

## The Wicked Uncle

By FRANK FILSON

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I was eleven yesterday and I have started a diary. The first thing that must go into it is about my wicked uncle.

When father said, casually, to mother, "Ned's written that he's coming East to pay us a visit next week," mother sighed and flung up her hands.

"I guess he wants some more money, Jim," she said. "At such a time as this—"

"I'm sure Ned's settled down and steadied himself during these seven years," answered father.

"It isn't in the man," said mother in a curiously constrained voice, like Bill Buffalo's after he had confessed to the sheriff that he stole the girl to keep her away from his rivals, the outlaw of the plains.

I must tell you now that while we live in a magnificent mansion, with four servants, we are fast approaching bankruptcy. Father made some unlucky deals on the stock exchange, and the war has cut off exports, so what is a man to do? As father said to mother yesterday, if those fellows would give him time and his bank would advance him only ten thousand he could keep his head above water and not have to take furnished rooms. More than that, he said, if that shipment comes through from Rotterdam we'll be richer than we've ever been.



Was on Guard Day and Night.

In our lives before. But nobody will trust each other in these days of degraded politics, and there hasn't been a man at the helm of the state worth his salt since Grover Cleveland left the White House, said father.

"You've lost that fellow Ned at least ten thousand," said mother, in the anguished tones of Dinah, when the outlaw of the plains lay dying.

"Yes," said father. "But that was between brothers, you know."

"You've started him three or four times over. You've put him on his feet, and now he can't keep there. And he's coming to borrow some more. Promise me you won't let him have it."

"The extent of my benefactions to Ned will be measured by chicken feed—dimes and nickels," answered father.

Tomorrow our wicked uncle starts East.

The wicked uncle has arrived. He is younger than father, and reminds me very strongly of Diamond Dick, the Pathan's woe, though the look in his eyes softens at times like that of Bill Buffalo's when Dinah refuses to become an outlaw's bride. He shook hands with me very frankly. Certainly I have received a not unfavorable impression of my father's brother.

Mother was cool toward Ned. Ned—that's what he has instructed me to call him—confessed to me in an after-dinner confidence that she always was cool toward him. "I don't blame Matilda," he added, with a mournful sigh. "She knows I'm no good and never likely to be any good in this world."

I laid my hand with a gentle but significant pressure upon the wicked uncle's arm.

"Cheer up, Ned!" I replied. "None of us are wholly bad. There's so much good in the worst of us and so much bad in the best of us, that it isn't the job of any of us—"

"To hit ourselves on the chest of us," said the wicked uncle. "Yes, yes, I know. Your words are infinitely consoling, my dear boy. But it's hard to bear—hard to bear!"

Next morning he had a long conversation with mother. I didn't mean to overhear the first part, but a fellow can't help it if he's making a boat upstairs and people choose to hold a conversation in the passage. Mother was very angry with Uncle Ned. I could tell that by the tone of her voice.

"My husband is ruined," she was saying. "I want you to understand that clearly, Ned. I don't inebriate that your visit here is anything more than one of friendship, but the poor man is struggling hard to keep his head above water. He hasn't got a hundred dollars to lend. He hasn't got fifty. I've given up my winter clothes, and we don't even know how Charlie can go back to school next term."

My heart stopped beating. It seemed too wonderful to be true.

"That's all I have to say to you upon that subject, Ned," she continued, as they moved away. If you understand that, you are more than welcome here."

"I understand, Matilda. You always did think the worst of me," said Uncle Ned.

That set me thinking. What was the purpose of Uncle Ned's visit? I knew he had been a desperate man in his day. Could he have come to rob us, and had mother suspected his designs and uttered a friendly warning that they would not be tolerated?

For a day or two after that mother trailed the wicked uncle like a shadow, especially when he was with father. As for me, I repaired the old pistol I had found in the empty room, and was on guard day and night. I loved Uncle Ned, but I would not suffer him to rob those who had befriended him.

