

TURPIN FEMINIZED

At about the end of winter, I had to make a trip from the neighborhood of Jim Lewis—as the next station south of Salinas Crossing at Soledad is called—to San Luis Obispo, to draw fifteen hundred dollars from the bank. I rode into Jim Lewis, and leaving my horse there, boarded the south-bound stage for San Luis.

The rivers were running pretty high that spring. However, we got to the Plecto ranch all right, where we changed horses, took dinner, and again started. There was however, one more river to cross the Nacimiento, lying between the Plecto and San Miguel. I happened to be the only passenger in the stage that trip, and while the driver and myself were discussing the passage, a rancher who lived close by the river advised us not to try it, as his own wagon had been nearly carried down the stream that morning. He added that if we liked, we could put up at his place all night. As there was every probability that the freshet would go down before morning, we decided to do so.

"We shall have to pay, though," said the driver to me with a wink as he turned his leaders from the bank, "and pretty roundly, too—mind that. Old Williams is a hard one. I've got stalled here once or twice before. It's just nuts for the old man to catch the stage in a tight place."

Old Williams' parsimony was the talk of the country side, although rumor had it that he was worth many thousands of dollars in cash besides herds of cattle.

When supper was called we were received by our host's wife, a woman of about forty, who had been doing the cooking. Mrs. Williams' conversation and demeanor, too, were courteous and pleasant, though one could see she was a woman of determined character.

After supper we were shown the sleeping apartment, on the second story. At each side of the room were spread six camp beds, twelve in all. For Old Williams' ranch had been the supper stopping place of the up stage some years before. I had not slept long before I was awakened. Some persons were talking on the other side of the partition wall.

"Marthy," said the voice of old man Williams, "I tell you I can't afford it. You'll ruin me with your extravagances. What with your house bills, and your dress bills, and your gallivanting about, and your trips to town, I'm spriced you should dream of such a thing. Five hundred dollars for a trip to Frisco? Why, you must be crazy!"

"It's you that crazy, you old hunk," replied the female voice in scornful tones. "It's six years since I've been to anywhere but San Luis. Do you think I'm going to toll and slave to make money for you all my life, and get no good out of it? I'm going to Frisco to spend a month with my sister, and I'm not going to be laughed at when I get there, you can just bet. Five hundred dollars ain't no cent loss. Why, I ain't got a rag fit to be seen in, I ain't got these six years, and I don't propose to stand it no longer."

"I see it all, Marthy," rejoined old man Williams. "It's all because I've got to go to the bay that you want to go too. But mine's business, and you know it. Now look a-here, Marthy, there's \$400, as you know, nearly to meet that little bill of Baxter's for that las' bit of land. My stagin' back an' forrard, \$25 each way—that's fifty. Two days in town, \$2—kain't do it a cent less 'cept Baxter treats—them cities is 'ort' expensive. Now there's \$452 got to be paid. An' you want five hundred more for nothin' at all!" Here the old man groaned.

"Nothin' or no nothin'," replied Mrs. Williams decisively. "I'm going to be it. Don't you forget that."

"Well, well, Marthy," said the old man, after a pause, in what was evidently meant for a soothing and mollifying key, "you was allus a good gal. I'll see what kin be done. Them banks in San Luis is 'ort' close, though. You mustn't expect too much."

"Don't give me none o' your games," rejoined his better-half sternly. "You tried that once afore, an' if you go for to try it agin, you'll try it once too often. Mind what I'm a-tellin' ye."

After this the voices ceased, and I managed to fall asleep.

Next morning we found the river had gone down, and after paying our bills—which were certainly pretty steep—we resumed our journey at daybreak with another passenger in the person of old man Williams.

"No foolin' now, Si," shouted his dame, as we drove out of the yard; "five hundred or nothin'."

"Aye, aye, Marthy," replied her spouse; "I'll be back to-morrow evenin'!"

Well, we got into San Luis without further mishap about noon. In order not to delay the passengers who had arrived from Santa Barbara and southern points the night before, it was decided that as we had lost half a day, the same stage would start on its return trip in an hour.

