

THE LATEST LULLABY.

Rock a bye, baby, my little sweet man,
Go to sleep, darling, as fast as you can;
For mother must hasten to don a new gown
And put in her vote for the good of the town.

Your mother's a voter; now, man child, be still,
And hush up your screaming, so piercing and shrill;
For be it known, man child, the time has come when
Your mother can vote with the mannest of men.

Now lie where I put you all safe in your bed,
And don't you dare wriggle a hand or a head,
While I go with my new silk and stylish capote,
Oh, man child, the rapture, to cast my first vote.

Mummy is a voter,
A voter proud is she,
And she will cast her ballot
With the foremost of the free,
And a brave and honest voter
Forever she will be!
—M. Phelps Dawson in New York Sun.

LIMPY JIM.

The Leadville stage pulled out of Webster station one evening after supper with 12 "pilgrims" for the city in the clouds. Webster was the end of the track, and the route from there to the carbonate camp lay over the summit of Kenosha mountain, through the northern end of the South park and across the famous Red hill, a doubly significant title by reason of the color of the soil and the bloody murders committed there by the Mexican bandits, the Espinosos. From Red hill the road again enters the South park, passes through the old town of Fairplay, once boisterous with the gayety of pioneer gold diggers.

Red hill was the danger point on the first division of the road. Near the summit is a little basin, where the road is completely hidden from view on all sides. Little gulches lead up to this spot from the South park, affording every opportunity for road agents to reach the place unseen and to likewise make their escape. "Pilgrims" for Leadville usually were supplied with money, and a great deal of wealth originally intended for investment in the carbonate camp was turned over to gentlemanly persons who encountered the stage in the little basin on Red hill.

The individual who sat on the dusty old Concord coach and pulled the ribbons over six bronchos between Webster and Fairplay was known as Jim. I made his acquaintance while we were at dinner in the rough board "eating house" at Webster. He was a tall, slim, muscular man, with a swarthy complexion, dark eyes and a heavy mustache, black as jet from the copious use of dye. He wore high topped boots, with extremely high heels, and his feet were small and delicately shaped. His trousers were of gorgeous plaid material, but the bottoms were worn inside his boot tops. A wide brimmed white slouch hat was cocked rakishly on the side of his head. Some garish jewelry adorned the front of his waistcoat. There was a jaunty air about him which was less pronounced by reason of the stiff and awkward way he carried his arms. I attributed this to the natural effect of driving six spirited horses for years over a mountain road.

He had formerly been a gentleman of fortune, and at one time in his career had amassed a considerable sum of money in the game of chance known as draw poker. When he was at the height of his prosperity, another gentleman of fortune, late of Texas, drifted unostentatiously into camp and caused the report to be circulated that he was aching for a game. Jim undertook to relieve the gentleman of the pain he was suffering on that account, and they met in the back room of Uncle Billy Coleman's Palace of Fashion, on Main street.

There was a slight controversy in the early part of the game, caused by a remark of Jim's to the effect that "people from Texas seemed to have more luck than a Chinaman."

The gentleman from Texas demurred to this and said there was no such thing as luck in draw poker. The chance features of the game, he said, had all been eliminated by the application of skill and science. He then proceeded to demonstrate his assertion, which he did to perfection. At the end of six hours Jim's earthly possessions consisted of the suit of clothes he was wearing. Everything else he had owned in the world had passed into the hands of the skillful and scientific gentleman from Texas.

The Fairplay gambler arose from the table and relieved himself of some choice profanity, most of which was directed against himself. He declared that he was "better qualified to drive a stage than to pose as a gentleman of fortune." The superintendent of the stage line, who was present, jocosely offered Jim a job, and the penniless gambler in a spirit of bravado accepted it and declared then and there that he would never touch the "pasteboards" again as long as he lived.

The gentleman from Texas took his departure as unostentatiously as he had come, but leaving behind him in his room at the hotel a peculiar wire and elastic contrivance which puzzled the brain of the landlord to determine its use. Several persons to whom he exhibited it declared they had never seen anything like it before, but Jim at once recognized it as a contrivance known

as a holdout, by means of which a player retained cards in his possession, secreted in his sleeves, which should be in the deck. The phenomenal "hands" held by the gentleman from Texas were no longer a mystery to Jim. He now understood that it was not "Chinaman's luck" that had beaten him, but this little contrivance, worn under the clothing, by the operation of which all elements of chance were eliminated from draw poker and the game reduced to a "dead moral certainty." It was true, as the gentleman from Texas had remarked, that luck cut no figure in the play. It was a question of skill and science.

As Jim was the only person in Fairplay who had anything like an intimate acquaintance with the scientist from Texas, the landlord presented him with the little implement that had worked the former's financial ruin. Jim's first impulse was to secrete the holdout upon his person and seek revenge upon the unsuspecting miners in the gulch, but he remembered that he had hired himself to the stage company and forsworn gambling. He was a man of his word, and a stage driver he became. It was a monotonous life until the road agents began to pay frequent visits to the line, and Jim liked it. The only thing that disturbed his serenity was the recollection of the gentleman from Texas. If he could but once meet that scientist face to face, life would take on new charms for him.

I had a seat beside Jim on the Leadville coach, and as the horses crawled slowly up the grade of Kenosha mountain, preparatory to a wild dash down the other side into the South park, I remarked to him that it was going to be a pleasant night. He replied that you never could tell much about nights in that country until the next day; he had seen nights just as promising as this one turn out real bad before daybreak. The very best of meteorological predictions were likely to fail in a country so thickly infested with gentlemen of the road.

