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POOR DOCUMENT

Hemming, The Adventurer

BY THEODORE ROBERTS

(Continued.)

After dinner that night, in the palatial dining-room of the house occupied by the staff of the South American Cable Company, O'Rourke learned something of the major's past life. It was a sad and unedifying story. The major had been trained at West Point, and led his class in scholarship and drill, and had risen, with more than one distinction, to the rank of major. But all the while he had made his fight against drink, as well as the usual handicaps in the game of life. He had married a woman with wealth and position superior to his own, who had admired him for his soldierly qualities and fine appearance, and who, later, had been the first to desert him. Then followed the foreign consular appointments the bitter and ever-increasing debaucheries, and at last the forced retirement from his country's service. Now he lived on a small allowance, sent him weekly by his family. O'Rourke began to understand the old man's fretful and disconcerting moods.

At a late hour the superintendent of the staff ushered O'Rourke to a big, cool room on the second floor.

"Make this your home," he said, "and we'll let you in on the same footing as ourselves. Hemming occupied this room last. There is his bed; there is his hammock; and, by Jove, there are his slippers. You can have your traps brought up in the morning."

Thus did Bertram St. Ives O'Rourke become an inmate of an imposing mansion in Pernambuco, with moderate charges to pay and good company to enliven his hours.

CHAPTER VI.

Cuddlehead Decides on an Adventure.

Toward noon of a stifling day, the major and Mr. Cuddlehead met in the square by the water-front. Cuddlehead greeted the major affably. As the major was very thirsty he returned the salutation. A glance through the door at his elbow displayed, to Mr. Cuddlehead's uncertain eyes, a number of round tables with chairs about them. He took out his watch and examined it.

"Eleven-thirty—I always take something at half-past eleven. I hope you will join me," he said.

"I seldom drink before lunch," replied Farrington, "but as this is an exceptionally dry day—"

They passed through the doorway and sat down at the nearest table.

"Now I will find out what is doing," thought Cuddlehead, and gave his order. But for a long time the major's tongue refused to be loosened. He sipped his liquor, and watched his companion with eyes of unfriendly suspicion. Cuddlehead, in the meantime, exhibited an excellent temper, put a few casual questions, and chatted about small things of general interest.

Now Cuddlehead had heard, from the captain of the mail-boat, something about a wealthy American with a bee in his bonnet and a pretty daughter, somewhere within reach of Pernambuco. The story had grown upon him, and a great idea had taken shape in his scheming mind. Why shouldn't he, if all that people said and wrote about American girls was true? By gad, he'd make a shot at it. He'd show them how to spend their money in more interesting places than the back of nowhere. As soon as the major began to look more friendly, under the influence of the crude whiskey, he produced his cigar-case,—a fat black leather affair, with an engraved silver plate on the front of it,—and offered the old man an excellent weed of Havana. The major took it, glancing keenly, but swiftly, at the initials on the case as he did so. "P. doesn't stand for Cuddlehead," he thought, but said nothing.

"Tell me something about the man who owns a whole country, somewhere back here, in the bush," urged Cuddlehead, lightly. The old man's muddled wits awoke and jerked a warning. Here was some scum of Heaven knows where, wanting to interfere in a better man's business.

"What's that, my boy?" he asked, looking stupidly interested.

"Oh, it is of no importance. It just struck me as being a bit out of the way," replied the other.

"What?" inquired the major.

"The place Mr. Tetson hangs out," laughed Cuddlehead.

"It's all that, my boy," replied Farrington, gleefully; then he stared, open-mouthed. "At least," he added, "it may be, but what the hell are you gabbing about?"

"Sorry. Had no idea it was a secret," retorted the younger man.

The major's quotations flooded to his head. His face took on a darker shade of crimson. His hands twitched on the table.

