PEDRO'S WIFE

By SADIE OLCOTT

There have been, in the United States and elsewhere, numerous instances of men acquiring wealth suddenly and squandering it in unusual ways. One of the most prominent of such cases was that of "Coal Oil John ny" Steele, who was made very rich by the discovery of petroleum on a farm he owned. He spent his fortune in spectacular ways and then sank into comparative obscurity. While his money lasted he was known as "the prince of spenders."

But the story of "Coal Oil Johnny" is dwarfed by that of Pedro Alvarado, a Mexican, son of a peon and a Mexican woman. Pedro's father saved his money till he had $100 and bought with it a rocky hill. On his deathbed he exacted a promise from his son that he would never sell the land Pedro prospected it for silver and one day found himself in possession of a mine that paid him $30,000 a day. This amount for a year of, say, 300 working days amounts to $9,000,000 a year. What a fortune for one who had known nothing but abject poverty!

But Pedro Alvarado, unlike "Coal Oil Johnny," did not waste his money in dissipation. A mania for something usually seizes on those suddenly made rich, and Pedro's was for pianos. He built a fine house and filled it with pianos. There were rosewood pianos and mahogany pianos and white enameled pianos—indeed, pianos of every variety. It does not appear that he could play a note on one of them or that he had any predilection for music. It was simply the form of mania that struck him, he having unlimited means at his command.

The story of Pedro Alvarado is a number of stories. Perhaps the most curious one of all is that of his wife's foresight. Pedro had no idea of business principles and knew only how to work his mine in a primitive way, which was most expensive. He paid everybody connected with his mine an enormous salary, besides which his employees helped themselves to what they could lay their hands on. Instead of building a railroad to carry his ore he sent it by mule. Perhaps the mine could have stood this drain and its owner's extravagance had the vein held out. But it did not. There was just so much silver in it, and when it was all gone Pedro's income was gone. He had spent it as fast as he made it, and when it ceased he found himself with nothing.

During this period, when bank bills were floating about like snowflakes, Pedro's wife foresaw that when the storm of wealth had passed the soil about them would become dry as before. She determined to gather what she could while it lasted and began putting away money secretly. Catching thousand dollar bills as they circled about her, she concealed them in her clothing, ripping open articles, putting the bills in and sewing them up. It is singular that while she and her husband had been peons and had drudged as such he lost sight during prosperity of the fact that he might return to his degradation, while his wife took precautions against it.

When Pedro's mine began to show signs of running out he was advised that in order to keep it paying he must work it on business principles—he must cut down the wastage, due to his methods; he must retrench in the matter of salaries; he must stop the stealing. But he had not the ability to change. As the amount of silver taken out of his mine decreased it was met by the expenditures, and there was nothing over; the one balanced the other.

According to all well told stories, Senora Alvarado, who had been sewing up thousand dollar bills, should now come forward and take the lead. But true stories have a way of running like water—in channels they make for themselves. The good woman did not live to enjoy the fruits of her precaution. She died about the time that the mine gave out.

Among the servants who had attended the deceased was a maid who had been in her mistress' service a long while and had learned the secret of her hidden wealth. When the senora's effects were distributed this maid was asked if there was anything she would like. She asked for a quilt that her beloved mistress had slept under so long that it had become identified with her. But in making the request the girl showed anxiety to possess the article which would be such a valued memento of her dear mistress.

Now, Pedro and his wife had many tiffs with regard to his extravagance, and she had often warned him that he would one day come to want. He wondered at her death if she had not been putting something away for a rainy day. The maid's anxiety to possess a bedquilt of no value when there were other articles far more to be desired, excited his suspicions. Ripping up the quilt, out fell one thousand dollar bill after another, accumulating in a heap on the floor.

When Pedro had got out all the bills and counted them he found himself again a rich man. He profited by his experience as well as his wife's foresight. In the first place, he turned over his mine to others who were ready to work it, or what was left of it, on business principles, and, investing nearly a million which his wife had saved from the many millions that had been wasted, he now lives like a nabob on his income. Does Pedro realize the value of the wife he has lost? That is a question. Only Pedro himself knows, and he does not tell.

The Borrower Bit.

