

# OUR PRIZES

## DISPARAGEMENT

EDITED BY FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT

THE PRIZE SERIAL.

### THE ABANDONED CLAIM.

BY FLORA HAINES LOUGHEAD,  
AUTHOR OF  
"WAS HE GUILTY," ETC.

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#### CHAPTER III.—(Continued.)—THE HEAD OF A FAMILY.

ND SO you want to take up land, eh? Turn rancher. What for?"

The register had come forward, his fine face lighted with interest.

"To make a home and earn a living for my brother and sister and myself," replied Ned, promptly.

"Not afraid of hard work? Don't mind leaving the city?"

"No, sir."

"I have two boys at home, and I wish they had had your pluck," said the ranchman. "Now as to this application of yours. It's irregular, I must own; but I can't see why it shouldn't hold. If a man deserts his family, his widow or minor child, in case of her death, may declare themselves heads of the family, and enter land accordingly. When an honest man is stricken down by disease, I can't see why members of his family shouldn't have the same privileges. It may arouse some discussion in Washington, but if you can afford to take the risk, I think we can and will. Go up and settle on the land, and then enter it in the office of the county clerk of Alameda county. It makes any objections, refer him to me."

CHAPTER IV.—TOM'S REVELATION.

A night or two before the children left the city, as they were resting from a busy day's labor, there came the sound of a great hubbub at the gate, followed by the sound of a stampede up the walk.

Two voices, a boy's and a man's, were heard outside, then there was a clatter as if a squad of infantry had raced over the little porch, and there were gruff murmurs and smothered laughter.

The boys, thoroughly startled, sprang to the door and flung it open.

On the porch a man and boy were struggling with something very strong and active, and very wild and unmanageable; something that was spotted, dun-color and white, with eyes like a fawn, and sleek ears that pricked forward as the door opened, in a very knowing fashion.

"That'll do, Jim!" said the boy, in a tone of one accustomed to giving orders. "I've got her now. You can go."

"Haa-a-a!"

Sarley knew the familiar call.

"Beauty!" exclaimed Ned, amazed.

"That's what's the matter," replied Tom Bateman, for it was he, avoiding Ned's eye, as he secured the rope to one of the posts. "Afraid you might forget her. Knew you were awful bossy. Thought I'd bring her home myself."

But Ned was a boy, too, and he still smarted over the savage threat young Bateman had made at the schoolhouse.

"I don't want your calf," he said, bluntly. "Keep her yourself."

Hope appeared at the door, drawing back slightly at the sight of the visitor. Something had happened the previous Saturday that she had not told the boys.

After they had started for the land office she had gone on the back steps to have the "good cry" she had been promising herself. She had been holding back all the week, and her tears rained down thick and fast, while her slight form shook with the sobs she could no longer control. She did not hear the faint rattle of the door bell in the house, nor yet a loud rapping on the front door when the bell remained unanswered.

A moment later Tom Bateman came along the walk at the side of the house, and opened the gate in the tall lattice work separating the front yard from the back. He thrust his head through the opening and called out in a cautious voice, as if not quite sure what sort of a reception he might meet:

"Boys."

Hope raised her head and recognized him, and tried to recover her self-command, but could not. Dropping her face again upon her arms, she sobbed as if her heart would break.

"Why, Hope!" said Tom.

He was a big boy, in class A of the first grammar grade, and she was a little girl, grades and grades below him, but she reminded him of a little sister he had lost, and whom, for love's sake and the pain the memory brought him, he had tried hard to forget. He sat down on the step beside her and drew the little girl into his arms and made a clumsy effort to quiet her.

"But I am, and I can't stand it. Do stop, Hope. You'll kill yourself crying so. Would that make it easier for them or your father?"

He had succeeded in quieting her at last, and he dried her tears with a handkerchief, not very immaculate and wrung from her a promise that she would not cry any more before he went away.

"When you feel like crying, just tear around the house and bang things about and make other people feel bad. That's the way I do."

Hope laughed.

"Don't tell the boys!" she implored.

"All right. Mum's the word."

The consciousness of this innocent secret embarrassed them both at their next meeting; but it made Tom all the more determined to make peace with the brothers of the little girl who had sobbed out her sorrows in his arms.