"Secrets! You'd—n little sneak," he roared, staggering up and overturning his chair. The expression of insolence faded from Cuddlehead's face. He dashed out of the place without paying for the bottle of whiskey. On the pavement he paused, long enough to compose his features and straighten his necktie. Then he went to the ship-chandler and gathered a wealth of information concerning Harris William Tetson. But he heard no mention of Hemming being in the country, which was, perhaps, just as well. He was certainly a sneak, as more than the major had called him, but he was not altogether a duffer. He could look after himself to a certain extent. He decided to keep Pernambuco until later, and go now for bigger game. He made his plans speedily, fearing another meeting with the major, and early next morning started along the coast, inside the reef, as a passenger aboard a native barcassa. The voyage to the mouth of the river Plado would take the better part of a day. He would wait in the little village for Mr. Tetson's steam-launch, which made weekly runs to the coast for mail and supplies.

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CHAPTER VII.

Hemming Learns Something About His Army.

In Pernamba, up the Plado, life had taken on a brighter aspect for at least two of the inhabiants. Marion Tetson was thankful beyond the power of speech, because the fever had left Hicks. True, it had left him thin and weak as a baby, but his very helplessness made him dearer in her eyes. That one who had been so big and strong should ask her to lift his head whenever he wanted a drink, and should have his pillow turned for him without displaying a sign of rebellion, stabbed her to the innermost soul with wonder and pity. Hicks was happy because she was near him all day, her eyes telling what her lips were longing to say, if his dared to question. Then he could half remember some things which were as part of his dreaming—wonderful, magic things with all the glamour of dreams, free from the weariness of the fever. But he said nothing of these just then to Marion though she read his thoughts like a book while he lay there very quiet, smiling a little, his gaze following her every movement. To Hemming also he wore his heart on his sleeve. Of this fact he was blissfully ignorant. Mrs. Tetson often came to his room and gave him motherly advice about not talking too much and not thinking too hard. Hicks felt no desire to talk, but as for thinking, Lord, she might as well have told him to stop breathing. He thought more in ten minutes now than he had before in any three hours. They were comforting thoughts, though, for the most part, and Marion knew that they did him more good than harm.

Hemming kept up a show of interest in the army. He lectured the officers and drilled the men, and dined almost every night at the mess, which he had remodelled on the English plan. But most of the time he kept his eye on the President. It was a job he did not care about,—this prying into another man's business,—but somehow he could not put it by him, things were so obviously out of order. He kept his monocle polished his ears open, and his mouth shut. He was always willing to listen to the President's dreary conversations. The life lacked excitement for one who had run the gauntlet of a hundred vital dangers. He had given up all special correspondence, but did a good deal of fiction when the mood was on him. The longing to return to a more active existence grew stronger every day, but his friendship for the Tetsons and for Hicks kept him at his post.

Hemming's morning coffee was always served in his room at six o'clock. That left him about two and a half hours of the cool of the day in which to work. Breakfast, with, its queer dishes of hot meats, and claret, tea, and coffee to drink, came on about nine. Breakfast was a family affair, and after it every one retired for a nap. Hemming usually drank his coffee before he dressed, but one morning Smith found him pacing the room, booted and spurred, and attired in stained breeches and a faded tunic. There were cigar ashes on the floor beside the bed. A volume of Stevenson's "Men and Books" lay open on the pillow.

"Fill my flask," he said, "and let the President know that I may not be back until evening."

"Very good, sir," replied the valet. "Will I order your horse, sir?"

While the man was out of the room Hemming pulled open a drawer in his desk in search of revolver cartridges. The contents of the drawer were in a shocking jumble. In his despatch-box at large among his papers he found half a dozen cartridges, a cigarette from the army and navy stores at home, and a small boy of black ribbon. He picked up the bow, kissed it lightly, and instead of restoring it to the box put it in his pocket.

"She liked me well enough in those days—or else she did some—ah—remarkable acting," he said.

Turning on his heel he found Smith in the doorway.

"Your horse is ready, sir," said the man. Hemming blushed, and, to hide his confusion, told Smith to go to the devil. He rode away with an unloaded revolver in his holster.

"It must be a pretty rotten country," soliloquized the valet, "when a single-eye-glassed, right-about-turn warranted-not-to-shrink-wear-or-tear gent like that gets buggy before breakfast."

