

The VANGUARD

A TALE OF THE OLD FRONTIER

By Edgar Beecher Bronson

Author of "Reminiscences of a Ranchman," "The Red Blooded," "In Closed Territory," Etc.

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CHAPTER II.—(Continued.)

After a turn and a half around the bear the bull backed away until near the outer barrier of the ring, where he stopped, facing the bear, bellowing and filling the air with clouds of dust raised by his angrily pawing hoofs, the act both a threat and a challenge. Perhaps a full minute the two beasts stood facing each other. Then the bear shook himself, voiced a furious growl, and began a swift advance. This was precisely what the bull had been waiting for, obviously, for scarcely had the bear got under full headway before the bull charged him. The impact was terrific. As they came together two great clawed feet for a second ripped and tore the glossy red shoulders, but in the very same instant one long, swordlike horn plunged full length into the bear's chest. The speed of the bull's thrust, that, checked by the bear's thrust, and he turned a complete somersault, and he found on his back with force just sufficient, so it sounded, to burst him asunder.

But no; it did not seem even to jar him. In an instant he was up, and once again he sank the same red-dripping horn deep into the bear's still quivering flank, backed away, as if realizing his task was finished, as in truth it was, and then walked slowly round the ring, eyes glistening with head tossing proud challenge for a fresh antagonist.

But his triumph was brief. Directly into the ring rode two beautifully mounted vaqueros, and scarcely had he turned upon them when one dropped a rope over his horns, the other snared both his hind feet, and the splendid little bull was stretched helpless upon the ground. Then others entered, mounted, dropped ropes on the stiffening bulk of the vanquished bear, and dragged him from the ring.

The moment the ring was cleared, right there the Mexicans sprung a trick that was new even to my mates. With the help of shoemaker's wax they stuck a twenty-dollar gold piece fast between the bull's horns just above the eyes. Then, when the horseman had retired and the one footman remaining in the pen had loosened the rope with which the bull's feet had been "hog-tied," and had leaped over the barrier, and the bull had jumped to his feet madder than ever of the rough handling he had received, those beauties of Mexicans yelled that the beauties of Mexicans was hung up to the horns for any gringo (American) who could take it off without the use of a horse.

What do you think of that? And that little chunk of brute dynamite sizzling for an explosion of wrath that left him no pretty thing for even a well-mounted man to tackle single-handed!

Nobody showed any evidence of appetite for that twenty dollars. Peach and Cox sat silent, awed, as I dare say every one was, by the devilish ingenuity of the Mexicans in planning such a test of our nerve. In fact, neither made any move until, finally, a Mexican ran up in front of the three of us, and cried:

"You! You, there; it's you the twenty dollars is hung up for. Get it, one of you, if you are not all coyotes!"

It is a miracle George Cox did not kill the speaker; but instead, before Peach or I had so much as contrived to speak, Cox was in the ring. Instantly out flashed my pistol, for I was sure we were in for a finish fight and was scared half to death.

Peach grabbed my wrist and whispered: "Stow the gun, kid. Leave it to Cox, and watch him make those damned greasers run rings round themselves."

And then, right there, I sure enough nearly froze stiff, for instead of opening on the Mexicans, as I supposed he would, Cox at once made it apparent that he contemplated the infinitely more nerve-racking stunt of accepting their challenge.

Indeed, the utter recklessness of his deed I did not fully appreciate until when, years later, I learned that no Spanish bull-fighter, banderillo matador, even in the ring late in the afternoon, they always wait at some distance until, by stamping the ground and waving flag or sword, the bull is incited to charge at full speed; then, and not till then, they advance at a run for the chance to affix a banderillo in the bull's shoulder, or deliver a fatal sword-thrust, and affect a safe side-step.

This for the very good reason that until the beast's great bulk is at full speed no man can count on safely dodging him.

Cox's leap into the ring had attracted the bull's attention, and it turned and faced him, gory head lifted high, motionless, save for an angry switching of the tail. The distance between the man and the beast was about sixty feet.

For more than a minute Cox stood still, until he had faced the bull's attention. Then he began a brisk, even-paced walk straight toward the bull, never shifting his steady gaze straight into its face.

The noisy, jeering mob about the pen fell silent. All present must have held their breath; I know I held mine. Steadily Cox advanced, and still the bull stood as if dazed by the audacity of this puny antagonist. At last, after an age, it seemed, and just as the bull began to paw viciously, the indomitable little man stepped within arm's length, reached out, plucked the coin from its wax setting, and began stepping slowly backward.

If not for Cox's own, at least for the nerve-tension of the audience was under there was a limit, a breaking-point.

