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Eraclio Solis, Highwayman.

By JOHN HEARD, JR.

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Among the many odd trifles which I have brought home from my travels is a little gold bell, on the table before me now. It was given to me some years ago as a souvenir by the only highwayman it has been my chance to meet, and often since then I have wondered what had become of the interesting rascal to whom it belonged.

A few days ago I received a letter from a friend in Mexico telling of his death. How vividly it recalled our interview! In the spring of 1884 I was obliged to take the tedious journey from Alamos to Mazatlan, in the traditional stagecoach—a picturesque experience to remember, but an agony of five nights and four days to endure. At the time I chafed over the slow progress of our civilization which forced me to travel in a restless, tin sheathed wooden box, but today the perspective has changed, and I look upon the geographical limitations of Yankee enterprise with a decided feeling of satisfaction. There are still some things to do that everybody has not done; some sights that cannot be had for the price of a ticket; some men to meet outside of offices and clubs.

Eraclio Solis was one of these men. He belonged to a species unknown to the railroad freighted Philistine who naively believes that he is traveling two generations; hence the race of such men as Eraclio will be extinct.

I had heard much about him, for in those years he was a more important factor in the government of northwestern Mexico than all the state governors combined. In spite of a detachment of cavalry stationed in the neighborhood of Los Hornitos, Eraclio held up every alternate stagecoach within a mile, more or less, of the same place. The soldiers always arrived upon the scene a few minutes after his band had disappeared, and whenever they escorted the coach it was sure to be attacked as soon as their protection was deemed no longer necessary.

When he left Alamos, Ben Hill, the gambler, called out to me as we drove past his house, "Here's good luck to Eraclio; tell him I'm all right," whereupon my neighbor asked if I were going beyond Fuertie. I answered that I intended to, and then he assured me that I should certainly make the bandit's acquaintance, as this was the regular marked trip. Shortly after leaving Fuertie my last companion got out, and I was left alone. The certainty of being stopped by the brigand had gradually grown upon me during the past 36 hours, and as I sat there suspiciously scanning the cactus brush on either side of the coach, my rifle between my knees, and my revolver ready for immediate use, I debated with myself what course I ought to pursue.

Beyond my arms I had really nothing to lose, and it seemed foolhardy to attempt to resist, single handed, the attacks of a band of trained highwaymen merely because my Anglo-Saxon prejudices forbade me to yield without a struggle. I did not wish to risk my life for the sake of a mere prejudice, but I rebelled at the idea of holding up my hands without making use of them.

While I was thus undecided, the driver settled the question by calling to me to take off my shooting irons and climb up beside him. "Don Juan," he said to me as I braced myself to the box at his side, "you've got nerve enough, so I may as well tell you that Eraclio will stop us in a few minutes. When we reach the top of this grade, you will see the arroyo hondo, and on the rise beyond probably the horsemen, too, but perhaps only Eraclio himself. Now, for heaven's sake, don't go shooting. There will be 30 rifle sights leveled at us from behind the cactus bush, and the minute you pull the trigger we shall be riddled.

"Did you ever hear how Ben Hill was filled with lead? Well, I can tell you, for I was driving. Eraclio appeared in the usual way, and I stopped, of course, as soon as he waved his rifle, but Hill jumped out and fired. Whew! How the bullets began to come in—a perfect hailstorm! Two minutes later it was all over. Three of the mules were dead beside the whipper and one of the passengers. As for Hill, he was lying on the road with six bullets under his skin—enough to kill any ordinary man—but there he lay, firing away at the cactus, with the blood running down over his forehead and as mad as though he had been eating papashes all the morning. Eraclio had a hard time preventing his men from finishing him, but the gambler was an old friend of his, and he kept the coyotes off.

"Ben," said he, "why did you shoot? Are you drunk?" "Quien sabe?" the other answered. "I'm pickled now anyway. Look here, Eraclio, be generous with me. There are 6,000 pesos in my valise, and that ought to satisfy you. But there's my wife, she has all her jewelry along, and now that I am laid up I think you might look after her. Can't you take her down to Culiacan? I can scrape up a couple of thousand more when I get home, and if you'll do that I'll send them to you and welcome. Is it a bargain?"

