

THE PONY EXPRESS RIDER

(A Tale of the Old West)

By ARTHUR GOODRICH

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Silence hung heavy in the plaza of Santa Fe late one afternoon in 1862. Suddenly there came a clatter of hoofs, unsteady with weariness, scattering the stillness with sharp echoes. A man, coming out at the moment from one of the low adobe buildings, waved his hand and the rider drew up short and stopped.

The two men as they faced each other were in striking contrast. One stood with his feet well apart, sinews pulled tight like wire-ropes over his slight frame. The other, broad shoulders bent with fatigue, begrimed with dirt, but black eyes flashing with the unsubdued fire of youth, swung himself from the sweating, panting steed. They were both pony express riders.

The dismounted rider's knees gave under him and he leaned against his horse for support.

"Tired?" asked the older man with a malevolent grin.

The young fellow stared at him vaguely for a moment. Then a thought seemed to strike him, for he leaned forward eagerly.

"Look-a-her, Harry! I'm petered, you're fresh. You go to Fort Union an' back for me fer a ten-spot."

"I'll go," said the other, and they walked slowly to the corral. Half an hour later "Old Harry" Simmons rode down the plaza. Meanwhile Ralph Mead was lying sprawled on a narrow bunk in the corral, sleeping the sleep of sheer exhaustion.

Ralph Mead had been left fatherless, motherless and penniless when he was 11 years old. His nearest relatives had bound him out to a hard-headed Connecticut farmer who believed in corporal punishment for persons smaller than himself. Three months later the boy slipped out of the house of his slavery and started west in pursuit of excitement and happiness. He was now 18 years old, with the muscle and judgment and experience of a frontiersman of 30.

The sun was glaring sullenly through the doorway when he awoke suddenly.

"Here you, Mead! Git up an' out o' this."

"What's matter?" he asked, still half-asleep.

"You've got to go to Fort Union."

Mead smiled reproachfully and, lying back once more, curled up on the bunk and closed his eyes.

"Harry Simmons—gone—Fort Union," he said, sleepily.

"Simmons's dead. Killed and scalped at Pecos Church"—he heard the voice say. Then he jumped to his feet, and threw on his clothes as he listened.

"Party of Mexicans—just came in—found Simmons. Indians out, Navahos and White Mountain Apaches. Regular trail dangerous."

These were the words that his now acute senses heard and understood.

The black Mustang had killed two men and had maimed a third before



STARTED WEST.

Mead had broken him. Now he was the rider's slave, and proud of it. No one else dared ride him. And so, on they went through the hot sunshine, Mead's brain steeled by sleep, his senses keen, his horse throbbing beneath him, and danger ahead.

As he rounded a turn in the trail into which a great rock had jutted and obscured the view, the bloody scene lay quivering before him. At the right of the roadway Indians, at the left, Indians, crouching behind bowlers, hiding in the chaparral, slipping slyly among the high bunch grass, fighting across the trail that lay before him. Only a second he hesitated. He could not go back. Some of them had probably already seen him.

"I started for Fort Union," he muttered, "and by the eternal I'm gone!"

Mead dropped the rein over the high pommel of his saddle and leaning forward, lay close to the Mustang's neck, seizing as he did so the revolvers from his high boots. Almost instantly they were in the midst of it, the beast plunging sure-footed over dead bodies still warm in the alkali dust, the man shooting at random to both right and left and following at the top of his voice.

Almost before he knew it he was past them and bearing straight on through the whistling wind.

His mad dashing had saved him temporarily, but it had also united the fighting war parties. They were probably the same bands which had ambushed Simmons and had later cut across to the canyon and quarrelled there. They were coming! Mead heaved a deep sigh and called again to the Mustang; they started down the narrow trail beyond.

A low rambling structure, like a group of huts, sprang up suddenly beside the road, and in the doorway stood a girl. Mead started as he saw her—a girl, and those devils behind! The Mustang plowed her fore feet into the ground and stopped.

