

Mrs. Drifter Has Her Say.
She Found Wild Bulls, Dry Rivers, and Chigres in Texas.

MRS. DRIFTER grew confidential the other evening. Some of Drifter's friends had called, and the subject of his adventures in the scrub came up.

"Of course, it is all right," said Mrs. Drifter. "For Drifter to tell about the trials he endured when he was the editor of a paper in Texas. I never put in such a time in my life. I expected that Drifter would come home to me shot full of holes some night. When I was down at his office reading the proofs of that cunning little daily paper he got out it used to make my blood run cold to hear those men talk about gun plays and so had made up in somebody's saloon.

"Drifter reassured me by telling me that the crack of a pistol did not always mean that somebody had been hit, but you know what a brave man Drifter is. No, you don't either. You say you don't know anything about the time he saved our lives down in Texas? I don't think I ever realized before just how courageous Drifter is. You know I had not seen a ranch nor a herd of cattle since I arrived in Texas, and I begged Drifter to take me where the real Panhandle cattle could be seen, so he took me out to the stock yards beyond Fort Worth.

"Times were very, very hard down there, and the packing house was closed, and there were no signs of life at the stock yards. We walked around and around the huge inclosure, and I tried to imagine what it must be like when the herds of Texas steers came in from the Panhandle. We had gone quite a little distance from the high board fence, and were admiring the scenery, when some cows come straggling along. We stood watching and admiring them until about 50 or 75 had passed us, when all at once there loomed up before us an immense Texas bull. His manner was dignified and masterful. He looked at us, elevated his head, sniffed, and my heart gave a jump.

"That was when Drifter and his in-born bravery came to the front. It is needless to say that I was frightened. I thought my last moment had come. The fence of the stock yards must have been 50 feet high; at least it looked so to me. Drifter afterward said that it was not more than 15, but I know that the trees around it were not as high as the fence. He grasped me by the hand and said:

"Little girl, run for the fence. I will stay here and protect you."

"I was brought up in the country, and I know it is the height of foolishness to run from a wild animal, so I flatly refused. 'If we are going to die, we will die together,' Drifter said, 'but the best thing to do is to back slowly away from that awful bull.' We backed toward the fence, and the bull paced toward us, never taking his eyes off us. I know I could hear Drifter's heart beat, but it must have been anxiety for me, for he is not afraid of anything.

"Get behind that tree," he said, and his voice sounded as if it was away off somewhere, and I felt as if we were to be separated forever. Reassuringly he said:

"I will see that he does not touch you." With that he took out his little pocket knife, opened the blade, which was not over three inches long, and said: "There! With as much defiance in his tone as if he had been behind a stone barricade and armed with a Martini rifle. Somehow or other we got to that fence at last. It was evident that Drifter would not let me take any chances alone, for he got there as soon as I did, and if you ever saw two people climb a high fence in the quickest possible space of time, it was Mr. and Mrs. Drifter.

"We sat there on the top of the fence until dusk, and Drifter never let go of the knife. I really believe that if the bull had attacked me Drifter would have stabbed him with that penknife. In the evening, after I had mustered up courage enough, we made our way, creeping close by the fence, until we reached a little hotel connected with the stock yards. Drifter never said a word about the adventure, and you would not have thought he had done anything at all remarkable, but I know that he saved my life from the wild Texas bull.

It took Mrs. Drifter's friends some time to rise to a proper appreciation of the courage displayed by her husband in that time of danger, and after she had fanned herself vigorously, she continued:

"You ought to get Drifter to tell you about the time we went out to the lake near Fort Worth. I was just dying for a sight of a body of water. It did seem to me as if I would dry up there in Texas unless I could get within sound of the ocean's roar, so Drifter did the best he could. He took me out to a pleasure resort about five miles from the city, at a place called Arlington. The trolley cars ran there, and the company made a great fuss over the Arlington lake. I told Drifter I would be satisfied if I could spend a few hours in a sailboat out there. At any rate, I would see a body of water once again in my life.

"Well, we had our dinner at the hotel, and I said: 'Now, Drifter, let us get right out on that lake as quick as possible.' The people in the hotel office told us in what direction to walk to the lake, and we walked. We kept on walking, and not a sign of a lake was to be seen. At last we found our way back to the trolley line, and asked one of the railroad men where the Arlington lake was.

