

THE REDEMPTION OF JOHNSON SIDES.

The day was hot and the wind was high, and the alkali dust from the sage-brush came down from the sky and whitened the stuffy upholstery and burrowed into the nerves of the passengers.

I looked out on the sun-flooded platform at Winnemucca and wondered what I should do with myself during all the long, hot, and uncomfortable hours that were still to be endured. And then I saw the big, broad-shouldered figure of the Nevada enter the car and come straight toward my seat. And at once I forgot the heat and the alkali dust, and my heart sang with joy, for I knew the Nevada of old. His store of yarns is limitless and needs only a listener to set it unrolling, like an endless cable.

"Of course, you've heard of him, haven't you?" he asked. "Everybody who ever lived on either slope of the Sierras must have heard about Johnson. Well, Johnson Sides is a whole lot of a man, even if he is only a Plute Indian. It ain't quite fair, though, to speak of him as only an Indian, for he has developed into an individual and wears store clothes."

"The first time I ever saw Johnson was away back, years ago, when I first went to Virginia City going down C street one day I stopped to look at some workmen who were excavating for the foundation of a house. They had been blasting, and were working away like good fellows getting the pieces of rock off the site. On the south side of the biggest stone they had removed, where the sun shone on him and he was sheltered from the wind, a big Plute was lying on the ground and watching the workmen as if he had been their boss."

"I wondered why he was watching the workmen, for it is little short of a miracle for a Plute to take any interest whatever in manual labor. So I spoke to him. Without paying any attention to me or what I had said, or even seeming to be conscious of my presence, he rose, straightened himself up, threw his head back, and said, as if he were addressing the world in general: 'White man work white man, white man work, white man work, white man work, white man work.'"

I laughed and said: "You've struck it right at the bottom. Anybody with as much wisdom as that deserves to be supported by the community. Here's a dollar for you." He took the money as disdainfully as if he had been a prince and I a subject paying back taxes, and without once looking at me stalked off down the street. An hour afterward I ran across Johnson. Two other bucks, and a squaw, sitting on the ground in the sun behind a barn playing poker. Johnson must have raked in everything the whole party had, for that night the rest of them were sober and he was whooping drunk. In consequence, he got locked up for a while.

"After he got out of jail I saw him standing around for several days looking as if he had been worth a million. But his wits of hunger must have set his pants to work. For pretty soon he appeared on the streets with a wrinkled, decrepit, old Plute tied to a string. He had fastened the string to the old fellow's arm and he walked behind, holding the other end, but apparently as unconscious of the whole business as if he had been the sole inhabitant of Virginia City. He stalked along with his head in the air, and the old fellow trotted on in front until Johnson yanked the string. Then they stopped and the old man began to beg money of the passers-by, and Johnson turned his back on his companion and looked off down the street, proudly pretending that they weren't together. If any one gave the old man money Johnson took it at once and it disappeared somewhere inside his blanket. Johnson and his prime minister, we used to call the combination. But Johnson wouldn't beg for himself. Oh, no! He was too proud. It's a fact, I never knew or heard of Johnson Sides himself asking for money. But he kept his prime minister trotting around for several weeks, and he never let go the string or let the old fellow keep a two-bit piece."

"But Johnson was reformed at last; and it was the power of the press that did it. We didn't try to reform him—in fact, we'd rather have kept him as he was at first. He was more amusing. But the aspirations of Johnson's soul were too much for us. I used to give him money sometimes—he was sure to do something if he got drunk that was worth writing up—and so he got into the habit of coming to our newspaper office whenever he felt the need of more cash. He didn't ask for anything, and he always made you feel that he was doing you a great favor in accepting any stray chicken-feed you might have about your clothes. He just sat around like a bronzed blanketed statue of Caesar or Alexander or Napoleon Bonaparte. Not one of the whole lot of them ever looked more as if he owned the whole earth than Johnson did after he'd sat there three hours waiting for somebody to give him two bits or a chew of tobacco. I found out after a while that he could give me scraps of news about the Indians over at Pyramid Lake or in the city that were worth looking into for them. Nobody ever saw a prouder Indian than Johnson was the first day I did that. I marked the items with a blue pencil and gave him a copy of the paper, and he carried it around with him until it was worn out. The money I gave him for the

items he kept in his pocket for two whole days. But at last there was a big poker game behind a barn—six bucks down from Pyramid Lake with five dollars apiece, and it was too much for Johnson. His proudly earned silver went into the pot with the rest.