"Injuns—shout mite back—comin' rapid," he bawled. The girl, of good height for a woman, broad-hipped, full-breasted, a healthy red showing through the tan of her cheeks, her smooth brown hair braided carelessly to her waist, her arms akimbo, stared at him dumbly as he filled with quick snaps the empty chambers of a revolver.

"Git along, stranger," she called, in stinging tones. "Reckon you're afraid."

The Mustang's ears at that instant stood straight once more and quivering. Mead turned upon the girl, and covered her with the revolver.

"Git yer horse an' yer family good, quick," he ordered, deliberately. For a second the girl did not move, but smiled defiantly at him; then she stood bolt upright, tense, listening. She heard now the confuse rumble of many horses, far away, at which the tired Mustang was already dancing impatiently. She disappeared within the building while he sat in the narrow trail, the noise of the pursuit growing rapidly louder in his ears. A frightened whinny came from somewhere at the rear of the main cabin; a door slammed and a single, squatty, dirty-yellow Mustang sprang into sight around the corner of the structure, the girl straddling its bare back. At that moment a shriek, echoing yell arose behind them. They had been seen. Then the race began once more, the black Mustang bounding dromedarily behind the wicked pace of the yellow beast.

Two miles farther on he came up with the girl as they were fording a narrow creek.

"Ain't seen an Injun sense we've been thar," she gasped between breaths, as if in explanation. "Lad, he's went to Santa Fe."

"Throo th' canyon?"

She nodded her head as they reached the farther bank and she took the lead again. But the black Mustang was weakening; his gut wavered, his eyes were bloodshot. At last he stumbled and fell on one knee, the leg snapped, and he lay quivering across the trail. The girl turned abruptly and came back. Mead took the mall legs from the Mustang's back and threw them to her.

"I'll hold 'em back while ye git a start," he said, laconically, drawing his pistols. He turned to face the trail.

"Ood-by," he called over his shoulder. "Stranger," the girl said, quietly. He whirled and faced a small pistol she had drawn from her belt. "Git up behind, quick. I ain't a-goin' to budge a foot of ye don't," she added as he hesitated.

Mead laughed aloud as he thought how quickly she had turned his own game upon him. Then she laughed also as he turned and mercifully shot the black Mustang, before leaping up behind her.

The yellow Mustang struggled forward bravely under the double burden, but the contest was unequal. The hoof-beats behind them grew louder and at last they could hear the noise of guttural voices from behind the turns in the winding trail. A few moments later an arrow struck fire in the roadway beside them. Then, as Mead reached down for a revolver, the girl uttered a low cry. There was the fort, less than a mile away, its bare walls looming gray in the distance.

Together they spurred the straining beast beneath them down the long incline, while arrows and an occasional bullet whirled and sang about them. They could hear now the quick breath of the tired horses behind them, the triumphant shouts, the beat of stinging thongs upon a dozen haunches. Now came the short up-hill stretch to the fort, a little more than a quarter of a mile away, but the exhausted Mustang shivered with each bound up the ascent, his reach growing shorter, his pace slower. Two arrows struck him almost at the same instant, and he fell heavily. But Mead had jumped clear, carrying the girl with him. They were on their feet quickly.

"Run!" he called. His first shot rang out, and an Indian tumbled from the saddle. Others went down before his steady aim as he ran backward up the incline. His left arm fell limp and the pistol dropped to the ground. Someone picked it up. Some one was firing calmly beside him. The horses were almost on them and the sneering, gloating, painted faces, when he heard vaguely a rumbling, many-roled cheer behind him, then the foremost Indians looked beyond him and wheeled suddenly and dashed down the hill in scattering confusion.

A few days later a man, his arm still in a sling, rode down the hill from Fort Union. A girl rode beside him. The man looked at her furtively now and then and his rugged face showed embarrassment.

"Say," he said at last, "I've got a red-colored temper. I'm mean, I am."

"Huh!" she answered, starting at the trail. The man hesitated for a moment.

"I've got \$14.17 exact," he remarked. The girl did not change her position. The man was silent for a moment or two.

