

## ARMS AND THE WOMAN

[BY REX E. BEACH.]

Illustrated by George Gibbs.

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"Here's the point," said Hoffmeister. "If we send a messenger they'll know there's trouble aboard. The stage has been stuck up so often it's getting habitual. We've got to use ingenuity. I've wired to Horn for two Wells-Fargo men. They'll meet you at the second relay, so you pull out alone, as usual, and pick 'em up there."

Shorty nodded acquiescence. "All the same, I ain't weighed down with suppressed grief at being duenna for thirty thousand dollars, even for twenty miles—that is, not in the immoral vicinities of this neighborhood."

"Oh, there's no danger this side of Number Two. I'll be on the Big Grade if it's anywhere."

"Let me impress on you once and forever that there ain't no danger to me in neither place—I'm the driver. Black Bart knows that the olive wreaths of peace and concord is graced on to me, and sproutin' like a sparrowgrass. It's the messenger that fills the exactin' duties of imitatin' the back end of a shootin' gallery."

Hoffmeister and his companion drank; the large man wetting the bottom of his glass with the vitriol, and tossing it off wryly; the other filling his to the brim, and rolling it in his mouth like a toothbrush.

"I suppose," said the impatient, having coughed the paralysis from his vocal cords, "you saw the girl that came up yesterday with Newcomb?"

"What! Girl here? In this camp?" Shorty showed extreme trepidation. "Why, I got off up here on purpose to get chide of 'em."

"Yes, I only caught a glimpse of her myself, but what I saw looked mighty pretty."

The driver groaned. "I'll be just my internal luck to run slap into her, an' if I do, I'll stampee like a buffalo calf, see if I stampee."

"What's the matter with you?" "Well, it's this way. The minute I see skirts, I go plumb dizzy—my eyes hang out like loose uster buttons, an' them little red springs in my mouth goes drrr till my throat feels like I was beatin' carpets in a closet. My speech splinters up and sticks in my lilk. I was eatin' sun perch in the dark."

A man inserted his head through the door and yelled: "All aboard!"

The two men carried the messenger box from the rear room, lifting it on to the boot. The postmaster tossed a dyspeptic mailbag into the stage body, and the driver scrambled to his throne with dignity. The heel of his gathered his reins, the voice of "Peg-Leg," the landlord, came to him.

"Hey! Wait a minute—passenger fer you, Shorty."

There was a rustle and scurry, and the Jehu's widening gaze beheld a flashing, white-clad, feminine figure, petite and pie-resque. It launched itself upon him, more dreadful than a plague, and he froze in his seat.

"Oh! I want to ride up there," she cried brightly, and Shorty's heart turned to water. He slid dumbly along till he crowded the edge, while she was lifted by willing hands, settling beside him like a bit of thistle-down.

"All right, Shorty!" said "Peg-Leg." "Good-bye, Miss, Cooie!" again, and the populace of Forest Hill doffed felt and fur to sweep the ground in a Chesterfieldian salute. The men at the rearing horses' heads watched the driver vainly waiting the signal to let go, but his eyes were roving helplessly. He licked his lips and opened his mouth. There issued—silence, broken only by the tramp of the dancing animals.

Theatricality, it was a stagewait, silent, awaiting a great—perhaps with a delighted audience grinning its approval. He swallowed desperately, the precipice of his esophagus like an ore-skip diving into a shaft. His body doubled convulsively, and there came a cough, unheeded and sharp—as sudden, metallic, and loud as the exhaust of a switch engine on a frosty morning. Men and horses leaped together, and they were snatched clattering into full flight. Simultaneously there was a jolting crash and a muffled squeak from the girl.

Oh, lasting disgrace! Shorty had taken out the corner post of the hotel porch.

Under her taciturn loquacity the dust dissolved in Shorty's mouth, the constricted paralysis left his larynx, and sounds born of intellect began to issue, hoarse and unintelligible at first, but approximating rhetoric of a kind.

Never in his life had the little man been so long in the company of the unknown sex, and now this unwanted intimacy with its most lovely member, together with the sense of being in a measure her protector, stimulated him strangely. His chest swelled round and full and he thought:

"Grand! If the boys could only see me now! I ain't sweatin' a bit."

Occasionally he stole furtive sideways glances, then stared fixedly at the thrifty road ahead, planting the impression in his memory that they

might later grow and bloom into marvelous reminiscence.