"Johnson brought up items every day after that, and soon began to feel himself one of the profession and a man of consequence.

"Well, it wasn't long after Johnson's entrance into literature until he discarded his blanket and appeared in a coat."

"The civilizing influence of literary pursuits and universal respect soon told upon Johnson's personal appearance. He began to wash his face and hands. His self-respect seemed to grow, like love, by what it fed on, and the more he became respectable the more his ambitions spread out and flourished.

"The civilizing process had been going on two or three years when Johnson's mind got an illumination as to the value of knowledge. He decided that the young Plutes ought to go to school. Johnson himself never showed any great desire for knowledge. He has since learned to read a little, and can write his own name, but at that time he was satisfied with 'making the paper talk through my agency. However, he set his heart on having a school for the young Indians. I suppose he realized that they couldn't all achieve respectability and influence in the field of journalism, as he had done, but must be provided with some of the implements of civilization to start with. There was some Government money with which the school could be run after it was started, but there was no building in which it could be held. The thing lagged along for a while, and Johnson tried to set several schemes going without success, and finally one fine morning, the proprietor of a lumber yard thought some of his piles of lumber had been tampered with. He saw some tracks, which he followed, and in the outskirts of the town, near a bunch of outcrops, he came upon two other lumberyard men, also following tracks." A little further on they found Johnson, even more important and dignified than usual, superintending the construction of a schoolhouse. Half a dozen Indians were at work, and Johnson was bossing them as if he had been building schoolhouses all his life. The men bowed him about stealing the lumber, and he frankly said yes, he had stolen it. That is, he had bossed the job and made the other bucks do all the packing. He explained that he had to steal it because he couldn't buy it and they wouldn't give it to him, and he had to have that schoolhouse. His frankness amused them, and they told him, all right go ahead, and if he needed any more lumber he might have it.

"The lumber he got the schoolhouse finished, corralled the Indian brats, and after the school was started visited it three times a week, when he didn't go every day. If any of the youngsters showed signs of mutiny, all the teacher had to do was to threaten to call in Johnson Sides, and immediately peace became profound. For by that time he had more influence among the Indians, big and little, than anybody else, white or red. They looked up to him with a veneration which he accepted as his right and a matter of course as calmly as he had formerly taken the quarters and half-dollars his prime minister had begged for him.

"That schoolhouse was the last stealing he ever did, even by proxy, and pretty soon he quit getting drunk. He has never given up poker entirely, but he quit gambling away everything he got, and only joined in a social game now and then, when he was flush, as any gentleman might. He was a good deal of a man, was Johnson, and everybody respected him and was glad to help him along. He worked and earned money, and saved a little, and cleaned himself quite respectable. People liked to employ him, for he was industrious and sober. That is, he was sober for a long time. There must have been five or six years in which Johnson was never even tipsy. He was mighty proud of himself and his respectability, and when he did fall it hurt him bad.

"For fall he did, at last, when a big enough temptation came along. And then he got whizzing, whooping, roaring drunk. It was a wilder, madder, more devilish drunk than any he had ever taken in the old days when he was only a dirty Plute buck, without ambitions or achievements. It seemed as if he were making up for all the time he had lost while he was respectable and condensing into one all the drunks he might have taken and hadn't. He kept it up for three weeks. Part of the time he was with the Indians, part in Virginia City, and part in Carson. How he managed to escape arrest is more than I can tell, and how it happened that he didn't massacre the whole population of Nevada is still more of a mystery. He had fights with Indians and with whites, with men who were drunk and men who were sober, and they drew guns, knives, and fists. But Johnson didn't get hurt, and nobody else got killed.