"Bah!" the other answered, laughing. "Friend Ben, between thieves the shortest accounts are best. I'll take your money for the men, but the senora shall reach Culiacan safely. I'll see to that myself." And he did it, Don Juan. He put three of his men inside, made me do the whipping and drove himself right up to the hotel, though he knew well enough that there was a big placard on the door—"Two thousand (2,000)

pesos for the body of Eraclio Solis dead or alive."

"You never saw him? Well, señor, he's a caballero, you will see, and I say we ought to have just such a man for governor. He knows what the poor people need and what is good for them. Vaya, if he were governor for only one year, they would make him president the next. The greatest man in Mexico, señor, and they are trying to kill him."

But in spite of Martin's predictions and apparently much to his disappointment we drove off unmolested across the arroyo hondo and into Los Hornitos.

The little rancho was crowded, and I ordered my dinner served outside under the porch, where I sat down alone to wait. The view from my seat was hot, desolate and depressing, typical of our dreary life west of the Sierra Madre. To the left stood a broken row of low, flat roofed adobe huts, joined together by irregular cactus hedges, and on the tops of the fluted gray green columns three or four buzzards perched motionless. On the right by the roadside lay odd looking piles of rusty mining machinery, relics of some abandoned enterprise, and far, far away, above the faintly purple level of dry bush, the blue sierra stretched along the horizon.

While I sat there, waiting and wondering wherein lay the undeniable charm of this dreary landscape, a horseman rode up, tied his animal to one of the posts and started to enter the house, but catching sight of me he stopped, touched his hat and came toward me smiling.

"Don Juan of the Rochin mine?" he asked pleasantly. I rose, answered that



"Don Juan of the Rochin mine?" he asked pleasantly.

I was Don Juan, but the man's face was totally unfamiliar to me, and my perplexity was evident, for he said:

"You are wondering who I am, Don Juan? It is true, we have not met before, yet we are hardly strangers." He drew a chair up to the table and said: "I am Eraclio, the outlaw."

"Eraclio!" "At your service, señor," he answered, amazed at my astonishment. "You expected to meet me yonder on the road, yes? But really it would not have been worth while. I knew that you were the only passenger and that you do not travel with more than a few dollars in your pocket. Graoia's draft on Mazatlan is of no use to me, for unfortunately circumstances do not allow me to go there. As for your rifle and your pistol—you might have been tempted to use them, and—I bear you no ill will. But, caramba! Why don't they bring us something to eat?" and springing up with an oath he went to the house and gave some orders, which were obeyed with eager alacrity.

As he stood by the door, one of his men came up and spoke to him, a huge, swaggering desperado, and it delighted me to note the superiority of the graceful, agile and youthful captain over his bulky lieutenant. Eraclio looked so simple and thoroughbred beside the melodramatic bandit—he was unmistakably the commander.

When he came back, he unbuckled his pistol belt and threw it down on the bench between us, so as to be much nearer me than him, and as he did so, he looked at me meaningly. It might have been merely a trick, and so I prudently refrained from following his example, though I liked the man's appearance, and instinctively felt that I had nothing to fear. He noticed my hesitation at once, and said, with a short, hard laugh:

"Do you distrust me, Don Juan? Well, I don't wonder! I have a bad name, and perhaps if you knew as much about me as I do myself you would trust me still less. It is not altogether my fault, though." Then changing the subject suddenly, he continued: "I suppose you keep pretty well armed up at the Rochin mine? Oh, don't fancy I am trying to get any information. I know you keep a large amount of silver there and have about 20 white men on whom you can depend. Now, suppose I were to pay you a visit—how would you receive me?"

"Why, about as roughly as we know how!" "Even if I had 50 men behind me?" "Unless you came with a whole army behind you," I answered. "I don't know that the number would make much difference. If you attacked the Rochin mine, we should defend it."

