

FAMILY STORY

SLATER'S -- RAID.

It was a cosmopolitan group that sat around the campfire of Slater's Horse. The troop numbered twenty men all told, drawn from every one of the Anglo-Saxon races of the planet. There were Americans, Englishmen, Canadians, Australians, and South Africans, and they had come from the ends of the earth to take part in such a row as promised to follow when Cuba Libre set up her flag against that of Spain. Their leader was a Virginian, there was not a Cuban or a Spaniard in the company, and the name of Slater's Troop was a name of terror to the government forces from Pinar del Rio to Sagua la Grande.

To see them thus encamped no one would have supposed that they were engaged in one of the most daring raids that had been adventured since the war opened in '96. The officers--there were but two--sat demagogically on the ground among their men; there was a tinkling of banjos, and a mingled sound of confused talking and of jovial, free-handed profanity. The shadows of the men loomed big on the background of tropical vegetation, where the red fire light flashed fitfully from time to time, and now the form of a tethered horse, and now the figure of a sentry leaning against a smooth coated pain.

It was no small affair that these men were engaged in--nothing less, in fact, than a raid on the "trocha" itself. It is not the policy of the Cuban leaders to risk a pitched battle, so to arouse the enthusiasm of the men, and at the same time keep the enemy on the alert, such expeditions are undertaken from time to time.

They have encamped some fifty miles from the Spanish lines and the attack was fixed for the next night. A dash across the country, a stealthy advance on the fortification, another dash, a sabre and revolver, and a triumphal retreat--this was the program that Slater's Horse proposed to itself.

Next morning they rode up and down the rolling hills in the early dawn for two hours, and then rested for the heat of the day in a cool and very secluded grove, where they would be screened from any wandering guerrillas. Late at night they saddled again and rode cautiously forward till they were not more than forty rods from the trocha itself. They could see the watchfires on the further side of the great redoubt, shining between the strands of the barbed wire fence stretched along the brink.

Between them and the trocha lay a dangerous obstacle, an ingenious defense, composed of a number of wires drawn six inches apart and a foot above the ground. This formed a network over which it was impossible to ride, and as its width was uncertain, was dangerous to leap. Slater knew of this impediment, however, and had made his plans accordingly. Half a dozen then dismounted in silence, and taking each a pair of nippers from his saddle bags, crept forward into the darkness. The rest of the troop sat silently on horseback harkening to the sounds and voices from the Spanish camp, and to the occasional clicking noise right ahead where their comrades were cutting the hostile wires.

In the course of half an hour the men came back, and in whispers reported the way clear. The wires had been cut and dragged aside, so as to leave a road of sufficient width for the passage of the troop, even in the hurried retreat which must follow. The whole party then dismounted and led the horses stealthily forward, till almost at the very brink of the trocha. The Spaniards on the other side were clearly visible, while they themselves were hidden in deep shadows, and the rest scrambled into the ditch and up the other side.

So quietly was all this done that the whole performance passed unobserved till Slater sprang upon the parapet and began slashing at the wires with his machete. Then there was a shout and shot from the nearest Spaniard, followed by a miscellaneous rattle of rifles along the line. The troops swarmed out, and saw a string of men backing furiously at the wires with one hand and plying a revolver with the other. In the dim fire-light their numbers could not be ascertained.

At this amazing spectacle the soldiers fired a volley--that is, discharged their rifles in the general direction of the foe. When the smoke blew off, this operation seemed to have produced no effect on the invaders, who had now cut and torn the strands apart and were actually within the "enclosure." They bore down in the line on the Spaniards, revolver in one hand, blade in the other. No soldier-marksman were they, but men whose lives had often and often hung upon a pistol shot, and now their energy felt the effect. In ten seconds thirty of the gray uniforms were writhing on the sod, and the remainder beheld the machetes flashing in their faces. The Spaniards are not without a proverb that teaches that discretion is the better part of valor; they drew back. Their shots seemed to have no effect on these madmen, whose pistols emitted a continuous stream of fire. The withdrawal became retreat--the retreat a panic. They crowded together and ran for the tents--a hundred men routed by seventeen. Slater did not pursue them further. The long

roll was sounding up and down the lines, and the firing would bring down a dozen regiments in five minutes. He had done all that was necessary, had cut up the enemy's lines with a small quarter of a company, and without loss, so that it was time to retreat as swiftly as he had made the attack.