"Oh," he said, 'I guess they have not turned the water on yet. There isn't much of a crowd. Last Sunday there

was a big excursion, then you could have seen the lake full of water."

"Turn the water on!" I exclaimed. "I thought they advertised sailboats and pond lilies and all that sort of thing?"

"So they do, ma'am," said the trolley man, "but you know it's pretty dry country down here, and they can't afford to waste water on that lake unless there's a crowd." Drifter bristled up and said: "What we want to know is where the lake is when there is any water."

"The trolley man was accommodating. He walked along with us, took us up what he called a hill, and then pointed out a hole in the ground about 50 yards round, and as dry as the hotel perch. Of course, I was amused, but nevertheless disappointed.

"Never mind," said Drifter. "I will take you for a sail on the Trinity river some afternoon. They are talking now of running a line of boats up the Trinity from Galveston, and it will seem like old times to get on a real big excursion steamer."

"For the next week or two Trinity river navigation was thoroughly agitated in the Texas papers. As near as I could make out, the principal difficulty seemed to be that they were clearing the river of snags. I read that snag boat No. 1 had accomplished wonders; that snag boat No. 2 had just left Dallas, and I fairly revelled in the anticipation of a trip on the broad beam of the Trinity. Then the newspapers began to print columns about the need of rain, and it was reported that the snag boats were tied up, owing to the drought.

"One day Drifter took me on the train over to the banks of the Trinity. Sure enough, there was the boat, an excursion steamer on a small scale, to be sure, but a boat, nevertheless. Believe me, there was not two feet of water in the deepest part of that wonderful river. One of the Texans got real mad when Drifter suggested that it would be a good idea to put the boat on trucks, so as to give an excursion up and down the river on wheels, at any rate.

"You wait until we have rain," said one of the Texans, "then you won't poke any fun at Trinity river navigation."

"The rain finally came, and there was enough of it to satisfy all Texas. Now we will have our boat ride," said Drifter, and we hurried over to Dallas. Alas, Trinity river was then so high that the excursion boat would either have to be pulled over the bridge or stay at its dock. They couldn't afford to cut a hole in the bridge, you see, just for an excursion, and the river had risen to the level of the bridge.

"At last accounts the Trinity river excursion had been abandoned. Drifter told me that the boat couldn't make much headway on account of the dust in the river bottom, and I believed him. Why, actually they have to wait for a rainstorm down there before they could have outdoor baptism services, for you see, it wouldn't look very well to have people be down in the bed of the river and have water poured over them from a sprinkling pot.

"If we didn't have river excursions or sails on the lake, there was always something to make it lively during our stay in Texas," continued Mrs. Drifter. "I wish you could have been down there when croquet was in season. I went to a croquet party one evening when we first settled in Fort Worth. I enjoyed it very much, but I didn't understand at that time that one ought to wear hip boots or armor in a simple little game like lawn croquet.

"The next day I was a sight to behold. I hadn't seen any mosquitoes, but it was evident that I had been stung upon by a swarm. My lower limbs were spotted with the most irritating and explosive mementoes of the bites of some insects. I confided my trouble to one of the ladies in the house, and she said, consolingly:

"Oh, that's nothing. You have been bitten by chigres, that's all."

"Chigres, what are they?" I asked.

"Why, a chigre is a little red bug, she replied, "the most persistent insect you ever heard of. You got them playing croquet on that lawn. We have not had one at our house this season, but they have them over there. You ought to put some salt on the places where you were bitten. Rub them with salt and water, and you will get the chigres off."

"Surely they are not on me now," I said.

"Yes, they are," said the lady. "Chigres bury themselves under your skin. If you look closely you can see them."

"By the aid of Drifter's microscope, I was able to detect in the center of each inflamed spot a little bright red insect, something like a spider. When I poked it with the point of a needle it ran with incredible rapidity. It is needless to say I didn't play croquet on that particular lawn again. Drifter told me that chigres in Texas were like the chills and fever in Missouri. The natives didn't mind them.