The commander-in-chief rode from the gardens by the same gate at which he had entered for the first time only a month before. He did not return the salute of a corporal in the door of the guardhouse. He did not notice the little brown soldier at the gate, who stood at attention upon his approach, and presented arms as he passed—which was, perhaps, just as well, for a freshly lighted cigarette smoked on the ground at the man's feet. He turned his horse's head northward. On both sides of the street arose the straight brown holes of the royal palms, and high above the morning wind sang in the stiff foliage. At the end of the street he turned into the path by which he had first entered the town. The country folk urged their horses into the bush that he might pass, and he rode by unheeding. In their simple minds they wondered at this, for the fame of his alert perception and flashing eye-glass had gone far and near. Of his own accord the white stallion came to a standstill before a hunt. Hemming looked up, his reverie broken, and his thoughts returned to Pernamba.

A woman came to the narrow doorway and greeted him with reverence. He recognized in her the woman who had first welcomed him to the country. He dismounted and held out his hand.

"How is the little fellow?" he asked. At that the tears sprang into her eyes, and Hemming saw that her face was drawn with sorrow. He followed her into the dim interior of the hut. The boy lay in a corner, upon an untidy bed, and above him, stood the English doctor. The two men shook hands.

"I can clear him of the fever," said the doctor, "but what for? It's easier to die of fever than of starvation."

"Starvation," exclaimed Hemming "why starvation?"

"The senor does not know," said the woman. "It is not in his kind heart to ruin the poor, and bring sorrow to the humble."

"But," said the doctor, looking at Hemming, "to Englishmen of our class, a nigger is a nigger, say what you please, and the ends-of-the-earth is a place to make money and London is the place to spend it."

The soldier's face whitened beneath the tan.

"Don't judge me by your own standards, Scott, simply because you were born a gentlemen," he said.

"Oh," laughed the doctor, "to me money would be of no use, even in London. I find the ends-of-the-earth a place to hide my head."

(To be continued.)

Catarrh of the Stomach.

A Pleasant, Simple, but Safe and Effectual Cure for It.

Catarrh of the stomach has long been considered the next thing to incurable. The usual symptoms are a full or bloating sensation after eating, accompanied sometimes with sour or watery risings, a formation of gases, causing pressure on the heart and lungs and difficult breathing, headaches, fickle appetite, nervousness and a general played out, languid feeling.

There is often a foul taste in the mouth, coated tongue and if the interior of the stomach could be seen it would show a slimy, inflamed condition.

The cure for this common and obstinate trouble is found in a treatment which causes the food to be readily, thoroughly digested before it has time to ferment and irritate the delicate mucous surfaces of the stomach. To secure a prompt and healthy digestion is the one necessary thing to do and when normal digestion is secured the catarrhal condition will have disappeared.

According to Dr. Harlanson, the safest and best treatment is to use after each meal a tablet, composed of Diastase, Aseptic Pepsin, a little Nux, Golden Seal and fruit acids. These tablets can now be found at all drug stores under the name of Stuart's Dyspepsia Tablets and not being a patent medicine can be used with perfect safety and assurance that healthy appetite and thorough digestion will follow their regular use after meals.

Mr. R. S. Workman, Chicago, Ill., writes: Catarrh is a local condition resulting from a neglected cold in the head, whereby the lining membrane of the nose becomes inflamed and the poisonous discharge there from passing backward into the throat reaches the stomach, this producing catarrh of the stomach. Medical authorities prescribed for me for three years for catarrh of stomach without cure, but today I am the happiest of men after using only one box of Stuart's Dyspepsia Tablets. I cannot find appropriate words to express my good feeling. I have found flesh, appetite and sound rest from their use."

Stuart's Dyspepsia Tablets is the safest preparation as well as the simplest and most convenient remedy for any form of indigestion, Catarrh of Stomach, biliousness, sour stomach, heartburn and bloating after meals.

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All persons having any legal claims against the above estate are requested to file the same with the undersigned Solicitor, at his Office Number 100 Prince William Street, Saint John, New Brunswick; and all persons indebted to the said estate are requested to make immediate payment to the said Solicitor.

Dated the 22nd, day of September, A. D. 1904.

STEPHEN B. BUSTIN, Solicitor.

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