A theatrical manager asked an author-actor down to a watering resort as his guest from Saturday to Monday. The actor accepted with alacrity and went down with the full intention of borrowing $500 from the manager before he returned to London. The time passed very quickly, however, and the would be borrower kept putting off the evil moment, hoping for a more favorable opportunity to prefer his request. When Sunday night came he decided to leave it till they were returning to town together. They seemed to be getting on so nicely that he did not wish to spoil it.

What was his horror and consternation when next morning, in answer to his inquiry for his host, the waiter said:

"He left, sir, by the early train for town and said I was to give you this note."

The letter ran as follows:

"Dear Old Chap—Had to leave early. Kindly pay the bill and let me know what I owe you when we meet in town.—Yours, L."—London Mail.

Couldn't Face Failure.

In 1782 James Price, a distinguished amateur chemist and fellow of the British Royal society, announced that he had succeeded in inventing a method of converting mercury and other inferior metals into gold and silver. He conducted a series of experiments in the presence of a number of men of rank and science which were apparently successful. Some of the gold thus produced was presented to the king, and the University of Oxford, hearing of this, immediately conferred on Price the honorary degree of M. D. But a fierce controversy arose, and he was requested to prove the truth of his discovery before the Royal society. He assented, and on the appointed day the critics assembled at his house. He received them cordially, and then, stepping to one side, he swallowed a flask of laurel water and died in a few moments. He had, it is thought, made a mistake in his experiments and had not the moral courage to own it.—London Standard.

Genuine Wit.

Benjamin Moore, the second bishop of New York, was a man noted in his day for his ready wit—a quality that his wife apparently shared with him. A dinner was given by some one of Gouverneur Morris' friends when he was about to depart for Europe. Bishop Moore and his wife were of the party. In the course of the conversation Mr. Morris observed that since he was going abroad he had made his will and, turning to Bishop Moore, said to him:

"My reverend friend, I have bequeathed to you my complete stock of impudence."

Bishop Moore replied, "Sir, you are not only very kind, but you are very generous. You have left me by far the largest portion of your estate."

Mrs. Moore immediately added, "My dear, you have come into possession of your inheritance remarkably soon."—Youth's Companion.

Fascinated by His Model.

The weekly meeting of the Married Ladies Society For the Better Control and Guidance of Husbands had just been called to order by the president.

"Members will now tell their troubles, one at a time," said the chair.

A meek looking little woman stood up in a far corner of the room.

"My husband," she quavered, "is in love with his model."

The buzz of gossip suddenly ceased, and all eyes were turned upon the speaker.

"But your husband is not an artist," argued the president. "He runs an iron foundry, doesn't he?"

"Yes'm," said the meek lady, "but all the same he loves his model. You see, he's a self made man."—London Standard.

An Ancient Phrase.

The frequently quoted "I do not pin my faith upon your sleeve" is traced in sentiment to feudal times, when the partisans of a leader used to wear his badge pinned upon their sleeves. Sometimes these badges were changed for specific purposes, and persons learned to doubt, hence the phrase. "You wear the badge, but I do not intend to pin my faith on your sleeve."—New York American.

What Hurt Most.

"Why are you crying so bitterly, little man?" asked the kind hearted old lady as she patted the tearful youngster on his head.

"Bill Jones hit me on the nose," was the boy's reply.

"Did he hurt you much?"

"Naw, he didn't hurt me at all, but he ran away before I could hit him back."—Richmond Times-Dispatch.

The Golden Fleece.

The noted Order of the Golden Fleece is a military one instituted by Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, in 1429, on the occasion of his marriage with the Portuguese Princess Isabella. The order now belongs to both Spain and Austria.

The Pessimist.

No doing anything with a pessimist. When you find a bright side for him he won't look at it for fear the light might blind him.—Atlanta Constitution.

A Difficult Case.

Maud—Have you given Jack any opportunities to propose? Betty—Yes; but I couldn't tell him they were opportunities.—Boston Transcript.

If you blow your neighbor's fire don't complain if the sparks fly in your face.—Wise Saws.

YOUNG FOLKS' CORNER

Geography Game.

