



Anyone looking into the smoking room of the steamship "Santiago" of New York, homeward bound from Panama, one blustery evening some five years ago, would have discovered a group of the gentlemen passengers chatting over their cigars and sherry.

Stories were the order of the evening, and a short dark Mexican had just related an adventure warranted to "raise hair on the baldest head." After the pause and comments which usually follow a thrilling tale, attention was drawn to a Canadian, who had not yet contributed a story. When asked for one he declined; but upon the request being pressed he reluctantly consented.

"Well, gentlemen, said he, 'since you insist I'll take my turn.

"Although I am a native of Canada, the larger part of my life has been spent in Chili. In fact I am now returning to my home for the first time since I left it—nearly thirty years ago—a boy of seventeen.

"As Chili was not thickly settled then, and very few of the people were educated, I found myself rising rapidly, and before I was thirty was the owner of a large tract of land, situated principally in the hills near the Andes. Being the owner of these estates, I was naturally looked upon by my tenants as a sort of magistrate. It was my duty to see that all offenders were punished, the few government officials generally being afraid to act, and I can assure you my duties as administrator of justice were none too light.

"One spring, reports came pouring in of the ravages committed upon my property by a human fiend, whose depredations and horrible crimes had earned him the reputation of being the worst outlaw in Chili. He was a German by birth, and, after having murdered his officer and deserted from a German war vessel, had served in and deserted from two other navies and one army, his exit in each case being marked by one or more bloody deeds.

"Having by some unfortunate chance come to Chili, he committed several crimes and fled to the mountains for refuge. Many weak attempts had been made to capture him, all of which had failed, and had only served to increase his thirst for blood and his desire for vengeance.

"Pursued and hunted down, he had gone from place to place. He lived in the most impenetrable recesses of the hills and descended on marauding expeditions upon the country round. Those who had seen him said that he was an abnormally short and heavily built man, and was covered with hair from head to foot. Thus it was that he was given the nickname of 'Gorilla'.

"Several times I had heard that this brute was living upon my property, and shortly many stories of his crimes were brought to me. I repeatedly informed the government authorities, but their one weak attempt at capturing him was not worthy of notice, and I saw that the duty devolved upon me.

"One morning there came to me a noted braggart of the neighborhood, who, though a worthless fellow, had through boasting words made himself a hero in the eyes of the credulous natives. He upbraided my neglect under the circumstances and declared that he was going himself on an expedition against our enemy, sneeringly inviting me to accompany him, and to his utter surprise I agreed. As we could start none too soon I suggested setting out at once.

"'No,' said he, 'I hadn't intended going to-day. I am not prepared.'

"'Well, then, what do you say to to-morrow morning?'

"'Oh, there's no great hurry, and two or three days makes no great difference.'

"'Well, I intend to go this morning,' said I, 'and if you're afraid don't come.'

"During our conversation several of the natives who had heard him bragging of his intention, had come up and applauded my decision. Noticing our audience Pasqual said in a loud voice:

"'All right; this morning be it, then. I'm ready for the Gorilla at any time.'

"Accordingly we made some necessary preparations and set out on horseback for the highland haunt of this human monster. The natives directed us to a narrow winding path which we were to follow.

"But an unforeseen difficulty awaited me. No sooner were we well on our road than my companion demurred, and finally openly avowed his fear. By means of taunts and reasoning, however, I eventually succeeded in urging him onward.

"The path through the woods had so far been plainly marked and easy to follow, even upon horseback. But, after ascending a steep hillside for some distance, it grew narrower, and finally led us into a tall, thick growth of canebrake.

"When we had ridden some distance in silence I was startled by hearing a plunging and crackling in the canes behind me. Looking around, I saw my companion apparently trying to turn his horse, which was kicking and jumping among the canes.

"'What are you trying to do, you fool?' cried I.

"'He did not answer, but spurred his struggling horse the more.

"'It was no time for trifling. I drew my revolver and covered him, calling upon him to stop. He looked up, and seeing his cowardly attempt at desertion thwarted, reined his horse into the path and begged me to lower my weapon.

"'Now, Pasqual,' said I, 'I know well that you are a despicable coward and I should be better off without you; but since you were so eager to come on this expedition, come you shall, and if you make another attempt to run off I will shoot you as surely as you stand there!'

"Pasqual assured me in a frightened voice that he would do my bidding in every respect, and we once more pursued our journey through the canes.

"Telling Pasqual to ride as closely behind me as possible, I gave directions what he was to do should we be successful in finding the 'Gorilla,' and we again rode on in silence.

"On, on, we went, riding steadily up the slope, always among the canes. It seemed as if they would never come to an end.

"Just as we were wondering whether the weary journey through the brake would ever cease, a sudden turn in the path revealed to us a small clearing, in the centre of which stood a tiny house. A more secluded spot could hardly be imagined, and the clearing was invisible from the path at a distance of five yards. So suddenly did we come upon it that before we had time to rein in our horses we found ourselves in the open space before the hut.

"We were in the 'Gorilla's' territory at last! The enclosure could not have been more than twenty-five or thirty feet square, but though small it was entirely devoid of shrubbery. In the centre stood the 'Gorilla's' abode, a miserable hovel built of cane with a thatched straw roof.

"Hardly had we noticed these details when at the small open doorway there appeared the head and shoulders of our