As the only business I had to do was to draw money, I was ready. While in the bank getting my coin, old Williams came in and also made out a draft. I was a little curious as to the amount, and noticed that the clerk counted out just four hundred and fifty-two dollars.

At 1 o'clock we left San Luis, taking extra horses to see us over the hill. There were now four passen-

gers, old Williams, a well-known landowner in Santa Barbara, a whisky drummer and myself. As the weather was cold, we all got inside the coach. By the time we got to San Miguel it was quite dark, and as we approached the Nacimiento river, about an hour afterward, I noticed that old Williams' trepidation, which had been noticeable for some time past, became more apparent than ever. As the horses plashed out of the stream on the farther bank, I remarked that the old man had retired into the farthest corner of the coach, had muffled his head in a travelling rug, and was snoring heavily.

As soon as we gained firm ground the driver whipped up and the stage bowed past the approach to old Williams' house at a lively pace. Not, however, before a female figure, in whom by the coach lantern I recognized Mrs. Williams, had looked into the stage and detected her recreant spouse, muffled as he was, in the corner.

"I saw ye, Si," she shouted after us, as we bowed along; "yet can't fool me. I thought ye'd try to play me, you old whelp, but wait a bit—the rest of her speech was lost in the distance."

From the Nacimiento Crossing to the Plecto Ranch is some ten miles, and here the north-bound stage in these days always stopped to change horses and let the passengers eat supper.

Half an hour afterward we resumed our journey. We began to get livelier under the influence of the good cheer. The colonel from Santa Barbara was particularly entertaining. The drummer's best samples circulated freely, and even old Williams joined in the general exhilaration, when, all of a sudden, the coach drew up with a jerk which nearly threw us out of our seats, and the familiar muzzle of a double-barreled shotgun was thrust in at the window.

"Never mind throwin' down the box, Jim," shouted a voice which I fancied I had heard before; "that ain't what I'm after. Come, pile out on the road, you galoots inside, and be quick about it. Wake up, old man," continued the voice, ironically, evidently addressing old Williams, who had shrunk back into his corner dead with terror.

We obeyed the injunction with alacrity. People always do under such circumstances. But who shall depict our astonishment when we saw that this daring road agent who had stopped us was a woman, and still more to my surprise I saw it was neither more or less than Mrs. Williams.

"Hold up yer hands, gents," said our captor, quietly; "taint' you I'm after; it's you, ye good for nothin' nincompoop," she continued, addressing her husband, as she covered him with the shotgun. "Jest shell out that money ye got to-day at the bank—all—every cent of it."

With trembling hand old Williams drew from his breast an old leather pocketbook, and handed it to his spouse who opened it and glanced at the contents, still keeping the gun leveled in our direction.

The whole situation was so ludicrous she said slowly, after a careful scrutiny. "I thought so! ye're forty-eight dollars short. Hain't ye got no more?"

"Not a cent, Marthy," returned the terror-stricken man, "as God's my witness."

"Well, ye kin borrow it off some of them gents. They know ye're good for it," returned his obdurate spouse. The whole situation was so ludicrous that the other three passengers and the driver burst into a roar of laughter. I immediately reached for my purse, but the colonel was before me, and with a low bow and benignant smile, tendered his. The woman accepted it with the utmost gravity, and took from it two twenties, a five, and three dollars in silver.

"This," she said solemnly, as she returned the purse, "is a loan to the old man. Never fear. He'll pay. I'll make him. Now, Si," she continued, turning to her husband, "you'll find my horse tethered over there. Git on his back an' go to San Luis for more money. I'm going to Frisco in this yer stage if them gents has no objections. I'll meet you up there."

We, gallantly, simultaneously, and unanimously assured her we had none. Two minutes afterward we were bowing along merrily again as if nothing had happened. Mrs. Williams was the lion, or rather the lioness, of that trip. She had, of course, mounted on horseback after the stage passed the ranch, with the intention of overtaking us while we were taking supper at the Plecto, which she did, with the above result.

None of us, I think, ever gave the business away, not even the colonel, though he relished the joke hugely. Few people care to confess that they have been stood up by a woman.—San Francisco Argonaut.

A Duel That Was Not Fought.