A torch was thrust into the nearest cluster of tents, the Maxim guns within reach were tumbled into the ditch, and the little band went back as they had come, leaving the cut wires and the rows of dead to mark where they had passed. A minute more and they were mounted and thundering across the country again.

As they rode Slater said to the man nearest him, a graduate of Harvard: "We have singled the Spanish king's beard, eh?"

"And the other replied: "Precisely." Then, after a mile or so: "They won't let this pass, do you think?"

"What do you mean? That they'll follow us?"

"Yes."

"Nonsense. Not a bit of it." He was wrong, for there was at that moment rage and cursing in the Spanish camp. The officer in command at that point had laid a heavy wager that the rebels would never break the lines. Naturally, he was furious. That the majesty of the powers of Spain should be slighted, that the works should be broken, that his men should be slaughtered--this was bad enough in all conscience, but that he should lose his gold doubloons--this was unbearable. He fumed, and swore, and called to him a captain of guerrilla cavalry.

"Captain."

"Senior."

"You have a hundred men in your troop?"

"A hundred and fifty."

"Good. Pursue these accursed Americans. There are not more than thirty. Follow them to Santiago, if necessary, but catch them, dead or alive."

"Very well, General," replied the guerrilla, and retired to muster his men and to sound the "Boots and Saddles." A hundred to twenty would be long odds, even for Slater's Horse.

So it came about that when Slater's men drew rein, fifteen miles from the trocha, and sat silent, a clustered black spot on the moonlit road, they heard a low thunder come rolling up from the west--the thunder of pounding hoofs.

"By Jove!" said the Englishman, who was related to the eminent author. "Not three miles away," asserted the Canadian, who had just come from the Egyptian Soudan.

"Forward, men," said Slater, and away they went, up and down the rolling hills whither the ill-made road led them. The country was too rough to allow of taking to the fields, where the Spaniards might be thrown off the trail, but it would be smoother in the course of a few leagues. All night they rode hard and sometimes the following thunder was loud and often faint, but never wholly died away. The guerrillas were well mounted, and Slater's horses were not fresh. The pearly dawn came up before them, and then the sun was trailing long shadows behind them as they galloped. It was 4 o'clock, and forty miles back to the trocha.

And now at last they seemed to have distanced their pursuers, for no rumble came out of the west. They fed their horses a few handfuls of the green tops of the sugar cane, refreshing and stimulating, and gave them a little water from a roadside brook, and rubbed them down as time would permit. That was not much, for before they had finished the sounds of pursuit again grew upon them.

"Forty miles farther and we will be in our own lines," remarked Slater.

"For three hours more the wily little Cuban horses bore their riders swiftly, though the sun grew high and snary. They had struck off the highway, ridden through a field of cane, and were now galloping down a wide stretch of sloping prairie, dotted with cocoa palms. They scarcely expected that the enemy would fall to notice where the chase had left the road so they were not disappointed when the long crash of breaking stalks announced

that the guerrillas were riding down the field they had just passed through. The pursuit was gaining fast. In another minute there was a roar of shouts and cheers from behind, and turning, they saw the hill side crested with a long line of galloping, gray-coated men. The peril was imminent, yet the staunch beasts had the material in them for a good ten-mile burst yet, and this would be more than enough to lead them into safety. Down the long slope the two bands swept, a full mile between them, and up another, when an astonishing sight met them as they topped the rise.