This is an amusing pastime. A leader is chosen, and all the other players are given pencil and paper. Then the game begins. The object is to see who can think of the most geographical names beginning with a given letter in a certain time. The leader announces the letter to be used. For instance, he says "A," whereupon all the players begin to write as fast as possible geographical names beginning with "A." At the end of two minutes, or whatever time has been decided upon as the time limit the leader calls "time," and the players must all stop writing. Then the leader passes on to another initial, which he announces in the same manner, calling the time limit on this letter as he did for the first one.

It is not a good plan to name letters in alphabetical order, as this gives the players some advantage. Instead, the leader should jump from place to place in the alphabet and thus confuse the players and throw them off the track. Usually it is enough to take ten or fifteen letters before ending the game. It should be announced at the beginning that there must be no going back on the list, but when time is called on a letter it is finished with, and the player must not add any more names to the list which he has written under it. At the close of the game a prize may be given to the player who has written the most names.

Forming Habits.

What boy or girl has not "habits" of various kinds? Here is a very good definition of the word. It is, "Habit is a chain that grows stronger every day." Bad habits seem to grow stronger more rapidly than good ones. Therefore if you want to have good habits when you are old form them while you are young and let them be growing strong all the while you live. Have you ever heard your friends say, "I have grown so in the habit of sleeping late that I have to rush to school every day to prevent myself coming late?" It is just as easy to grow into the habit of waking up at half past 6 as at half past 7. A little will power will do the work. When you retire at night say to yourself, "Tomorrow I want to get up at 6.30." In all probability you will be your own alarm clock and will wake up on the minute. With a little practice you will get in the habit of being early and punctual.

A Disgusted Dog.

The Brooklyn Eagle tells the story of a dog that was very much attached to the baby of the house. They had great comfort in each other's society except when the baby's bath was going on. During this proceeding the baby cried and screamed and the dog, out of sympathy, crouched in the corner and moaned. Presently the dog devised a scheme to better things, and when the baby was howling, as usual, the dog appeared with a rattle and shook it—and his head as well—with all his might. Baby stopped crying in sheer astonishment for a minute, but began again with extra vigor, and the dog dropped the rattle, disgusted. After that he managed to be out of the house when it was time for the daily bath.

Campfire Girls.

They are not really Indians, of course, even though they can cook over a campfire without getting smoke in their eyes and wear tawny clothes and beaded head dresses. If you were to meet a band of them in the woods you wouldn't need to tremble for your scalp, for it would be a 10 to 1 shot that the small woodland maids were campfire girls, and campfire girls are every bit as helpful and desirable young persons as boy scouts. Indeed, they are the small sisters of the boy scouts. They know all sorts of lore about outdoors, and they have learned to love it. "Hikes" are a regular part of campfire work, a work that is as interesting and beguiling as good play.

The Butcher Bird.

Among the smaller birds of prey is one called the butcher bird, which is with us all year except in the summer, when it goes farther north to build a nest and raise a family. It lays four or five light colored eggs with brown spots on one end. Its nest is built of moss, leaves, grass, roots and feathers and is placed in the fork of a tree. This bird is not much bigger than a robin, but it is so fierce that it is as dangerous as a hawk. It is called the butcher bird because it hangs its prey on thorns or sticks, just as a butcher hangs meat on hooks. It does this so it can eat its prey conveniently.

The Boy Scouts.

The idea underlying the boy scout movement is not military. It is that of character building and to teach boys to do things for themselves. In view of the growth of the movement it is strange that some misconceptions still exist about it. Its purpose is not to train soldiers, but to train citizens. The boys learn woodcraft and campcraft, but above all they are taught their duties to others, especially the duty of service, and they are trained to perform this duty on their own initiative and to know how to perform it.—New York Times.

Umbrellas.

People on a rainy day
Look like mushrooms, strange to say,
And their round umbrella tops
Gleam between the falling drops.

Little mushrooms grow in clumps
Round the feet of mossy stumps;
Large ones wander up and down
Through the streets of Rainy Town.
—St. Nicholas.

BULLETS ARE TRICKY.

One Chance Shot That Brought Down Three English Officers.