Thus it happened that, while Cox was still within ten feet of the bull, slowly retiring all of the Americans and not a few of the Mexicans broke into wild shrieks and roars of applause—a racket that seemed to rouse the bull to action.

He charged, sprung like an arrow from its bow. But quicker yet was the man, for with a lightning-swift draw he lodged a bullet fairly in the brute's brain that dropped it at his feet.

CHAPTER III. No Gentleman's Game. Chagrined by Cox's success in retrieving the twenty-dollar gold piece from its wax setting between the bull's horns at the Talama fiesta, the Mexicans were furious, for well they knew none of them would have dared to attempt the feat, much less been able to perform it.

Indeed, no more was the bull down, and Cox turned to join Peach and me, than here, racing across the ring toward him came a hundred or more Mexicans cursing, yelling the only complaint and demand they could think of—that, having killed the bull, he must return them the coin.

But before they reached him Peach and I were by his side, with our guns drawn, where we were quickly joined by fifteen or twenty Americans keen to see fair play. Then the ring filled with the entire male populace, it seemed, all clamoring for the coin or our lives, many demanding both.

Meantime, Cox stood smiling, silent, apparently delighted with the prospect of a real matanza, a wholesale killing. But Peach himself must have felt serious doubts of the result; for instead of courting trouble, as was his usual custom, he told the mob, in fluent Spanish, that our mate had accepted their foul challenge, had fairly won a prize none of them would have dared make a try for, and that at the first hostile move we would turn that pen into a shambles.

Strange it was, heavily outnumbered as they had us, but righted until our little group and the stiffening carcass of the bull were the only tenants of the pen.

As we were retiring from the ring, one old grizzled miner turned to Cox and remarked: "Pardner, I have drawn card at death-hugs with Comanches and Apaches, and once, got my gun broke and had to use my bowie knife to carry my life, loose from a grizzly that wanted it. I'm still good for a fifty-mile tramp, on a pinch; but may I be cross-cut and stoned out till I'm plumb holler if I believe these old legs of mine would have carried me over your sixty-foot march on that red heilion. They'd just naturally buckled and let me down, ker-plunk."

It was a sentiment which I am sure would have had many cordial subscribers if all who heard it had not still been half breathless of the recent happenings.

When, presently, both the gringo and greaser camps had become calmed down a bit, riding and roping contests were resumed, which soon proved too much for Peach. In the preceding autumn he had won first prize at the Sacramento fair, both as broncho buster and with the riata, and that much "let go" melted drifted into a grizzly that wanted it. I'm still good for a fifty-mile tramp, on a pinch; but may I be cross-cut and stoned out till I'm plumb holler if I believe these old legs of mine would have carried me over your sixty-foot march on that red heilion. They'd just naturally buckled and let me down, ker-plunk."

Getting his horse, and, uninvited, entering the ring, he roped and tied a wild steer in eighteen seconds less time than any other competitor. Where others, mounted and at top speed, bent from their saddles and pined up from the ground ropes and handkerchiefs, he with equal certainty picked up small coins; dropped along the off side of his horse until one hand and a foot were in sight from the high side, meantime shooting beneath the horse's neck like a Comanche.

At all this the Mexicans glowered jealously, and nothing but our good will enabled me to get my mate away from the ring late in the afternoon, with clean guns.

They told me that through it all I was white as a sheet, and I dare say it was true, for I know I was near sick of fright. Indeed, I took good care not to return to the night's gambling and carousing in the plaza, and for a wonder, succeeded in persuading Peach and Cox to stay in camp with me.

They said I had "done fine" in the jump into the bull ring to meet the mob, but cursed me for a coward for wanting to stay away from the plaza. But for me it was easier to stand their jeers than to take on a new bunch of trouble.

George Peach was in every sense a hard man, one of the most desperate I have ever known. He had an actual passion for fighting. Powerfully built, always in prime condition on account of his daily grueling work with wild broncos, wonderful quick and handy with his fists, he was never once beaten in the eight or ten prize fights he engaged in during the time I was with him.

myself when sober, in drink Peach was a raging fiend whom Cox was always careful to avoid and of whom I was equally cautious, for at that time I could not have stood up against him for a moment.

Thus it fell out that, one evening about our camp fire, we made a solemn agreement that, under no provocation, should we engage in quarrel among ourselves, much less should either of us strike another; and that if, unfortunately, either should break this engagement, the other two should join in restraining him.

Realizing, doubtless, that the suggestion of this agreement, which came from Cox, was inspired chiefly as insurance against his own mad outbursts, Peach concluded the discussion by insisting upon exacting a promise from both of us that, in the event he should attempt to strike either, we would promptly shoot him down—little fancying he would soon be earning such self-sought punishment.