"Where're ye headin' fer?" he asked, with something like a sigh.

She turned and looked at him, a smile quivering about her full lips.

"Where're you-all goin'?" she asked, meaningly.

The two horses came close together and stopped short to the tug of their bridles. After a time they went on once more.

"What'll yer dad say?" asked the man.

"Dad," returned the girl, patting her Mustang's neck caressingly, "he weren't good fer much, tho' he meant right, dad did. Ef he's alive, he'll jest go off 'bout his business."

"Say," cried the man, a thought suddenly striking him. "What's yer name?"

"Annie," she said.

AS IN A ROSE JAR.

As in a rose jar filled with petals sweet, Blown long ago in some old garden place, Mayhap, where you and I, a little space, Drank deep of love and knew that love was sweet—

Or leaves once gathered from a lost retreat, By one who never will again retrace Her silent footsteps—one, whose gentle face Was fairer than the roses at her feet.

So, deep within the vase of memory, I keep my dearest of roses fresh and dear As in the days before I knew the smart Of time and death. Nor ought can take from me The haunting fragrance that still lingers here.

As in a rose jar, 'so within my heart!—Thomas S. Jones, Jr., in Applleton's Booklovers Magazine.

Mice in Mines.

White mice are to be put to novel use in South Africa. It has been shown that with 0.4 per cent. of carbon monoxide in the air, one of these very susceptible animals becomes unconscious in three minutes, but that a man feels no discomfort for half an hour. It is urged, therefore, that operators of coal mines, and even of metalliferous mines, be required to test the air by means of these creatures whenever the presence of dangerous gas is suspected.

ON SUPERSTITIONS

SCHOOLGIRLS DO NOT ESCAPE FASCINATION.

Many Girls Still Obey 'Lly Traditions That Destroy One's Peace of Mind—Presenting Edged Tools, Spilling Salt and Thirteen at the Table—Some Superstitions Cause More Fun Than Fear—Illusions of the "Peter Pan" Sort Are Good for Schoolgirls—The Practical Fairies That Fight for One in Daily Life Are Order, Promptness, Obedience, Courage and Love.

BY MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

Superstition is almost as old as the human race, and even schoolgirls do not entirely escape its fascination. No matter how strong most of us may be in our resistance to foolish fears and fancies, we have somewhere in the back of our mind a little feeling about certain signs and we begin very early in life to shape our conduct by them.

For instance, very few of us care to make a present to a friend of an edged tool. I know several otherwise sensible people who tell me that some of their most prized friendships have been cut in two because they gave or received a knife. I myself would not object to receiving a knife as a gift, whether it were intended for carving a roast, or dividing the leaves of a book.

All sorts of knives from those of finely tempered steel, intended for the table, to dainty little pearl-handled affairs that may be carried in the pocketbook, appeal to me as particularly desirable possessions. Yet I know very few persons who do not like to add a bit of silver or copper to such an exchange, that it may seem to be a matter of barter and sale, rather than of gift-making.

"Don't give Mabel a knife on her birthday," I heard Priscilla's mother gravely say, to her daughter, "for as surely as you do give and Mabel will quarrel."

The same superstition about spilling friendship clings to the spilling of salt on the tablecloth. It is held to be most unlucky to go this, and it is supposed that it forebodes friction between those who are sitting nearest the spilled salt. Of course, this superstition and the other date a long way back to those primitive times when men settled everything speedily by knife thrust or blow, so that knives were dreaded weapons instead of useful tools. This superstition harks back to the period when a man pulled off his glove in greeting a friend or neighbor in token that he had nothing concealed, and so gave the naked hand.

The other about the salt has an oriental origin. In the tent of the Arab, though he might be a robber, there was hospitality for the wayfarer guest, and if the latter shared bread and salt with his host, his life and property were sacred. So you may easily read between the lines that salt is an emblem of friendship, and that its spilling signifies a breach of friendship.

I should be sorry to think that the girls of to-day, who will be the women of to-morrow, were in the least under the bondage of silly traditions in which there is very little common sense.