Away to the left in the following valley smoke was rising from a burning house. The yard before it was filled with Spanish soldiery. Two women stood bound in the midst. There seemed to be an altercation. A soldier began to receive a rope over a convenient tree-bough.

All this flashed before the men's eyes in a moment. There was no hesitation, nor were there any orders given. Those of Slater's troop were accustomed to follow when Slater led, and they galloped at his heels as he spurred furiously down the hillslope. The Spaniards by the house were suddenly aware of a mingled rattle of hoofs and pistol shots, and beheld a rush of men sweeping down upon them, brandishing weapons and volleying forth curses and bullets at once. A moment--and they were struck, crushed, ridden down. The sheer weight of Slater's headlong charge scattered them in every direction. At the same time the deadly machete and more deadly sixshooter were at work. "Throw the women across your shoulders," roared Slater. They were jerked up in an instant by two brawny troopers. It was no time for ceremony.

"Now, hard ahead! And before the Spaniards had recovered from the shock their assailants were dashing past the outbuildings of the hacienda and had disappeared behind the sheds. At the same time the guerrillas swarmed in, and the soldiers also mounted and followed the chase.

Meanwhile, Slater's men had met unexpected obstacles. A high and strong wire fence stood firmly across their way; it was apparently designed to be horse-proof. There was no gate, and the ends were not in sight.

"Well, cut it then," shouted the leader, with a rattle of oaths, when its impregnability became apparent, "and dig--a quick, too!" He drew his ma-



A RUSH OF MEN SWEEPING DOWN UPON THEM.

chete and slashed as furiously at these wires as he had done at those of the trocha.

In a minute or less an opening had been made, and the riders were through. When the Spaniards arrived at the same point their greater number and the narrowness of the gap caused a tremendous crush, which gave the insurgents a much-needed start.

It was soon lost, however. The fresh horses of the Spanish reinforcement rapidly overhauled the little troop. And, to add to their difficulties, a deep ravine suddenly appeared ahead. To scramble in and out of it with sufficient rapidity would be impossible for the tired horses, two of which carried double loads. To have cast the women aside might have facilitated their escape, but no one seemed to dream of such an act, nor was there a word of regret for the delay which had caused them to be overtaken. Slater drew in his horse, and the others gathered round.

"Way's closed," said the leader, sentimentally. "Got to fight here or surrender."

"Or out our way through," suggested the man from Harvard.

"The women," remarked Slater, and the other accepted the fact.

"If they were only mounted!" muttered a trooper.

The Spanish riders were now drawing in, and a volley of carabines ran before them. They had aimed high, with the result that three men of the troop toppled from their saddles. This left the number of mounts free.

"Can't you ride, Senora?" said Slater. Both replied in the affirmative. "Then mount here, if you please. We must try to cut our way out . . . Are you afraid?"

"It is the privilege of a Cuban woman to fear nothing except capture by these!" The man from Harvard was struck by her courage, but he could not stop to admire it. The women were helped astride the dead trooper's saddles--it was no time for false modesty--and the rest formed up around them. One of the women held out her hand toward Slater's bolsters, but he pointed out the fact that there were pistols already in the holsters before them. They took these out and handled them with familiarity.

The Spaniards had paused a few hundred yards away, and were scrutinizing the men they had pursued. I do

not know why they did not rush down and overwhelm them by sheer weight. Possibly so much coolness made them suspect a ruse or ambush. At any rate they stood still a moment till they saw the band form in hollow square, with the women in the center, and charge down upon them.

Slater was leading. The guerrillas assayed to move forward to meet the attack, and when they came within fifty yards the pistols began to crackle on both sides. A charging horse stumbled heavily to the ground, throwing his rider headlong. An incessant volley poured from the left revolvers of the assailants, and the Spaniards recoiled from the spot on which it was directed, where men and horses rolled together on the earth. A moment, and the little company, with the impetus of a bullet, had crashed into this shrinking spot and sunk right in for five horses' lengths. There was a shim-



HE WAS ALONE.

mer all about as the men swung the machetes above their heads and urged on the plunging horses. The Spaniards directly in front strove to get clear, to have more room for fighting, and the insurgents pushed forward to the furthest inch. It really seemed, for a little, that they would win through the Spanish ranks.