Appropos of the duel between General Andre and General Negrier, Parisians are recalling the effective manner in which a statesman of long ago replied to the challenge of an illiterate bully. The statesman responded with the following letter: "Dear Sir—You have called me out without any good reason. I have therefore, the choice of weapons. I choose the spelling book and you are a dead man." The duel was never fought."

A London Furniture Dealer Who Committed Suicide the Other Day. Left a note explaining that he had done so because a friend of his had asked him.

OXYGEN AND MUSHROOMS

Old Use of Plants Made in a Government Laboratory.

A singular way of removing oxygen from the air by the aid of a plant was recently made the basis of an experiment in one of the Government laboratories at Washington.

Inside a glass bell-jar suspended over water, was placed a mushroom, and sunlight was allowed to fall upon the plant. The mushroom absorbed the oxygen from the air in the jar, and the carbonic acid formed during the process was absorbed by the water, which gradually rose in the jar to one-fifth of its height. The mushroom then dried up; but its animation was only suspended; it was proved by introducing beside it a green plant, when the mushroom recommenced to vegetate, being nourished by the oxygen exhaled by the fresh plant.

Spiders and Music.

It has often been said that spiders are fond of music, but a French investigator, M. Lecailleu, now asserts that this is not true. He says that their musical sense must be attributed merely to greed or to hunger. When a fly is caught in a spider's web it buzzes and the spider immediately makes for the place from which the buzzing comes. M. Lecailleu, by experimenting with a violin, some flutes, a piano, violoncello and a cello, found that only those musical sounds, which resembled the buzzing of the flies attracted the spiders. The cornet, for instance, invariably frightened it, and so did the piano.

Differences in Mineral Waters.

The new electrical test of D. Negro, a French electrician, distinguishes between different mineral waters and detects imitations. It consists simply in measuring the electrical resistance, which proves to be very constant for the water of any spring at a given temperature, but varies greatly for different springs. For instance, gave resistance per cubic centimeter ranging from 27.5 to 1,280 ohms.

Notions About Babies.

In Spain the baby's face is swept with a pine bough to bring it good luck.

In some parts of Ireland a bit of woman's hair is placed around the child to keep harm away.

In Holland garlic, salt, bread and steak are put into the cradle of a newborn baby.

When a Grecian mother is putting her child into the cradle to sleep she turns three times round before the fire while singing her favorite song to ward off evil spirits.

Against Sunday Labor.

Under the provisions of a new Belgium law Sunday labor in that country will hereafter be forbidden in all commercial and industrial enterprises except sea, canal and river transport, fishing and hawking and peddling. Only members of an employer's family living with him, or his domestics, may work more than six days per week, and the weekly day of rest is to be Sunday.

Differences of Iron and Steel.

There are three prominent differences between iron and steel which ought to cause a difference in their capacity of rusting: First, blow holes; second, manganese; and third, the presence of cementite in the steel and of cinder in the wrought iron.

Settled by Coin Toss.

The tossing of a coin settled a controversy over the division of a large tract of land left by the late Bart Smithson of California. The land was divided into four parts and the four heirs, with the head and tail of a half dollar made successive selections, much to the chagrin of the legal fraternity.

World's Longest Bridge.

The longest bridge in the world is at Sangon, China, and is called the Lion bridge. It extended five and one-quarter miles over an arm of the Yellow Sea, and is supported by 300 huge stone arches. The roadway is seven feet above the water, and is enclosed in an iron network.

Color of the Squirrel Fish.

The squirrel fish is a brilliant red in color, which makes it a conspicuous inhabitant of the sea as it darts here and there with alert movements. The body of the squirrel fish shows a few stripes and is well covered with sharp spines.

Sensitiveness of Plants.

After studying the sensitiveness of the tendrils and hairs on plants, a distinguished naturalist has come to the conclusion that some plants are capable of experiencing regular sensations.

Sultan's Many Bicycles.

More than 200 bicycles are owned by the Sultan of Turkey, some of which have gold and silver mountings. It is said that he could earn a good salary as a trick rider.

A Merited Punishment.