"Don't be spongy, Ned," urged Tom in a low voice. "I didn't know—"

hadn't heard anything about—why you left school, you know. Besides, Beauty is getting to be a terrible nuisance. She's setting dangerous. Her horns are growing. You don't want her to go to the slaughter house? The governor's declared he'll send her here if he finds her around another day."

Ned could not but own that he would not like to have the pretty creature meet such a cruel fate.

There was a tone of indifference in Tom's speech about his father that the other boys, who had been brought up so differently, could not understand. Tom Bateman was the type of many a San Francisco boy whose father was too much given over to business speculations and his mother to society, to take much thought of their child.

"There's no question but Beauty would ruin Mr. Roberts if he kept her three months longer," Tom went on.

"The directors have got their eyes on her, and either she'll have to go or he'll be fired." If she could get out in the country and be put on grass or alfalfa, there'd be some reason in it. But when it comes to keeping her on school books and hats and satchels, and choice roses and orchids—she cleaned out all the orchids in our conservatory yesterday—(you see Mr. Roberts made me take her home), she's—she's ruinful. Hold on! She's got your handkerchief now."

So she had, and was calmly chewing it with the prospective enjoyment of a new and delicate cud by and by. The shout that went up at this discovery restored good feeling among the boys, and emboldened Tom to discharge another errand, not of amusement in the neighborhood, but an unselfish impulse to give a lift to the boy friends whose way must henceforth be an up-hill climb.

"Look here, boys," he cried, kneeling down and fitting a key to the large box the man had put down on the porch.

"Can't you make some use of these things out on your ranch?"

He threw up the lid as he spoke, disclosing what had been a well appointed chest of boys' tools of excellent manufacture, but now in sad disorder.

"Oh, Tom, we couldn't think of such

then gave an apologetic whinny, and laid her nose on her master's shoulder, docile as a kitten.

The tall man turned away.

"Dr. John."

It was Martin who spoke and hailed him.

"Here, my boy; where are the rest of you?"

A hearty voice with a sound of honest welcome. Martin stopped short and Ned and Hope looked pleasantly bewildered, for it was the ranchman who spoke, and who now came cordially forward,

ward, bidding them jump into the spring wagon, while he went off to see about their luggage.

Martin, smarting under the sense of his error, looked critically after Dr. John, and saw only a man of medium height and slender figure, who moved and spoke and acted precisely like other men. There was not the least suggestion of the hero about him, and Martin felt defrauded.

It was plain that Dr. John was a general favorite, from the friendly greetings he received as he progressed along the platform. Some of the villagers drew near and addressed friendly inquiries to the children. They seemed to be at once adopted into the community, because they were Dr. John's charges.

"What is it, Ned?" asked the doctor, as he returned and found Ned waiting on the platform.

This way of addressing them by their Christian names seemed to place the children on a near and friendly footing from the first.

"I must have a freight bill to pay," replied Ned.

The children could not understand the merriment that this remark appeared to arouse among the bystanders.

"Here's the freight agent," said the doctor genially. "Hatten has your bill against these young people?"

"Dr. John, this is too bad," protested the man called Hatten.

"Ned," said the doctor solemnly, "that calf of yours is a financier. She breakfasted off from her own way bill."

"And all the others I had in my pocket," sleepily confessed the agent.

The children could not help but laugh. It was so like Beauty.

Soon they were riding swiftly over the smooth road and past the village. Martin added one question on the road.

"Dr. John, who was that tall, dark man who spoke to you about the horse; the one you called 'doctor'?"

"He? Oh, he's a sort of itinerant dentist," replied Dr. John, carelessly.

"We don't think very highly of him. He gambles and gets drunk, and it is rumored that he beats his wife."

All of the land they saw under cultivation. Although it was the last of September there was still an abundance of fruit everywhere. Apple trees were laden with red and green and yellow fruit. Late peach trees bent beneath their golden burdens. Fig trees sheltered great purple lobes beneath their abundant foliage. The russet of pears, the

the calm, sympathetic control which the farmer exercised over his horse. Every time the animal plunged forward, she found herself checked by his vice-like grasp.

