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She Came to Grief by Ignoring System

By F. A. MITCHEL

Miss Gwendolen Archer, aged eighteen, was an earnest church worker. There was only one trouble about Miss Archer—she was rather inclined to take affairs into her own hands. She had served on a committee to send boxes of clothing and other domestic articles to ministers in out of the way places the largeness of whose families was proportionate to the smallness of their salaries. Becoming restive at being subordinated to older women, it occurred to Miss Archer to pack a box and send it away herself.

When she had got together sufficient articles, consisting principally of such as would be needed by children, she looked over the list of impetuous ministers with large families and selected one that stood higher on the list than some to whom boxes had been



A SUSPICION OF THE TRUTH CAME SUDDENL Y RUSHING OVER HER.

sent. Why this family had been omitted she did not know, and since she was acting independently she did not care to ask.

There was at this time in the southwest a sort of missionary station presided over by the Rev. Francis Kaplan. His parishioners were plainsmen, cowboys, Indians, grocers and some negroes. There was not a person in his flock with whom he could associate on familiar terms. It was lonesome out there in the home of the cactus, and Mr. Kaplan sighed for a companion. He was thinking of writing to some of the ladies in the east who had sent him to his field of labor to ship him a wife when one day he received a box.

Mr. Kaplan opened it, wishing that he might find a wife packed in excelsior, a real flesh and blood wife, who would be a companion to him in his exile. Taking off the cover, he saw inside on top of various articles a paper on which was written in a woman's hand, "If you want anything else send to Miss Gwendolen Archer." The address was added.

Taking up an article, he unfolded a little girl's petticoat; the next was a nightgown; a third was a pair of boy's knickerbocker trousers. Then came toys of various kinds, children's shoes, stockings that had been often darned and some much thumbed schoolbooks.

Now, though Mr. Kaplan had no children to use these articles, there were plenty of little Mexicans and pickaninies who would be only too glad to get them. He turned them over to some women of his flock for distribution, and various children who had been running about nearly naked were now better covered.

Mr. Kaplan wrote Miss Archer, thanking her for her donation, and referring to her paper on which was written that if he wanted anything else to send to her to say, "There is one thing I need very much, but since it is not an easy thing to get I hesitate to ask for it." He did not inform her that since he had no family of his own he had given the things to those who had, but he said some other things that were not called for—namely, that he was sure Miss Archer must be a very practical Christian and altogether lovely.

Then followed by correspondence a kind of twenty questions game. The young lady asked whether the object desired belonged to the animal, vegetable or mineral kingdom. The reply was the animal kingdom. Was it a pet? Yes, it was intended for a pet. Then followed a number of questions as to what kind of an animal it was—dog, cat, parrot or such like? In the answer to all these questions was the negative.

Miss Archer, not making headway in the matter, concluded to consult her minister. The minister, Dr. Hawley, listened to her and took Mr. Kaplan's letters, which he promised to read and

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A DESPERATE BANDIT

By MARGARET BARRY

Lieutenant Giuseppe Griolano of the Italian national police being summoned to headquarters at Naples, his chief said to him:

"This brigand Lanetti who has been terrorizing the mountains must be captured. I have sent out a spy, who says that in a ravine back of Sorrento he came upon the band. He was halted and told to turn about. He could see no one, but remarked the position and says that if they remain there long enough for a competent force to attack them they must all be captured. Take fifty men, go at once and bring Lanetti here dead or alive. If you can bring the others do so, but do not fail to capture their leader."

"Have you a description of him?" asked the lieutenant.

"No. Nor have I found any one who has seen him." He has but recently begun his depredations and thus far we have not been able to get any information about him. Persons who have been captured by his band and held for ransom have not been brought before him."

Lieutenant Griolano with his men went by train as near to the point they intended to attack as possible, then at nightfall followed a road leading up into the mountains.

As soon as it grew lighter the police, all armed with rifles, advanced, turning a bend in the ravine, which led them face to face with a barricade of stones the bandits had erected across it. Griolano halted his men and stood looking up at the barrier. All was silent. Not a living thing was to be seen.

"The bird has flown," he remarked in a disappointed tone.

No sooner had the words been uttered than a bullet sang close to his ear.

The bravest man will duck at being thus surprised, for the nerves do not give the brain time to reason that the danger has already passed. Griolano involuntarily ducked, then ordered his men to lie down under cover till he could determine upon the best method of attack. He stood upright himself, taking in the defense before him. He was a handsome man, twenty-five years old and brave. While he was looking for an opening by which to make a flank attack upon the position another bullet sang a few inches above his head. This time he was prepared and did not flinch.

On both sides of the ravine where the barrier had been erected there was a wall of rock, which the lieutenant saw no way of passing. Indeed, the position the bandits had taken could only be captured from the front, and this could not be done without considerable loss of life. The young officer was at a loss how to proceed. While deliberating another rifle cracked, and another bullet whizzed past him, this time knocking off the uniform Napoleonic hat worn by the national police.

"For heaven's sake, lieutenant," cried a sergeant. "Cease to expose yourself in that way. The next shot will surely bring you down."

"Those shots have come from different parts of the barrier," replied the lieutenant without heeding the warning. "There must be half our number behind it and if we attempt to carry it by storm we shall lose the greater part of our men. I must find a way to get at them from—"

"Ping!" another bullet grazed the officer's shoulder.

"I beg of you, lieutenant," reiterated the sergeant, "to get behind a rock. Why the villains have missed you four times I cannot understand."

"Nor I," replied Griolano. "However, there is nothing for it but to carry the place by assault."

Given the order to advance the men moved up the ravine, each man getting over the rocks in his own way. Every moment all expected to receive a volley that would thin their ranks, but they made half the distance and not a shot had come from the barrier. Every neck was stretched, every eye bent on the improvised fort, looking for a burst of flame and smoke and a hailstorm of bullets. Half the remaining distance was covered and yet no sign of defense.

"They are waiting," said the sergeant, "till we get right before them, then each bandit will aim at one of us, and they will fire all at once."

But in a few moments more they were at the base of the barricade, then on and over it, all unhurt.

In the farthest corner crouched the garrison, a girl some seventeen years old. No other living being was there. Griolano stood in amazement.

"Where is Lanetti?" he asked.

"I am Lanetti."

"You Lanetti?"

"Yes, signor."

"Where are your men?"

"They are cowards. They have deserted me."

After a brief silence, during which the officer was lost in wonder, he said: "Why did you miss me so many times. Are you so poor a marksman?"

"No, signor. I can hit a bird on the wing."

"Well?"

"You looked so handsome in your beautiful uniform I could not kill you."

The police went back to Naples and reported that the brigands had disappeared. But this is not the last of the story so far as Griolano and the bandit are concerned. The rest is a tale of love.

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