

FOURTH OF JULY RIDING AT GALENA

"Howdy mother, gintlemin!" argued Dillon, "is a matter av' impotence. Wud ye have another shootin' Donnybrook? an' me a-bearin' av' all the divilment, same as twiz last year? Wud the ripshash av' the camp, too? In the name av' Inlinsence, have ye no heads for an emergency?"

Dillon was clearly in earnest, and when a man of his racial characteristics in earnest things are likely to happen, whether the scene of action be Spitzbergen or Timbuctoo. His indignation at our stupidity—at the mayor's, the sheriff's, and mine—was offensive, but we could offer no suggestion that might stand for us as combatant. There were men in the camp with official titles, and men very prone to swift and accurate shooting, but these collectively were as caught before the breath of Dillon.

Galena was like most other of North-western mining towns; if at all distinguishable from them, it was by a slight accentuation of that air of bonhomie which is more or less apparent on the visages of all communities of the genus.

Dillon owned and generally presided over one of the biggest and brightest and most remembered of the combination saloons and gambling resorts.

The mayor, the sheriff, and I sat in a back room of the saloon, listening intently to Dillon's harangue. After he had given us every opportunity to suggest ways and means for the day of entertainment, fruitlessly, he elucidated to us his own idea of a program, which was voted on and adopted by unanimous and immediate consent. This narrative deals solely with the first number of the program, so you will be compelled to surmise the others from it.

"We will begin," says Dillon, "in the morning, wud what ye might designate a toorymint. This is the way av' it: We will have rounded up a bunch av' thin divils av' bronchos, an' we will also have rounded up a bunch av' jolly bhoys; we will beguile the bhoys to the backs av' the bronchos, an' we will give the best buster av' them a foine fat purse—which he will spind immetigly. This, ye may understand, is legitimat, wud excitement enough to kape av' the raw edge av' their temper. This we will—" but this is as much as concerns us.

A goodly purse was collected against the coming of the popular event. Dillon's "ante" (his own word) was a hundred, and a number of others came down handsomely. But in the interval between the statement of the idea and the day of fulfillment there arose the necessity for some modification in the plans. Dillon had relied on procuring a number of bad and unbroken horses, and on having the many volunteer riders break them on time, or something of that sort. When the trial was made, however, it was found impossible to bring together the required number of sure-enough bad horses; that is, horses which could be depended on to make excitement under any circumstances; so a big list of shagged and sombered competitors could not, consequently, be accommodated.

The morning of the Fourth dawned in all the chaste radiance of July in the foothills, such a day as recompenses a man for a year lived in a hut, 150 miles from the nearest railroad artery, and, as they say in Montana, "only half a mile from hell."

Directly after breakfast those ranch people from the rival valleys, and from all adjacent sections, who had not been fortunate enough to get in the night before, began to concentrate in the camp.

Dillon drew me out to the veranda. "By me sowl, 'twill be beautiful," says he. "We have a brace av' the beasts as wud misharse the divil, an' the bhoys are foine an' achin' for the sport. Ye'll see av' the day, me son." He was in merriest spirits himself, and I should have enjoyed some of the effervescence of his rollicking blarney; but his unswerving sense of duty to the day compelled him to drink more frequently than I had reason to believe my experience and capacity would permit, so I was forced to abjure his society.

About 10 he got on a table somehow, and announced the riding, and invited the contesting busters up to throw dice for choice of horse. This called forth uproarious yells of applause. One of the contestants, the North Valley representative, was not present, but his mentor was, with full power to act. This latter, however, an old ranch foreman, with badly bowed legs and a crooked back, called out renewed cheers by remarking that he "reckoned it didn't make much difference about the throwin'," as Curlew was satisfied with a "most any hoss."

But the South Valley contingent demurred at this, and Dillon routed it as unparliamentary. So old Joe and the South Valley man cast for choice, and the throw was Joe's. He gruffly chose the horse that should be nearer the goal gate. Then they shook out again for precedence in order of riding, and this time the South Valley broncho buster won, electing to ride second. There was one other contestant, who did not throw—but I am anticipating my story.

After these preliminaries all rode toward the goal, the crowd even mounting Dillon's bar of its left attendant. The crowd was situated at the open extremity of the goal, on a hill of much lower level than that of the goal and the other main division of the town.

When I got down the flat was cleared for action, and the man called Curlew was preparing to ride.

He had barely time to draw his sleeve across his perspiring face when the half-choked and bewildered pony had leaped, like a flash, to his feet; at the same fractional part of a second, Curlew was lightly ensconced in the saddle, stirred up and pulling off the pony's hood. Blinded by the sun, dazed and frightened by the weight on his back, the bay stood quivering for a short space. But a stinging cut from Curlew's quirt discovered his bondage to him. Up he reared, straight and unhesitatingly, till, losing his balance, he dropped over backward with an ugly thud, the broad horn of the cow saddle digging into the ground just where Curlew should have been.