The mystery was explained about a week after Ned's arrival. Mother and I had seen him go out; but a few minutes later he sneaked in by the back way and went straight to father in his library.

I had spotted him. A man does not inform his womenfolk when danger is imminent. I simply waited under the stairs, the empty pistol in my hands. I knew that Bill Buffalo had cowed the Outlaw of the Plains with a tobacco pipe, and I would not scruple to intimidate Uncle Ned with an empty weapon.

I could not hear what the men were saying, but all at once mother came hurriedly into the room. Her woman's instinct, never at fault—as Dinah knew—had told her that the crucial moment had arrived. She went in and left the door unfastened.

Her voice was angrier than I had ever heard it before. The men cowered before her feminine fury.

"I know when you came here," she cried, "that you were going to try to induce Jim to start you in life again. Start you in life, at forty-five!"

"Only forty-three, Matilda!" said Ned in a pained voice.

"At forty-three, then! My husband has done more for you than any brother need do! And you shall not take his last penny in the world!"

"Do you think I came to borrow money, Tilly?" asked the wicked uncle.

"I do, if I know you," protested the wicked uncle. "I made my pile in Nevada last year, and I came home to pay back what I had borrowed. But I knew a black sheep never turned white, and I—well, my dear, I had a little fun with you. That's all. Here's Jim's twelve thousand four hundred and nineteen cents. The nineteen cents I borrowed from him to buy a rabbit when we were at school together."

Then followed a silence that might be felt. Then I heard somebody kissing somebody else.

"You're still the same, Ned," said father, in an odd, choked voice.

"What pleases me best is that that little chap will be able to go back to school," said Uncle Ned.

I sheathed my weapon, I gritted my teeth with baffled rage, and sought the seclusion of my lair. I hate my wicked uncle.

### NECKLACE OF HUMAN FINGERS

Remarkable and Gruesome Exhibit at Present in New National Museum at Washington.

At the new National museum at Washington there are many kinds of necklaces, and among the most curious and gruesome are three made of human fingers. Two are made almost entirely of the first joints of fingers. The third is much more pretentious. It is elaborately beaded, and hanging stiffly from the collar of the necklace are eight fingers. These are eight middle fingers cut from the left hand of hostile Indian warriors by their Indian enemies. The bone was deftly withdrawn from the fingers, the flesh cured, and a stick, in lieu of bone, was inserted in each finger.

Appended to the necklace are four or five tiny bags. This uncouth adornment was a medicine necklace, and was once the property of the Cheyenne and Sioux Indians. Its loss was attended with great lamentation on the part of the Indians. The necklace was captured in a campaign against the Sioux and Cheyennes, in 1876-77. In the old National museum, among the leather goods, is a pair of boots made from human skin. Nothing definite can be learned concerning this unusual footgear.

### City's Lighting to Cost Less.

According to the annual report of William Williams, commissioner of the department of water supply, gas and electricity of the city of New York, for 1914, the street lighting bill for 1915 will be \$400,000 less than for 1914. A good portion of the saving is said to have been effected by the use of nitrogen-filled tungsten lamps in place of the arc lamps. The former are being rapidly introduced all over the city. In fact, before the end of the year it is expected that 15,000 gas lamps will be replaced by the electric incandescent lamps. An interesting comparison between the relative cost of operating nitrogen-filled tungsten lamps and arc lamps is presented in the following figures: 300-watt nitrogen-filled tungsten lamps cost \$70 a year each to operate, while the 400-watt lamps cost \$77. The cost of operating arc lamps was \$85 each; a reduction of \$5 having been effected in the course of the current year.

### Preparedness.

"Ye have turned very industrious lately, Tim," said one Tipperary man to another.

"That I have, bedad," replied the other. "I was up before the magistrate last week for bawling Cassidy, and the judge told me if I came back on the same charge he would fine me ten dollars."

"Did he?" said the first speaker.

"And ye're working hard so as to kape yer hands off Cassidy?"