The guerrillas next the troop were exchanging desperate sword-strokes with their antagonists, while those farther out were pressing closer, and firing wildly into the swirl of fight with revolvers. Five of Slater's men had gone down beneath the blows that came from the front and rear alike. There were but twelve left, and these redoubled their efforts to break through the trap that held them fast. Slater rode in front, slashing to right and left with a huge machete. He cut down an opposing trooper, pistolled the horse as the rider fell, and spurred forward into the space thus provided. His men followed, and by sheer dint of blows managed to gain a few yards more. But the foe gathered close, and again two of the handful went down. The air was all a-quiver with steel blades about the fight, but now that the insurgents, had got fairly in motion once more, they were slowly yet surely thrusting their way through the circling crowd. But they lost a man for every yard they won. Pistol bullets hummed through the melee, striking down friend and foe alike. One of the women was hit as she fired into the dense gray ranks; the other, either wounded or fainting, slid from her saddle, and both disappeared beneath the press.

While Slater's horse thus melted away, Slater rode in the front, and knew not how the others fared. He only knew that he was hewing his desperate way forward as a bushman hews his way through the tropical jungle. He had lost his hat and his hair was matted and dripping with blood, but he took no heed of the wounds; all his effort was to reach the open space beyond. And at last, bleeding horse and man, he swung into the clear ground and looked about for his men.

Not one had followed; he was alone. The women he had rescued were gone, too. He stared about as if dazed, while the Spaniards stood and wondered at the man who had done so mightily in the battle. The blood was pouring from a deep cut in the neck of his horse. The animal's knees began to totter, and presently it sank to the ground. Slater fell with it. The troops rushed forward, but when they came to him he was dead, with the red blade still clinched in his fingers.

And the women for whom this score of men had recklessly thrown away their lives lay trampled and crushed beneath the hoofs of the guerrilla horse. But shall it therefore be said of Slater's troops that their sacrifice was made in vain?

"Mor'n' You'll Keep."

Some years ago an old sign painter, who was very cross, very gruff, and a little deaf, was engaged to paint the "Ten Commandments on some tablets in a church not five miles from Buffalo. He worked two days at it, and at the end of the second day the pastor of the church came to see how the work progressed.

The old man stood by, smoking a short pipe, as the reverend gentleman ran his eyes over the tablets.

"Eh!" said the pastor, as his familiar eye detected something wrong in the working of the precepts; "why, you careless old man, you have left a part of one of the commandments entirely out; don't you see?"

"No; no such thing," said the old man, putting on his spectacles; "no; nothing left out--where?"

"Why, there," persisted the pastor, "look at it in the Bible; you have left some of that commandment out."

"Well, what if I have?" said old Obstinacy, as he ran his eye complacently over his work; "what if I have? There's more there now than you'll keep."

Another and a more correct artist was employed the next day.

A Good Thing.

A Lewiston (Me.) confectioner has applied for a patent on a process by which pasteboard boxes may be so treated that ice cream packed in them will remain solidly frozen for twenty-four hours.

FOLDING OF THE TENTS.

Circuses Want Winter Quarters While Showmen Think the Old Thoughts.

Art is getting a move on herself. Yesterday upon a circus banner shone the cheering legend: "Bolt chastely artistic musical contortionists now before the public."

About unoccupied corners and contested acres of estates in Chicago hang noisily the fopping tents of the itinerant 10-centricus, an industry overlooked by amusement chroniclers but suddenly grown into a threat to the colossal three-ring menagerie-hippodromes occupying the attention of pleasure seekers and enterprise watchers. Strolling bands of disqualified or unfortunate players opened up these paths for tent shows and from stragglers of uncertain license and certain rascality the little company of clowns and half-trained gymnasts showed the wary circus fakier a way to pick up business and profit by a harmless humbug almost welcome.