Then he would stroke her gently, and seem to reason with her. The door of the barn opened and a tall man came out wiping his lips. He was dressed in black and had a fierce black mustache, and carried himself with great dignity. In one hand was a gold-headed cane, in the other was a morocco case.

Here was the model hero of romance. The tall man caught sight of the rancher struggling with the spirited horse.

"What's the use of fooling with an animal in that fashion!" he demanded impatiently. "You take a stout whip, lay it over her—raise the welts on her back—and you won't have any more trouble."

"That isn't my way, doctor," said the ranchman, quietly.

At length the animal yielded to the firm and gentle control, and stood perfectly still, only shivering slightly as the engine thundered away down the track. She watched the living train out of sight,

yellow of quinces, the dull greens and browns of almond and walnut husks were everywhere seen. In the vineyards the stacks of boxes and throngs of Chinamen told that the vintage was at hand.

At length they turned into a place which although much less extensive and important than his neighbors, had something a different and distinctive look. Perhaps it was because the background of hills rising so majestically behind it; possibly because of the fringe of forest trees at one side, or the avenue of grand old sycamores leading straight from the gateway to the door. The gateway itself was something to be studied. It was a high rustic arch, and there were rude letters above. The children spelled them out: "S-o-m-b-r-a."

"Sombra." What does that mean?" asked Martin.

"It's only a fancy—the name I call my place. It is the Spanish for shadow, and you see I am the shadow of the hills."

"The shadow." Ned felt that the name had some deeper meaning.

The garden through which they were passing was unlike any that they had ever before seen. It had none of the stiff lines and angles which possess most Californian gardens like a light. This was a genuine old fashioned garden, under a new fashioned climate and in a new fashioned land. Rose hedges raised a defense of flowers and thorn about the patches of green lawn. Sweet scented white and purple violets fringed their margins. Castilian roses rioted everywhere and trailed like a light. There were treasuries of fuchsias and great clumps of trumpet-gardenias, and a hollow filled with fleur-de-lis of melting colors. In a deep pond gold fish glauced and a pond lily bloomed. The house was so lost in vines that it was impossible to follow its outlines, but it had a strangely silent and deserted look.



CHAPTER VI.—A STARTLING ADVENTURE.

"How do you suppose I am going to get you across the Rubicon, and why don't you ask after your freight?" inquired Dr. John, zally, as he drove down a shaded road at the rear of the house.

"How do you know I haven't confiscated it, and may even now be leading you into some dangerous pitfall?"

"You look as if you could be trusted," said Hope, quaintly.

Ned laughed boyishly, but Martin saw Dr. John give a quick, strange glance at the little girl.

They soon came to the bank of a beautiful stream, with tall sycamores and bending willows gracing either margin. Beyond, on the further shore, was disclosed a view which filled them with delight, for there, on a gentle slope, which seemed to be hollowed out of the mountain, was their own dear home to be. There had a glimpse of some rude buildings, then heard a low, contented "moo," and saw Beauty but a few rods below them, grazing happily away for the first time in her life upon legitimate fodder. The children sprang out of the wagon, and the horse was tied to a tree.

"Why, Dr. John, that's something that looks like a raft," cried Ned, bending over and looking in the shadow of the willows.

"It is a raft," replied Dr. John, "or at least it tries hard to be one. It has a good deal of business before it and we must have confidence in it or perhaps it will founder and go down. I think it will carry everything but your horse. He is welcome to quarters in my stable until Ned finds time to take him around by the hill trail."

A dozen times the little craft traveled back and forth across the stream. Beauty made the voyage like an old and experienced sailor, though plainly consumed with curiosity to know what it all meant.

"You'll come up with us?" Dr. John asked Ned, as the doctor handed Hope ashore with grave courtesy.

"Not now, Ned. I have some patients that I must be off to see. Don't attempt to do it until you can get your goods are perfectly safe where they are. If you cannot make yourself comfortable for the night—oh, well; I shall be over to see how you are doing."

"Was it any wonder that the children could hardly wait to see him off, before heading on their explorations? Hand in hand they climbed the brook's steep bank, leading Beauty by her rope. Then they paused, dismayed by the prospect before them.

