

The Story Club

by Edmund Conco Conco

COLORADO MOUSE-TRAP

"Spell mouse-trap with three letters, Uncle Frank," said Elizabeth from West 166th street, who was visiting her uncle at Fort Morgan.

"Oh, that's an old one. Suppose you spell it with four."

The little girl guessed h-a-w-k and c-r-o-w and F-i-d-o and a good many others, but her uncle told her she wasn't even warm. "It can't be a very good mouse-trap," she protested.

"I've known it to catch and kill about a hundred in an hour."

"Maybe they were all in one place and couldn't get out," said the little girl.

"No, they were all out doors and the mouse-trap went about thirty miles in catching them."

"Oh, Uncle Frank, you're making fun of me."

"Not a bit. If you like, I'll show you the mouse-trap in action some night."

"Tonight?" asked the little girl.

"No," said her uncle, "I don't like to kill even a mouse when I need not, but some night when the mouse-trap is acting and I can't save the poor little mice even if I would, I'll show you the mouse-trap which is spelled with four letters."

It chanced that Uncle Frank (who was a doctor) had a telephone call from a rancher that

very evening and as he brought his motor car around he called to Elizabeth to come along.

The little girl had been motor-ing a good deal in her young life, but never had seen anything like this. The night was dark and the desert stretched away for miles in every direction, seeming strangely dreary and delightfully eerie in the dimness. But the lights of the motor cut a narrow streak right out of the blackness and the dry, hard road ahead showed dazingly for a hundred feet, perhaps.

It was fascinating and the little girl could not take her eyes from it. Suddenly she gave a little squeal. The road was fairly good, but narrow, and Uncle Frank had to steer straight to keep the wheels in the track which the motor cars of the neighborhood had grooved into the road. Now the light picked up a little quadruped which looked white, or flesh-colored against the dusty road and was about the size of a small rat. It crouched in the track blinded by the light.

"Oh," said the little girl and "Oh!" she cried again, as a few feet further on a second panic stricken beastie ran straight along the smooth path. Another and another and another and soon Elizabeth ceased to count them.

These desert mice come out at night to feed and either pick out