"I found out in time how the natives protected themselves against the intruders of the spider-like chigre. Having been invited to a picnic in the woods, I asked a woman who had lived in Texas a dozen years or more what to do. I told her I couldn't possibly survive another attack of chigres, and Drifter had told me the people who subscribed for his paper would be offended if I declined the invitation to the picnic. She told me to follow her example, and I would not have to worry about chigres. She said:

"Whenever I go to a picnic in Texas, I prepare myself for the chigres. Do as I do. In the morning before starting out rub yourself thoroughly from head to foot with a chunk of salt pork. Chigres don't like pork, and they won't bite on you."

"I did not go to the picnic," concluded Mrs. Drifter.—N. Y. Sun.

NIAGARA SOLILOQUIZES.

For years uncounted I surged on my way, Rimmed round with rocks and wreathed with peary spray. My white locks in a halo made of mist. My voice and vigor no man might resist: All those who braved me were but passing breath. My grasp to men, poor moths, meant instant death.

But now strange miracles have come to pass. Man has put harness on my limbs, alas! His turbines and his dynamos I turn. And far away his lights mysterious burn, His factories hum, his street cars come and go. Driven by my sinews swiftly to and fro.

Little thought I to round his ways and curves Along his system of intricate nerves Of insulated copper, armored steel. To flash in light or turn his shaft and wheel: Obedient to his lightest touch of hand, A willing slave to toil at his command.

My voice transferred now makes the busy hum Of swift machines where human tollers scarce. Hands closed in mine to benefit the race— Each rudding at high-pressure race— To serve the world, give life or light and cheer, Drive other blessings to the sons of men.

Imagine old Niagara lassoed thus, To light a lamp or haul a city bus, To whisper mildly over the telephone. To press a feather, lift up building stone. A giant made a chore-boy by the folks Who held the reins and make me wear their yokes.

But never mind! I still plunge in the deep With mighty anthem and resistless sweep: What matter little tasks I daily do To pull these pigmies and their projects through? They dare not meet me when my warriors all Flash countless spears and clash them at my call.

Yet will I serve them with my surplus strength. Perhaps do tasks unthought of yet, at length: But here within my stronghold I defy And challenge mortals with my fierce war-cry: They dare not brave my heights and depths profound—I am the monarch, this my battle-ground.

I. EDGAR JONES.

CONFIDENCES.
BY CLARENCE ROOK.

SYLVIA rose from her seat by the fire as I entered, and gave me her hand; and from a certain look of consciousness in her eyes I saw that she knew that I knew—

"So you're back in town at last?" said Sylvia. "Have you had tea?"

"No," I said, "and I will, thank you." Sylvia poured me out a cup. "No sugar—and very little milk, isn't it?" she said.

"Yes," I said. "I've had an excellent time—paddling up and down the Riviera in the sunshine. Glad to get back, though."

I slipped my tea in silence. Sylvia lay back in her chair, her face half-hidden by the fan with which she shielded her complexion from the fire.

"Well?" said Sylvia.

"Well?" I said.

"Don't you think," said Sylvia, "that the occasion requires you to say something nice—and—cousinly. I am sure you've heard—"

"Yes," I said. "I've heard. Aunt Emma wrote and told me about it as soon as—well, at least, I suppose it was as soon as— by the way, when was it?"

"When was what?" said Sylvia.

"When did it happen?—when did you—?"

"O, don't be silly, Jim," said Sylvia. And her foot waggled in the old way. I have always noticed that Sylvia's expression lies in her foot.

"I suppose," I said, reflectively, stirring my tea (into which Sylvia had put sugar), "that it did happen. He did propose. Or did you?"

"Jim, you're horrid," said Sylvia.

"Please may I have some bread and butter?" I said. "You can't get bread and butter on the Riviera—at least, you don't."

Sylvia handed it to me. Her eyes flashed a pathetic entreaty.

"I ought to have said I was pleased, oughtn't I? And that I am sure you will be very happy, as you deserve to be."