For compelling ten soldiers to scrub a barrack room with their toothbrushes a subaltern in the German army has been sentenced to one year's imprisonment and degradation.

Snails Sense of Smell.

Recent investigations show that snails have a sense of smell which, however, is not localized but extends over the greater part of the body.

SEATH OF THE BARNY

French Scientist Thinks It Is Single by Topography.

A French scientist, M. de l'Apparent, professes to discover in the latest polar expeditions an argument tending to show that the earth is slightly top-shaped, the protuberance corresponding to the point being at the South Pole. This, the Frenchman thinks, would explain the different results arrived at by the various measurements of astronomers and geodesists.

These differences are very small in comparison with the entire bulk of the globe, yet they are readily appreciable, and one of the explanations that has been suggested for them is that the earth is tetrahedral in form. But M. de l'Apparent thinks that the top-shape theory is preferable.

The fact that to an eye looking at the earth from a point in space it would not sensibly differ in appearance from a true sphere, shows how refined are the methods of science that enable men living on the surface of the globe to detect variations in its general contour.

No Electric Launches for Venice.

Negotiations have taken place during past years between the municipality of Venice and launch builders with a view to the adoption of electric launches for the public service, but the matter appears, says the British Consul, to have been abandoned by the municipal authorities, notwithstanding the advantages that would have been derived from speed and absence of smoke.

Deterioration of Cement.

The deterioration of wet cement when subjected to oil is not of serious import commercially, since the material is never used by itself in practice. In the case of the three-ton mixture, on the other hand, experiments show that if concrete is allowed to set in water for some time before the application of oil no ill result need be feared.

Water-Proof Glue.

A waterproof glue may be made from three parts of gum shellac and one part of India rubber, these being dissolved separately in ether under the influence of heat, and the two solutions mixed and kept for a time in a sealed bottle. According to the Iron Age, water, either hot or cold, and most acids and alkalis, will have no effect on the glue.

Scouts' Good Work on Bicycles.

During the French army maneuvers two privates, owning bicycles, were taken from each company of the Thirty-first Infantry to act as scouts, estate-finders and sentinels mobiles, in the absence of cavalry. They afforded more rapid and precise information than could be obtained by the adversary.

Sea Kites British Land.

It has been estimated that some 1,000,000 tons of detritus—mud, sand and shingle—are eroded each year from the Holderness coast between Bridlington and Spurn Point, and the great probability is that much of this material contributes to the silting up of the Humber estuary and the Wash.

Net Saves Scorchers.

A wire net near Monte Carlo has saved the lives of several reckless cyclists and motorists. A road down a steep hill abruptly leads across a chasm spanned by a narrow bridge. The net catches the scorchers at the turn as deftly as it does in a circus tent.

Strength of Wet Grindstones.

Tests seem to indicate, states Iron Age, that the strength of a grindstone is considerably reduced when it is wet. The wetting not only decreases the tensile strength of the materials, but it adds weight, and thus augments the centrifugal pull at a given peripheral speed. The reduction of strength appears to be as much as 40 or 50 percent.

Planting Indigo in Java.

In Java the planting of indigo is steadily decreasing by reason of the great increase in production of the synthetic article. Much of the land on which indigo has heretofore been cultivated has now been turned into sugar plantations.

A Custom of Turkistan.

When Turkistan girls become engaged it is the custom for the fiancé to pay her parents a sum of money. If she jilts him later the parents must return the money.

Madame Melba's Memory.

Mme. Melba has such a good memory that she can learn an entire opera in one week. She does most of her studying in bed.

What Chinese Eat.

The Chinese will eat anything that comes out of the sea. All the fishes are good to their taste, and are caught with great skill. Seaweeds are used to thicken soups and gravies.

Another Fertilizer Added.

A new fertilizer made in Norway from the nitrogen in the atmosphere is said to be very nearly as good for plants as Chile saltpeter, while its cost is lower.

A Remarkable Pig Tree.

In the gardens of the Haby castle, Durham, England, is a fig tree which has a spread of branches from twenty to twenty-four feet. It was brought from Italy in 1785 and is kept under glass.

FIGHTING RARELY RETAINS

A Pugilist Once Defeated His Opponent by Turning the Tables.