"After it was all over and he had sobered up, Johnson came to me and he was so repentant and humiliated that I declare I never felt so sorry for anybody in all my life. He thought it was all up with him, that he had ruined all his respectability and influence, that nobody would ever believe him, or trust him, or respect him after that, and that it was quite useless for him to try to be a good Indian again. Of course he didn't put it in so many words—he expressed more by gestures and looks and grunts than

by words—but that was the meaning of it all.

"Johnson was sure about it, and I had to make him understand that I knew what I was talking about. 'It is all straight,' I said. 'They do that every session for somebody. Why, Soan-So—and I mentioned the name of a prominent writer, 'was on an awful drunk last winter, and just as soon as he sobered up he went right over to Carson and had the Legislature pass a bill repealing his spree, and you know that he is just as much respected as he was before. I'll attend to your business myself to-morrow, and then I'll publish the whole thing in the paper and everybody will read it and know that you are all right again. But you must remember one thing, Johnson,' I said. 'You must remember that as you are an Indian the Legislature can't do this for you more than once. If you were a white man you could have as many drunks repealed as you wanted. But being an Indian this is your last chance, and you must keep straight after this.'

"Well, the upshot of it was that Johnson put his trust in me, and I flattered myself that I was just the man he needed in the emergency. You've lived in the West, and you know what the Nevada Legislature is, and always has been. There never was one that you couldn't count on to do anything under the sun that tickled its sense of humor. I thought that bill 'em in just about the right place, and it did. They dropped everything else and sent it through with a burrah.

"There was a long preamble, telling about Johnson Sides's prominence and influence and the great importance of his retaining the high position in the respect of the community which he had won, and about the misfortune into which he had fallen, and how it was the universal wish that he should be reinstated in public esteem. And then there was a resolution which declared that Johnson Sides's drunk should be and was thereby repealed, destroyed, wiped out, forever and ever, and that all statutes not in accordance with that act were thereby annulled from that time forth. They passed it through both houses unanimously, and the next day I published the bill verbatim and all the proceedings in my paper.

"Johnson's face fairly shone with joy when I read it to him. It was his patent of respectability, and he stowed it away in his breast pocket as carefully as if it had been his passport to heaven. He carried it there until it was worn out, and then he came after another. He's worn out three or four since then, but he always keeps one in his pocket."

"The theme worked like a charm, for his redemption had been complete, and he's been a good Indian, sober, industrious, and respectable, ever since."—N. Y. Evening Post.

Game Fish in Africa.

A trader in ivory and rubber writes as follows of sport on the Kafue River in Africa: "Every morning at day-break we got up and scanned the plains with our glasses for game. Often our boys called us first to say that a herd of water buck or hartbeest was grazing in sight, especially if the camp was out of meat. The river was full of fish—bream, pike and tiger fish. The bream were by far the best eating, but the tiger fish and big barbel gave the best sport. Spoon bait, with strong pike tackle and a stiff bamboo rod, was all that was required, and trolling behind a dugout paddled by natives we could soon make a bag. The tiger fish fight gamely, and breaking water repeatedly, very often succeed in shaking the hook from their mouths. Barbel run up to eighty pounds weight, and a heavy one can tow a canoe along the surface at some speed."

Bible of the Esquimaux.

The Esquimaux now have their own translation of the Bible, which has taken 150 years to complete. The Norwegian pastor, Hans Egede, who went to Greenland in 1721, toward the close of his life began the work, which was completed and published by the Bible Society of Denmark.

Breech-Loader Not New.

The breech-loading gun is not, as many persons believe, an invention of modern times. There is on view, in the shop of a Dublin gunsmith, a breech-loading rifle that was offered to the British War Office at the close of the eighteenth century. It was rejected, it is said, because it took too much ammunition.

First Railway in Iceland.

The first railway in Iceland probably will be begun soon by an English company recently formed for the purpose of working the sulphur mines at Thelstareykir, in the north of Iceland. The mines are about seventeen miles from Hnauk, the nearest harbor, to which the proposed railway will run.