"Don't ye believe it," said the industrious man. "I'm working hard to save up the ten dollars."—Buffalo Courier.

### Many London Pawnbrokers.

There are 622 pawnbrokers' shops within a radius of ten miles from the Royal Exchange in London.

# Farewell to the Cossack

THERE is nothing very literary about the average man's conception of the Cossack. This formidable individual is ordinarily looked upon as a member of an elite, redoubtable, savage cavalry, who are absolutely insensible to any such emotion as fear. And, to be sure, the present war has provided both ample opportunity for the testing of that fearlessness and proof of its steadfast refusal to be intimidated. The Cossacks have faced every murderous resource of the twentieth century science with the same courage that has distinguished them from their earliest days, writes Dr. I. Goldberg in the Boston Transcript.

Their fire, their spirit, their absolute recklessness through fire, water and steel are those of a military community which at one time bade fair to become a nation all its own, but the role of a modern, purely warrior state was left by history for the Prussia of Frederick the Second.

War, however, endangers literature; the warrior needs a Homer for his illad. And so, if the Cossacks have themselves been too busy fighting to have time for the production of anything but a rude literature, they have, on the other hand, inspired genuine works of art in England, France, Russia, Poland. The last-named country owes very much indeed to the inspiration of the wild men of the steppes.

The original meaning of the word "Cossack" is that of free marauder, brigand, nomad. "The Steppe," says Gabriel Sarrazin, in his work on the great romantic poets of Poland, "engenders Cossacks." Here, in the middle ages was the place of refuge for all manner of criminals, vagabonds,

down upon. Every true Cossack must bristle with a fierce independence, must burn with a passion for war. And thus in the tale of the Cossack and his sweetheart, when we find Ostap ready to thrust aside the sword for the love of Marienka, we must see in his abandonment of the fight the greatest sacrifice possible to a Cossack. We come to the marriage of Ostap and Marienka. At this moment a troop of Cossacks is going by, within Ostap's hearing. The latter, despite all vows, seizes his white steed, jumps on his back and makes a mad dash across hedges, ditches and reaches the plain where the Cossack army is on the march. The war-god has claimed his own. Day by day Marienka watches for the return of her sweetheart, and at last the army comes back. Ostap is no longer alive. Marienka takes one look at the corpse, brought back with full honors. She smiles sadly, sighs, falls and expires.

For to Cossacks the war passion is ever stronger than that of love. Most of the regular Cossacks, Pascal tells us, form really a celibatory corporation. Not that this should be a continence on their part. It is the freedom from domestic ties rather than any absence of sensuality which is thus denoted.

So strong is the appetite for drink that to gratify it a Cossack is often led to sell his horse. And their horses are really part of their very selves.

But mere plunder is not for the Cossack. For he has written somewhere: "He who desires nothing has nothing. Let the Tartar be content with simple pillage. As for the Cossack, he must



COSACKS OF THE DON

refugees and fugitives, who banded together into a confederation.

Cossack life and that of Poland have time and again interpenetrated, now in combat against each other, now joined side by side in a fight against a common enemy. The attack of Bohdan Chmielnicki (1648-1657) is the subject of Steniewicz's widely-read novel, "By Fire and Sword." The Cossacks of the Don gave Russia no little trouble. Under the leadership of Stenka Razin, who promised freedom to all who would follow his standard, the Cossacks rallied faithfully to battle. As with all such figures, legends have grown up around Razin, one of which imputes to him a feat cap which rendered him invulnerable. He was finally captured in 1671, dying by torture without so much as a murmur.

For a long time the death of the famous leader was doubted, and legend has it that he made various appearances, now among Russian sailors, among Persian prisoners and on the Caspian sea. He is here represented as a white-haired old man. One hundred years later it was believed that Pougatcheff, who then played a role similar to that of Razin, was really an incarnation of the adventurous bandit and good fellow.