It has been truly said that once you fire a bullet from a modern rifle no one can forecast where it will ultimately come to rest. Even when a bullet has an uninterrupted course it is capable of upsetting all known calculations of its flight and range.

Before the battle of Omdurman a sick officer was carried across the Nile and placed under an awning no less than 5,500 yards from the nearest point of possible fire. This should easily have insured him a margin of safety, but it didn't. A stray bullet ate up the intervening three miles of desert air, struck him in the head and killed him.

Shortly before another battle in the Sudan General Sir Archibald Hunter, Colonel Hacket-Thompson, C. B., and another officer were reconnoitering through an opening in the wall of a disused sakieh, or waterwheel. The hole in the wall was so small that the officers had to stand one behind the other to see anything.

The officer, whose name is not given in the incident, was in front using a pair of binoculars, while Sir Archibald Hunter was in the rear. The glint caused by the setting sun shining on the glass of the binoculars attracted the attention of a dervish, who, with others, was retiring along the Nile. He stopped, took rapid aim and fired.

It was a very good chance shot, for it sped through one of the lenses of the binoculars, through the brain of the officer holding them, killing him on the spot, through the shoulder of Colonel Hacket-Thompson and finally lodged in the breast of Sir Archibald Hunter, where it remains to this day.—London Mail.

THE HOUSE OF SORROW.

Those Who Have Dwelt Therein Have Learned a Lasting Lesson.

They that have experienced a great sorrow are born again. The world they are now in is quite different from their old world. In that earlier world they lived upon terms of household familiarity with joy and felicity. Now they must lie down by the side of sorrow and eat with sorrow beside them at the board. Outward things may assert their identity to eye, to ear, to touch, but outward things cannot deceive the spirit within. The house of sorrow is strange, all its furniture is strange, and the newcomer must learn anew how to live.

The first lesson is to accept the past as a beautiful day that is done, as the loveliness of a rose that has withered away. The object of our yearning has passed from the world of actual contacts into the world of art. Memory may paint the picture as it will, drop out all shadows and catch the beauty of our exquisite loss in all the golden glow of human happiness.

There, within the shrine prepared by sorrow, that picture will ever refresh us and bless us. Evil cannot touch it, nor ill will, nor envy, nor sordid care. Only our own faithfulness, our own acceptance of unworthy things, can stain the freshness of its beauty. Sorrow has constituted us the sacristans of this shrine, on us rests the care of this pictured relic, and unless we suffer motes and beams to get in our eyes it will remain as bright in the sanctuary of memory as in the sunshine of earthly life.—Atlantic.

His Passport.

On one occasion Gustave Dore, the artist, lost his passport while on a tour in Switzerland. At Lucerne he asked to be allowed to speak to the mayor, to whom he gave his name.

"You say that you are M. Gustave Dore, and I believe you," said the mayor, "but," and he produced a piece of paper and a pencil, "you can easily prove it."

Dore looked around him and saw some peasants selling potatoes in the street. With a few clever touches he reproduced the homely scene and, appending his name to the sketch, presented it to the mayor.

"Your passport is all right," remarked the official, "but you must allow me to keep it and to offer you in return one of the ordinary form."

The Codex Sinaiticus.

The most ancient of the New Testament manuscripts is the one known as the "Codex Sinaiticus," published at the expense of Alexander II. of Russia since the Crimean war. This codex covers nearly the whole of the Old and New Testaments and was discovered in the Convent of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai by the celebrated Tischendorf. It is generally ascribed to the fourth century.—New York American.

Was Probably Serious.

"I'd like to know," said the boatswain, "whether she was stringing me or not."

"Who?" inquired the mate.

"The young woman who asked me awhile ago if we ever hitched seahorses to the captain's gig."—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

A Queer Eye.

An orator stated that "the worst enemy any cause can have is a double lie in the shape of half a truth," and the newspaper reported it "a double eye in the shape of half a tooth."

Hopeless.

"He ought to turn over a new leaf."

"Gee, that wouldn't do much good. He could turn over a whole library and not have a good start toward being decent."—Exchange.

If you cannot get grapes, runs a Russian proverb, try an apple.

When Coal Fires Were Barred.