Thus oddly, scarcely a fortnight had elapsed before, on one of our busiest days, when we were at a mountain camp engaged in marketing a newly broken bunch of horses, Peach got roaring drunk and demanded of me, as the company treasurer, thirty dollars, which I gave him. This did not last him long; the "tin horn" gamblers soon got it, and within an hour he was back in camp demanding of me the hard earned one thousand dollars which represented the total cash savings.

In the very instant I refused his demand, he sprang forward to strike me. Powerless otherwise to resist him, mindful of our agreement and certain he would beat me half to death unless I availed myself of his terms, I stood a small moment, pulled my trigger, sending a bullet fairly through his right lung.

And even at that he scarcely got the worst of it. While his wound had him short of wind and laid up in a doctor's care for two months, his blow broke my nose so badly that for weeks the weck of it clinging to its old stand was hopelessly retired from every sort of business. For years thereafter it caused me, from time to time, the most acute suffering.

However, blow and shot served a good purpose; for once Peach was up and about again, we were closer friends than before, and never again to the end our association did a hard word pass between us.

But God knows we were never long out of trouble, of one sort or another, and always serious. Try as we could not keep my mates out of it, Cox was actually worse than Peach, for he was as keen for battling when sober as Peach was when drunk. His deadliest animosities, however, were toward Mexicans. He hated the race as a whole in the same wholehearted way that he hated the invading tide of overland American emigration. Thus it was not long after Peach rejoined us that, in the little plaza, embowered among the live oaks, a Mexican monte dealer who proved to be quicker at pulling the bottom card from the pack than at drawing his pistol, invited and received death at Cox's hands.

But for once the poison was too thick for him; although he contrived to wound two more, before he went down, stunned sufficiently to leave it an easy matter to tie him and pack him off to the frail choza that served as the local jail.

Luckily for him, a woman of the village was sufficiently enamored of Cox to bring word of his troubles to our camp. Peach was alone there at the moment—having ridden out to drive in our horses. But a little matter of odds never bothered Peach; in a trice he was mounted and dashing through the town at top speed, the mounted man who ventured through the lead at every man who ventured to show himself, deluging the place with such a torrent of blue hail that the guards about the jail ran for cover along with the rest. That left it an easy matter for Peach to release our mate, haul him up beside his own saddle and fetch him safely to our camp.

Luckily, I got in with our horses about the same time, when we made a two days shift at such speed that it carried us beyond their line and out of the north, close on the then outer line of settlements, where the Digger Indians were fiercely resisting the slowly encroaching miners and ranchmen; or rather, to be more accurately truthful, a few of the more desperate were so engaged, for most of the Diggers were timid folk.

So the third morning of our drift northward, we were not particularly surprised when, on reaching Hat Creek, we found Callahan's ranch sacked and burned, his horses gone, and himself and one hired man stark, abristle with Digger arrows.

Of course we joined a party of neighbors that soon gathered and took the trail, but they proved such a faint-hearted lot we soon left them, and struck across toward Eureka, dropping into and climbing out of the fathomless gorges of Roaring Fork and Mad River—both of which, I will stake my word, honestly deserve their names—and followed down Eel river until we came to Hydenville, where until we found Captain Wright's little command of Indian fighters.

After looking them over for a day, we decided they looked like they really meant to kill something besides time, so we threw in with them.

Nor did we regret it. Real men they proved. Wright marched us up into the Great Bald Hill country, about the head of the Eel river, where for three months we were kept out stalking the constantly shifting camps of the Diggers, sometimes stepping into an ambush and playing pin cushion for their arrows and occasionally having our lining and potting a few.

But it was rarely we could contrive to get in striking distance of them, for they kept scattered like quail and stuck to rugged sierras no horse could travel in. We sure kept them on the safe and comfortable for the scattered settlements south of us.

It was not, however, until the spring of 1860, shortly after Wright's command had been disbanded and we had gone to Comptonville, that a blow was delivered to the Diggers that permanently pacified the tribe.

In Humboldt, Bay, not far from the regular troops had been withdrawn. They made history in more than the noble record of their terrible hardships in the desert and of the battles they fought, for without them the Confederacy would inevitably have gained possession of all territory west of Texas and Kansas, right through to the Pacific, which had it happened, must surely have served to prolong the war, to seriously embarrass the administration at Washington, and very possibly (who knows?) have changed in some measure the terms of its ultimate conclusion.

Little Benny's Note Book

By LEE PAPE

Ma was elektid vice president of the Ekwil Suffridge club the uthr day, and last night I sed to pop, Pop do you believe in ekwil suffridge.