### Soldiers First of All.

Felicien Pascal, writing in one of the leading European magazines of the Cossacks and their effects upon the literature of the surrounding nations, points out that in the novel of the Pole Michael Czajkowski, entitled, "The Zaporog's Sweetheart," the life of the Cossack and the ideals for which he lives find one of its most effective and realistic settings.

First of all, as one by this time may easily guess, the Cossack is a soldier. For battle he is born, and in battle he finds his most glorious death. To labor is a calamity, and work is looked

astonish the world. If there were a ladder to heaven itself, or a staircase to hell, the Cossack would find his way thither and revel in his conquests!

### Sorcerers and Superstitions.

There was among the Cossacks no constitution or legislative body for the steppe. Custom was the only guide. A conference usually elected the chief. They are firm believers in magic and sorcery, and not even the introduction of Christianity has wholly succeeded in stamping out superstition. In Czajkowski's Cossack tales there is a characteristic scene where a witch is visited for information. We find her with her associates, Maruska the cat, and a rooster. Fire and wax complete the magic outfit. She lights a fire in the cave and calls the cat forward. Maruska makes a circle around the fire, all the time meowing softly. The witch then melts her yellow wax and places the question in the magic circle described by the cat. Strange letters are written down, followed by a good deal of hocuspocus, and while the rooster crows and the cat slinks into a corner, the witch pronounces a terrible horoscope of love, blood and damnation.

The steppe is the symbol of silence, of dreams and melancholy. The Cossacks have their type of lyric effusion, which represents, as Chojewski has written, "bitter voluptuousness of suffering intoxicated with itself." But this is true, concludes Pascal, only of the more intimate songs. For their warrior ballads reveal the true Cossack, with their wild pulsation of the joy of combat, and their ardent passion for the life of strife.

This is a way in a farewell appreciation of the Cossack, for the present war has demonstrated the comparative uselessness of cavalry, and the Cossack soldier is above all things a cavalryman.

### DOG ENTITLED TO PRIVILEGE

No Published Regulations as to the Matter, but it is Understood in France.

There is a quiet little town in the south of France—quiet in spite of the cruel war, and for all that it is the capital of an arrondissement. For some cause the inhabitants of this town are no lovers of dogs—they cherish an undiscriminating animosity equally toward the high-bred collie, the noble mastiff, the mongrel puppy and the cur of low degree. No good citizen omits any opportunity to make war on any sort of dog.

It seems that recently a very fine bull terrier strayed into the municipal office and about to drive him out with scant ceremony when a gendarme intervened. The uniformed representative of the law drew himself up, brought his heels together and raised his hand in salute to his kept.

"The dog of monsieur the subprefect," he proclaimed.

Thereupon the official tobaccoist and those who had come to buy their daily allowance of the official tobacco drew back respectfully while the bull terrier made a deliberate and dignified exit to the street.

Examination of the published regulations fails to show exactly what are the honors prescribed to be rendered to the dogs of subprefects, but at least a precedent now exists to serve as guidance in future cases involving these privileged and distinguished quadrupeds.

### Next Door.

"How's our marksmanship?" asked the bandit chief.

"Improving," replied the trusty lieutenant. "I tried out a man this morning in a shooting across-the-border test."

"Did he hit his mark?"

"No. But he came close. He aimed at New Mexico and hit Arizona."

Sleep, riches and health are only truly enjoyed after they have been interrupted.—Richter

### DOING MORE THAN HIS SHARE

Laborer at Bottom of Well Not Willing to Perform Work of Ten—Rather Give Orders.

Two laborers were engaged to deepen a well which had become dry. One of them sent his mate down into the well while he sat at the top and directed the work.

He first ordered the other man to "dig a bit on this side," then "dig a little more on that side," until the latter, tired of both the work and the orders, exclaimed: "You sit up there and use your tongue while I have to do all the work!"

"One man here giving directions," said the man at the top, "can do as much as ten men down there."

Thereupon his mate threw down his pick and climbed up beside the other man. "What are you doing here?" inquired the latter. "Two men up here," answered his mate, "can do as much as twenty down there."