Filipino Grasshopper Confections.

The Filipinos eat large quantities of dried grasshoppers, and also prepare them in confections.

WICKEDEST TOWN ON EARTH.

Callentes, Nev., a Paradise for Thugs, Gamblers and Cut-Throats.

Callentes, Nev., only four months ago was a little, peaceful, pastoral settlement, scarcely of enough importance to get notice on a county map, and known only to the couple of hundred sleepy individuals who made up the population of the village.

Now its inhabitants number thousands. It is a city of tents, shacks, gambling halls and saloons without number, and is known for hundreds of miles around as "the wickedest town on earth."

All this great change came about through the building of the Pedro, Los Angeles & Salt Lake railroad, which is to connect the intermountain country with the Pacific Ocean by a new route.

With the advent of the city engineers, camp crews, track layers and the host of other laborers Callentes was chosen as a temporary headquarters and no sooner had tents been pitched and rough frame shacks raised than the camp was invaded by thugs and sharks of all descriptions, representative of the worst element in the West.

First saloons were opened, then roulette, faro and poker in a dozen gambling halls came into glaring evidence, and soon painted females from the mining towns of Arizona and Nevada arrived in numbers and assisted the bartender in separating the gay westerner from his coin.

As time went on the thousands of men employed on the new railroad moved farther along the double line of stakes, but at the end of the month, when their wages come in, they pay regular tribute to the town, and in a single night—often in much less time—their earnings of four weeks go into the pockets of the keepers of the resorts.

Great crowds gather nightly around the faro layouts—the laborer, cowboy and miner against the professional bet and the amateur gambler before his wagers become smaller; finally his last "two-bit" piece is raked in by the dealer, he goes out into the night and in the morning is hard at work again.

With the "amusement promoters" have come a bold crowd of armed thieves, who rejoice in having found a place where they can reverse the usual order of things by sleeping the night and working the day, for in Callentes sand-bagging men, for bread daylight is a business of slight risks and good returns. New York World.

Experience in Interior of Russia.

An Englishman residing in the interior of Russia thus describes her housekeeping experiences. "As molasses is unobtainable on the steppes, one is obliged to break up a huge two-pound or three-pound lump into pieces and crush in a pestle and mortar. I believe that churns may be procured in big towns, but they would be very expensive, and the English residents in country villages, who do not care for the smoke-flavored Cossack butter, make their own by shaking cream in a big bottle. The Cossack servants are capital laundry women, though their washing appliances are somewhat primitive; they use large, low wooden troughs to wash the clothes in and boil them in open boilers. The system of mangling is rather curious; first, they wrap the rollers carefully around a wooden trough, like a pastry pin, then press it up and down a board scored with nicks, loosely laid on the table. Consequently, this makes a clatter, more deafening, if less irritating, than the tuneless squeak of the British mangle. Although the summers are intensely hot in Cossack land, yet the mistress of the household has less trouble to keep milk and other foods sweet there than in England, for every house above the rank of cottage has its icehouse, which is refilled during the latter part of the winter with huge blocks of ice brought, perhaps, many miles across the frozen steppe from distant lakes or rivers, in the bullock carts."

Personal Risks of War.

The introduction of rifles of greater precision has lessened the percentage of men hit in proportion to the number of shots fired, because firing, as a rule, now begins at a far longer range, and the troops are taught to take advantage of cover.

In the Franco-German war one bullet in 400 was mortal, but in the Boer war the proportion was only one to 740. The total loss is less. In 1870 the French losses were 20 per cent., but in the Boer war the English lost only 5 per cent. and the Boers 6½ per cent. At Waterloo the allies lost 22 per cent. and the French 24, the average losses in the great battles of the last century being put down at 15 per cent. for the victors and 27 per cent. for the vanquished. In the eighteenth century the losses were much higher.—London Sketch.

Comanche's Use for a Desk.

