

A TEXAS GIRL

THE WAY PHYLLIS KEPT SHEEP CAMP AND PROVED HERSELF AN EMERGENCY PARTNER

By Grace McGowan Cooke

"Now, Mamsey, Buddy promised I might if you'd only just say yes. He said I'd be some help to him, and loads of comfort, please!"

Mrs. Mason looked at the round, eager face, and sighed. "Phyllis, love I don't want to cross you, but what use can a girl of 12 be in a sheep camp? And think of the danger and discomfort."

The red face to Phyllis' bow, and her big eyes filled with tears. "Don't, Buddy here to face the danger and discomfort, Mamsey!" she queried gently. "I want to go along to make him more comfortable, and take care of him."

"You brave little soul," whispered her mother, kissing her. "I haven't the heart to disappoint you—though I do think Howard should not have offered to take you."

Phyllis, accepting this as an explanation, gave her mother an enthusiastic hug and ran off to hunt up Buddy and tell him the great news. She was to go with him! She, Phyllis, was at last to be allowed to accompany this only and dearly beloved brother down into the Pecos country, where he went to "drift" his sheep.

Mrs. Mason was a widow and Howard, or Buddy, as Phyllis always called him, the oldest son, was the support and head of the household.

It was in the early 80s, and sheep had just been brought into west Texas. Much money was being made by the pioneers in the business, and ambitious young Howard Mason had been among the first to buy a bunch.

It is a little hard to understand now the extreme bitterness that the cattlemen of the section felt against the introducers of sheep. An near an explanation as one can give is that the cattlemen were obliged to own or lease large bodies of land, to drive water and build tanks, for cattle must have water.

The ill-feeling increased from the first, because just at the time sheep were brought in the cattlemen, with all their investments, were losing money, while the owners of sheep made it rapidly.

The cattlemen claimed that the sheep spoiled the pasture; that the cattle would not graze over the ground where they had been, and that, therefore, they were ruining the country, were at the bottom of all the troubles of the cattle trade, and must be driven out.

Phyllis and her mother naturally heard less of this talk than would have reached them if Howard had not been in the sheep business. Nobody was likely to speak about it, and they thought, as did Howard when he bought his sheep, that the bitterness of the feud was over.

So Phyllis, much happier than any queen rode away with Buddy one crisp October morning, mounted on her own small pony, Chiquito. A Mexican had gone on ahead with the sheep, and another was driving the outfit

let them send Manuel's boy down to take her place.

But Phyllis scouted the idea. She was growing brown and rosy living out of doors. Three days before the day they had planned to strike camp Howard came in greatly excited. "I can't stand this," cried Howard, "I found five dead sheep, and every indication that the bunch had been fired into the night before, though neither of them had heard the shot."

Phyllis was so angry that she scarcely thought of fear; but Howard looked at her with troubled eyes. "This is what I was afraid of, little sister," he said. "How should I ever face mother if any harm came to you down here?"

Phyllis managed a joke by way of trying to cheer Howard up. "You don't think they'll take me for a lamb, do you?" she laughed. "It's only mutton they're after, you know."

But that night showed her her mistake. Phyllis was sleeping in the tent; Howard, wrapped in his blanket, by the camp fire. Three fringes, worn by its day's labors, was apt to be sound asleep by 8 o'clock.

About 10, as Phyllis guessed, they were aroused by repeated noise in the direction of the flock. "I can't stand this," cried Howard, leaping to his feet. "Phyllis, I can't! You stay in the tent, and be dashed off in the darkness toward the sheep."

Left alone, Phyllis could think of nothing to do but to pile dry sticks on the fire. These burn like pitch pine and she soon had a bravo blaze.

It was well she had, for poor Howard could scarcely have found his way back without. Accidentally, or intentionally—the Masons never knew which—the party of cowboys who were firing into the sheep shot him. As he cried out and fell he heard one man call to another, in the dark. "Say, Sharty, you've missed the feller that owns these here sheep," and another voice replied, "I hope to the Lord I've killed him. Bet yet that'd stop his sheep drifting."

As they galloped away Howard tried to call after them. It seemed to him impossible that human beings should leave a fellow creature wounded, helpless as he was, and only a few miles from any succor. But his voice died in his throat; he fainted, and when he came once more to consciousness he was alone.

His first thought was of Phyllis. He groaned and sat up. There was Phyllis, snoring loudly away so that he thought for one terrible moment that the mercenary who had shot him had fired the camp. Then, across the levels, he saw the tent and his sister beside it. He must get to it. The hurt was in his shoulder; he was only faint, and after ten minutes of restless trying he did finally stagger into camp, only to faint again and fall almost at Phyllis' feet.

III. What a terrible night for the little girl and one which she will never forget, even should she live to be very old and have many adventures.

