When Corenca Willed

By XENO W. PUTNAM

IT hardly seemed a chance at all, but we were forced to call it one so long as there was nothing better. Of course 'twas Tarpon's work. Tarpon, whose murderous hand my stout friend had restrained and who had done this other murder just to bring an avenging posse down on Jack in a humor that would render inquiries few and explanations useless.

Bill Morgan brought the word. It seemed a strange unbending of the outlaw's spirit. Perhaps his own wild, hunted life led him to pity in his uncouth way a victim run to earth without warning, or possibly he had some personal memories to be avenged. Anyway he told us just before daybreak of the cowardly crime that had been fastened so unmistakably and so unjustly upon Jack and of the furious pursuers close upon our trail.

Before us were the mountains, grim and full of dangers for the stranger fugitive, but to this score of relentless followers home. Some forty miles behind lay Halseyville—and safety, for half her leading citizens—the mayor himself, to say nothing of his fair daughter—would have sworn to Jack's presence at a banquet given in our honor at the very time the murder was committed miles away. But between our camp and vindication rode a relentless, uninquiring foe with a single purpose—and a halter. The outlook was gloomy enough for poor Jack.

It seemed that I was not connected with the crime. That, too, was Tarpon's skillful planning or perhaps my government position saved me. Vengeance was to be taken upon Jack alone, my great, rough, burly friend with the heart of a lion or a woman, as the occasion called for courage or for kindness.

When only a single course is possible one can think quickly what to do. I gathered in Corenca, loath to be gathered from the luxurious pasture of the foothills, and, throwing the saddle over her back, jerked up the girth so tightly that she flinched and snapped at me. Then, flinging the other saddle on Jack's horse, we headed her off across the country toward her old home alone. As she turned and looked back at Corenca, pawing impatiently at the restraint, a sharp crack of the whip encouraged the eagerness of her departure. Soon she disappeared from view in the dim light, leaving a plain but bootless trail behind for our pursuers to presently follow a few miles in their quest for Jack. Then, after a silent handshake that said more than words, my friend went dodging in among the heavy shadows of the mountain canyons, leaving me alone with my wonderful Corenca, whose speed was matchless and whose temper was the devil's own. If he could only evade capture while I rode to Halseyville for help! Twice forty odd miles would have to be covered, and the hope was slight, but Corenca was a wonderful foundation upon which to build it. If the foe should lose even a little time on the false trail of the other horse

IT SEEMED AS IF SHE KNEW THE NEED FOR HASTE.

and Jack get a few extra hours, just a few, where each moment gained was glinted with gold!

My thoroughbred mare, chafing and tugging at the bit as we swept out into our long, hard trip, set me to wondering whether I spared her most by holding her in or letting her have her head. I tried to compromise, but she willed it otherwise, and the ground slipped away under her feet like a smooth running belt from the flywheel of some ponderous machine. It seemed as if she knew the need for haste and scorned a suggestion of her own limitations. The only notice my restraining hand received was an impatient toss of her shapely head and a savage jerk at the reins.

In less than an hour—only an hour behind poor Jack, I thought, with a sinking heart—I saw our grim pursuers in the road before me, but all that I feared from them was delay. They knew I was not the man they wanted and were themselves there to uphold their idea of the law and human justice in their fierce, crude way. They might attempt to take me back with them—the one thing that I really dreaded—but of personal violence I had no fear. My government position would again protect me, and whatever time they hindered me Jack would also gain from them.

As we approached I got the halting signal, but the little mare rushed ahead, alike unmindful of their shouting and my hand. Two men dismounted hurriedly and made a rush for my bridle as we passed. In a flash Corenca's fighting blood was up, and, with gnashing teeth and eyes like a dragon's, she was upon and over them and dashed ahead. A dozen mounted men spurred after us with the act. They might as well have chased the wind, for the very dust from the little mare's feet fell short of their leader. They dare not shoot lest Uncle Sam should hear the echo presently and only wasted a little time for Jack to profit by.

Once clear of pursuit Corenca fell off a little in her speed, but not in her independence, as I quickly learned in my first attempt to juggle with the reins. After all, why should I not let her have her way now that no special cause for speed bursts lay ahead? She was a willful child of the plains. Let her sweep them to suit her fancy. She would lose no time and perhaps, better than I, could judge of her own endurance. So we left the dubious miles behind us in pursuit of the miles ahead that she rapidly found and conquered one by one. Sometimes the pace was a moderate canter, sometimes swift as the wind, but I watched the flanks beneath me in vain for a labored breath. She seemed to temper her speed to the limit of what she could endure without drawing upon that wonderful reserve force that made her at once the pride and the terror of the plains.

