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HEROES OF THE PLAINS.

Meeting After a Fifteen Years' Separation.

Buffalo Bill, White Beaver and Pony Bob Recalling Incidents of the Past—How Their Names Originated.

Chicago News, February 19.

Three men sat in the rotunda of the Grand Hotel yesterday, and talked in a jolly strain half of the afternoon. They wore dress suits, and, excepting the large hats worn by two of them, there was nothing about their appearance to attract attention. It was the first time they had met for fifteen years. Their last meeting was under circumstances which made their conversation yesterday particularly interesting to them. They were Buffalo Bill, White Beaver, and Pony Bob. They were reviewing incidents of their lives on the plains, and accounting for their whereabouts since their separation at a camp in the rocky mountains when Buffalo Bill and White Beaver went as escorts of Gen. Custer against a band of hostile Indians, and Pony Bob went in an opposite direction, carrying on horseback \$60,000 of the trust money of the American express company.

"Do you remember that little jaunt of ours, Powell?" said Buffalo Bill, as he looked at White Beaver and addressed him by the name which he had known since they were boys together in the wagon trains that hauled freight over the mountains before there were any railroads.

"Remember it! Yes," replied White Beaver, "it was the last time I went with Custer."

"One of my last, too," said Buffalo Bill, "and speaking of it recalls my first trip with him. It was soon after the close of the rebellion. I was then a scout in the department of the Platte, stationed at Fort Hayes. Custer got into camp late one evening, and asked for a guide to lead him and his eight men to Fort Larned. The commander told him he would have a man in soon who could go. I had been doing skylarking around, and when I got night into camp at 10 o'clock that night Custer called me to his quarters and asked me to go with him. He was well mounted, and Custer wasn't much of a man for words, so, looking at me closely, he said: 'I must leave here at sunrise for Fort Larned. The trip must be made in quick time. Can you lead me?—I told him I thought I could dangle along behind at least, and that I would be ready to start about day-break. 'We are well mounted,' he said, 'and you must have a good horse. Have you got one you can trust for such a trip?' I just sort of smiled to myself as I thought of that big dun mule which had come to be known as a part of me, and said: 'Yes, I've got a good one. The general said good night, and at once pulled in. I slipped out and gave my mule a good feed and bed and then hustled off to my quarters. I was sure to go through with the general, for I knew that mule was a stayer.

"Next morning at reveille I pulled up on my big dun mule. Custer and his men were ready; they were on Kentucky thoroughbreds. I saluted the general, and the mule pricked up his ears to listen to the music. The mule always felt well when he pricked up his ears. 'You ain't going to ride that thing, are you?' asked the general. 'Remember, we must make this trip in a hurry.' I told him I thought I would get there, and without another word we ricketed out. That horse of his was a dandy, and it hurried me to keep until we got out of the sand, about twenty miles. 'This is Smokey Hill fork,' says I, 'and the sand will make it bad traveling.' I put my spurs in the mule's side and shot out ahead. I was in the lead about one hundred yards for several miles, and kept the spurs on the skin all the time, but would pretend to be pulling back on the mule when the general was looking at me. I saw his horse was panting, and that he was about to draw up, so I slacked my mule until he came along. The men were trailing behind, and when he came up he said 'we'd better halt awhile and let the horses blow.' I said 'all right,' and climbed down. When the men reached us and rested we started again, and I took my place in the lead. Custer's horse was about played, but the dun mule skited along over the sand like a scared deer. Along in the afternoon we came to Pawnee fork, and I told Custer it was just fifteen miles to Fort Larned, and that the rest of the way was so direct he and his men could make it without danger of getting lost. 'Well,' said he, 'if the road is clear go on for God's sake don't tell any of the boys that Custer ever kicked against that mule. The next time one of you fellows want to ride a buffalo or a bear I won't say a word.' He never met me after that but what he asked about 'that dun mule.' He was one of the best men in the service against the redskins. Say, what a pity he got killed!"

"Yes," said White Beaver, "he was a good man. He had a great heart in him."

"By the way, wasn't he up in your part of the country when you got your name?" asked Buffalo Bill.

"I ain't certain," White Beaver answered.