"Do you always carry a gun?" she inquired, gazing doubtfully at his holster, from which protruded a curved ivory pistol butt smoothed by much usage.

"Yep I learned the habit as a baby."

"It's an awfully big one, isn't it?" "Sure, an' she jumps like a goat, too. First time I shot her, she bucked me through a fence, an' then kicked at me twice under the bottom rail. We've got acquainted now, though. Want to try her?"

"No! no!" she hastily disclaimed the girl. "It might frighten the horses."

"Not on your life—they're used to it. 'Tain't over two weeks ago that Black Bart shot up the Auburn Kid

live quite a time, as much in some cases as two weeks, if the water is very pure. But if the water is full of other kinds of germs, especially sewage germs, the typhoid bacilli seem to die out much faster; again because of the greater competition they have to face. Now, please don't interpret this as an argument for contamination of our water with sewage to make it safer.

The only way to keep water supplies really safe is to keep all sewage out of them.

With meat, because meat is solid, not a liquid, like milk and water, the germs that get on it from the butcher's hands and mouthspray, from the knives, the air of the room, from flies, from the paper used to wrap it in, from everything it comes in contact with, lie at first on the surface. Because the meat is only partially solid, however, these germs grow in after a time and reach deeper and deeper into the meat. Just as in the case of water and milk, etc., the exact changes that may be produced depend on the exact kinds and combinations of the germs that may fall upon the meat; sometimes, on germs present in the animal's body when it was killed. Whether the meat is good or worse or better for these changes depends on the kinds and number. No one likes perfectly fresh meat; it is not very digestible then; and usually meat must be hung some time to become palatable and reach the best point for consumption; one week to several weeks according to temperature and other things. Meantime bacterial decomposition is going on, ripening the meat. This ripening process, these changes of the more delicate kinds, if present, tend to die out, just as they do in standing water or in souring milk. Some few spore-formers, again, may survive just as they may in water or in milk.

But here is the very important distinction between water and milk on the one hand and meat on the other: If there is an outbreak of typhoid due to water, the health department, very properly, urges the public to boil the water, assuring them that this way they will kill the germs, and those who drink only boiled water escape any danger of infection through the water. If there is the outbreak of typhoid due to meat, the health department very properly recommends pasteurization to kill the germs of tuberculosis. Pasteurization heating the milk, not to the boiling point (212 degrees Fahrenheit) but only to 140 degrees Fahrenheit, for 20 to 30 minutes.

In the case of meat, however, there is no need to urge that it should be cooked, for we nearly all do that anyway; sometimes boiling it, sometimes roasting or frying it, and only those few persons who eat raw meat (not merely rare) run any risk of the ordinary infectious diseases from meat.

It is true that very occasionally there are disease germs present in meat that boiling, roasting or frying will not kill. But these are not the germs of our ordinary diseases at all; and most of them cannot be recognized by meat inspection either. The meat inspection to prevent tuberculosis was abandoned in the United States, because it could not be carried to the point of

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be often carried by milk. It was not carried by sour milk, even if the milk was only slightly sour, and the explanation is the souring, that is, the acid production by the regular lactic acid germs, killed off the very delicate typhoid germs. Only fresh milk is really dangerous so far as disease germs are concerned, because in old, sour milk they have been killed by the regular lactic acid germs, not produce any special disease, but can affect the milk. The benefits of sour milk as a diet have been advocated, based on this principle, for it was proposed that by killing off the great deal of sour milk, the intestinal bacteria we usually have might be replaced by the lactic acid bacilli; and these would make so much acid in our intestines that the disease germs we swallow would be killed out before they could do us harm, just as they are killed out in sour milk. However, it is quite difficult to get the sour milk bacteria (or germs) to replace those in our intestines completely; and they do not kill all the germs in milk, especially certain very tough germs, known as spore-formers. These germs lie dormant while the lactic acid germs are growing, but if the latter are killed off (as by boiling or long standing) the spore-formers grow and putrefy the milk.

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TWO FIGURES HAD ARISEN—ARMED, MASKED.

might later grow and bloom into marvelous reminiscence.

"Do you always carry a gun?" she inquired, gazing doubtfully at his holster, from which protruded a curved ivory pistol butt smoothed by much usage.