

Youth Rides West

(Continued from page 3.)

as though struggling against fear. The other was slim; she stepped out with a free stride which I found myself admiring.

A sudden movement from the right caught my sharpened attention; the nearest of these two evil lizards sprawled on the rock had started, raised himself on his elbows, let the muzzle of his long gun droop. Then I saw the other bandit give him a kick, sideways, of his heavy boot. The careless robber jerked to attention. A grunt from Buck drew my eyes back from this bit of byplay. The bandit chief had laid hands on the younger woman, was awkwardly jerking her dust-coat apart at the throat. I felt another spurt of hot rage, and—down the road

a rifle fired twice in succession. I jumped so that had the bandits been looking in our way, I am sure I should have betrayed myself. For a moment the group about the stagecoach was as still as a photograph. Then the leader, dropping his hands from the shoulders of the younger woman, bawled a word which carried even to me:

"Vamoose!"

At that, the two lizards on the rock became men again. Holding their rifles at ready, they leaped down into the road.

"Somebody's comin' and they're goin'," whispered Buck. One of the men from the rock, his muzzle still on the huddled crowd of passengers, stooped and picked up the rifle which the leader had dropped in the road. It had a strap, like an army gun. He slung it over his shoulder. The leader and his assistant, slipping their pistols into

their scabbards, grasped the handles of the box.

"Now we'll know," muttered Buck. "If it's this way, don't shoot until I say!" But the robbers turned in the other direction. Then I heard Buck mutter:

"Lookie there—down by the creek!"

I saw a disturbance of the leaves among the willows. Into a space between patches of the green pattern I saw a horse swing round, sidewise and backward, as an independent steed will when he is about to be mounted. He flanks appeared first; then his side. He was a rangy, lean American horse of that yellow shade which we called buckskin in the west in those days; but



"Now We'll Know," Muttered Buck. "If It's This Way, Don't Shoot Until I Say!"

on his right flank, as he exposed it to my view, the full flash of the sun brought out a lighter patch, as though he were turning white; a patch which, with my sharpened observation, I compared mentally to the top of a pear or the back view of the head and shoulders of a veiled woman. A second later I saw his rider mount—booted, in inconspicuous dark clothes, still wearing a mask. The bandits were all dressed so much alike that, except for the big fellow, they had to me no separate identity. The thicket quivered no more; they were gone.

"Keep on layin' close for a minute," said Buck. Now, he no longer whispered, but spoke aloud. "They kin see us just as we kin see them." He chuckled in his beard. "Hid their horses from the stage people. Hard to mask a horse!"

"Well, even if we didn't shoot—" I began, throwing forward my unreasoning conscience.

"An' what was the use of shootin'—only to get the women killed," interrupted Buck.

"Even if we didn't shoot, we've got a little evidence," I pursued. "Kid Tenderfoot," replied Buck impressively, "what you don't know in this man's country don't hurt you none."

"What do you mean?" I asked, my eastern sense of law and order not a little shocked.

"I mean," replied Buck, "that we don't know nothin' yet about the lay of this country, or what's goin' to get you in and out of trouble." He chuckled again in his beard and grew almost garrulous. "Darn slick job. Did you notice how smooth they got away? If anybody up here had been disposed or inclined to do any shootin' they was only a second when you could 'a' got all four of 'em. I wonder," he mused, "jest what the rear look-out was signalin' for." His question was answered at that instant, when a mule team drawing an emigrant wagon hove into sight below us.

"Skeered off by a family outfit of nesters," remarked Buck. "Wish't they could 'a' known the joke on 'em! Well I guess we'd better be gettin' back to the jacks."

"I'm going down there," I said. Curiosity, perhaps something stronger, was drawing me. Buck rolled over, and regarded me full in the face.

"If anybody asks you questions, you didn't see nothin' but the tail end of this little circus," he said. "An' especially you saw no horses. What'd they do, anyway, but git a roll or a watch or two from those first passengers they stuck up?"

"They got the express strong-box," said I.

"Yes, and who owned what was in it? Some money devil or other in Wall street," replied Buck.

"All right," I replied, perhaps assuming more reluctance than I felt. Really I was a little relieved not to have to admit that we had witnessed this episode without opening fire. Buck, remarking, "You go ahead, I want to pack these lions," took the two long guns and turned back to the train. I rose up then, and began scrambling toward the road down the face of the hogback. As I came down, the little bearded man whom I had seen relieved of his wallet was remarking to the express messenger: "You're a fine guard, you are—let your stage git held up in broad daylight and you with a sawed-off shotgun over your knees—"

(To be continued.)

Coal First Employed for Melting Metals

Coal probably was burned for the production of superheat used in the fabrication of metals during the Iron age, as early as B. C. 1000, but the first authentic use of this fuel is traced to Greece, where it was burned in B. C. 300. These facts relating to the common coal of today are presented by Malcolm MacFarlane, general fuel inspector of the New York Central, in an article in the railroad's magazine.