For Quannah, an intelligent and popular Comanche chief, the cattlemen around Fort Worth, Tex., built a house and furnished it. They were rather puzzled when he told them that the first article of furniture he wanted was a roller desk. "What can you do with a roller desk, Quannah?" they said. "You can't write." "Oh, I want 'em," said Quannah. "You see, I open desk, an' I sit down in my chair, an' I put my feet up on desk, an' I read my seegar, an' I hol' newspaper up front of me, like this—sabbo? Then white man come in, an' he knock at door, an' he say, 'Quannah, I wan' talk' you a minute.' And I turn 'roun' in my chair an' puff lot of smoke 'n' in his face, an' I say, 'Go away! I've busy 'u' day!'"—Kansas City Journal.

YELLOW JOURNALISM HEROISM.

Suddenly a wild shout rose from the terrified crowd.

Four trolley cars were approaching the same corner at full speed, and the usual fool mob was hustling across the street and trying to dodge, then—

All at once a big, hulking coward became so insanely frightened that he ran amuck, and in making a break for the sidewalk bumped a woman and a baby out of his way. In doing this he knocked them from between the tracks, where in another moment they would have been struck by the trolley.

In an instant the still gibbering coward was surrounded by reporters from the evening papers, and half an hour later extras were on the street telling of his heroic rescue of the woman and child, and giving his picture across four columns.

Besides, there were editorials commending his case to the managers of the Carnegie fund.


Such is the stuff of which yellow journal heroes are frequently made.—Judge.

Beyond Them.

Though auto-scooters may not heed the rules of navigation, to their distress they cannot break the law of gravitation.

—Town and Country.

SLIGHT CORRECTION.



Customer—I believe this is the same steak I made you take back yesterday.

Waiter—Oh, no, sir. The man opposite you got that one.

Boy Obeyed Orders.

The Hon. Elihu Root, who has returned to the practice of law in New York city, has engaged a new office boy. Said Mr. Root: "Who carried off my paper basket?"

"It was Mr. Rolilly," said the boy.

"Who is Mr. Rolilly?" asked Mr. Root.

"The janitor, sir."

An hour later Mr. Root asked, "Jimmy, who opened that window?"

"Mr. Lantz, sir."

Mr. Root wheeled about and looked at the boy. "See here, James, he said, 'we call men by their first names here. We don't 'mister' them in this office. Do you understand?"

In ten minutes the door opened and a small, shrill voice said: "There's a man here as wants to see you, Elihu."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Harakiri.

"Speaking of self-made men," said the Savage Cynic, "there are lots of them I know who should improve themselves."

"How do you mean?"

"Finish themselves."—Philadelphia Ledger.

The Truth About Truth.

Pupil—Please, teacher, why do they say that truth is stranger than fiction?

Teacher—Because it is rarer, Hector. Does any other pupil wish to ask a question?—Boston Transcript.

Resenting It.

"He writes that I am a cad."

"Tell him that you will pull his nose."

"I will—where's your telephone?"—Glasgow Times.

Nearing the End.

Methuselah was in his nine hundred and sixty-eighth year. It was a long, dry summer that year, too, and Abigail the Beehiveite, and Obadiah the Dinnymite, were fretting over the drought.

"Yes," quavered Methuselah, fidgeting with his stout cane, "it is pretty warm; but I—"

Here Abigail and Obadiah winked knowingly at each other.

"But 'I,' Methuselah continued, "can't say that I recollect any year that ever has given us such a long dry spell."

Then Obadiah and Abigail walked softly away, saying one to another that the old man was showing his first signs of breaking down.—Judge.

Nothing New.

Joques—I see that a Connecticut genius has invented a glass skate.

Soques—Huh! that ain't nothing. I've got many a skate out of glass tumblers and bottles.—Chicago News.

Require Long Stations.

Yeast—They say in Russia they have some awfully long railroad stations.

Crimsonbeak—Of course.

"Why of course?"

"If the station was not awfully long how in the world would they ever get the name of the town on it?"—Yonkers Statesman.

Penny Saved Penny.

A penny saved is frequently a penny that has somehow worked down into the lining of your coat.—Orange Democrat.

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