Why should anyone dread to pass under a ladder except for the reason that the ladder may fall? Why should the howling of a dog give one uneasiness or there be any meaning attached to the dropping of spoons and forks? Why do some people hesitate to sit down at the table when the company numbers 13? If the family should happen to consist of father and mother and 11 children, would there always be one who had to wait for the second table? This latter superstition is supposed to recall the last supper of Jesus with his disciples, when one of the group proved to be a traitor.

Nearly everything we do, say or think, strikes deep roots into the past, if we can find and trace them out.

In my school days girls put themselves to an immense amount of trouble when walking on the street that they might avoid stepping on a crack in the pavement. It was sure to cause trouble in the schoolroom in the way of imperfect recitations and badly-drawn maps.

One unfortunately touched a crack with the toe of her boot. Older persons were sometimes surprised at the erratic progress of children who were bending their energies to this careful sort of walking. A school friend of mine had a theory that nothing would prosper with Helen if she did not put her shoes at night in a particular spot, and set them precisely side by side. It took her a long time to get settled in bed, as she had to jump out a number of times in order to be sure that her shoes were standing exactly as they should to a hair's breadth.

There used to be, too, a proverb regarding Indian givers. These were generous in making presents, but they regretted them afterwards and wanted them back, a sorry thing in itself and rather mean. Bargains once concluded should stand fast, as we all know. Some of us had delicious fears that we greatly enjoyed about passing a certain place in a forest not far from the school. Here there was a tumble-down cottage falling into ruins, the haunt of bats, rats and spiders. We hurried past it with frantic haste, lest something we knew not what should spring forth and seize us. You remember James Whitcomb Riley's poem with the line, "The robbers will catch you if you don't watch out."

That was what we dreaded and yet we had great fun in running races past the enchanted corner and eluding the witches and elves who were hidden behind those broken window panes.

Superstition of every kind is a sort of poetry. This is why unlettered races deal so much in beautiful folk lore. As we become learned in mathematics and science we cease to believe in fairies and elves. For my part, I am glad that a great throng of schoolgirls have gone to see the pretty drama of "Peter Pan." There are no illusions that never ought to be destroyed. Whether you agree with me or not, I must tell you that it does you no harm to believe in the fairies.

Perhaps you may never have the good fortune that befell a dear little Irish maid who used to work in my kitchen. She told me in good faith that she had often seen the good people, as she called the fairies, dancing in the moonlight on a green knoll behind her father's house in the land across the sea.

We so soon leave the morning mists and the poetry behind us that we refuse to see the beauty that is tucked away in myths and dreams. Study folk lore and you will be studying poetry, and a little poetry sweetens life's prose, and is like honey on one's bread.

Your fairies, when you descend to the practical, will be named Order, System, Promptness, Application, Obedience, Hope, Courage and Love. These are forever the good fairies who fight and conquer in the battles of life, and drive away the baleful influences that menace our peace and usefulness, as we study, work and play.

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INEXPENSIVE FROCKS.

In the Summer One Can Get Up Very Fetching Dresses at Small Outlay of Money.

One may buy such delectable summer fabrics at any price from ten cents to three dollars that it seems as if only a lack of taste can prevent even the most impecunious of summer girls from being a radiant vision in the coming season.

We have seen a lawn frock made of ten-cent material which would do credit to the most fastidious of Dresden china shepherdesses—a lawn of white ground with at wide intervals a single pink rosebud and leaves. The pink is a soft, lovely shade, the leaves are of delicate green and the material washes perfectly, as the buyer discov-

ered by washing a sample before buying her frock.

At 12½ cents there are other pretty lawns in small flower design or dot or interwoven circles, or in the very finest of flower stripes alternating with white stripes, along which pin dots of color are thickly set. Twenty-five cents opens up an embarrassment of choice—dimities, organdies, lawns, swisses. To be sure, one may find exquisite embroidered swisses running up in price to two or three dollars, but there are very effective dotted swisses with printed flower design at 25 cents.