"It seems reasonable," the writer says, "to believe that coal came into limited use with the discovery of metals because of the more intense heat required to work these. On this assumption coal may have been used in the Iron age as early as B. C. 1000. Reports indicate that coal was mined quite extensively in England during the Roman invasion, but the earliest reliable record of its use there is in A. D. 852."

After tramping unconsciously over the enormous beds of coal in the Alleghenies, pioneers of America discovered the first bed of coal on the Illinois river at Ottawa in 1079. But nearly another century passed, says Mr. MacFarlane, before actual mining began, and then it was in Virginia, at a point 12 miles above Richmond, on the James river. This was in 1750. During the next 25 years it came into general use in that region and made possible the manufacture of cannon for Washington's army.—Detroit News.

Good Effect Gained by Proper Pictures

Pictures serve an admirable purpose in the decoration and furnishing of the small home.

By the very nature of their location on the wall they occupy none of the floor space that is so valuable in the small dwelling. If the little room has been rather crowded with furniture, pictures on the wall carry the eye upward and bring the attention from the lower part of the room to the upper, where there is a greater appearance of space.

Then, too, the subjects of the pictures may be chosen with a view to increasing the apparent size of the room. Pictures with a rather deep perspective give the eye a feeling of looking into the scene, down a corridor into a valley, along a river, or otherwise creating an appearance of distance.

To do this removes much of the cramped feeling that invades a small room overcrowded with furniture.

The choice of color in pictures also will have much to do with the decorative scheme of the room, and the same effect of spaciousness can be created with the judicious use of mirrors.

His Promise

A southwestern banker tells of a man in his state who was continually hard up and had so many notes at the bank that he could not leave town except on Sundays and holidays. There was one note of his falling due every banking day. He dropped into the bank one day and spoke genially to the president. "I came in to fix up that little matter of mine," he said. "I'd like to renew it for a while."

The president had the note on his desk. He picked it up and studied it carefully. "Henry," he finally said, "I don't think this note is made out properly."

"Why not?" asked the borrower. "It reads: 'I promise to pay, not I promise to renew.'"

Moslems' Holy Stone

The black stone of Mecca is a dark-colored stone about nine inches long, apparently a meteorite, built into the southeast corner of the temple of the Kaaba at Mecca. The Mohammedans claim that it was given to Abraham by an angel. Pilgrims to Mecca walk around the temple seven times, then kiss the black stone. The Kaaba was the temple of Mecca for ages before the time of Mohammed, and attracted pagan pilgrims in those days just as now it draws thousands of Moslems. It is a legend that the black stone was at one time white, but turned black owing to the sins of men.—Exchange.

Necessity for Sleep

We are told that too much sleep may be harmful, depending the activities of the mind and body. A physician who has been studying the mystery of sleep, has gone as far as to advance the theory that it may be possible to develop a sleepless race. He declares that eventually we may eliminate sleep by scaling it down gradually and getting accustomed to going without it. A way to do this, he suggests, is to reduce our sleep five minutes every two months. At the end of sixteen years, provided we start at eight hours a night, "the stupor of sleep would be banished if it could be."

Named Through Error

The Amazon, largest of the world's rivers, was discovered by Vicente Yaner Pizarro in 1500, and was explored by Orellana, one of Pizarro's officers, in 1541. Observing, as he supposed, armed women on the banks as he sailed down the river from Peru to the ocean, he fancied them to be "Amazons," and thus the river obtained its name. These people were simply the native Indians. They parted their long hair in the middle and wore long tunics. To the imagination of the Spaniards they seemed to be the fabled women warriors of antiquity.—Exchange.

Proof Enough

"Men don't perform heroic acts for women as they did in the Middle Ages!" "Oh, I don't know. They will marry them!"—Boon Humor, Madrid.

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The professor was putting the new men through a mental test to determine their originality.

"Young man, what would you do if this room were to burst into flames?"

"I'd run out of it, sir."

"But suppose that you had become paralyzed with fear, could not control your muscles, were glued to the spot as it were, by mental mutilation. What would you do then?"

"I'd stiet it out, sir; and when the fire had perceptibly softened the muelage, I'd ooze out through the cracks in the floor, sir."—Notra Dame "Juggler."

Transfer Binders. Sentinel.

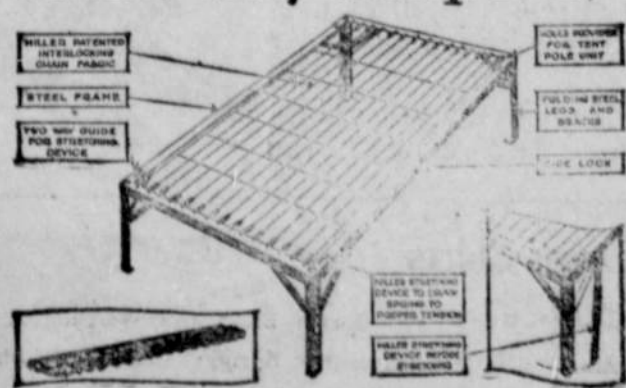
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