So thirty odd miles lay behind us presently and the game little beast had drawn up only once for a drink as she forded a stream. Still, more than one sign now told me that she had made her run at an awful expense to herself. Once she began to show fatigue, it seemed as if her dissolution was to be as rapid as her flight had been. The willful flirt of her head she had left miles behind, and she stumbled a little sometimes as she still galloped fearfully on. Each breath was a heave and a gasp now, and the white foam that fell from her mouth was occasionally colored with red. Should I dismount and feed her or try to crowd her through? Back among the mountain canyons I could see a kindly, rugged face, now stern and resolute, at bay. Before me, only a few miles ahead, lay Halseyville and rescue. Already I could almost see the stately mayor and a few chosen friends rushing away on their errand of mercy and justice. For could I quite forget the sweet faced girl, in whose eye a tear had stood so close behind the laugh she had given Jack at parting. And it all tempted me forward. Still, it would be a foolish thing to ruin all so near my journey's end by letting my now suffering horse go off from her feet for want of a few minutes' rest.

Corenca stood quiet enough now, with head down and heaving sides, but with the fire still unquenched in her flashing eyes. Reluctantly I dismounted and loosened the saddle girth a little. Then a sight met my eyes that stayed my hand at the fastenings while I looked again, to bring me a moment later back into my seat. For the first time that day I urged Corenca beyond the limit of her chosen speed, and right nobly did she struggle to respond. But the heaving sides told their own story of a conquered body still reeling forward under the impetus of an unyielding will. Poor, faithful servant! It was, then, to be a race to the death—of my horse or my friend—and in that choice of course the dumb brute had to lose.

Now that the decision had been forced upon me I spared the use of neither whip nor spur upon Corenca—Corenca, to whom no one had ever before dared to teach the use of either. No more thought of trying to save her—just to get the last ounce out of her before she fell. Far ahead, just leaving Halseyville, I could see a queer little red spot rushing toward us, which I realized to be the mayor's automobile, bearing him rapidly away to a neighboring town. For a few miles his route lay straight toward me, but presently the road forked, and the red spot would bear out of reach the one man whose presence would awe Jack's pursuers into submission at a word. If I could reach those forks in time it would save me a smart little ride to the town. If I failed I feared me much that all my efforts were doomed to failure—that the game was up. Well, it would never be Corenca's fault. As I noted her trembling and unsteady gait I could not but hope that when she did go down she would be out of her misery soon. Again and again I urged her on, heartsick as I felt the futile struggle she was making under me. It was a losing race. Still, she lost it by so narrow a margin that she won for me.

Already the electric steed was about to swing around the curve and leave me such a few rods behind when Corenca, as though still obedient to her unconquered will, plunged wildly into the air and sank dying to the earth. Her race was over, but she had been grit to the very end.

A pair of sharp eyes, not the mayor's, saw the accident and gave in quick report. So it happened that instead of leaving me helpless they presently drew up by my side and looked down on me crouching by the dumb brute's head.

It wasn't the mayor who first comprehended the story I tried to tell them of Jack, and it wasn't his voice that ordered me into the vacant seat nor his hands that suddenly took control of the machine and gave it motion. I cast one bitter look back at my dying horse stretched there along upon her side, but I hadn't the time to end her misery with a pistol shot, as I was minded to do. Now at last was Halseyville behind me and ahead the mountains—and Jack. I stole a glance at the slight girlish figure whose guiding hands now seemed like steel, but over whose face had come something that was neither a smile nor a tear.

How the wind came up and rushed in our faces as the auto gathered speed! It wasn't a flight, but a melting away of objects. Things were and then were not. The belt over which we had galloped, Corenca and I, now changed to a smooth zone of marble, flanked on each side by a ribbon of greenish gray. We didn't seem to advance; just swayed and tilted, while the green gray ribbons on either side of us rolled into a tangle of mist just ahead, into which we were constantly trying to plunge. One could not determine where the real joined forces with the imagination. Somewhere between the two the real became invisible and the invisible seemed almost real. There wasn't a thought of fear, but a half formed wish that something would happen to add variety to this throbbing, undulating sensation, without particular motion and with nothing to see. Where we were or what we were doing not one of our senses could tell. We were only ethereal spots in the

"JACK!" CAME A FEMININE SCREAM.

midst of an infinite nowhere, at one end of which lay my dying horse and at the other the friend I was trying to save.