I happened to be in Crown Point, Ind., yesterday, and the pretty village was aflame with warnings of the presence of Wallace's Gigantic Circus. Instantly I hid myself hither and there it was--the same "grand entry," lady performer in the air rings, trapeze, slack wire, chariot races, trained animals, strong people lifting glittering generalities in cast iron and young ladies twisting themselves up in knots of spangled intricacy; there were the jugglers, the dashing party who throws knives at a stripped lady in impressive scowls and dodging attitude, again the "principal bareback equestrienne" of my tumultuous infant circus days, the double-hautecole-menage act and the hesitating somersault rider; besides these inevitables beheld the pompous cracker of the ring whip, the full-dress, snappy person to whom the august stars bow low and at whom the sulphurous silly Joey courageously huris puns too weightily for the Samson of brawn to lift out of obscurity. Just the same, it seemed to me quite as good as any circus I had seen in years. Ringlings' seemed the greatest show ever produced and ten years back so did the Barnum & Bailey crush of these same attractions, and now it occurs to me that a week or so ago I took five small boys into a weather-stained tent pitched on the corner of Loomis and Congress streets, paid 10 cents admission and that was absolutely the best of them all. The only difference in the big shows and little ones infesting America is not in the variety but the art, the finish, the talent of the performers, the number of them employed and the number of rings employed by them.

Wallace winters near Peru, Ind., and, like every other circus grower, the most attractive portion of his show is never shown. He has the same privilege of exhibiting magnificent draft horses (by which Cody made such a sensation here last spring); he has 100 little Shetland ponies at the farm which eat their heads off and bray at each other all year, but never travel for their health or money, nor do the splendid Percherons ever do anything but bawl. Up at Baraboo considerably the same conditions exist. American showmen do not make use of the novel attractions at their command. The Ringlings are superb athletes, gymnasts and tumblers, but instantly they bestirred themselves to management the sawdust was something credibly impossible and they sit about growing fat while inferior performers do work they might with physical and financial advantage keep up. Col. Cody is an actor of infallible reliability in his own show; he is the prime attraction and in the fifteen or more years in which he has served the public Cody has missed just three performances--one when his little daughter died, one when his daughter Artea was very ill and one other when the United States Government requested his services. He is really a greater showman than any floating history pictures him. What has been sensational or in a pose for the public has quite obscured the larger disposition and genius of W. F. Cody.

I was in Cody's tent one day when a boy came in aglow with importance at the distinction of being allowed to speak to the incomparable Bill. "How are Col. Cody?" said the child. "I'm the boy I wrote you the letter." "Yes," said the object of his idolatry, with a kindly smile, as he brought to view a pigeon-hole package containing at least fifty epistles. "Which one of these did you write?"

Not less than fifty a day and sometimes more than fifty childish billets reach Buffalo Bill, and they are such rare literary contributions that to publish them would be to round up the poets and warriors in embryo all over the country. Nearly all Cody's letters come from boys and young ladies; that glamour intoxicating to blithe and adventurous infancy still hangs about Cody, and not a little of his unchallenged popularity is wrapped in this pleasant knowledge of the barbaric element in all youth and its easily won worship. The thing is not to be exalted or better than all others, but to be different and Joshua could not stop the eternal plod of the circus sun in its orbit of conventionality.--Amy Leslie, in Chicago News.

Electric Sounding. It is said by the engineers who conducted the laying of the Amazon river cable to Manaoas that the difficulties of their enterprise would have been almost insuperable if the ordinary methods of sounding had had to be relied upon. There were no charts to go by, the river bottom was constantly shifting, and the softness of the soil, mostly alluvial clay, would allow the lead to sink into for several feet. An electric device, fitted named a submarine sentinel, was suspended from the

cable ship and set at, say, five fathoms.