"Good! That is one thing I like about English and Americans. Odds don't frighten them. Now a little while since I went up to the Rosario and had an interview with Schmidt, their superintendent. 'How many are you?' I asked. 'Oh,' he answered, 'I have only 24, so walk in and help yourselves.' Schmidt

is not a coward, but once he was an officer in the German army, and there he learned that two men always beat one. Two units always beat one, that's true, and in large armies the average manliness is at its lowest. However, I'll get even with him," he added with a somewhat cynical laugh. "I shall take good care to have fewer men than he and force a fight, for I don't like robbing without some danger or excitement. It is too much like thieving."

"You draw rather nice distinctions," I said. He frowned, and for a moment seemed annoyed, then he went on. "Oh, let us talk of something else; it is so rare nowadays out here to have a chance of passing an hour or two with a man of education that I must make the most of it. You have been in Europe, of course? Well, then, let us get as far away from Los Hornitos as possible. Ah, Don Juan, I hate this life," he added passionately, and in an instant the whole expression of his face changed. His eyes were clutched on the table before him, and his lips were drawn back over his teeth until he looked more like an animal about to spring forward than like the handsome, good humored young fellow he had hitherto seemed to be.

But this expression vanished again as quietly as it had come. He drank off a tumblerful of wine and lighted a cigar, while I reflected on the danger of irritating such a fearful temper. For an hour or two we chatted very pleasantly. He was especially interested in French affairs and begged me to give him a bundle of papers which I had just been reviewing and happened to have with me. I had heard that he was of good education and that he had traveled for a number of years, but I was not prepared to meet one so familiar with French, English and even German books as his conversation proved Solis to be. Eventually I expressed my surprise at his unusual knowledge, and I asked him how he managed to keep so well informed out in the wilderness.

"Do you know anything of my past life, Don Juan?" he asked in return. "Gracia has told me something," I answered, "but not much, after all. He was a friend of yours once, was he not?"

"He is now, for the matter of that," Solis answered, "at least as far as circumstances will allow him to be."

For some minutes the outlaw remained silent, looking blankly at the table before him, while his thoughts were evidently far away. When he spoke again, he did so with unmistakable diffidence and hesitation.

TO BE CONTINUED.

Dancing and Smoking in Borneo.

In one village where we staid the chief man arranged a dance in our honor. Neither he nor we danced. That would have robbed us and him of dignity. He paid somebody else to dance instead. A troop of village girls, with flowers stuck in their newly greased hair and wearing their prettiest pieces of silk that serves as frocks, threw themselves into all kinds of graceful and other postures. What little skirt there was was tight fitting and hampering in movement. Yet the girls had a freer swing of the body than nautch girls, and all the while they were twisting themselves into fantastic attitudes they were working their elbows and hands and fingers twitchingly. The most skillful dancer was the girl who could stand staccato, with face unmoved, while her bosom rose and fell in panting excitement.

Then some of the youths danced. First of all they were seated, and after lowering their heads as obeisance to us they commenced a song. Suddenly jumping to their feet and drawing handkerchiefs from their waists, they began prouetting in the most demented fashion. While the women were stately in their gyrations, moving languidly, the men thought the chief merit was to work themselves to a pitch of frenzy by throwing their legs about in a reckless manner. During the dancing everybody was smoking, men, women and children. There were little rascals who had to hold on with both hands while they sucked at a cheroot a foot long.—Travel.

A Family Greatly Blessed.

Many years ago, when oneness of interest characterized the relations between employers and house servants, the cook at the Virginia home of the historic Harrisons was a negro named George. Master of his craft, George was stately and even pompous in manner and speech, and an incident which illustrates the mingled dignity and conceit of his character has a place in the family records. A family festival in honor of an anniversary had filled the Harrison house with guests for several days and tested the abundant larder to what seemed to be its utmost possibilities. On the very day that saw the departure of the company a communication was received by Mrs. Harrison, informing her that the presidential party might be expected on the morrow. She summoned George and imparted the startling news. He met it like an ebony Gibraltar. "Very well, madam, your orders shall be obeyed."

"But, George, can we be ready for them? There will be about 30 persons, including the president of the United States and his cabinet."

Gibraltar relaxed measurably. The lady's apprehensions appealed to his chivalric heart. It was his duty to allay them.

"Very true, madam. But we must bear in mind that we are greatly blessed in our cook."