Their way was barred by a miniature forest of tall mustard stalks, twelve to fifteen feet in height and an inch or so in

cowboy, which include not only lassoin but dragging cattle from bogs, etc., because of their combined lightness, strength and freedom from kinks. If the learner becomes sufficiently expert to make it worth while, he can then procure one of these pleated lassos from any large saddlery house in San Francisco or Albuquerque or probably Kansas City, for about \$8.

An ordinary rope, however, is the proper thing to use with, and indeed many cowboys use it altogether, because of its cheapness. It is almost as good, in every way, as the pleated reata, but costs only a twentieth as much.

Get a three-eighths inch hemp rope, forty-one feet long, secure the end from fraying by winding tightly with waxed shoemaker's or carpet thread, and make the hounds (loop) by "grafting" the other end back on the rope, and wind the graft in the same way. Never tie knots. The hounds should be two or four inches in diameter, so as to let the rope play through it with perfect freedom.

Having the lasso thus made, give it two hours in clean water; then whip it out free from kinks, and stretch it tight between two posts or trees—never putting the ends around the posts, but stretching by another rope at each end, and leave

short, a little excited, and looked at each other.

"What if some one should be living here—some hermit or crazy person?" suggested Martin, who was given to sensational theories.

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Ned. "It is probably some wild thing—a coon or coyote."

When they came out of the tall mustard field they saw before them the old adobe house, clumsily built and badly crumbled away in pieces.

The children tied the calf to the cypress and bent their footsteps toward the house.

It was a low structure, long and narrow, with the front door under the eaves, and flanked by two windows on either side. Beside it was a Monterey cypress, and before it stood two pepper trees, through whose fernlike foliage the air and sunshine played. A pink rose rioted over the small porch and hung a leafy screen over one of the windows.

It seemed strange to them that the front door should be ajar, but they observed that the thumb latch was broken.

What dismayed them as they climbed the rocky steps and walked into the front room, was the confusion of tracks that went ahead of them and seemed to wander aimlessly over the floor.

The room in which they found themselves was some twenty-four feet long and fourteen feet wide, with a solid floor, and walls sealed with rough boards. There was a rough fireplace at one end, but it was lily constructed, and the place within was littered with crumbling brick. The chimney was built out into the room and had no pretense at a mantel, but the ledges of brick, where the fire arch narrowed into the flue, still held pieces of broken clay pipes and some rusty nails.

Behind this room was an open door leading into a little "lean-to" which a capacious housewife might have called stifling and stuffy and man and other disagreeable names; but our little housekeeper looked cheerfully into it and declared that it would be nice and snug when it was cleaned out and fitted up. Ned observed that there was a stove-pipe hole in the wall, and drew a rule from his pocket and took its height and measurement, with an eye to business.

One more room waited to be explored; this opened off from the front room and had a window wrenched by the climbing rose. As they took their way to it they were startled by hearing a movement within, as of some heavy body dragging along the floor.

FIGURE 2.

It there till perfectly dry. Then take the rear or hand end in your left hand, and with the right coil the whole rope into that hand, toward you, in a coil of say two feet in diameter, taking care that the successive coils do not cross each other, but lie flat to each other like so many hoops held side by side. The coil through and around the coils on one side to keep them together, and hang over a peg to let the rope "get accustomed." The reata, to do good work, should always be thus coiled and hung up after use, otherwise it will acquire kinks, and fail to work just when you want it most.

Your lasso is now ready for use. You must of course at first practice on foot, and at a stationary mark—a post five or six feet high is best. Begin at a distance of twelve to fifteen feet, which may be increased as you gain proficiency to the range of your rope—thirty-five feet. That is about as far as you can throw. The higher distances are attempted only by rare experts with extra long ropes. I have seen one lasso his remaining target at even sixty feet; but he was the only man I ever saw make it at that astounding range.

Taking your position, whip out the reata, and run it up till the nose is about seven feet long. Then take the hand-end in your left hand, and coil the rope carefully to it until you are within six feet of the nose. Take this rope a foot on each side of the hounds together in the left hand—as in figure No. 2. This makes a temporary extra loop to prevent the hounds from slipping forward and shutting the nose.