"By the by," said Pony Bob, "I've heard as many stories about how you got that name as I have about how Buffalo Bill and I got ours. Come now; out with the straight of it."

"Well, it was just this way," replied White Beaver. "After I resigned my place as surgeon of the regiment and got to knocking around with Buffalo Bill, I fell in with the Sioux when they had the small-pox. You know they just rot away with the small-pox—die off like sheep, as the saying is. They had passed through the disease once before, and knew what it was. They were scared about to death when I got there. I happened to have a good deal of vaccine virus with me, and I told the chief that I could keep away the small-pox if they would do as I said. They agreed, and the next morning the work began. I vaccinated 1,000, and it was a funny job, too. They had never heard of such a thing before, and it bored the bucks like thunder to have to go through the operation, and it was a great show when the wounds began to get sore. They cut all sorts of capers. But the small-pox didn't hurt them, and, just to see whether it would or not, I waited among them until it had passed. (One day, as I was about to leave, the chief asked me to be at a certain place that night, as they would have a present for me. I went to the place they had mentioned, and they gave me an overcoat made of the skin of the white bear—the sacred animal of the Sioux. They did not understand vaccination, and thought that some spiritual influence of mine had kept them all from dying. They looked upon me as the only person who was

worthy to wear the trophy of their nation—the overcoat of white beaver. They had collected the skins and had the coat made while I was with them. I wore it a few times (I have it at home now), and the boys gave me the name 'White Beaver.' The Indians have never since called me anything but White Beaver."

"Well, now, that's a good story, Powell," said Buffalo Bill. "Of course it's an old song with you that I got my name by killing sixty-nine buffaloes on one hunt, and 4,280 in eighteen months for the construction force of the Kansas Pacific railroad. Suppose Pony Bob tells us how he got his name."

"Easy enough, and hard work at the same time," replied the little man. "For years, you know, I carried all the money of the Wells-Fargo company across the Sierras. I seldom had less than \$50,000 along, and would have been good picking for a broken winner. That was long before there were railroads, and under the circumstances I had to have good horses. There was one run of ninety miles over the range that I had to make every day. One morning, just as I was starting, a ranchman came along and said: 'Cockeye (I was known by that name then), I want to make this ore trip with you; I just to show you that your horse ain't any good compared with my new mule.' I said, 'All right,' and we started. The hills and the sand were too much for his mule. It pegged out on the last fifteen miles, and he had to come in behind. It was the best mule I ever saw, was as good as any two of my horses, but the old man said it was no account. You see, I had three dapple grays that were exactly alike, and I changed on the old fellow at three stations, but he was off after a drink of water or something. The boys made so much fun of his great mule, comparing it with my little pony, that I come to be called Pony Bob."

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TOBACCO AND CIGARS.

Talk With a Philadelphia Manufacturer.

Philadelphia Ledger.

One of Philadelphia's oldest cigar manufacturers—a man of forty-two years' experience in the business—chatted the other day about domestic and imported cigars.

"You are making the same mistake that so many Americans make," said he, when the superiority of Cuban tobacco was suggested. "It is a great error to suppose that the best tobacco comes from Cuba." He continued, "There is just as poor tobacco raised in Cuba as in this country. We have as good tobacco here as in the world, only with this difference: when compared with Cuba: there are raised good tobacco in proportionately large quantities. That is all. It is no better, only there is more of it. Take, for instance, the tobacco produced in Pennsylvania, Connecticut and Wisconsin. Among these tobaccos you can pick out as fine a quality as there is in the world, provided you are judicious enough to know tobacco when you see it. Unfortunately, good judges of tobacco are very few indeed. In a large crop, say of Pennsylvania tobacco, I can pick out fifty different kinds, ranging all the way up from the vilest 'cabbage leaf' to the finest that Cuba or elsewhere produces. If our people were as careful in their selection as the people of Cuba, they would buy the Cuban principle, there would be less talk of the superiority of the 'pure Havana.' The principle of the manufacture of cigars is a peculiar thing. It requires more judgment and manipulation to produce a good cigar than nine tenths of the people have any idea. The great point in making a good cigar is good judgment in selecting the tobacco, and in preparation of the tobacco for the workman, and proper treatment of the latter after it gets into his hands. The best part of a cured leaf of tobacco is its stem, and its roots is where the stem enters the leaf. Between these two points there is a regular gradation of excellence from the point of the stem to the roots. Bearing this fact in mind, it is obvious that the careful workman will construct his cigar, that the best part of the leaf will always point towards the end of the cigar which is lighted, and this fact applies to fillers, binders and wrappers. This is the Cuban plan, and they had for a long time the advantage of us in the manufacture of cigars. It was not until the present time, however, the Cuban method is adopted by many of our manufacturers, and the result is seen in much better cigars."