"Well, aren't you pleased?" asked Sylvia, looking at me curiously with arched eyebrows. "I thought Edgar was such a friend of yours, and I—well, we have always been—"

"You call him Edgar—how curious," I murmured. "Now I have known him for years and never called him anything but Jones; while you have only known him—how long? A year? Less, I should think. And yet you—"

"It's not a question of time, at all," said Sylvia, turning her face away from me again. "Edgar and I know one another—thoroughly. We have no secrets from each other. You may get to know a person quite as well in two months as in two years if only—"

"Quite so. Very proper," I replied, wondering vaguely what was Jones' notion of a secret.

"Well, but why aren't you pleased?" said Sylvia. "I'm sure you're not—and I think it's a little—a little unkind of you. Still," and Sylvia settled herself more comfortably in her chair, "if coffee it doesn't matter—much."

"Not much," I replied, putting down my teacup; "nevertheless, you can scarcely expect a man to be overjoyed when he loses his best friend—and—his best cousin. Can you?"

"Loses them!" said Sylvia. "What do you mean?"

"I have always noticed," I said, "that I lose more friends by marriage than by death."

"But you don't suppose—"

"If my friend is a man," I continued,

"his wife dislikes me because I know more of her husband than she does—"

"How absurd!" said Sylvia.

"And if my friend is a woman," I continued, "her husband is just a shade jealous because he suspects that I have been making love to her."

"How silly!" said Sylvia, shifting impatiently in her chair.

"The worst of it is," I proceeded, "that they are both right—as a rule. In this particular case—"

"Jim," exclaimed Sylvia, bringing an expressive foot down upon the hearth-rug, "if you've only come back to be horrid—"

"I have come back," I said, "for the express purpose of giving Jones away—or whatever it is you do for your best friend when he is married."

"That's nice of you, Jim," said Sylvia, leaning back contentedly. "Then you are pleased?"

"I think Jones is an uncommonly lucky man," I said.

Sylvia wrinkled her brows and looked curiously at me.

"If you think Edgar is marrying me for my money, that is not the case," said Sylvia.

"I shouldn't dream of such a thing," I said.

"Though, of course, it is lucky that I have money," said Sylvia, "or else we couldn't—we should have to wait."

"Of course," I said, "a regular income is a convenient thing to have. And I don't suppose Jones has ever made \$200 in any single year at the bar yet."

"But he's clever," said Sylvia, "and he must wait his opportunity."

"Yes," I said.

"You were surprised, weren't you?" said Sylvia. "Now confess you were surprised—for once."

"Well, I don't know that I was—particularly. You see, I was staying up the river with him in August, and I knew there was something up."

"O, but you couldn't have known then," said Sylvia, with a slight laugh.

"Of course I didn't absolutely know," I said. "And now I come to think of it, I think it was a little mean of Jones—and of you, too, Sylvia—to keep me in the dark so long. I could have done a good deal for you in my quiet way, you know—brought you together and retired discreetly round the corner. A little seasonable frankness would have done wonders. As it was—"

"As it was," said Sylvia, rather stiffly. "Edgar and I were able to manage our own affairs ourselves."

"Still," I said, "if it's any consolation to you, I don't mind assuring you that he's frantically in love with you."

"Thank you," said Sylvia, "it's pleasant to hear it on such excellent authority."

"Of course I should have known there was a woman in the case even if he hadn't told me so."

"What do you mean?" said Sylvia, who seemed to be getting a little bored.

"Well, when a man leaves the river to spend his week-ends in town, it's fairly safe to conclude that there's a woman in it; and when he tells you so it seems to remove the last vestige of doubt. But I must confess he quite put me off the scent. I never dreamt it was you he was after. I fear, Sylvia, you are a sly puss. Why, what on earth's the matter?"

Sylvia had turned white and had risen from her seat.

"What are you talking about?" she asked.

"We are talking about Edgar Jones; but—"

"Big who was the woman? Jim, I insist—"

"My dear Sylvia—"

"Mr. Jones," said the parlor maid, holding open the door.

"Hallo! old fellow—back again?"

"Yes," I said; "just in time to congratulate you both and to—give you away. Well—I must be going—two's company, you know, eh? Good-by, Sylvia."

"I shall be dining at the club," said Jones; "shall I see you there?"

"I think not," I said.

Really, I could have done no good by staying—Black and White.

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