Now you are ready to "aim." Stand with your right foot the little forward, lift the right arm till the fist easily bears the hand—about as in figure No. 2. The club—and begin to revolve the nose over your head with an easy motion of the arm from right to left and a perfect flexible wrist. See figure No. 2. It is the wrist that does the chief work here, as in most other matters of dexterity. Whirl the rope fast enough so that you can guide it into a plane to the ground, the whole nose revolving on a level as if it were a wheel, of which your uplifted arm is the axle.

When you have the nose going thus horizontally and have calculated as well as you can the force necessary to carry it over the post, give a quick forward swing with the left foot in front; and in the same instant, bringing your hand (palm downward) forward and down to the level of the shoulder but at full arm-length and without breaking the rhythm of the sweep—let go. Figure No. 3 shows the position of body, arm and hand in the instant of delivery.

If you have done this properly the nose will go sailing forward like a hoop, in a plane almost parallel to the ground. Whether it falls over the post is a matter about which you need not worry for some time. The first great difficulty is to send the nose "over" and when you have done that the proper cultivation of force will come soon enough without practice.

The coil in the left hand must of course be held loosely in fingers uncurved but not closed, so that it may "pay out" easily as the nose "calls." This coil, or the last coil, should be securely held,

FIGURE 3.

ing or hanging up or drawing things, because in some hands one of the most astonishingly effective weapons in the world. It is a hempen rope which needs no loading and has no more report than a snowflake; which is as accurate a bullet within its range, and kills its game or secures it unscathed, with equal ease and certainty; a trap which does not await the uncertain coming of a victim, but runs after him and shuts down on him and holds him as with teeth of steel. And as nearly all weapons are also adapted to amusement, this magic rope is one of the most fascinating of toys, beside which rifle practice, archery, and similar diversions are very tame indeed. A great advantage, too, is that it is never dangerous unless the user designs it to be—a virtue possessed by no other weapon—and it is as easy to learn as real expertness with rifle or bow.

There is but one race in the United States that is, as a race, expert in the use of the lasso—the Spanish speaking people. It is peculiarly their possession—one which they first brought here from South America, and one still chiefly confined to that part of the United States which they occupy, the Southwest. Thousands of Western Americans, however, and most of the Southern Indians, are handy with it, reata—the proper name of the lasso, "larria" being a Texas corruption.

There is no reason in the world why any American boy with common, outdoor pluck may not become an expert with the reata if he desires, and the editor of this department has asked me to tell him how. I am very glad to do so, for it is a beautiful and useful accomplishment and a noble training to eye and hand, and I wish all my young countrymen were as clear as it is my Indian friend, Francisco, who has kindly come over to let me photograph him in the positions desired to make my descriptions perfectly clear.

The standard lasso is forty feet long, and from the three-eighths to one-half an inch in thickness. The best are of pleated rawhide; but they can not be had in the East, and only an expert can make one. They are preferred for "cow-work"—the various duties of the

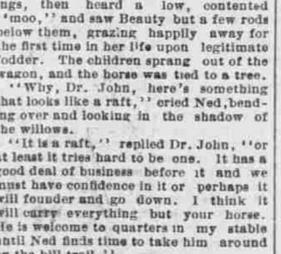


FIGURE 4.

however, as it has to be in real lassoin.

When you can guide the nose safely at the first range, increase your distance from the post little by little. In time you will be able to "bag" the post every shot at thirty-five feet. Then it is time to begin practice on moving objects—an accommodating ohm, for instance. Let him run slowly and pursue him, whirling the nose overhead as you run, until you can make a throw. If you take longer to learn to calculate his speed and where to throw in order to get

FIGURE 5.

But they have not caused nearly so great a loss of life as the ancestors of some of the other plants growing in this garden. Before trying to describe some of these it will be convenient to give some names for them. All of these are known collectively as "algae." These which are like little grains of sand, which are called cocci or micrococci, and which are rod-shaped and called bacilli. Each particular kind has

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his head, but it can be done by practice, and the practice is "good fun."