I knew in a half dazed way we were rushing ahead at a speed that was terrific, but felt impatient that it was not greater still. The breath of the whirlwind might have been tame to my quivering, overwrought nerves. Shut out of the material world by this cloud wall, I longed for a thrill of expectant danger to break up the depressing sense of isolation. It wasn't the call for haste so much as the call of impatience—a mind taken entirely out of its realm of accustomed comparisons and clamoring for sensation rather than accomplishment.

Such were some of my chaotic impressions when I suddenly became conscious of objects about me and realized that we were slowing down. The green gray ribbons took on a spotted aspect, which gradually expanded into some of nature's own pattern, and I was conscious of a sudden relief to get back into the world again. The gray marble pavement shook out into the swift flying belt of the morning, then gradually came to a stop in the midst of mountains, trees and human forms and a few other things.

"Jack!" came a feminine scream from the front seat of our vehicle. Then I noticed for the first time my friend in the midst of the group of men, still on his feet, but with a telltale rope dangling from a limb directly over his head.

We carried him back with us presently seated considerately on the back seat beside the feminine voice, while the mayor and I, as befitted our official rank, rode in front. Thus we proceeded back toward Halseyville, attended on either side for some distance not by the green gray ribbons of a short half hour before nor even by the shapes of my morning fancy, but by a good, stout guard of armed and penitent men now anxious to do homage to the man they meant to have slain in the name of the law. In a little real haste and a good bit of spite we hit up their gait quite briskly ere they finally parted company with us after many a goodly wish and shake of Jack's hand; then away like the wind for Halseyville.

Faster and faster over the road that Corenca had galloped so well till the ribbons swung up to their old place again and cut off our view of the plains, on past where the avengers that morning had thought they would stop me and while getting their lesson in thoroughbred temper lost just the small margin of time that saved Jack until our return, on splash through the ford where my horse slaked her thirst just before rushing on to her death, on past where I held up to rest and to feed her—a brief rest it proved and the last she was ever to have—on past where she fell and doubtless now made up her part in the greenish gray ribbon which unrolled beside us. Then we rolled into Halseyville and found some unusual excitement ahead, where a group of rough men were attempting to corral a game little mare whose speed, they declared, was as swift as the wind and who still held the devil's own temper.

Prejudiced.

"Are you in favor of government ownership?" asked Meandering Mike.

"No," answered Plodding Pete. "De only gover'ment institutions dat I've had any experience wit is jails. An' de way dey're run don't make no hit wit me."—Washington Star.

A Tragic Finish.

A watchman's neglect permitted a leak in the great North Sea dyke, which a child's finger could have stopped, to become a ruinous break, devasting an entire province of Holland. In like manner Kenneth McIver, of Vanceboro, Me., permitted a little cold to go unnoticed until a tragic finish finish was only averted by Dr. King's New Discovery. He writes: "Three doctors gave me up to die of lung inflammation, caused by a neglected cold; but Dr. King's New Discovery saved my life." Guaranteed best cough and cold cure, at Charles Rogers' drug store. 50c and $1.00. Trial bottle free.

ADVERTISING.

One of the Many Marvels of This Progressive Age.

Among the many marvels of this marvelous age there is none more striking and none more characteristic than the art of advertising as developed in modern times. We talk much about the wonders of the telephone and the phonograph, about the astonishing expansion of railroads and telegraphy, but here we have an industry as remarkable for its extension and as wide and varied in its applications as anything of man's device in any era of the world's history. When there is brought into consideration the vast amount of money expended in advertising in our day, the novel and ingenius methods employed and the expert skill and artistic talent engaged in the business, one may begin to realize what a wide field has been opened here for some of the highest and most useful forms of human endeavor.

With all its abuses—and they are not a few—it remains true that advertising is one of the greatest of popular educators and one of the chief promoters of human happiness and prosperity, and there are yet many ways in which it may be extended to the still greater benefit of the world. No good reason exists why the churches, the Sunday schools, the missionary societies and other agencies of good should not advertise far more than they do and thus add to the membership and their power in the community. To set their advantages, aims and benefits before the public in a proper way and form would involve no loss of dignity or prestige, while it would almost certainly widen their influence.

The time must come, too, when the absurd code which prohibits physicians and other professional classes from advertising themselves must be abolished. There is nothing but a sentiment to prevent it and a very weak sentiment at that. It should be no more infra dig for a physician or a lawyer to seek patients or clients through the medium of print than it is for teachers, insurance men, real estate dealers or the members of any other honorable trade or calling.—Leslie's Weekly.