Fires were at one time a great luxury in England, and even the right to use the fire had been bequeathed. Thus the will of one Richard Byrchett (1516) read:

"I will yt sayd Nell my wyfe shal have ye chamber she lyes in and tyberte at ye fyer in the house; all yese thyngs shal she have so long as she ye wido."

Coal was first imported into London at the end of the thirteenth century, but the smoke produced by burning it in improperly constructed grates caused such a prejudice against it that in 1306 a law was passed making it a capital offense to burn coal in the city. The Tower records give details of a man's trial and execution for the offense.—London Graphic.

Food and the Human Body.

The chemical composition of the human body and of the food we take is quite similar. About twenty elements are found chiefly, with a trace of others. Oxygen, hydrogen, carbon, nitrogen, calcium, phosphorus and sulphur are the chief. Sixty per cent of our bodies is water, and probably a like percentage exists in our food. Mineral matter exists in our food and in our bodies to about 6 per cent of weight.—"Eating to Live."

Colors.

It seems that bluff King Henry VIII. was the first person who wore a collar in any way resembling those of the present day. An old historian writes of the monarch as the first English king that wore a band around his neck and that very plain and an inch or two in depth.

Made Two Foes With One Sketch.

Scutari in Albania is needlessly confused with its namesake on the Bosporus in Asia Minor because one place is always spelled and pronounced Skodra, except in western Europe. Edward Lear, the painter who invented "Limericks," had a quaint adventure here. He had made a drawing of his host in Skodra costume when a younger brother of the model came in and wanted to be sketched. Lear for lack of paper was obliged to make a smaller portrait of him on the same page. Thereupon the younger exclaimed in a fury of indignation: "It is true I am younger, but I am not smaller than my brother. Why do you act so insultingly?" Before the amazed artist could apologize the elder brother added, "If you think to win my esteem by a compliment paid me at the expense of my brother you are greatly mistaken." Lear adds, "I had made two enemies by one sketch, the injured brothers bowing me out with looks of thunder."—London Standard.

How to Get Rugs Cleaned.

She told the agent for the vacuum cleaner that she really did intend to buy one, but could not decide which to choose. It was at this time that another agent, for another vacuum cleaner, came around the corner of the north side home. An argument ensued.

"This cleaner is nickel plated; it is light and compact, the rubber is the best vulcanized"—

"My machine, lady," interrupted the second agent, "is the lightest and most durable machine on the market. It is"—

"Excuse me," said the woman of the house. She was absent a moment, then reappeared with a rug.

"We shall see now which is the better," she said.

Ten minutes later she excused herself again and entered the house with a spotless rug. Two agents shook hands and swore they would "never tell."—Indianapolis News.

Hair High in the Air.

Women's hair used to be dressed to an amazing height in days of old. Formerly doorways had to be heightened to accommodate the eighteenth century woman of fashion. Marie Antoinette's hairdresser had to mount a stool in order to get above his work. Women of that time had to kneel in their coaches to get their head covering inside or drive with their heads out of window. Mme. de Genlis was caught by her hair while hastening to greet Voltaire at Ferney, but escaped Absalom's fate, her hair remaining on the bough. And the Duchesse de Chartres had room on her hair one evening for a miniature man-of-war in full sail, on another for a representation of her little son, Louis Philippe, sleeping in the lap of his nurse.

Gaelic.

Gaelic is the language of the highlanders of Scotland. The name belongs also to the sister languages of Ireland and the Isle of Man, but these have other names more commonly applied to them—Irish and Manx—and the term Gaelic is usually reserved for that spoken in Scotland. The three languages were originally one and now stand in much the same relation to each other that broad Scotch does to king's English.

Misplaced Sympathy.

"You don't mean to say that Dugeon is dead?"

"Yes, sir; and I married his widow."

"Dear me! You don't say! Poor fellow!"

"Don't be at all sorry for him, old man. He has the laugh on me all right."—Life.

A Little Mixed.

Sportsman—I wonder what's become of Mike? I told him to meet me here. Driver—Ach, 'tis no use tellin' him anything! Shure, sorr, it just goes in at wan ear and out at the other, like wather off a duck's back!—London Tit-Bits.