If you wish you may now begin to back work; that is, sit on a post, then loping slowly and trying to keep something stationary but not trying to make a shock of corn or anything like that. A good deal more than the post, but you must at the same instant take a sharp turn around the horse of your side with the free end of the rope. Last of all, if you have an available animal, you may practice real lassoin without hurting it.

Head-lassoin is as far as the average youth will ever care to go; and how to do that I have explained. The supreme skill with either kind or fore legs—which is done by throwing the nose forward close to the ground in front of the hurrying hoof, with so much a calculation that the next step will take the hoof within the nose before the nose has quite fallen flat, and with a backward jerk so well-timed and rapid that it shuts the nose upon the leg before the hoof can be out again—something to be acquired only by very patient and patient practice. But the youth who has learned head-lassoin has all the necessary knowledge for the last branch, and can acquire that, too, if he have the necessary perseverance.

A QUEER KIND OF GARDEN.

By John S. Billings, Surgeon United States Army, Director of the Army Medical Museum at Washington.

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I have before me, in a box about one foot square, a garden in which several millions of each of about fifty different plants are growing rapidly. Most of them were planted about a week ago, or rather I should say that about 100 of each kind were planted, and already each group numbers millions. If they were to go on multiplying at this rate they would fill this great room less than a month, and that would be very bad piece of business, for while some of them are very useful, there are a few which are very dangerous.

Each kind is in a glass tube about as thick as your thumb and as long as your hand. Some are planted in small slices of potato, some on a cork, some on a piece of bread crumb, but most of them are in a kind of jelly made out of linseed oil with a little beet juice, and poured into the tube while it was warm and fluid, and allowed to cool and become solid there. After the soil, if I may call it so, had been thus prepared, the point of a fine needle was dipped into a drop of fluid containing some of the organisms which we wish to grow, and then the surface of the potato or of the jelly was pricked or scratched with the point of the needle. You could see nothing on this needle point, for these organisms are so small that a eye could not see them. They are placed side by side would hardly make a line long enough to cross a pin's head. In two or three days, at the point where the Bacillus of Tuberculosis or scarlet was pricked or scratched a little stain or spot about as big as a very small pin head, and this rapidly enlarged. One organism made a white spot, another a gray one, while some produced yellow, blue or rose colored spots. The growth of one of them has nearly covered the surface of the piece of potato, and one which it was planted with a thick, red slime, looking like blood, and a few hundred years ago such growths sometimes caused great terror among the people by appearing in large numbers on bread and other substances, giving the appearance as if a man's blood drops had coagulated during the night.

In several of the tubes the jelly has been liquefied into a dirty, grayish fluid, and the organisms in these tubes have a very important work to do in the world. They are the unbridled makers of disease, and it is to decompose dead plants and animals and change them into simple combinations which can be used by new plants to build up their structure. If not for them the dead tree or weed, or beetle, or man, would remain with little change, instead of being resolved into gasses, fluids, and salts which are needed for the development of other living things. If you look at them as a powerful microscope you find that they are little globes or rods, or oval-shaped bodies, sometimes separate, sometimes linked in pairs or long chains, and usually all the plants in this garden have one or the other of these shapes. They are found almost everywhere upon the land, in all drinking water, in the air, in the upper layers of the soil, on the surface of the skin, in our mouths, and in short they are in the air far out at sea, or near the poles, or on the top of the very high mountains, that they are absent. I said that some of them are dangerous. One or the other has been a pest upon the jelly, which streak is formed by an aggregation of several millions of little spherical or rod-shaped bodies, together with little bunches of grapes. If some of these get into an open wound, such as that made by a knife or by a splinter, they may produce a disease, or they may multiply rapidly, producing inflammation and the formation of a pus. If they get into the lymph of the body, or into the blood, or into the vessels of the body, they may be carried along in the stream until they lodge in some of the finest vessels and there produce an abscess. They are known as pus-producing organisms, or pyogenic cocci, and they have been the cause of death of hundreds of thousands of men in years gone by.

But they have not caused nearly so great a loss of life as the ancestors of some of the other plants growing in this garden. Before trying to describe some of these it will be convenient to give some names for them. All of these are known collectively as "algae." These which are like little grains of sand, which are called cocci or micrococci, and which are rod-shaped and called bacilli. Each particular kind has

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