Howard was always delicious when ill and he now came out of his swoon only to fight imaginary assailants, try to hide his sister from approaching danger and so rave till morning.

Phyllis was a high-strung, imaginative child. She could not help believing, when Buddy pointed to the dark that whistled the

of shaft-like poles behind a pony. This she saw, and in the dark she did not just Buddy's precious head whining. Buckshot's nimble heels. Chiquito was so gentle, she hoped he would make no objection to the strange contrivance.

Bringing the two feet poles to where Howard lay in his stupor of weakness, she turned the edges of his blanket over them in a sort of bed and made it fast with a sail needle and twine, brought along for tent mending. Then, putting her brother's saddle on Chiquito, she carried a heavy strap



THE FREE ENDS OF THE POLES TRAILED OVER THE LEVEL GROUND.

Through the iron eye which was let into the end of each pole, and around the saddle girth, she started the pony with fear and trembling, and he did not unseatly around at the strange contrivance trailing behind him, but soon convinced by Phyllis' voice and hand, which he knew and loved, that it was all right, he trotted along complacently.

The free ends of the poles trailed over the level ground, and the hammock rocked gently. Phyllis walked behind Buckshot and Chiquito, with a hand on the bridle of each, and so hampered she could not walk with little success, to drive the head of sheep, which she had already lunched, before her.

Finally she mounted to her saddle, which she had put on Buckshot, riding him and Chiquito, and matters went somewhat better. Progress, however, was slow, and she found that she could not reach the place in which she hoped to make camp by noon. There had been a little seep hole back at the old camp, water not fit to drink or cook with, nor enough for the sheep, but it had served for the ponies; and now she must press on and reach the Three Cottonwoods on the edge of Anselmo divide or the animals would be giving out from thirst.

So she passed the sheep and left them intending to return when she had established Buddy comfortably under the shade of the cottonwoods. However, nobody can count upon what sheep will do. No sooner had the cavalcade passed than the sheep, under the leaders, full of curiosity, tossed up his head, and trotted after it, and soon the whole bunch was moving contentedly along, following Phyllis and her strange household as though she had been a bellwether.

This contented till so close to camp that when Phyllis finally overcame sheepish curiosity, and they stopped to graze, Phyllis decided to push on and leave them.

IV. The water of the Three Cottonwoods spring was poor and brackish enough. She dared not let her invalid drink it, except boiled into a weak coffee. Phyllis had had ambitious plans of pushing on in the cool of the evening and trying to better her location. She hoped, too, to save the water in the keg for the long stretch between the Cottonwoods and Trembling, where she feared she would have to camp twice without water.

But these were things she found impossible, she must go right back to gather and drive up her sheep.

The spirit of perversity seemed to have entered into and possessed these wretched creatures. Or perhaps they were only tired and tired, as indeed they had an excellent right to be. Phyllis coaxed, scolded, threw little clubs, and rode, and rode, while every muscle and nerve tingled with weariness.

Yet she was well and promptly repaid, for when she rode, dusty, yet successful, into camp, she found that Phyllis had not only perfectly collected, sitting up and trying to eat a bit of the lunch she had left carelessly exposed beside him.

Phyllis eagerly told him all about the happenings, of which he had but the most hazy recollection, and he promptly drew one conclusion which filled his little sister's heart with joyous pride. "You see, I don't see how those fellows didn't know I had any one with me, that's plain. And if I hadn't had a hand along who was looking after a man, I'd have died a horrible lingering death from thirst and starvation, for I'd never have gotten well enough to catch and mount my horse, or maybe to know enough to try to get on."

With Howard able to talk and counsel, the rest of the drive appeared easy to Phyllis; but it was far from proving so.

Her brother remained miserably weak and ill, and in spite of himself was forced to travel in the contrivance which he had at first laughed at as a characteristic "Phyllis invention."

The long, hot days, the discomfort, the unsuitable food, the pain of his hurt, were all telling on him, and Phyllis was determined to hurry the drives. Yet they could go no faster than the sheep could travel, and work as she might at the driving, that was slowly.

When they reached the head of Trembling, after a week's desperate work on Phyllis' part and much worry on that of Howard's, they were at the last stage of exhaustion themselves, ponies, sheep and—worst of all—provisions.

"Now," said Howard wistfully, when he had been refreshed by such a supper as Phyllis could contrive out of the last bits of bacon and meat she had—coffee there was none—now, if nothing else, we must try to hurry the drives. Yet they could go no faster than the sheep could travel, and work as she might at the driving, that was slowly.

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"Let's play it's going to be that way," answered Phyllis, seriously. "What would you want him to bring you particularly, if he came?"

"Some smothered chicken, I guess," began Howard, "and real bread and butter, just one of mother's nice liches, and I say, don't talk about it; I can't stand it, with no breakfast of any sort in sight, Phyllis."