Time and again the question has been asked by followers of the ring whether a pugilist can "come back." That is, can a fighter who has once been on top retrieve his lost laurels by defeating the man who has already whipped him. Many scrappers have tried to upset the theory that once a thing is impossible, but some have failed. As a recent illustration of this fact, there is the bout between "Young" Corbett and Battling Nelson at San Francisco. When Corbett was vanquished the first time he contended that it was his poor condition and the fact that he had treated the Dane's tactics lightly for lightly that resulted in his undoing. So Corbett secured another chance, trained harder than ever for the fray, according to his own assertion, but, as in the previous encounter, was compelled to bite the dust, and in quicker time, too, than in his first effort.

Confidence in pugilism, when everything else is considered equal, is a great help to the man who possesses it. And it is doubly so when the possessor is going against an opponent whom he has already conquered. The fighter who is trying to regain the honors he has already lost is in a most fearful of a repetition of a defeat, especially if it happens that he has already been knocked out by his rival.

Often the rings hear of the rejuvenation of some fighter who in past days has been at the top of his profession. By mending some of his mistakes he may succeed in winning a number of hard battles against opponents whom he had never hoped to face. He may show his old time skill in these fights and give his friends good hope that he has not lost entirely the ability that made him the best of his weight and a champion.

But somehow as soon as he tackles the man who has succeeded first in dethroning him all the dash and cleverness he has displayed in his march to his former goal disappear, and he is once more back in the place where he started after his star had set.

After Jim Jeffries won the championship from Bob Fitzsimmons at Coney Island he proved himself a good fighter. But there was some doubt as to his real greatness, and he was forced to convince the critics as to his real ability by taking Fitzsimmons again.—New York Sun.

Railway Travel in France.

On the principal railways of France the traveler finds his train in the left hand set of rails. This is what is used in England; but when it emerges from the station and takes a "train" out or cat he has his vehicle and all others inclined to the right. When he comes into Germany he finds trains rigidly keeping to the right like road vehicles. Why is this difference, asks an English traveler, in France the railway was not developed from the colliery railway as this had been from the plank road, but was imported from England; and with it the left-hand direction. Once settled the railways have played so with a flavor of the exotic about them.

—New York Globe.

Stenography As An Education.

Stenography used as a means of education induces the dictionary habit, and often results in a real appreciation of the masterpieces of literature. It also greatly aids in the study of foreign languages. Having analyzed the sounds of his mother tongue, and acquired a considerable working knowledge of phonetics, the application of the same methods to French or German is a matter of course. Many very distinguished literary men have found stenography to be the first rung on the ladder of fame. The ability to note down a word or thought instantaneously is of incalculable value, as a facility with which memoranda may be made in stenographic characters.

Danish Hospital For Children.

The Danish Government has lent its aid to a novel scheme for raising money for a hospital for consumptive children. It issued a special stamp, worth half a cent, which the public was requested to buy and paste on letters and parcels. Within a short time more than \$20,000 worth of these charity stamps were sold.

Smoking in France.

In France there are six million smokers, and of every fifteen there are eight who smoke a pipe, five who smoke cigars and only two who use cigarettes. Still, the French consume more than eight hundred million cigarettes a year, or enough to go around the world five times if they were placed end to end in a line.

Bird Traveled 400 Miles.

Two Australian black swans were picked up recently off Norfolk Island, in the Pacific. They must have traveled 400 miles. The birds were in a very exhausted condition, but after a fresh water bath and plenty of food they revived. The black swan is a powerful swimmer, but 400 miles at sea is a long swim, even for him.

Opium Trade in England.

A French journal, L'Avenir, says that Congo, which, as its name indicates, is published by way of retarding the fish charges relative to the misgovernment of Congo, declares that whereas Holland, Germany, and Japan forbid the opium trade in their colonies, England benefits by it to the extent of \$25,000,000 a year.

Black Snakes As Pets.

A novel method of keeping snakes to protect one's property is covered at an exhibition in Belgium. The snakes are kept in cages, and the owner can see them at any time. The snakes are kept in cages, and the owner can see them at any time.

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