"The trouble with the Americans is the idea current that a good cigar can not be obtained unless you pay a high price for it. This is an error. I can make a selection of Pennsylvania tobacco and produce a cigar that will deceive an expert. I can make a domestic cigar and sell it for less than an imported cigar, and it will be at the same time superior to the latter. An imported cigar that is usually sold over the counter at 15 cents apiece, or two for 25 cents, is actually better than Havana about \$35 per 1,000; and at the latter rate, in Cuba, it can not be sold cheaper in this country on account of the heavy duty, cost of transportation, factor's commissions, profits, etc. A cigar that sells in Havana for \$32 is really a poor cigar, and as it is sold here two for a quarter, falls far below the domestic at the same price. To get a good cigar in Havana from \$60 to \$90 will have to be paid. Cigars are considered the best cigars in Cuba do not come to this country, or they come in such small quantities as to be hardly worth noticing. They are a heavy, strong cigar, have much more nicotine in them, and are not relished by Americans; they prefer mild tobacco. When an American says he wants a 'strong' cigar he means that he wants a 'dark' cigar, dark, but mild. If a manufacturer should start here and turn out a cigar, such as a Cuban would pronounce to be the best, he would find that there would be no market for such an article, and would have to close up."

"What I call a 'good' domestic cigar can be bought three for a quarter. Such cigars, if made by reputable firms, are superior to any 15 cent imported ones. Most all of the domestic cigars contain Havana tobacco, not, as I told you before, because the tobacco is superior to the American, but because the latter of the same grade is scarcer. The advantage which Cuba has is in the quantity of good tobacco not the quality. In all my experience I never knew the domestic cigar to have as good a reputation as it has today. The majority of the five cent cigars made in Philadelphia are not only a pretty good article, but a very good ar-

icle for the price, and I think that Philadelphia beats other parts of the country in this respect. Here the manufacturers pay attention to quality first and looks afterwards. In New York it is just the reverse. There they are all for looks. The quality of the cigars is not so good. The good five cent cigars are made of domestic wrapper and binders and part domestic and Havana fillers.

"As to the number of cigars consumed in this country annually I can only give an approximate figure, but I think that 2,000,000,000 would be about near the mark. As to what constitutes a good cigar, I could no more describe than I could tell you what makes a good judge of music. A judge knows by the 'grain' of the tobacco whether it is good or not, and that is all that can be said on the subject. It is all a matter of natural bent."

The same gentleman then told briefly the process of cigar manufacturing after the case of tobacco leaves has reached the factory. He said that after the case opened the tobacco was removed and dampened with water and allowed to remain in this condition for two or three days. When it becomes soft and silky by the creeping of the moisture to every part of the leaf. It is then repacked in the case and "re-sweated" for the purpose of removing the impurities and for obtaining a darker color. The mode adopted in re-sweating is to subject the tobacco to a temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit, and this takes from three to twenty days. After this the stem is taken out and the leaves are put in half pound packages with the points of the leaves together. These packages then go into the workmen's hands and are made up into cigars and packed in boxes. The packing, he said, is no small part of the business, for upon the packer devolves the duty of selecting cigars of identical shade and color a thing which requires very sharp eyes and much experience.

BLONDIS' RIDER.

The Story of One of the Most Daring Feats on Record—A Foot-hardy Adventure.