But the red-haired rider was to one side, waiting. He must have been quick as light, for I assure you the play of the pony was not slow. Again and again the bay rose in the air and repeated the backward fall, Curlew each time eluding it and each time swinging in the saddle as the playful brute came to his feet. It was all incredibly rapid, and how the boy handled his long, loose-jointed legs is yet a mystery to me. There were 12 of these backward half-somersaults in that 90-foot corral, and then the manoeuvre was over, forming merely an unostentatious prelude to the real tactics of the fight.

With a shrill whistle of rage that brought my heart against my ribs the bay made several sharp sidelong jumps and then took to running. Through the corral gate, across the flat, up the steep pitch, and into the town he went, the whole company of interested spectators following at their variously best paces. Curlew set him with swaying ease, the hackamore rope hanging loose in his hand; he made no attempt to stop or to guide.

In the midst of the town the run ended in the inevitable buck, and thenceforth the fun waxed fast and furious. We were not mistaken in our horse; the brute was all his looks indicated—and more. The battle only lasted some 15 minutes, but in that short space of time he called into active use every resource of equine trickery and threw himself into every startling contortion that horse anatomy permits of. He bucked straight and sideways, and turned and fell, and reared and kicked, squealing again and again in that fierce, unholy manner, till it seemed impossible that the plucky red-haired rider could longer endure the awful back-wrenching strain. A fall, too, meant death, for the horse would have slashed him before he touched ground or struck with front feet as he lay. During the first 12 or 14 minutes of the fight that boy's life was not worth the value of a cigarette; between rage and fear the horse was stark mad, and had there been the sign of an opening would have leaped headlong into the reputed inferno a half a mile below.

As the moments wore on and his whole repertoire of strength and strategy was worked through, without in the least unfixing his rider, the white-eyed pony began to lose heart; it was the first time that any man had been so tenacious of grip, and gradually his leaps became weaker and less vicious. Then Curlew's quirt and blood-seeking spurs urged him to more vigorous efforts, but even these could not much longer sustain the engagement. Dripping with blood and sweat, nearly dead with fatigue, he finally succumbed, and permitted himself to be guided by the rider at will. A hearty cheer burst from the crowd, and Curlew, rather pale and weak, but ever smiling, was rapturously dragged from the saddle and carried into Dillon's, an inert monument of glory to his memory and demonstrative friends.

After the hero, his worshippers, the antagonistic party, and all outsiders had been duly refreshed, which required some little time, we bent ourselves again to the matter in hand, and prepared to witness the second bout of the man against horse battle.

There was almost as wide a difference of the two riders as between the bay and the buckskin. The South Valley champion was much shorter than Curlew, and better knit. If I had not seen the confusing dexterity of the lanky, red-haired boy, I should have esteemed this the likelier man. His movements were alert and he showed much experience; in complexion almost black, with a bearded and somewhat sinister face—"Charley Rawlins, late av' N'Mexico, an' bad whin he's dhrinkin'," as Dillon catalogued him.

The buckskin pony remained in his downcast posture and allowed the New Mexican to saddle him unresistingly, merely cocking his hairy ears—once forward and the other back—and watching behind through the tail of his slitted eye. I was standing alongside old Joe during this peaceful overture, and noted the old man's chuckle, grim and ominous.

Charley led his mount out from the corral to the flat, and jamming his finely worked Mexican hat down over his eyes, vaulted cleanly to his seat. The yellow pony waked up immediately and took the buck, not wildly and ferociously, as the bay had done, but in a calm, matter-of-fact sort of way that convinced one it was his natural gait. Just as another horse might have galloped or trotted, so did this beast buck, and for two blessed hours maintained the pace without a falter. War in all

that heart-breaking period did his final progress exceed 100 yards! It was most astonishing, not one superfluous movement was made; he simply kept on and on, each jump being almost semicircular, that is, landing with his head where his tail had started from, and vice versa.

This is what the cowpunchers call changing ends, and it is not difficult to imagine the effect of such a protracted merry-go-round sensation on the rider. The bucking was neither high nor fierce, but the strain of that continuous swirl must have been racking. There was one slight variation which the scrubby buckskin allowed himself in his system, though this was of such nature as to be rather disconcerting to a rider with a head already far from steady. It was to turn in the air after the usual fashion, but instead of alighting on stiffened legs, to fall clumsily on one side, the pony saving himself by bending his foreleg back under him. It was an ugly trick to evade, and the black New Mexican must have been clear grit to hold his own so long. His face grew pallid and drawn, and after awhile his stomach revolted.

At the close of the second hour he was helpless; his will was still in the thing, but his body was limp and ineffective, and the blood slowly trickled from his nose and ears. The pony still worked with the monotonous regularity of a steam exhaust, and the end was unquestionably near.