A Fateful Game of Chess.

It is a Spanish tradition that the fate of Columbus overhung on a game of chess. For years the great navigator had haunted the Spanish court, trying to interest some one in his plans, but at last he determined to abandon the country and visit France. The night before his intended departure he sought an audience with the queen to communicate his intentions and to take his leave. The queen asked him to wait while she made another effort to interest the king. She found Ferdinand engaged at a game of chess and, disturbing him by her entrance, caused him to lose a piece. Annoyed and irritated by the incident, the king, after rudely denouncing Columbus and his schemes, informed Isabella that the result of the petition would depend on the result of the game. It grew worse, and the chances were all against the launching of the expedition. But the queen, overlooking the board, whispered to her august spouse a suggestion relative to a move that would be advantageous. The king followed the advice, the complexion of the game was quickly reversed, and Columbus' dream of years was realized at last.

Prolific Fungi.

An average sized mushroom will produce as many as 1,800,000,000 spores, and a common toadstool shaggy cap has been shown to produce as many as 5,000,000,000. Fortunately for the other inhabitants of the world, however, the probability of successful growth of any given spore is somewhat remote.

The mushroom or toadstool plant is formed by fine filamentous threads which ramify beneath the soil, and if we assume that a successful plant of the mushroom or shaggy caps produces as many as ten mushrooms or toadstools we find that the chance against successful growth to maturity is respectively about 18,000,000,000 and 50,000,000,000 to one in the two species mentioned. Even more prolific than the mushrooms and toadstools proper is the giant puffball, a large specimen of which has been known to produce as many as 7,000,000,000,000 spores.—London Knowledge.

Empty Compliments.

Fifty years or more ago Sir Harry Smith, after whose wife Ladysmith was named, was governor of Cape Colony, and led a number of campaigns against the Kaffirs. Returning from a particularly lively one, he held a review of his troops, who were in a most dilapidated condition—barefooted, ragged and half starving.

When the time came for him to say a few words he lavished praise upon them, dwelling upon their bravery, endurance and even upon their soldierlike appearance.

This last compliment was too much for the patience of the old color-sergeant. He stepped forward—tattered and unkempt—saluted most respectfully and then said:

"Begging your pardon, Sir 'Arry, we don't want no gammon; we want boots!"

This outspoken criticism was fortunately taken in good part and shortly afterward the men got their boots.—London Scraps.

Bedlam.

The word "bedlam" is a corruption of the word "Bethlehem" and originated as a synonym for chaos at the time when the house of Bethlehem, occupied by a sisterhood of London, became an insane asylum. The treatment of the insane in the early part of the sixteenth century was not well understood, and, according to the theories then prevalent, it was necessary to frighten the patient out of his lunacy. All sorts of awful expedients were resorted to, among them "surprise doors," which slipped from under the feet, "surprise baths" and doggings at the periods of most severe illness; hence the name "bedlam," the result of incorrect spelling possibly, came easily to stand for awful things.

Weight of Air.

There is no uniform weight for air. For instance, say the weight of a cubic foot of air at sea level is 1,700 grains, with the pressure removed, by its elevation to an altitude of 10,000 feet, its weight would be about the half of 1,700 grains. In other words, the cubic foot at ten or twelve thousand feet above the sea would expand to two cubic feet, each of about 850 grains weight.

Girl Workers in Japan.

The number of factory girls newly recruited every year in Japan is 200,000, of whom only 80,000 go home. The remaining 120,000 never return. They go from one factory to another or go into other occupations, never thinking of going home.—World of Labor.

One and Two.

Charming Widow—And what are you doing nowadays? Mr. Bach—Looking out for number one. And you? Charming Widow—Oh, I'm looking out for number two!—Houston Post.

A Puzzle.

Bacon—There's one thing I can't understand, Egbert—What is that? Bacon—When a couple get married they become one. But they say it takes two to make a quarrel.

Rebuked.

"Guilty or not guilty?" asked a Dutch justice of a prisoner.

"Not guilty."

"Den vat you vant here? Go about your business!"

Free speech is a precious right, and so is free action. But the tongue has no more right than the hand to abuse its freedom.