I expressed a desire to have a view of Red hill as we crossed that famous elevation and wondered if the moon would be down before we got there. Jim vouchsafed the information that the moon would be up, but added that he had known of people's appetite for scenery being permanently destroyed by gazing on Red hill by moonlight.

I was sound asleep with my head on Jim's shoulder when he nudged me and said:

"We're going up Red hill now. Help yourself to the scenery, and if you've got any valuables about you you'd better hide them. We're liable to see more things than scenery."

Then the horses came to a sudden stop, and Jim and I were looking down the muzzle of a revolver in the steady hand of a horseman beside the wheelers.

"Will you step down for a moment, driver?" asked the gentleman on horseback.

Jim replied that he was just thinking of getting down, as he was tired of sitting. I followed him and took my place beside him in time to see the other passengers descend one by one from the inside of the coach with their hands above their heads and take a place in line beside us.

There were but two of the road agents. While one of them relieved the passengers of their weapons and all articles of value the other was in the front boat of the stage securing the treasure box.

When the first robber came opposite to Jim, he drew back in surprise, exclaiming, "Well, I'll be hanged!"

For a second only he was off his guard, but that brief space of time was a fatal one. A pistol cracked, and he fell shot through the head.

"Bang, crack!" went two more shots. Both took effect. The second road agent reeled and fell from the boot of the stage, and Jim was lying beside the first robber. It was the big six shooter of the man on the stage that had answered Jim's first shot, and it was the crack of a derringer that had terminated the brief battle.

Jim was wounded in the leg. A young doctor in the party stanchioned the flow of blood, and we proceeded on our way with the bodies of the two bandits thrown into the hind boat.

The shooting was shrouded in mystery so far as the passengers were concerned. They had seen Jim's six shooter taken from his holster by one of the bandits, after which a careful search had been made to see that he had no other weapon, but when we picked him up a derringer was clasped in either hand. The question was how had he managed to conceal them and bring them into use at such an opportune time? The mystery was solved when his clothing was removed at the hotel in Fairplay. Under his waistcoat was the wire and elastic poker holdout formerly belonging to the gentleman from Texas. The nippers for holding the cards had been removed, and a circular clasp large enough to securely hold the handle of a derringer had been attached in their place. The gentleman to whom the contrivance originally belonged was in the hind boot. His surprise upon recognizing Jim accounted for his presence there.

Jim's leg was broken, and the doctor informed him that when he recovered that leg would be shorter than the other; that he would always limp when he walked.

"It's all my own fault," said Jim.

"I don't see how you can make that out."

"Well, it was this way: When I let the derringers down into my hands, I calculated to shoot the man on the boot with the gun in my right hand and take the highest feller with my left, but just then I recognized him as the gent I was mostly seeking after, a gent from Texas who skinned me out of my pile with this yere holdout, an, doc, the temptation was too great. I give it to him with my right, an it took me too long to get a bead on the other one. But, say, doc, this science is a great thing."

—Chicago Times.

Lighting Up In Parliament.

Every part of the house of commons is now lighted by electricity. In Cromwell's time the commons appear to have entertained strong objections to debates by artificial light. A Sir William Widdington brought in two candles against the direction of the house and was sent to the Tower next morning. An inter-ruption to debate was sometimes caused by a motion that candles be brought in. A standing order was passed in 1717 empowering the sergeant-at-arms to bring in candles without any particular order. This order has been superseded by the instantaneous illumination of the house at the proper time, at first by gas and subsequently by electricity.—London Letter.

IN THE HEAT OF YOUTH.

A Novelist's Recollections of Days When Women Were All Queens.

Why is it, I wonder, that we come into the world so ill equipped for its exploration? It seems to me, as I look back upon my youth, that, in a certain way, my senses were fresher and keener then than they are now. And yet they were continually—particularly in the matter of girls—playing the most unwarrantable pranks on me. Some alien fluid, of an intense and fiery kind, got mixed with them and made them subject to all sorts of unaccountable aberrations.

It is a notorious fact that an electric current will make the most excellent compass behave in an irresponsible fashion. And yet, though the disturbing field which made my compass worthless was nearly always there, it has guided me somehow with tolerable safety a long distance across the trackless main. And I am not by any means sure that I would exchange it for a truer instrument, subject to fewer aberrations. For I take this very sensitiveness to electric influences to be a proof of its exceeding fineness and excellence. Life would be a horrible dreary affair if these magnetic currents which make the needle tremble and swerve were banished or nonexistent. The dull, dead, stupid sanity which has no sympathy with folly and no gleam of potential madness is no doubt a staunch and reliable rudder, but I cannot forbear questioning whether to the soul thus equipped the voyage is worth making.

Ulysses of old, middle aged though he was, had to stuff his ears with wax lest he steer his ship into the jaws of perdition, when the sirens sang so deliciously, and he did not exactly cover himself with glory during his visits to Circe and Calypso. But what very red blood he had, and how humanely his heart beat in every one of his manifold adventures! He never, like his shipmates, became a swain, and how noble and manly was his bearing in the presence of the lovely Nausicaa!

There is something almost touching to me in seeing the same sentiment which stirs my own bosom recorded thousands of years ago. And, truth to tell, the man whose pulse is subject to no irregularities and whose judgment registers no aberrations in the presence of a beautiful woman is, in my opinion, "fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils."

—H. H. Boyesen in Lippincott's.

The Easter totem now in the making too often atones in size and expense for all the sacrifices of the penitential season.—Philadelphia Press.



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