Signor Natalie, the man who rode on Blondin's back when he performed the most hazardous feat in history at Niagara falls in the city. Mr. Natalie is now a remarkable looking man, but he was, although his vigor is well preserved. He speaks English imperfectly, but can be quite readily understood. He is probably one of the greatest travelers in the country, most of his travels having been incident to the profession of catering to the amusement loving public. His travels began at an early age. He went over 18,000 miles in the service of Henry Ward Beecher, and was last year the advance agent of Salvini. "I first met Blondin," said he this morning to a Post-Dispatch reporter, "in the Bavell troupe, of which we were both members, way back in the fifties. He was, I think, about my age, and was not quite so tall as I, though very powerful. I think he was about five feet seven inches tall. We traveled all over the country with the troupe, and I remember we played here, at what I think was called the old Bates theater. Blondin's specialty was tight rope dancing and he was a wonderful performer. I guess there are people here who remember his performance. His most dangerous feat was to walk up a tight rope from the stage to the gallery of the theater, the incline being very steep. Well, while we were in New York state he thought what a big thing it would be to cross over Niagara on a tight-rope, so he left the troupe and made an arrangement with the railroad companies leading to the falls by which he was to give a performance there, and was to receive a certain amount on every ticket sold by the railroads. That was in the summer of 1861. A tremendous crowd of people gathered that day at the falls, and it was a nice day for our purpose. I was no performer, but acted, you know, in the capacity of manager. This particular event, however, Blondin carried something over on his back, and as nobody else had enough interest in the affair to risk his life, he enough faith in Blondin's strength and skill to take such desperate chances, I had to do the riding."

"So that if there had been an accident the whole troupe, manager and all, would have disappeared?"

"Yes, of course, Blondin wore tight shoes as some rope walkers usually do, except that he had on a sort of harness, so that I could reach around his neck and get a good grip without choking him, and so I could stick my legs through a pair of things like swings, and cross them in front of him without interfering with his arms or legs."

"How much did you weigh?"

"More than I do now—about 165 pounds, I think."

"Did he carry a balance pole?"

"Oh, of course. That was more necessary with me on his back than if he was walking by himself. He carried an unobtrusive heavy pole—had to, you know. I think it weighed either 75 or 100 pounds."

"The entire weight he carried was about 250 pounds!"

"About that. The rope was stretched across the river about where the new suspension bridge now stands—much closer to the falls than the old bridge, and was very confident and firm, but of course we both knew it was a desperate chance to take. He walked at first very slowly and regularly, but soon, feeling more settled, he made an occasional stop, stood on one leg, kissed his hand to the crowd, and did a few other such things as you have seen other rope-walkers do. I could see the water way down under us, and the crowd on either side, everybody watching us with faces that looked as though they were suffering. There was no cheering or applause while we were out over the water, and the roar of the falls, which seemed only a few yards away, would have prevented us from hearing very faintly even if there had been. It was a terrible few moments to me; more so to me than to Blondin, because he was used to that kind of danger and I was not. I did not move a muscle for fear of tripping him, and I can assure you, I felt mighty good when we reached solid ground again and the people began to yell and cheer and wave their handkerchiefs. You can form some idea of how big the crowd was when I tell you Blondin received \$2,000 for the performance. That gave us a big start, and not long afterward we went to London. Just before we started a young man we had as our treasurer ran off with \$2,000 of our money, and left us little except our trunks to travel on. We had hardly reached London before we were offered £150 each for 12 performances at the Crystal Palace. Our first performance drew 80,000 people, and one of the members of the present Abbey troupe was in the crowd, and remembers it well. We did a good deal of the same kind of work. Blondin carried

me on the rope several times, wheeled a barrow across while blindfolded, took a cook-stove across, stopping on the way, and the like. We visited all the countries of Europe, and in Spain I was more lionized than Blondin himself, which was natural. In a course of years he had made nearly \$100,000, and when I left him after six years of business he was a very wealthy man. He suffered once in a bankruptcy affair caused by a corner in wines, but he still has a fine future and lives in splendid style. I dined with him when in England last."

—[St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

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EATING POISON IN COURT.

Colonel John Van Arman's Famous Defense of a Murderess.

Chicago News.

Forty years ago Colonel John Van Arman, the famous criminal lawyer of Chicago, at a poisoned biscuit before a Michigan jury, and by that act secured the acquittal of a woman charged with attempting to murder her husband. From that time until now the story of the poisoned biscuit has been told throughout the northwest many hundreds of times by lawyers and others, but it has seldom been told correctly. So far as known the true version has never appeared in print. Since the incorrect story of the matter has received such wide circulation, a reliable narrative of the incident will doubtless prove readable to many.