### Wistful Waiting.

"Care much for fishing?"

"No," replied the melancholy man. "It's great sport."

"I haven't found it so. In fact, it has a very bad effect on me."

"Impossible!"

"True, nevertheless. Fish seldom bite fast enough to require my undivided attention and the longer I sit and watch a cork the more I'm inclined to brood over my troubles."

### A Corpulent One.

"It's rather curious about the Gadsbys."

"Yes?"

"They have a family skeleton."

"Nearly all families do."

"But the funny part about it is that the Gadsbys family skeleton is a relative of Mr. Gadsby, who once traveled about the country as a fat woman in a side show."

### ONLY THING LEFT.



"George, dear, the cook we took without a recommendation has left us."

"I suppose that is because we are among the things she didn't consider of sufficient value to take with her."

### Can't Charge Admission.

"Scadson believes in getting his money's worth."

"He doesn't always succeed, though."

"I thought him rather shrewd."

"Oh, the man who swaps dollars with him usually pays 20 per cent for the privilege, but whenever Mrs. Scadson gives a party, so far as Scadson is concerned, it's a dead loss."

### Trouble in Store.

"I'm not worthy of you, my dear."

"I know it, Henry, but after I take you in hand I dare say you will do very well."

"So I'm to be made over, eh?"

"Oh, no. You will merely be altered to conform to certain plans and specifications mother and I had in mind before you appeared on the scene."

### A Long Walk.

The self-made man stalked into the office of a great financier with whom he had an appointment.

"You probably don't remember me," he began, "but twenty years ago, when I was a poor messenger boy, you gave me a message to carry."

"Yes, yes!" cried the financier. "Where's the answer?"—Argonaut.

### Gosh, How He Dreads It!

"When your wife gets the ballot, are you prepared to accompany her to the polls?"

"Not yet," answered the timorous man. "But give me a little time. I'm gradually screwing up my courage to the sticking point, for it is already settled that I'm to be her escort."

### Lovers All Right.

"They're very much in love with each other."

"What makes you think so?"

"She doesn't mind the mistakes he makes when he's her partner in a bridge game, and he never complains when she insists on driving his car from the rear seat."

### Delaying the Count.

"Do you think mirrors will be placed in voting booths for the woman voter?"

"I hardly think so," replied the practical politician. "It would mean that every woman voter would spend at least half an hour in a booth and at that rate an election would require a week of more."

### Mercenary Motive.

"What was the subject of the lecturer's address?"

"Peace at Any Price."

"Did he prove his case?"

"No. The audience was rather small and he cut out some of his most eloquent periods because he failed to get his price."

### Nothing But Frowns.

"Frown at the world and it frowns back. Smile, and you get a smile in return."

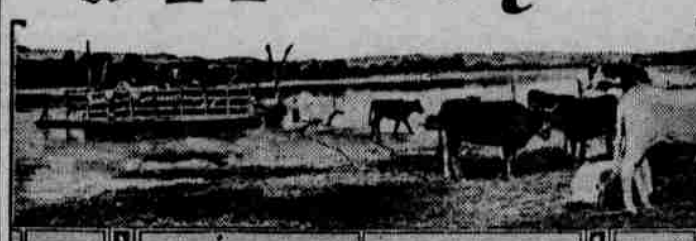
"I dunno about that. I've had that last part fail to work when trying it on a pretty girl."

### Of Course.

"That fellow is an old grump. He'd be sour if you went to him with a golden opportunity."

"Well, a golden opportunity ought to be able to stand a little acid."

# Valley of the Rio Negro



ALONG THE RIVER

TOMAS FALKNER, in his book, speaks of the Rio Negro as the largest river of Patagonia. It is not only the largest river of Patagonia but, next to the La Plata and its two large tributaries, which do not, however, belong to Argentina alone, the largest of the Argentine Republic. Roughly speaking, it drains a large triangular piece of territory lying between 36 and 42 degrees of latitude south, with the base following the line of the watershed between Chile and Argentina and the apex resting at the mouth of the river on the Atlantic coast just south of the fortieth parallel of latitude. Falkner gives quite a list of names for this stream, of which the Indian name of Curu Leuvu has been retained to this day in the Spanish translation of Rio Negro.