When it came, the man was sprawled to one side, and the horse immediately lapsed into his usual drooping attitude of watchful sleepiness. Some of us ran to assist Rawlins, who lay just as he had fallen, too weak to rise. But he waved us back; his face was malignant with shame and anger, and distorted by pain; altogether, with the pallor and the blood-streaked beard, he was not an exhilarating sight. Rolling over to his side, he raised himself partially on an elbow, and before we could close on him had drawn his Colt's and fired. The big gun spoke sharply, and with a moan that was almost human the buckskin pony lurched heavily to the ground.

We reached Rawlins in time to take the smoking revolver from his nerveless grasp; but as he fell back again, I heard him mutter thickly: "There, curse ye, ye mud-skinned hell-bound! Ye'll wear no more men out!"

The prostrate broncho-buster's friends had taken him up, and Dillon was in the midst of a brilliant address, awarding with much ornate language the purse to Curlew, when an incident in the form of anti-climax took the floor from the speaker and wound up the sport with a hearty burst of good-natured acclamation.

I had the history of this incident afterward. It seems that the boys of the town—the juveniles, I mean—had organized and schemed to place an unregistered and unexpected entry in the contest; and their scheme was eminently successful—and amusing. The camp supported a little half-breed youth of about 12 years, a marvel in his love for and command over horses; he must have been born and reared upon their backs, so easily did he become them. It was this urchin, Pedro by name, who was elected to represent the younger faction in the riding. There was one difficulty that would have baffled most boys; no bad horse was forthcoming, but Pedro was so extremely indifferent as to the nature or build of his mount that even this was an easy adjustment. At the extreme upper end of the town was a butcher's cow corral, and in it confined a bunch of cattle new from the range, one of these, a great red and white 4-year-old steer, was selected, and Pedro eagerly started on his ride to fame.

Dillon was getting well warmed to his much-prepared and patriotic oration, when Pedro and the frantic steer appeared, rushing down the pitch from the town above. There was an unstrained howl from the assemblage, in which even Dillon joined, and the dirty, dare-devil brat shot out an answering grin from the careening back of his astonished steer. It was a thing to make the old gulch quiver with laughter. Some one had dressed the boy especially for the game; he had on a pair of heavy fringed, full-sleeved shape, at least eight inches too long for him, and only kept from entirely covering his feet by the shanks of a pair of huge Mexican spurs, all bells and bangles. His impish face was surmounted by a 5-inch sombrero, a heavy quirt in one hand and in the other a coil of rawhide lariat, which was looped only over the steer's horns. And bow that animal was twisting himself, head down and tail up! But the boy clung like a barnacle, by what means I have no conjecture. It is well known that a steer has no withers, that he can buck through the cinches of any saddle, and a cowboy without a saddle is not formidable. Yet there was that lean youth heathen, hampered by the awkward trappings they had put on him, perched on his arching, ungirded steed with all the port composure of a tomtit on a pump handle, which is old Joe's simile.

"Cum av' av' that, ye young limb," shouted Dillon, as the steer rushed madly by us; the boy wailed, however, till the crowd was passed, and then, skillfully twirling his rope from the steer's horns, slid harmlessly to the ground. He could scarcely walk for the grotesque accoutrements, but when he did reach us, the boys greeted him riotously.

"Give the money to the kid," said Curlew laconically. "That's a trick I can't do," and midst clamors of commendation and acclamation the half-breed steered was given the purse.

You cannot expect a doctor to join an anti-trust society.



General Washington wanted a man. It was in September, 1776, at the City of New York, a few days after the battle of Long Island. The swift and deep East River flowed between the two hostile armies, and General Washington had as yet no system established for getting information of the enemy's movements and intentions. He never needed such information so much as at that crisis.

What would General Howe do next? If he crossed at Hell Gate, the American army, too small in numbers, and defeated the week before, might be caught on Manhattan Island as in a trap, and the issue of the contest might be made to depend upon a single battle; for in such circumstances defeat would involve the capture of the whole army. And yet General Washington was compelled to confess:

"We cannot learn, nor have we been able to possess, the least information of late."

Therefore he wanted a man. He wanted an intelligent man, cool-headed, skillful, brave, to cross the East River to Long Island, enter the enemy's camp and get information as to his strength and intentions. He went to Colonel Knowlton, commanding a remarkably efficient regiment from Connecticut, and requested him to ascertain if this man so sorely needed could be found in his command. Colonel Knowlton called his officers together, stated the wishes of General Washington, and, without urging the enter-



prise upon any individual, left the matter to their reflections.

