

## JUST A CHICKENFOOT

By IDA SPEED.

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It was the romance belt of the Southwest which that tenderest of tenderfoots, Chick Saunders, struck.

Farther West is the land of the outlaw and desperado; back East commercialism makes 'em eat folks alive, and up on the North plains the cold grips a man's soul and makes him kinder brutal.

But we take things easy here and jog along, everybody friendly amongst themselves, savin' all the joshin' and raw remarks for the fellow from back East that busts in on our peace and goodwill.

Chick Saunders blowed into Floretta off a west-bound passenger one bleak November day, which havin' only fifteen cents in his pocket he couldn't have rode but five miles further anyhow.

As that would have set him down in the middle of the prairie, he alights at Floretta, which is only redeemed from bein' in said middle by a half-dozen cottages, a general store and post office, a two-story frame hotel, a lumber yard minus the lumber, and just such a school buildin' as you'd have to come to Texas to see.

All this was south of the railroad track.

On the roof of a big barn a quarter of a mile north, painted in bold letters, Chick saw "Bar C Ranch," and he hotfooted it thereto, inquired timid-like if old man Cranch was in, got the laugh from a bunch of cowboys that was standin' around the door, it bein' chuck time, then walked in and got a job.

That job was to cut wood. Old man Cranch, the owner, had just looked out the window and observed that here was winter comin' on, a regular blizzard of a norther blowin' and no wood cut.

Chick was the man of the hour.

The boy's name on the pay roll was set down as Willie Saunders, but we're too uncertain out here about whether a fellow gives his right name or not, to put ourselves out to call him by it, so him bein' such a rank chickenfoot, we just christen him Chick from the start.

He'd crawl on any horse you told him to, but he'd almost be whimpertin' from fear.

We thought he'd leave when he went down some day to get a drink on the train, as quick as he got paid off; but no, he was here to stay if it killed every animal in the pasture, includin' of hisself.

Every spare minute he had, he hung around the Hotel Dalhart, for little Elsie Dalhart and her mother showed him all the humane treatment he found, and it turned out he told them about his folks and read letters to 'em that he got from home, and let himself be known to them in a way us fellows knew nothing of.

And Elsie! You put a wild rose amongst a bouquet of American Beauties in some hothouse, and I guess it wouldn't be noticed much; but out here on these wind-swept plains we ain't specin' to see even a wild one.

and they look awful good to us. And, by the way, the thorns wasn't missin' neither. Elsie was the pride of this country, but she wouldn't stand for no foolishness off of us cow-punchers if she was the queen there-ot.

She was one of those outdoor girls, though she helped her ma faithful around the house and kitchen.

In summer she wore them sailor-collar, polka-dotted affairs that look so well where they roll back from a soft, girlish throat. And any time of year there was a golden curl or two that bobbed around her face, and the eyes that kinder peeped out at you from beneath the long lashes made you want to dig your spurs in the bronc' you was ridin' and wish to the kingdom come he'd pitch and run so you could show how good you could ride. We all felt that way, but she was Mexico Charlie's girl.

At least he said so, and folks didn't dispute Mexico's word, him bein' of a different temperament from us other buttons, and his word bein' about all the law there was around Floretta way.

After eight months Chick begun to look different. He got him a full cow-puncher outfit, a swell California saddle, a Navajo of gorgeous reds and greens, big rattlin' spurs, and 30 foot of rope.

He had to accumulate them things as he got hold of money, and this was slow at first. But after he got to gamblin' it was the rest of us that couldn't lay up a cent.

It seemed like he just couldn't lose, whether he was shootin' craps or matchin' money, playin' cards or just plain bettin' on how much a steer would weigh.

This was powerful aggravatin' to Mexico, and he made us assist frequent in standin' Chick on his head to see if his hoodoo wouldn't fall out of his pockets.

It was at the Fourth of July celebration at Floretta that Chick Saunders come out in his complete costume, by wearin' a big white Stetson hat and replacin' his woreout shoes and leather gaiters with a pair of shop-made boots which shore become the looks of his underpinnin', for his legs was long and thin and his feet was too big to look pretty.

