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The Mascot of Sweet Briar Gulch

By HENRY WALLACE
PHILLIPS

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They went over stones and gulleys, the tools clanging and banging as they leaped from the wagon, the men clinging to the sideboards for dear life; down hillside like the slant of a roof, the horses keeping out of the way of the wagon; up the other side with the reeking animals straining every fiber; over bridges that bent fearfully beneath the shock of their onset; swaying around curves with the wheels slewing and sparks flying and over the level as though the devil himself were behind them.

It was the record trip for eight miles in a wagon in that country. The driver stood up, a foot braced on either side, the reins thrown loose, the whip piled hard and every urging that voice could give shrieked out by his powerful lungs.

It was like the rush of a fire engine plus twice the speed and twenty times the danger. Above the pounding of hoofs, the din of rattling metal, the crash, smash and roar of the wheels and the yell of the driver could be heard the man Pete, ex-cowpuncher, cheerfully singing:

"Roll your tails, and roll 'em high.
We'll all be angels by and by."
"Braced in the back corner sat Captain Hanrahan, his leg keeping some of the tools from going overboard, holding Ches in his arms.

"Curse it all, Billy," he screamed to the driver, "miss some of them bumps, will you? I've got on a new pair of pants."

"I'll take 'em clean off you the next time, cap," retorted the driver.

They joked, which may seem heartless, but they risked their necks a hundred times, and that isn't very heartless.

"That's the place, I reckon, cap," said the driver, pointing "Somebody working there now."

"Give 'em a hoot," replied the captain.

Bud stepped out and held up his hand in answer to the yell. The wave of thanksgiving at the sight of this most efficient help took all the stiffness out of the knees of the mail rider. The tears rolled down his face unnoticed.

"You're welcome, boys," he cried as the driver sawed the frenzied team to a standstill and the men sprang out.

"Reckon we are," said the captain.

"Now, what's up?"

"Is the boy hurt? He ain't hurt himself, has he?"

"Naw. Pore little cuss is used up, that's all. He'll be around all right in a minute. Now, tell me what's loose."

Bud answered briefly, but completely.

"Pete and Billy, get to cutting wood. The rest of you come here," commanded the captain.

"You ain't going to stop to timber, are you?" asked Bud in an agony of haste.

"I sure am," replied the captain. "All this trouble's come of carelessness. Now, you just keep your clothes on and let me run this thing."

"We'll have your friend out in no time, and there won't be no more men stuck in there with a hill a-top of 'em in the doing of it. What you're done there is a help all right, but it might easy have meant that we'd had two men instead of one to hunt for."

"You're dead right," said Bud. "Tell me what I'm to do."

The captain took hold as only a man can who has the genius for it. He knew by long practice what size of a relief tunnel meant real speed of progress.



CAPTAIN HANRAHAN.
Pete—the least dirt to be removed to

make it possible that they could work to advantage. And his tunnel, safely roughed, went in at the rate of a foot a minute.

When at last they pulled the insensible man out into the light of day and found that while his wound, though severe and if neglected mortal, was not likely to be dangerous with good attention, the captain said that he must be getting about his business.

"Oh, stay a little longer, fellows, till he comes to," remonstrated Bud. "He'd like to have a chance to say 'Thank you.'"

"Rugs," replied the captain. "You tell him he owes us a drink and as a particular favor to me please not to put his frames over four foot apart in that ground."

"Well, boys, I can thank you, and I'm going to," said Bud. "That man is my friend, and if you hadn't come as you did—"

"Say, let go," interrupted the captain. "You'd have done the same thing if you'd been us, wouldn't you?"

"Yes," admitted Bud reluctantly.

"And you wouldn't want to be thanked for it a white chip more a we do," concluded the captain. "If there's any thanks coming it is to that little two foot chunk of man yonder. Snaking over that fall was a thing to put a crimp in anybody. You was bound to help your partner, wasn't you, son?"

The boy looked up into the captain's eagle face. "I'd er got to Jim," he answered simply. "I had ter chew me way in like a rat."

The captain stepped back and looked at him.

"By thunder," he said slowly, "I believe you would." A change came over the thin, arrogant face. He stooped suddenly, raised the boy and kissed him. "Now, get out o' this!" he roared at the driver as he leaped into the wagon.

"Pretty good folks when you're in trouble, ain't they, Ches?" said Bud.

"What 'nd we have done if dey hadn't come? Ain't it 'mos' time Jim was moving, Bud?"

"I'll give him another spoonful of whisky, but you can't expect him to start right up and hop around. He got an awful crack, boy."

For all that as the dose of strong liquor went down Jim's throat he opened his eyes.

"Hello, Bud! Hello, Ches!" he said wonderingly. "Have I been asleep? Why, what the devil's the matter with my head?" He raised his hand to the spruce gum bandage. "I'low, but I feel weak!" he sighed as his hand dropped. "Something's happened. What is it?"

There, with a friend on each side holding a hand, they told him the story. It was a sacred reunion.

The gratitude of the man saved and the protestations of the others that they would have done all they did a thousand times again would only seem childish in repetition. They cried, too, which is excusable in a child, but not in two big men. Men don't cry. It is the monopoly of women. Nevertheless Bud and Jim and Ches cried and swore and shook hands and cried again until it was a pitiful thing to see.

"Well," said Bud at last, "this makes you feel better, but it won't get the work done. I've got to go out and fix old Buck and get in some firewood."

"Oh, I'll do that," cried Jim, raising himself on his elbow.

"You!" jeered Bud. "You look like it! Now, you lie right down there and get well. That's your play. It would make us feel as if we'd wasted our time if we had to turn to and bury you after all the trouble we've had. You're good for two weeks in that bunk, old horse."