Of the figured dimities we have spoken before, but they grow daintier and more desirable each week, with their tiny flower designs overlying the varied checks and stripes. Organdies, too, have followed suit, and though beautiful large designs are shown there are newer things which tend to large bar effects of white ground and small scattered single blossoms or sprays.

Bath and Beauty.

It is necessary for a person to take as good care of the body as the face to obtain the clear, healthy complexion so much desired by all. A cold bath every morning for very vigorous persons, or once or twice a week, and thoroughly rubbing with a coarse towel or nesh brush mornings when the bath is not taken, for the less robust is necessary to keep the functions of the skin in health and very invigorating. After warm baths at night a dash of cold water will prevent chills. Clothing worn during the day should never be slept in, and that worn at night should be exposed during the day to the air. Quantities of moisture filled with the waste of the body are given off every day and mostly absorbed by clothing. Exposure to air and sunlight purifies the clothing and bedding of the poisons which nature is trying to get rid of, and which would otherwise be brought again in contact with the body. By following these healthful everyday directions and taking equally good care of the face you will soon notice a decided improvement in the tone of your whole system.

The Eyes.

When the eyes have been irritated through excessive use a compress of fine linen wet with very cold water will generally bring relief. An eye wash that is particularly excellent when inflammation has set in can be made by combining 15 drops of spirits of camphor, one teaspoonful of boiling water, and half a pint of deodorized alcohol. Cork and shake well. You can double the recipe if you desire.

Mourning Cards.

Cards may be sent in response to written messages of condolence. They are the size of the calling card, have mourning borders, and are enclosed in envelopes to fit, also black-bordered. Stationery is not so heavily bordered as formerly.

Girls Dance Together.

Dancing in India is held in the highest esteem and dates back many centuries. The girls never dance with the men, but with one another, performing all sorts of grotesque figures.

Useless Words.

Statistics show that the sooner a man allows his wife to have the last word the sooner the controversy will end.—Chicago Daily News.

French Commodity.

Potato starch is used in France to sweeten sour grape juice.

Russian Concepts.

Every year about 280,000 conscripts are added to the Russian army. In times of peace it numbers 1,000,000 men, and is the largest standing army in existence.

PRETTY CROCHET LACE.

No Trimming at Present More Fashionable Than Real Crochet—It Is Agreeable Work.

1st row: 23 chain, turn, a treble in the fourth and 1 into each of the next 5 stitches, 5 chain, pass 4, and double crochet in the next, 10 chain, a double crochet in each chain, turn.

2nd row: * 4 double crochets under the chain loop just made, 5 trebles under same loop 5 chain, a double crochet on the double crochet in middle of previous row, 5 chain, pass 3 stitches, a treble in each of the other 9, turn.

3d row: 3 chain (counting as 1 treble), 10 trebles, 2 chain, pass to the fourth chain-stitch past the double crochet, 7 trebles, 9 chain into the second double crochet, turn.

4th row: 13 double crochets under loop just made, 20 trebles, turn with 3 chain.

5th row: 25 trebles (the turning chain counting as the 1st), 9 chain in third double crochet, turn.

6th row: 13 double crochets under the loop, 11 chain, back into fifth double crochet, turn again and work 16 double crochets under the last made loop, 2 trebles to complete the previous loop and 1 treble on each of the next 5 stitches (7 trebles), 5 chain, pass 5, 4 trebles into the next, leaving

the last loop of each stitch on the hook, and then drawing through all the loops at once so as to form one thick, or raised stitch, 5 chain, pass 5, 9 trebles, turn.

7th row: 25 trebles, 7 chain in fifth double crochet, turn.

8th row: 11 double crochets under loop, 25 trebles, turn.

9th row: 11 trebles, 7 chain, pass 2, 7 trebles, 9 chain in end treble, turn.

10th row: 13 double crochets under the chain loop, 5 trebles, 5 chain, double crochet into the fourth chain stitch, 5 chain pass 2 trebles, 1 treble on each of the next 9.

11th row: 7 trebles, 5 chain into the double crochet, 10 chain, double crochet into the last treble of row, and repeat from * for length of lace required, after which the two rows of edging are added, and also the heading.