It is not to be wondered at that the Spaniards neglected the inhospitable coast of southern Argentina in those early days of conquest and settlement. No one could be expected to settle down in an unattractive and desert country while there was an unlimited supply of more desirable lands closer at hand and to be had only for the asking or taking. It is only when the good land has become exhausted and when railroads and science make the

as it takes days to ascend the swift current.

The winds of the southern Pacific lose most of their moisture on coming in contact with the cold peaks of the Cordilleras and then sweep down across the Patagonian tablelands like an ocean gale. They often last for days, obscuring the sky and landscape with clouds of dust and are at times of such velocity as to hurl small-sized pebbles, but they are most frequent in spring and summer, and when once over are soon forgotten in the delightful weather which otherwise prevails—warm or very hot days, according to the time of year, usually with breeze and cool nights always, with the temperature seldom below 20 degrees F. in winter. The climate most closely resembles that of the interior of the state of Washington. As snow seldom falls, the abundance of verdure which follows every winter rain is available for grazing cattle and sheep.

### Good Place for Hunters.

Hunting is very good, as many kinds of game are plentiful; the guanaco, the small silver fox, the skunk, the Patagonian hare, three species of armadillo (the peludo, pichi and molito), and three species of gopher or prairie-dog-like rodents (the bizcacho, the tucutuco and the quise).



INDIANS OF THE VALLEY

desert more accessible and more easy and certain of remunerative development that the eyes of the colonist are turned toward the less attractive, says Walter Fisher in the Bulletin of the Pan-American Union.

The most convenient method of reaching the valley today is for the traveler to take the train which leaves Buenos Aires at 6:37 in the evening, arriving at Bahia Blanca at 9:25 the following morning. Leaving Bahia Blanca again at 9:55 on one of the tri-weekly trains he reaches Neuquen at 10:35 that night; there he passes the night in a hotel or inn, leaves at 5:20 in the morning and gets to the end of the line on a mixed freight and passenger train at either 10:30 or 12:45 noon, according to which of the bi-weekly trains he happens to have taken.

### River Is Dark and Swift.

We are more particularly concerned with that part of the valley extending eastward one degree of longitude, or about sixty miles, from the junction of the two rivers to the small station of Chichinales. The valley is narrow here, not more than ten miles from bluff to bluff, with the fertile, irrigable land north of the river about half that width at its widest and narrowing down to almost nothing where the rivers meet. The Rio Negro itself is a dark and silent, deep and rapid stream; a steamer is said to take only as many hours to make the down trip

as abundant in the valley, while other species of game are common in the mountains not far away; in the river are otter and plenty of fish.

The inhabitants are as cosmopolitan as a lot as is to be found almost anywhere. As in the greater part of Argentina, the Italian predominates in the farms and the Spaniard in the small towns; there are a few Germans, English and Scandinavians, in fact practically every country in Europe is represented, usually by immigrants of the humbler classes.

A great impetus was given to settling and farming by several droughts and crop failures in other parts of Argentina which drove up the price of alfalfa, a crop which was absolutely guaranteed under irrigation. Other crops such as wheat, barley, and to a slight extent maize, are grown, but lately the planting of the vine has assumed enormous proportions. There are vineyards of nearly 1,000 acres and several wine presses have been erected, one at Roca having a capacity of 3,000 hogsheads. Sheep and cattle coming from the mountains and from across the desert are bought, fed and then shipped on again; hogs, too, are raised locally; the drying of the natural pastures in summer does not, however, permit of local ranching. Fruits of all kinds grow well and are being planted, so that in general the small and mixed farm is on the increase.

### JUDGE SETTLED HIS STATUS

No Doubt as to Where Colored Man Would Be strong for the Next Six Months.