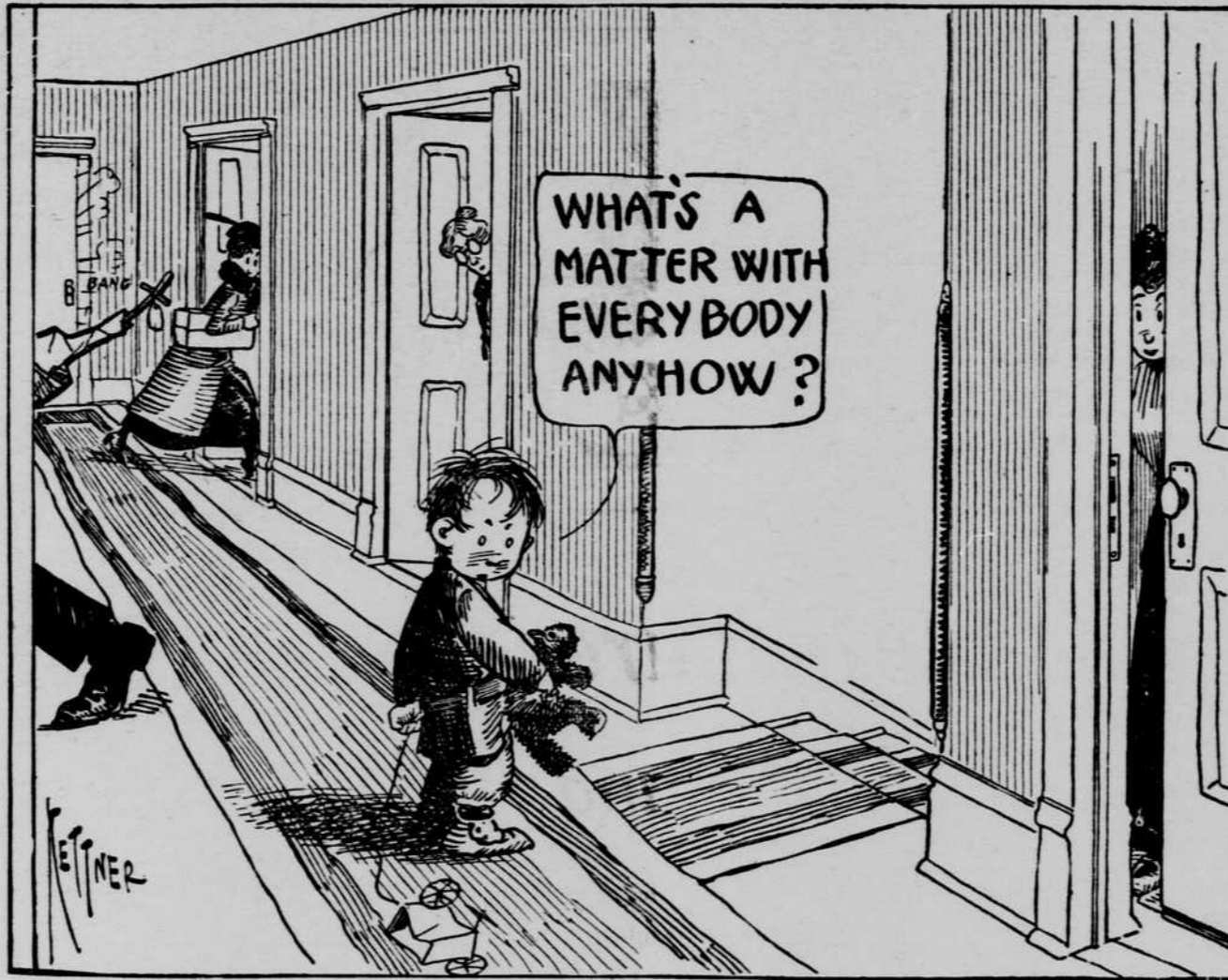
He rode up to a bunch of us standin' around the grand stand, which had been put up temporary for the ladies to sit in and watch the ropin' and bronc' ridin', and it bein' covered with two sacks was shore cool and shady. "Look at the boots!" says Mexico loud. "It costs Chick as much to buy 'em as it does a cat to get life insurance. Both bein' nine times what they ought to be."

Everybody laughs and Chick rides off bashful toward the Hotel Dalhart, and I see Mexico's eyes narrow to two dark slits when Elsie bounds out on the gallery with one of them polka-dot effects on, and gives Willie the glad hand.

Even this far off you can tell she's braggin' in his clothes the way she stands back and looks at him, her head on one side and her hands clasped in front of her.

And all day Chick stayed by her. Not engagin' in the cisar race and contests of various kinds, he just stayed by Elsie's side, and took her from stand to stand buvin' her every-

## NEARING CHRISTMAS TIME



thing in sight.

Mexico Charlie always took first money on these occasions, him bein' the star roper and rider in these parts; but today he couldn't win nothin', and when at last a bronc' threwed him, he got up with a wicked look, and never even smiled when Elsie rushed over to ask if he was hurt.

Just before sundown when it was all over but the biley, which was to be in the schoolhouse that night, the crowd had dispersed and a little bunch of three or four cow-punchers in front of the hotel was all there was in sight.