Miscellaneous Reading.

THE TRANSVAAL RULER.

What Has Made "Oom Paul" the Unique Character He Is—Spoken of by His Own People as "The Lion of Rustenburg."

From a history of the Transvaal recently published by Mr. Van Oordt, state historian of the South African Republic, the New York Sun has condensed some interesting matter relating to the personality of the Boer president:

"The founder of the family was a certain Jacob Kruger, who arrived at Cape Town in 1713 as a youth of 17, in the service of the Dutch East India company. Jacob Kruger was a German. A descendant of his, Casper Kruger, married and settled on the Buhoek farm, near Colesburg, in Cape Colony. It was there that Stephanus Johannes Paul Kruger was born on October 10, 1825. While still quite a child he had to help his parents, in his ninth year sometimes acting as shepherd, and even leading the oxen yoked in the wagon. Later, when yet too small to handle the heavy musket of the period, he went after game with bow and arrows, and returned to the farm house with many a hare and partridge.

"Then came the trek into Natal, and he went out into the wilderness to begin a life of toil, care and danger. That was the school in which he was reared and in which he was trained to be what he is. He received his baptism of fire in battle with the Matabele before the occupation of Vechtkop, and took part in the repulse of the Zulus in the attack on the laager which followed the massacre at Weenen, in Natal. At 18 he became assistant field cornet, and two years later attained full rank. Later on he served as commandant and commandant general, was one of the Trumvirate during the war of independence (in 1880-'83), and has been president since the retrocession of the territory of the Republic by Great Britain to its own government. By his people he is spoken of as the Lion of Rustenburg.

"Although a republican, the centralization of administration in the Transvaal is such that nothing can be done without the consent of the executive council. The consequence is that business is often months in arrears. Mr. Van Oordt admits the evil of this and agrees with the contention of the Volksraad, that more power should be delegated to the head officials of the government. President Kruger, however, is most strongly opposed to this, believing it would be dangerous in a young state circumstanced as the Transvaal is to entrust the government wholly to officials. 'Be trustworthy, but trust no one,' is the president's life motto, which he often quotes, and which is, according to his friends, the plain wisdom of Paul Kruger. It is, says Mr. Van Oordt, the simple philosophy of a man who shrinks from no duty, but only fears and doubts whether others will do theirs.

"The personal habits of President Kruger are extremely simple. He never takes strong drink himself; but has said that he believed God gave man strong drink to use, and that there is no harm in its moderate use. Although fairly wealthy he likes the ordinary life of a well-to-do Afrikaner, indulging neither in ostentation nor festivities. To poor burghers he has lent money without any security, knowing as he said, that they were honorable men. In character, Oom Paul is stiff-necked—obstinate, some say—and full of hardihood. This quality he has displayed on many occasions. During the war of independence, with only a small escort, he rode into the kraal of a Kaffir chief who was making trouble for the Boers, and though he ran great risk of being attacked, seized him by the neck. The result of the interview, begun under such unusual circumstances, was that the chief remained quiet during the rest of the war.

"While still a youth his gun, which he had overloaded in order to make sure of a rhinoceros he was hunting, burst and shattered the top of his left thumb. Before he could get assistance the wound began festering, for he was far distant from surgical help, and threatened mortification. He thereupon amputated the thumb at the first finger joint with a pocketknife; but, finding the operation insufficient, he cut the second joint, after which the hand healed. As his biographer says: 'The man who could do this is not the man to be easily frightened. Many stories are told illustrating his strength of will and endurance, of racing contests with Kaffirs lasting a whole day, and his personal strength in struggles with animals.'

"As to his place in history Mr. Van Oordt says Paul Kruger has been compared with Washington, with Lincoln and even with Ulysses and Blucher, and many other illustrious historical personages. It sounds well, says the state historian, but the fact remains that he can be compared with no one. The circumstances of his bringing up, those in which he has gained his influence and ruled over his people for 16 years, have been so exceptional that Paul Kruger can be compared with no other historical character. To the Dutch of South Africa he is simply Paul Kruger, a man of themselves, born into their troubles and tribulation, who has contributed to their triumphs, and is now, in his last years, steering them through new dangers.