1st row of edging: 3 chain into every other stitch.

2nd row of edging: Commence at the first loop of previous row, * 5 chain back into the first, 5 chain back into first (forming 4 little loops or picots), pass over 2 loops, a double crochet in the third, and repeat from *; the illustration will show how the scallops are connected.

1st row: 5 trebles under the end stitch of the first row, a double crochet under the next, and repeat.

2nd row: * 1 treble on second treble of previous row, 1 chain 1 treble on fourth, 2 chain, pass to the second stitch of the next group and repeat from *.

3rd row: 1 treble 1 chain in every other stitch.

4th and 5th rows: Same as last, but working the trebles upon the chain stitches of the previous row.

6th and Beauty.

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COUNTRESS DRESSMAKER.

Very Much of the Fashion Nowadays for Women of High Position to Go Into Business.

The Countess Fabriotti made her debut as a milliner in London a short time ago, and never before in the British capital was there such a millinery opening. The shop was transformed into a lower and the scene was like a drawing room reception in the height of the season. Social leaders, members of the nobility, men as well as women, came to pay their respects to the countess, to whom, afterward, fashionable London was expected to pay its bills.

The countess, a handsome woman, gowned in white muslin, with a design of green leaves and white flowers, received, assisted by two of the debutantes of the season. Three live-headed footmen handed out tea and cake. Uniformed lackeys were in attendance, and outside was a line of carriages, many of them bearing the arms of noble families.

The prices charged by the countess in her new shop are even higher than her position in the peerage. She charges fabulous prices for simple little toques that could be purchased elsewhere for \$10. She asks \$50—and gets it—for a simple dress hat with plumes, and \$100 is considered reasonable for anything.

The countess is well known in American society in New York and Newport, and is a beautiful woman. Three years ago she was a member of W. C. Whitney's house party at Aiken, S. C., and she was known as one of the most artistically gowned and jeweled women in the world. It was reported once that W. C. Whitney was engaged to her, and August Belmont was one of her admirers. Her venture into the millinery field was purely for financial reasons. She thought she could make artistic hats for London society, and that society would pay well for artistic effects produced at the hands or under the direction of one of their own set with whom they could discuss the becomingness of the headgear on terms of equality. So she enlisted the aid of Princess Hatzfeldt, daughter of the late Collis P. Huntington, who agreed to finance the venture.

The countess studied under M. Vivot for six months and learned the art of hat-making—not the business, but the art. She does not work with her own hands, only overseeing the building of all hats and supplying the finishing artistic touches. She is said to have the true artist's appreciation of lines.

"Ah," said M. Vivot. "That is where the hand of the artist shows itself. We of the aristocracy of art create. For that we demand the prices that art demands."

Unless the regularly made nursery furniture adapted to child stature is bought a small kitchen table may be enameled either white or blue. Old chairs in the same way may be short-ened and painted. A cot may serve instead of built in seat, and should be cut low for juvenile convenience.

A toy box should be constructed, and, if possible, a play cupboard in which play pinafores may be hung. And if the little one be taught to put away both toys and aprons at night the first lessons in neatness, which lead to the formation of helpful habits, will have been learned.—Chicago Tribune.

A CHARMING BEDROOM.

It Takes Taste as Well as Money to Get Results—What One Girl Accomplished.

It is not in buying a set of French furniture for a boudoir and knowing that the decoration of the walls correspond in design and period that art lies. For instance, here is the way a girl of taste as well as wealth has a dressing-room arranged, which is done entirely in the low pieces of the eighteenth century salons. In it she has managed to introduce an air of cozy comfort which is not usually associated with this period.

First, on the floor in front of every place where one can sit either to dress or to lounge are scattered oblong cushions rather stiffly upholstered. There is one under the toilet table, one in front of the high-backed settle, and one near a dear little oblong seat which has low caned supports at each end. Fitting in this is also a cushion by way of upholstery, and it is cleverly arranged within the folds of a screen