Somewhere between the years of 1840 and 1845, the wife of a farmer of Hillsdale county, Mich., baked some biscuits one Sunday morning, and then went to church, leaving her husband to take dinner alone. As he sat down to his meal, however, a young farm laborer came to the house and joined him at his repast. Each ate of the newly-baked biscuits, but quickly found them unpalatable, and put them aside. Neither one had eaten more than half a biscuit. Both were soon taken violently ill and displayed strong symptoms of arsenical poisoning. The young man recovered from his sickness after some days of intense suffering, but the farmer lingered in a dying condition for more than a year, and finally expired.

Sixteen years before this time the farmer had married his wife for her money. She brought him \$3,000. He purchased a farm with this amount, and in a few years became quite fore-handled. His greatest enjoyment, apparently, was to annoy his wife in every conceivable manner. His favorite amusement was to play cards with her, and finally he beat her and beat it cruelly. They finally concluded to obtain a divorce from each other. The farmer agreed to give his wife a lien on his property for \$1,600 for the support of herself and her child. The mortgage was made out and placed in a lawyer's hands to await the divorce. The wife, in consideration of the mortgage, signed a quit claim deed to all her husband's property. On the eve of the granting of the divorce the farmer secured the mortgage and destroyed it, intending to put the deed on record after the divorce was granted. His wife discovered the cheat and stopped the divorce proceedings. She then deliberately planned to kill her husband. She sought reconciliation with her husband, and with him. One day she disguised herself in male attire, went to Hillsdale, and purchased a quantity of arsenic. This she mixed in a batch of biscuits, and left them for her husband to eat.

In a short time she was arrested. By law the woman could not be tried for murder because her husband lived more than a year after he was poisoned. She was indicted for poisoning, and put on trial in Hillsdale. Mr. Van Arman, then a young man, with a law office in Marshall, Mich., defended her. A young French chemist from Detroit testified against the accused. He was the only chemist that Detroit afforded, and he was a very competent one. This young man swore before the jury that he had analyzed several of the biscuits which the prisoner made for her husband's eating and had found they contained arsenic. From his quantitative analysis he swore positively that the husband had swallowed less than a grain of arsenic. The chemist further swore that a grain of arsenic was a deadly dose, and that even less might be fatal.

There were no railroads in Michigan at that early day, and there was not another chemist nearer than Chicago. Mr. Van Arman, who had studied chemistry in his youth, and had even delivered lectures on the subject, plainly saw that the Frenchman's testimony was woefully incorrect. Mr. Van Arman contended before the jury that a grain of arsenic was only a medicinal dose, and that the defendant's husband, therefore, must have become fatally ill through some other agency than poison in the biscuits. He could produce no expert testimony to substantiate his theory, because no experts were within reach. Knowing that a grain of arsenic would not seriously affect the human system, he caused a number of biscuits to be baked by a physician of the town, each of them containing a grain of the deadly substance. Fortunately for his client there were none of the original poisoned biscuits to be had, and the jury could not determine against the substitution of new ones.

Having proved by the physicians who made them that the biscuits were properly poisoned, Mr. Van Arman, near the beginning of his closing argument, gracefully ate one of them before the jury and continued to address them. He remained in their sight for several hours, and took pains to show them that he swallowed no antidote. The grain of arsenic produced no ill effect on him. The prosecuting lawyer could not argue away the plain fact of the harmless, though poisoned, biscuit which the jury had seen eaten. When the case was given to them they very promptly acquitted the prisoner.

The truth regarding the biscuits of which the farmer partook was that they contained four or five times as much arsenic as the young chemist swore they did.

The commonly accepted version of this famous story has always been that Mr. Van Arman ate one of the original poisoned biscuits just as an immediate improvement, and that, after making his bow to the jury, he hastened out of the courtroom and swallowed a vast quantity of emetics as soon as the door closed behind him. This incorrect story is said to be quite annoying to Mr. Van Arman, as it represents him resorting to a disgraceful trick to secure the acquittal of his client.

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