"Mr. Van Oordt, in concluding his sketch, thus apostrophizes him:

"'All peaceful lies the Lion of Rustenburg, his eyes fixed on God, his paw upon the flag of independence. You mark no signs of attack; only the Lion takes a watchful protecting grasp. But, take care! At the first approach of danger he erects his mane and rises up. And woe! woe to him, however mighty he be, who dare touch the flag of Transvaal independence. The Lion then will fight; he will defend himself to the last drop of his blood; and if he must fall dying and conquered, then shall it be enwrapped in the vreklem, which shall make the shroud of Stephanus Johannes Paul Kruger.'"

WHAT VICTORIA HAS SEEN.

Fresh Suggestions of the World's Marvellous Progress During Her Life.

From Leslie's Weekly.

"Crowned heads hold a low place in the space of longevity." If the French author of this expression had foreseen Victoria his assertion would not have been quite so sweeping. England's queen born 80 years ago, has long passed the Psalmists span of years. She has gone much farther beyond the average official life of the world's crown-wearers. Sixty-two years will have passed on June 20, since she ascended the throne. This exceeds in duration by over two years the reign of her grandfather, George III., hitherto unexampled in British annals. No other monarch of a great nation in the world's history has been on the throne as long except Louis XIV. of France, 72 years, and he was only five years of age when he became titular king, and during his minority his mother ruled in his stead as regent. Victoria, however, was 18 at the time her predecessor died, and she has exerted sway ever since.

Victoria during her life-time has seen the entire world transformed. On the day of her birth, May 24, 1819, the first steamboat which ever crossed the Atlantic or any other ocean started from Savannah for Liverpool, making the voyage in 26 days. The same distance is now made in less than six. She was six years of age when the first railway train in the world started to carry passengers. She was 18 years of age, and had just ascended the throne, when the Morse system of telegraphy and that of Cooke and Wheatstone were first patented. Thirty-nine years of her life had passed when the first cable was laid under the Atlantic, and that one almost immediately ceased to operate. Fifty-six years of it expired before the first telephone went into practical operation.

Scott and Byron were in their prime when Victoria first began to read the printed page. None of the great writers—Thackeray, Dickens, Bulwer-Lytton, Tennyson, George Eliot, the Brownings and others whose names have cast a glory over her country during the past half or two-thirds of a century—had yet begun to work. Darwin, whose labors have revolutionized science and have profoundly affected the thoughts of moralists and theologians, was not heard of.

At the time of Victoria's birth the tramp of Bonaparte's armies had just ceased to shake the world, and Bonaparte himself was prisoner on a British island in the South Atlantic. She has seen every throne in Europe vacated many times. She has seen her own country transformed politically from an oligarchy, in which only one out of fifty of the population was permitted to vote, into a democracy in which the voters number one out of six of the inhabitants. France has changed its form of government four times since her early girlhood days. Italy, then only a "geographical expression," to use Metternich's phrase, has since become one of the greatest powers of Europe, while the empire of Germany was still far in the future.

The United States was in the midst of the "era of good feeling" when Victoria was born. Monroe has had 19 successors in the presidency since that time. This country had only 9,000,000 population then. Buffalo and Pittsburg were frontier towns, and not a house existed on the site of the magnificent metropolis of the west, Chicago. The annexation of Florida, Texas, New Mexico, California and Alaska, to say nothing of the more recent accession of territory, all came since Victoria's birth. The world's map has been changed in many places the world's ideals have been altered in many respects, and the face of human society has been transformed in four score years which have elapsed since Britain's queen first saw the light.

MARRIAGE IN THE PHILIPPINES.

The Negritos have a curious marriage custom, says Self Culture. When a young man makes known his preference the young woman flees from him while he gives chase and catches her in his arms. She struggles and frees herself, whereupon the chase is renewed, and so on until he has caught her the third time, when she yields, and he proudly leads her back to her father's dwelling. The father and mother of the bride-elect then meet with the contracting parties, the latter kneeling side by side. The father then takes some water in a coconut shell and throws it over them. Continuing the ceremony he takes each by the neck and bumps their heads together several times, and they are then adjudged to be duly married. A wedding tour of five days' sojourn alone in the mountains follows, after which they

take up their abode as staid citizens among their friends.