So long as there were no signal from the "sentinel" the engineer could steam ahead without fear; but the moment the ship got into water shallower than the gauge fixed upon, the sounder gave an alarm, and special reckonings were taken. A somewhat simpler device, having the same end in view, has been invented, the idea being to have it used as a substitute for the hand lead as a vessel approaches a coast or shoal in darkness or fog, when the captain is doubtful of his bearings. The apparatus consists of a metallic cylinder, having a watertight chamber. Within the chamber works a piston, upon the outer edge of which is a heavy ball. When the apparatus is swung clear in the water, the weight of this ball keeps open an electric circuit; but as soon as the sounder touches the bottom the circuit is closed, and the current, conveyed by wires running in the cable by which the sounder is attached to the ship, rings a bell in any department of the ship. The cost of the device is quite moderate, and its inventor claims that its operation is simple and sure.--New York Journal.

Imogene Guiney and Stephen Crane are becoming known in France through recent translations. "The Sentimental Sex," by Gertrude Warden, is announced as a new novel of especial originality. Georges Hugo, grandson of the great French author, recently made his debut in letters with a book entitled "Souvenirs of a Sailor." The Boston Aeronautical Society has offered \$250 in cash prizes for the best designs for kites and the best monograph on their mechanical principles. Clergymen found a luminous article in the July Homiletic Review by Professor Blake of the University of Edinburgh on "The Essentials of Effective Expository Preaching."

William Black, whose novel "Briseno" has recently appeared in book form, was once a leader writer on the London News. He says his journalistic experience helped him but little as a novelist, though he recommends a reporter's career as valuable for gaining experience of life.

Bhas Carman has returned from a business trip to London and Paris by way of Amiens. Regarding journalism he says he likes the "strong and healthy, and slow-moving" British ways best. Though he has lived in New York, he says the city gives him a feeling of unrest and uneasiness.

Max O'Rell has no use for the Anglo-Saxon woman. In the North American Review he declares her to be "the most ridiculous production of modern times, and destined to be the most ghastly failure of the century." He says she wants to retain all the privileges of her sex and secure all those of a man besides. "She will fail to become a man," Max kindly assures us, "but she may succeed in ceasing to be a woman."

Wives Drawn by Lot. In some parts of Russia a queer game is still played at Christmas time which has much to do with the future lives of the participants. Some prominent person in the village announces that the annual merry-making will be held at his house. On the appointed day the young men and women hasten in huge excitement to the meeting place.

There are songs and games and dances, but they are simply a prelude to the more important business of the day. When the time comes the hostess leads all the girls into one room, where they seat themselves on the benches. Laughing and chattering, they are each promptly muffled in winding sheets by the hostess. The head and hair and figure are completely covered, and when this is done the girls resemble mummies.

The young men draw lots, and one by one they enter the room where the muffled girls sit. Helpless so far as sight or touch goes, the puzzled lover tries to find his favorite. Maybe she could help him if her eyes were not hidden, but she is as helpless as he. Finally he chooses one, and then he may unveil her. This is the critical moment, and disappointment or rapture will be the result of seeing her face.

It is the law of custom that the man shall marry the girl he has picked out, and if either backs out a heavy forfeit must be paid. It is said that this matrimonial lottery is productive of many happy marriages.

Speedily Changed Her Mind. She was the college girl of lofty ideals and superior attainments, such as college girls have in their early days. When she left her family to rest in the mountains for a while she said haughtily: "No; I'll not take an evening gown. And please don't put any of that paper-covered literature in my trunk. I have some philosophy to read and I don't intend to mix with the hotel people. Nature, my work and serge frocks are enough for me." Then she departed. At the end of four days her mother was startled by a telegram. It read: "Send two party frocks, a hammock and some reliable face powder at once."

Not Worrying. "Say, your horse reaches over the fence and pulls the branches off our trees." "Oh, that's all right. The horse can't hurt himself so long as you don't throw no broken glass bottles over on our side."--Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Half of the praying that is done consists of back talk.