

# Buhl

## MILK CANS

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**CLOVERDALE MERCANTILE CO.**

### A Close Call

By DONALD CHAMBERLIN

During the administration of President Huerta of Mexico I was employed by the United States government to do certain service for the state department. I went by land, crossing the Rio Grande at Laredo and entering Coahuila. I soon fell in with a prominent leader of the rebel forces, who, after I had satisfied him that my mission was not detrimental to his interests, expressed a willingness that I should go to my destination, the City of Mexico.

"How would you like to earn some money?" asked the general.

"I would gladly earn money if I can do so without compromising my employers at Washington."

"What I have in mind would not interfere with that at all. I desire to get a message through to a certain person in the City of Mexico. As a messenger of the United States you would not be suspected. Your government has not taken sides in this matter, and there is nothing to prevent your being the bearer of a letter from me to a friend."

"But supposing I am caught with such a letter on my person?" I asked.

"In that case you would be shot."

"And what would I receive for taking this risk?"

He named a sum that tempted me. It seemed to me that, being in the employ of the United States government, there would be little or no risk in my

bearing the general's message. I needed the sum he offered for a certain purpose and concluded to stake being shot against it.

He wrote his message on a bit of thin paper about three inches square. I was to take it to a man high in favor with President Huerta. His name and address were given me, but were not written on the message, though it was signed by a fictitious name. I decided to carry it in the upper vest pocket on the left side, my object being to have it where I could easily get it to destroy it in case I was cornered. The general paid me the money for the service I was about to render, for I was to receive it whether I succeeded in delivering the message or not.

Going southward on the general's pass I struck the Federal lines not far from the City of Mexico. I informed the commanding officer of my mission and was received by him with the courtesy due one in the United States service. Indeed, being stationed at a point where he saw no one except his officers and men he seemed pleased to see me, and since I reached his quarters in the evening he insisted on entertaining me overnight.

He proved to be an inveterate gambler, and nothing would do but that I must play cards with him. I dared not antagonize him by refusing and after the evening meal sat down with him in his tent to play. He soon won all the cash I had provided for my journey, and I proposed to quit. He seemed inclined to play on, and I feared to refuse him. I had the money the general had given me, a roll of bills, in my pocket and was obliged to produce it.

My opponent looked at this large quantity of Mexican money with interest. He said nothing about it, but from that moment he began to talk about the difficulty of my getting on

in the morning and expressed the opinion that I would be delayed. His prophecy came true, for he gave orders that no conveyance was to be furnished me.

The next morning I asked my entertainer to cash a draft on the American consul at the capital. He promised to do so, but made no move to produce the funds. His actions were so suspicious that I began to think I had better seize upon any opportunity to destroy the general's message. But I was given no opportunity. My host never left me for a moment unless there was some one else in the room. All the while he was telling me that he was endeavoring to secure conveyance for me, that he expected a team very soon, and when it came he would furnish me with money for the journey.

About 10 o'clock in the morning I saw a sergeant posting a guard about the house. My heart stood still. I was suspected, would be searched, and the message would be found on me. That meant death. The officer was looking over some military papers at a table, with an unlighted cigarette between his lips. Taking a cigar from my pocket, and with a show of coolness I did not feel, I deliberately cut off the end with my penknife and asked him if he had a match. He produced one, struck it and was about to light his cigarette when, remembering politeness, he extended the match to me.

"After you," I said.

He touched it to the end of his cigarette and handed it to me. I put the flame to the end of my cigar, but purposely failed to close my lips tight in order to prevent suction. When the match had burned near my fingers I took the message from my vest pocket, put one end to the flame and lit my cigar with it, taking sufficient time for it to be entirely consumed.

I saw the officer look up at me quick-

ly, but he said nothing. Dropping the ash of the paper on the floor, I put my foot on it, rubbing it with the sole of my shoe so that it could not betray me.

I think he saw by my expression that I experienced a great relief and had made myself safe, for he permitted me to depart without further delay.

#### Helping Him Along.

"I want to get up, doctor," said the patient in the hospital.

"But your heart is weak," replied the medical man.

"Oh, the pretty nurse is going to give me hers."—Yonkers Statesman.

#### Utility.

"Did your audience throw you bouquets after your speech?"

"No," replied the reckless orator. "They brought only useful gifts, such as bricks and other building material."—Washington Star.

#### Suspicion.

"Father," said the small boy, "what is political economy?"

"To be perfectly candid, my son, I can't tell you. Sometimes I think there isn't any such thing."—Washington Star.

#### Not a Pleasant Prospect.

Mrs. Cross—This book says that married women live longer than single ones.

Cross—Heavens, woman! Do try to talk about something pleasant.—Boston Transcript.

#### Artichoke Seed For Sale.

Anyone desiring artichokes for seed can secure same by calling on Chas. Ray, Cloverdale. Price, dug 2c per lb., in the ground 1½c per lb.