"Never mind," comforted the little sister. "I just believe he will come. I made a wish to the new moon, and I think—"

Howard laughed uncertainly. "Go to sleep, little girl, and get all the strength you can, for you'll need it tomorrow. I don't see any way to do but to move this outfit as far as we can then. Water's good, but we can't live on it; and we can't graze with the sheep and ponies. We won't come so far only to break down, but the next day or two is a hard lookout."

When Howard waked in the morning Phyllis was nowhere to be seen. This, however, was not unusual, so he composed himself comfortably for another nap. He waked again, and found his horse and ponies, and finding his comrade still asleep, he began to feel a little injured, when he saw planned to his sleeve a note, in which he saw peculiar spelling.

He had scarcely read it when Manuel and Jose, in the wagon, accompanied by the one doctor the little frontier town boasted, came over the divide between him and home, and rattled down into the draw, with many hallos and greetings.

Howard's eyes were full of tears, as he tracked that little girl away in his pocket. She had gotten up after he was fast asleep and ridden away in the pitch darkness—his little sister, who had always been so afraid to be alone in the dark even—to bring him help, because as she said in her note, it had to be done, and she was "afraid" he would not let her "show up" in the morning. Phyllis never dwelt on the terrors of that trip—she had no need to; Howard, his mother

and all their friends were only too ready to accord her the respect, rights and privileges of a heroine without any prompting.

MARK TWAIN'S GERMAN.

The American Humorist's Speech to the Vienna Press Club.

Mark Twain was dined recently by the Vienna Press club. He made a speech there. Here is the Vienna Wiener Tageblatt's account of the affair.

It is seldom that a foreign author has found such a hearty reception in Vienna as that accorded to Mark Twain, who not only has the reputation of being the best humorist in the whole civilized world, but one whose personality arouses everywhere a peculiar interest on account of the genuine American character which sways it.

Mark Twain, or Mr. Clemens, as he is called in private life, has now been sojourning in our city for more than a fortnight, and those who have had the opportunity of intimate association with him learn soon that the "grand old man" is a highly amiable and plain man, a fellow, from whom nothing is so far as affectation, and a desire to appear interesting.

This was also present in response to the gathering of scribblers who met the renowned colleague from the far west of the United States on last Sunday. The Concordia was held at the Hotel de Ville, and the invited guests were the two directors of the Imperial theater, Dr. Burckhard and Herr Lehner; Imperial Counsel Dr. Wlassack, Director of the Vienna Theater, Lewinsky, Girkard, Alfred Gruesfeld, Van Dyk, Municipal Counsel Dr. Radler, the correspondent of the Vienna Times, Mr. Lavio, besides numerous foreign correspondents, principally representing American papers.

At 9 o'clock Mark Twain appeared in the salon, and amid a storm of applause took the seat at the head of the table. His characteristic bearing and flowing hair, and his admiring a youthful countenance, attracted the attention at once of all present. After a few formal convivial compliments, the president of the Concordia, Mr. Girkard, crossed, delivered an excellent address in English, which he wound up with a few French sentences. Then Mr. Tower was heard in praise of his august guest, and in the course of his remarks he said he could hardly find words enough to express his admiration of the presence of the popular American. They formed the greatest attraction of the evening, an impromptu speech by Mark Twain in the German language, which it is true he did not fully master, but which he nevertheless contrived sufficiently well to make it difficult to detect any harsh foreign accent. He had carried his speech, "Die Schrecken der Deutschen Sprache"—the horrors of the German language. At times he would interrupt himself in English and ask, with a stammering smile, "How do you call this word in German?" or, "I only know that in mother tongue." The festiveness lasted far beyond the wee sma' hours.

He was deeply touched, my gentlemen, here to hospitably received to be. From colleagues out of my own profession, in this from my own home so far distant land, my heart full of gratitude, but my poverty of German words forces me to greater economy of the expression. Excuse you, my gentlemen, that I read off, what I you say will.

"The German language speak I not good, but have numerous comsolisers me assured that I had written like an angel. Maybe, maybe—I know not. That comes later—when the dear God please—it has no hurry."

"Since long, my gentlemen, have I the passionate longing to speak in German to hold, but one has me it not permitted. Men, who no feeling for the art had, had me ever hindrances in the way and made me my dearest comsolisers by excuse, often by force. Always said these men to me: 'Keep you still your highness! Silence! For God's sake seek another way and do yourself obedient to it.'"

"In the present case, as usual, it is no difficult because, for me the permission to obtain. The comsolisers showed deeply that I had the permission to grant on account of a law which from the Concordia demands she shall the German language produce in full, and I had me in my power, this say could—might—dared—should? I am indeed the truest friend of the German language—and not only now, but from long ago."

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