Wars yure mothr, sed pop. Up in her room, I sed. No, I dont believe in ekwil suffridge sed pop, I think the man that believes in ekwil suffridge is a molley coddle. Wy, I sed.

Well, as the bigamist sed wen he was asked wy he wasen happy, for sevrl reasons, sed pop, in the first place, the first thing wimin want to do wen they are aloud to vote is to close up awl the saloons, thus throwing millylins of bartenders out of a job, not to speak of the dizastrous effect it wood have awn the now prosperis brass rale factories, were did you say yure mothr was.

Up in her room, I sed. Every time I think of wat the famerlies of those poor brass rale werkers wod half to suffer if wimin were aloud to vote, it brings teers to my eyes, sed pop, can you see eny thare now.

Eureka, lay Indian Island, which then held one of the largest villages, among whose thickets and tule swamps they felt safe. But one night a party of twenty-five men, a mixed lot of lumbermen, ranchers and miners, slipped over to the island, surprised their camp, and killed two of the dead being sixty-two children.

It as nothing less than a dastardly massacre, for even the mature men of the village, few were active hostiles. As for the children, one man, a ranchman named Larrabe, whose ranch had been burned by the Indians and all of his live stock stolen, boasted that he himself had, single-handed, killed every last one of them, and with the cruel sentiment then prevailing in those parts, no voice was raised to protest.

About Comptonville we gathered and broke another herd of horses, luckily for us just in time to sell them handomely to stampeters for the new placer strike on New River, in Trinity county.

And then on into the new camp the three of us trailled for a share of the pickings—a chance to back Peach into a prize fight or to pull off a horse race, falling in both of which, we could always rely on Cox's skill as a gambler to let us out of a camp heavy winners—when we could contrive to keep Peach away from the gaming tables.

But there we found everybody so crazy staking and prospecting that claims that the trip would have been a barren one but, for a chance meet- ing with Henry Bowen, a youngster, who later proved to be the fastest one hundred yard runner in California and became known as "The Plow Boy."

Amid temptations which scarcely one man in a thousand resisted, it was always a matter of curiosity to me that neither of my mates all prey to the mad lust for quick riches inspired alike by white, red and yellow men by a new gold strike. But they possessed a quaint and primitive philosophy, in which they seemed to be entirely sincere, and which certainly served to hold them immune.

The subject never came up among us as an urgent proposal but once, early in my association with them, young and impressionable, a rush of hundreds out of Sacramento to a new strike in the north possessed and nearing to show himself, red and yellow men by a new gold strike. But they possessed a quaint and primitive philosophy, in which they seemed to be entirely sincere, and which certainly served to hold them immune.

"Not for us, son, not in a thousand years; feller can't get but just so drunk, anyway, and we are makin' about all our systems will hold at this horse game. Then, besides, it don't appear to me to be no gentleman's game to go diggin' with a pick and shovel—hey, Cox?"

"Go 'gopherin', diggin'?" queried Cox; "why, d—n me, I wouldn't dig my own grave, not even if I was needin' it to prove and that the coy- by swept my 'damberin' me if I didn't." All of which seemed to leave so little room for argument that I made no further attempt to pursue it.

However, while we got none of New River's treasure, the Plow Boy proved to us a good asset, for at Sacramento he won for us a race that tripled our capital. Indeed I believe we could have dropped down and broken Fried's leg, but for the fact that that boy frightened started my mates on, and slipped away from us.

Throughout the year preceding the outbreak of the Civil war, my mates grew so much more desperate and reckless that I became convinced it could not be long before one or the other of them would involve us all in continually straining my influence with them to the breaking point in some crime, and that, although I was unceasing efforts to restrain them, I must inevitably be branded as their abettor.

Leave them I realized I must. The war made the opportunity. All of us were keen to enlist, and when they selected the First Cavalry, I chose the Fifth Infantry.

For the last thirty years I have heard little and have not read a line written on the grand work done by the California column, enlisted in July, 1861, composed largely of miners, bronco riders and gamblers, with a sprinkling of lawyers, doctors and merchants from Frisco, Sacramento and the mountain camps.

They made history, those men who formed the little column that, with the remnants of a mixed regiment of Coloradians and native New Mexicans under Kit Carson, took and held the vast territory west of the Rio Grande for the government. Then for four years scattered in small detachments over the enormous area between the Poudre and Delaware rivers in the north and the Delaware in the south, they were engaged in perpetual battling with the Navajos, Apaches and Comanches, who resumed the war-path as soon as

No sir, I sed, and pop sed, Then I gess im not thinkin' of wat they wood haf to suffer jest at present, in the second place, if wimin were aloud to vote, do you no wat they wood do.

