-headed dog" of Thibet.

here, and, after seeing her aboard the train. I went to buy some cigars. The result was that I lost my train, my wife going on without me. Wiring her, in charge of the conductor, not to worry and that I would follow on the next train, I made the best of the situation.

"It wasn't long before I received her answer, and then followed a string of incoherent messages from every station where the train stopped. Seeing bankruptcy staring me in the face if the flood of collect messages didn't cease, I seized a telegraph blank and wired her in the name of heaven to stop sending me so many messages."

"In the innocence of my soul," continued the confiding man according to the Detroit Free Press, "I supposed that settled it. But it didn't. In due time I received an answer from her that read: 'Why?'"

MILWAUKEE PEOPLE

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"My attention was called to Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound; the first bottle brought relief, and the second bottle an absolute cure. I could not believe it myself, and felt sure it was only temporary, but blessed fact, I have now been well for a year, enjoy the best of health, and cannot in words express my gratitude. Sincerely yours, SADIE E. KOCH, 124 10th St., Milwaukee, Wis."—\$5000 forfeit if above testimonial is not genuine.

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Women should remember that they are privileged to consult Mrs. Pinkham, at Lynn, Mass., about their illness, entirely free.

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