Captain Nathan Hale, a brilliant youth of 31, recently graduated from Yale college, was one of those who reflected upon the subject. He soon reached a conclusion. He was of the very flower of the young men of New England, and one of the best of the younger soldiers of the patriot army. He had been educated for the ministry, and his motive in adopting for a time the profession of arms was purely

patriotic. This we know from the familiar records of his life at the time when the call to arms was first heard.

In addition to his other gifts and graces, he was handsome, vigorous and athletic, all in an extraordinary degree. If he had lived in our day he might have pulled the stroke oar at New London or pitched for the college nine.

The officers were conversing in a group. No one had as yet spoken the decisive word. Colonel Knowlton appealed to a French sergeant, an old soldier of former wars, and asked him to volunteer.

"No, no," said he. "I am ready to fight the British at any place and time, but I do not feel willing to go among them to be hung up like a dog."

Captain Hale joined the group of officers. He said to Colonel Knowlton:

"I will undertake it."

Some of his best friends remonstrated. One of them, afterwards the famous Gen. William Hull, then a captain in Washington's army, has recorded Hale's reply to his own attempt to dissuade him.

"I think," said Hale, "I owe to my country the accomplishment of an object so important. I am fully sensible of the consequences of discovery and capture in such a situation. But for a year I have been attached to the army, and have not rendered any material service, while receiving a compensation for which I make no return. I wish to be useful, and every kind of service necessary for the public good becomes honorable by being necessary."

He spoke, as General Hull remembered, with earnestness and decision, as one who had considered the matter well, and had made up his mind.

Having received his instructions, he traveled fifty miles along the Sound as far as Norwalk, in Connecticut. One who saw him there made a very wise remark upon him, to the effect that he was "too good looking" to go as a spy. He could not deceive. "Some scrubby fellow ought to have gone." At Norwalk he assumed the disguise of a Dutch schoolmaster, putting on a suit of plain brown clothes and a round, broad-brimmed hat. He had no difficulty in crossing the Sound, since he bore an order from General Washington which placed at his disposal all the vessels belonging to Congress. For several days everything appears to have gone well with him, and there is reason to believe that he passed through the entire British army without detection or even exciting suspicion.

Finding the British had crossed to New York, he followed them. He made his way back to Long Island, and nearly reached the point opposite Norwalk where he had originally landed. Rendered, perhaps, too bold by success, he went into a well-known and popular tavern, entered into conversation with the guests and made himself very agreeable. The tradition is that he made himself too agreeable. A man present, suspecting or knowing that he was not the character he had assumed, quietly left the room, communicated his suspicions to the captain of a British ship anchored near, who dispatched a boat's crew to capture and bring on board the agreeable stranger. His true character was immediately revealed. Drawings of some of the British works, with notes in Latin, were found hidden in the soles of his shoes. Nor did he attempt to deceive his captors, and the English captain, lamenting, as he said, that "so fine a fellow had fallen into his power," sent him to New York in one of his boats, and with him the fatal proofs that he was a spy.

September 21st was the day on which he reached New York—the day of the great fire which laid one-third of the

little city in ashes. From the time of his departure from General Washington's camp to that of his return to New York was about fourteen days. He was taken to General Howe's headquarters at the Beekman mansion, on the East river, near the corner of the present Fifty-first street and First avenue. It is a strange coincidence that the house to which he was brought to be tried as a spy was the very one from which Major Andre departed when he went to West Point. Tradition says that Captain Hale was examined in a greenhouse which then stood in the garden of the Beekman mansion.

Short was his trial, for he avowed at once his true character. The British general signed an order to his provost-marshal directing him to receive into his custody the prisoner convicted as



a spy, and to see him hanged by the neck "tomorrow morning at day-break."

Terrible things are reported of the manner in which this noble prisoner, this admirable gentleman and hero, was treated by his jailer and executioner. There are savages in every large army, and it is possible that this provost-marshal was one of them. It is said that he refused him writing materials, and afterward, when Captain Hale had been furnished them by others, destroyed before his face his last letters to his mother and to the young lady to whom he was engaged to be married. As those letters were never received, this statement may be true. The other alleged horrors of the execution it is safe to disregard, because we know it was conducted in the usual form and in the presence of many spectators and a considerable body of troops. One fact shines out from the distracting confusion of that morning, which will be cherished to the latest posterity as a precious ingot of the moral treasures of the American people. When asked if he had anything to say, Captain Hale replied:

"I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country."

The scene of his execution was probably an old graveyard in Chambers street, which was then called Barrack street. General Howe formally notified General Washington of his execution. In recent years, through the industry of investigators, the pathos and sublimity of these events have been in part revealed.

A few years ago a bronze statue of the young hero was unveiled in the New York City Hall Park. It is greatly to be regretted that our knowledge of this noble martyr is so slight; but we know enough to be sure that he merits the veneration of his countrymen.

The man who marries for money merely trades his liberty for a meal ticket.