No sir, I sed, and pop sed, Then ill tell you, if wimin voted they woodent be content to have the pois in respect- abill places like pool rooms and the back rooms of seegar stoars, were they are now situated, do you no ware they wood have the pois.

No sir, ware, I sed. In sum low tango tee room, with danse programs for ballits, thats ware, sed op, and now ill tell you anuthr rezin wy wimin shooodent be aloud to vote.

Wats that about wimin voting, sed ma, kuming in jest then.

I was meerly outlinin' to him the meny rezins wy wimin awl ovir the sterilized world shood no lawnr be denied the ballit, sed pop.

Well I hope he has convinsed you, Benny, sed ma.

I Yes mam, I sed.

—and the Worst Is Yet to Come



Daddy's Bedtime Story

The Little Lizards' Rainy Day Party

It had been such a rainy day, but Jack and Evelyn had been for a walk in spite of the weather.

"Where did you go?" asked daddy. "We had a splendid walk," said Jack. "We went through the woods. We had on our oldest clothes, high boots and rubbers, so we didn't care how wet we got."

"We certainly did get wet, though," said Evelyn. "But just the same we had lots of fun. The woods looked so pretty all wet and green."

"The red lizards gave a party this afternoon in the woods, and I thought maybe you two children might have seen them," said daddy.

"We didn't see them having a party," said Evelyn. "But we saw just ever and ever so many lizards hurrying along, and probably they were on their way to the party."

"Yes, that must have been it," said daddy. "You see, they wanted to give a party for the fairies."

"The fairy queen and all the fairies thought it was fine of the lizards to give them a party, and they liked being invited out on a rainy day because it wasn't every one who wanted to give a party on a rainy day."

"When they got to the side of the mountain all the lizards were in line ready to receive the fairies very formally. They made low bows and twisted their tails as well as wiggled their little legs, which in lizard talk meant: "Good day, fairies. We are happy to see you."

"The first thing the lizards had arranged for the amusement of the fairies was a wading contest.

"Near by on the mountain side there was a little brook with mossy, slippery rocks in it. The fairy who could wade for the longest time without slipping was to win a prize.

"The lizards, of course, thought it was lots of fun to watch the fairies slip, because the more rain there was the easier it was for the lizards to hurry along, and the fairies thought it was lots of fun too. Of course, as they had come out with the intention of getting wet, they didn't mind falling on the mossy stones at all. And such laughter as there was! And the lizards wiggled so with glee and amusement!

"The little fairy named Silver Wings won the prize, as she didn't fall at all, and the lizards were very pleased that she had won, for on the tip of her right wing she had a little rosette made of moss which she had put on in honor of the lizards' party. That pleased the lizards so much that it was with the greatest enthusiasm they presented the prize to her."

ings will hold a piano recital Tuesday afternoon, June 16, in the I. O. O. F. hall.

Congregational church. Services morning and evening. Topic of morning sermon, "The Reward of the Christian Life." Text I. Dan. 3:24. The Ladies' Aid society meets Friday afternoon with Mrs. Maud Owen. J. H. Skiles, pastor.

Christian Science society. Meets in I. O. O. F. hall Sunday morning. Services at 11 a. m., Wednesday evening. Meeting in their reading room at 8 p. m.

M. E. church. Communion services Sunday morning at 11 a. m. Evening services at 8 p. m. W. L. Selby, pastor.

Catholic church. Morning services Sunday by Rev. Father Vaughn.

LIBERTYVILLE Mrs. Roy May of Kansas City is here for several weeks' visit with her parents.

Mr. and Mrs. Rowland and son of St. Louis were recent guests at the parental Slimmer home.

About a dozen ladies Mrs. Winn Tuesday in honor of her birthday and gave her a handkerchief shower.

Mrs. Henry Gibe is confined to her home by illness.

Those who attended the sessions of the district convention of Rebekahs held in Batavia Tuesday were as follows: Mrs. Grace Worley, Mrs. Mayme Coleman, Mrs. Maude Davis, Mrs. Carrie Riggs, Mrs. Lester Burnhaugh, Mrs. Anna Vaught, Mrs. Will Fulton, Mrs. Daisy Eystone, Miss Leah Linder and Miss Goldie Anderson.

Mrs. Martha Gearhart, who has been a student at Parsons, returned home Tuesday.

Mrs. James Cowan of Allerton is here visiting with old friends.

Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Helmer have returned to their home in Lovilla after a week's visit at the J. W. Hill home.

EDDYVILLE Miss Ieta Worrall left Wednesday.

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