Chick was leanin' against a post listenin' to the rest of us auser, when Mexico Charlie walks out of the hotel and stands on the gallery lookin' down at Chick's feet.

"Fellows," he says short, "do you know why I got throwed today?"

"Course we didn't," says Johnny Car-ton, "where is it?"

"In my pocket," says Chick, cool as a refrigerator. "I guess I'll have time to roll a cigarette before he gets back," he adds in his injured tone. "I've got a date with Elsie for the dance, too," he says regretful.

Well, we all looked foolish. This was the coward we had laughed at, and tortured, now ready to face the Bad Man of Floretta in the worst of his moods!

The whole group sauntered off a bit from the hotel, for there were ladies inside and they must not be disturbed.

Wild Cat Mike.

"And Wild Cat Mike's gone home, I suppose," says Mexico suggestive.

"Yes, he's gone home," answers Chick still twirlin' the spur.

Mexico steps down and forces Chick to look at him.

"I'm goin' for my gun," he says furious. "I'll fix you for this." And he rushes off toward the store.

Chick looks at us kinder bewildered.

"Now what did he mean?" he asks innocent.

Then we all explain at once, for we know this Mexico of old and that's why nobody else has ever throwed in too much with Elsie.

"Have you got a gun?" I asks excited.

Chicks puts down his foot and reached back to his hip pocket.

"Yes," he says, drawin' out, not a .45, but a sack of tobacco and a book of cigarette papers.

"Heavens, man," says Johnny Car-ton, "where is it?"

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in' west. It was the only sound there was. "Supper's ready," says Elsie, kinder peevish. And we all turned and went in the house like bad boys that'd been caught stealin' green apples. All, that is, except Mexico Charlie. I ain't never seen him since.

Found "Dead" Father in Poorhouse. Rudd, Ia.—Mrs. K. E. Penny, wife of a banker, has found her father, John De Mart, after a search of 35 years. She believed him dead, but De Mart, now eighty-three years of age, was located in the poorhouse at Marshalltown.

## Prevailing Styles in Furs



Looking through the displays of the furriers, for styles in neckpieces and muffs which are representative of the season, one concludes that fur sets, to be alluring, need not run after strange gods of fashion. For in neckwear the flat scarf or muffler of fur, or the pelt of the animal, lined and provided with a fastening, or the short high collar, seem to about cover the variety of the best sellers.

In muffs there is somewhat greater diversity, but the moderately large, almost round muff, the smaller round muff and the barrel-shaped model include the majority of all. They sometimes are finished with tails, but often without, and they are smaller than for several seasons. Otherwise there is no decided change in styles. But, for those who insist upon novelty, there are the "small furs" of fashion. This is the name given to wide bands, or collars, for the neck, that are just long enough to encircle it comfortably, and as wide as they can be worn, with small, round muffs to match. And fur usually appears in the turbans or hats worn with these sets. Some of the collars are attached to very

narrow capes or collarettes, and there are wide cravats of fur which entwine the neck with one end slipped under a slide made of the fur and extending over the shoulder to the back. It is the fad to fasten these neckpieces, and others, at the back. Even the scarf with long ends is worn muffler fashion, with a knot at the left back and ends hanging over the shoulder and floating behind. To be muffed up in the furpiece, be it ever so small, is the effect to strive for.

As neckpieces and muffs are small and only a touch of fur is needed on the hat to match, these sets are beautifully adapted to the tailored suit. Seal, squirrel, chinchilla, kolinsky, cony and beaver are liked for them, and very attractive sets are made of several fur-fabrics. The latter are not at all difficult to make at home and so inexpensive that one may indulge in an extra set for the sake of change or to spare the set made of real fur.

Julia Bottomley

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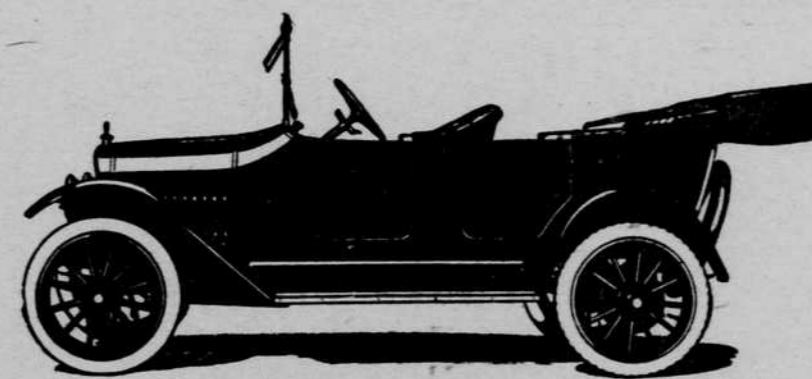
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