YELLOW FEVER SERUM.

If a Success It Will Be Rough on the Horses.

Writing to his paper, the Greenville News, from New York, under date of July 8, Mr. A. B. Williams, sends the following:

I went over to the quarantine station on Staten Island today to find out about the yellow fever cases and the new serum there. Dr. Doty believes he can vaccinate with his serum against yellow fever just as we inoculate against smallpox. He gets his virus by inoculating a horse with yellow fever germs more than a year and then drawing off the animal's blood and injecting a dilution of it into human veins. The man he is working his scheme on seems to be getting well, and if he does recover, the serum business will have a boom. But it will be rough on horses. One healthy horse in two years will yield only enough to inoculate 50 patients. As there will be some hundreds of thousands of people to be treated yearly, it looks as if a good many horses will have to go. But with the development of motive power it may be that presently we will have no use for the horse but as an unwilling breeder of serum. The process is said to cause little pain to the animals, and the doctor says they are as good as ever after a rest; but I wouldn't care to have a horse saturated with yellow jack around me.

Maybe if they keep on experimenting on this line with horses they will find some way of injecting a solution of horse sense into the human family. I would like to get a few gallons of it and a syringe about four feet long and operate on some people I know, including several in South Carolina.

WONDERFUL STORY.

No Reputable Newspaper Would Stand Sponsor For It.

A wonderful kind of Indian corn has been discovered and is now being grown in Kansas. This corn has sprouted from seeds perhaps 2,000 years old. The corn has grown 10 feet in five days, and there is no telling when it will stop.

Two years ago J. L. Brady, a well-known Kansas explorer, went to Marktree, Ark., and commenced exploring in the mounds of that section. He kept it up for three months and recovered many valuable things from the mounds. These things were known to have existed 2,000 years ago.

In an old earthen jar Mr. Brady found some small round seed resembling Indian corn kernels. He took them to his home and preserved them until one day last week, when he planted five seed in the moist ground in his back yard.

These seed grew out of the ground and nearly a foot high by morning. This remarkable growing has stirred up the neighborhood, and every day crowds assemble to watch it grow.

The corn has every resemblance to the Indian corn of today, except in the growth.—New York Journal.

SPANIARDS GOING TO MEXICO.

Spaniards formerly in business in Havana and other Cuban cities are now arriving here looking for investment, says a City of Mexico dispatch, and says that by October, fully \$30,000,000 of Spanish capital will have been withdrawn from the island, for Spaniards of wealth do not want to risk a long period of political unrest and possible coming into power of professional Cuban politicians. This wealth, which is being taken away by Spaniards, is good cash and will mainly be taken to Spain for investment, while some will come to Mexico. Spanish merchants and planters now here report the English as being the boldest investors now in Cuba, and declare that the Americans are timid and have lost many large businesses which have passed into English hands.

Ambassador Clayton has arrived from Guadalajara and is greatly pleased with the remarkable demonstrations of good will made him by the authorities and people of the state of Jalisco. The Americans are prospering in trade, mining and contracting in that state.

HE SAW THE POINT.—A former attorney general of the United States, in a recent article, tells the following anecdote of Mr. Justice Miller of the federal supreme court:

Judge Miller was a very agreeable man socially; but in the later years of his life became somewhat impatient upon the bench. He was no orator himself and seemed to have an aversion to all attempts at oratory in court. I have seen him on more than one occasion disjoint with sharp questions a beautifully prepared speech with which an ambitious orator expected to charm and captivate the court. One midsummer day, as it is said, he was holding court in a western state, and a lawyer, whom we will call Brown, was addressing him in a long, rambling speech. The judge listened and fanned himself and fidgeted about on the bench for some time, and, finally, leaning over his desk, said in an audible whisper, "Confound it Brown, come to the point."

"What point?" inquired the somewhat astonished lawyer. "Any point," responded the judge; and, though the sequel does not appear, it is probable that there was a rapid condensation of talk in that courtroom after this short colloquy.