"Two weeks! I can't Bud; I can't! I must get up before that!"

"You lie down there. Hear me?"

"But I'll have to see to things around. You can't stay."

"I stay right here till you're well."

"But the mail?"

"The devil take the mail or anybody else that wants the job. Uncle Sam won't hop on to my collar button because of the fine sendoff my friend the inspector 'll give. And somebody will get orry eyed up in town and come down to find what's loose. He'll take the bags then. It's all settled."

"But there are other things—"

"Let 'em rest. Now I'm off to do the chores. Oh, say, speaking of mail, here's a letter for you. I forgot all about in the excitement. Here you go. Come along, Ches, and help me carry wood."

The miner looked at the letter in his hand, and a tinge of blood crept into his white cheeks, then ebbed, leaving them whiter than before.

Suppose there were other men who wanted her, men with money, learning, wit and influence! Was this bitterest of blows to fall upon him when he was already down? He looked at his hands, green from loss of blood. "I tried," he muttered; "I tried."

Still the very touch of the paper seemed to have something warm and heartening in it. It was from her, anyhow. With sudden strength he tore it open and read:

Dearest! Dearest Jim—I yield the whole case. You are right. It is to my shame that clear sightedness

came from no source within me, but from a brave example set.

My little cousin married the man she loved last week, and of course Miss Anne was a high functionary.

Oh, what a stirring there was in me, Jim, watching them and thinking of you! They will be as poor as church mice, but they do not care, and there is the wise economy.

Life is too short to waste, Jim. I see it now. I put it all in your hands, dearest. You cannot come to me I shall come to you.

I believe I'm only lukewarm by habit, not by nature.

I wish I could tell you how sorry I am for the time I have squandered.

I'll show you. That will be better.

Any time or any place and no conditions now, Jim. That's all, my dear, brave over. Good night!

Your own, ANNE.

He was sitting bolt upright. Once more he detoured the letter. Then he sank back and closed his eyes.

"Thank you, my darling. I can rest now," he said.

The golden sunset light played in riotous joyousness on the cabin walls; the little creek laughed out loud; so did Ches and Bud approaching the cabin. It was a beautiful and happy world.

THE END.

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Daddy's Bedtime Story — The Elephant That Was A Shaker



The Elephant That Swayed Back and Forth

"ONCE upon a time," began daddy, "there was an elephant, and he shook and shook."

Jack and Evelyn looked surprised. "Why did the elephant shake?" they were about to ask.

"The elephant thought shaking was a graceful accomplishment, something like dancing or walking on a tight rope. He said it helped him to think. The elephant was a great thinker, so he said."

"Now, the elephant shared the house at the menagerie with the camel, the buffalo, the musk ox, the dromedary and a lot of other plain, quiet animals of that sort. They said they didn't mind the elephant shaking when he was outside in the big yard of the menagerie, but on bad days when they had to be shut up with him and at nights when he would sway, sway back and forth in the dusky light it was most trying to their nerves. They said they never knew what minute the big beast would swing a little too much to the right or a little too much to the left and the walls would come crashing down around their heads."

"But when they spoke to the elephant about it he would look them calmly over and say that they must not be so fussy. He said they must learn to be calm and unruffled like he was."

"So the elephant added to his shaking exercise the little trick of clanking his chains. He would lift his huge feet and sway them gently back and forth while the iron links rattled dolefully and waked every napping animal in the house."

"One morning just before breakfast one of the keepers took him out and led him to another building. It seemed that the house was to be pulled or something like that, and in the meantime other homes had to be found for the animals. None but the elephant was put into this house."

"Of course Mr. Elephant stayed out all day, but at sunset the keeper took him in and chained him up, as usual."

"This is comfort," the elephant began; "no nervous, fussy creatures to whine and complain, and as he swayed back and forth his trunk struck something soft."

"Whir, whizz, bang! A wilder elephant you never saw, for the wasps settled all over him, and the next morning when the keeper came to let him out his trunk was a sight to see."

"And since then the elephant doesn't talk so much about other people being fussy and has a little more care for their comfort and feelings, for he doesn't know when he may strike another wasp's nest."

Thomas Moore.

Thomas Moore often wrote a short poem almost impromptu. He consumed over two years in reading and preparing material for "Lalla Rookh" and two years more in writing that inimitable poem.

Legs and Feet.

Let me put it to you as a man of sense. If you were given your choice of the two things and could have either, but not both, which would you choose, a book of poems or a pair of trousers?—London Idler.

Two Kinds.

"There are just two kinds of liars in this world."

"Two kinds?"

"Yes—the ones who lie to help themselves and the ones who lie to injure others."—Chicago Record Herald.

No Cause For Alarm.

"See here, husband, I found a lock of hair among your old papers."

"Well?"

"I never gave it to you."

"Don't worry. I don't remember who did."—Washington Herald.

Her Part.

"Your husband says you proposed to him."

"That's quite right. Everything of importance that my husband ever got credit for doing I either did or showed him how."—Detroit Free Press.

Repertee.

Beggar—I have a poor wife and ten small children, lady.

Lady—When I was along here last week you told me you had eight.

Beggar—Yes, lady; blessed with twins last Tuesday.—Exchange.

His Hard Luck.

Jones—Brown is an unlucky dog. Smith—How's that? Jones—His object in marrying was to get out of a boarding house. Smith—Well? Jones—Now his wife is running one to support the family.

Accent on the "Know."

Marks—If you had to live life over again would you marry the same woman? Parks—You just bet I would. I know what she is, and women are too uncertain for me to experiment with another one.—Exchange.

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