

JIM TRENBAR'S HARD LUCK.

A Story of Early Life in the Lone Star State.

Where It Was a Greater Crime to Steal a Horse Than to Kill and Murder Human Beings.

From Saturday's Daily.

In the strong, clear light of the August morning the sheriff of Bandera county and his deputy rode out from the timberland that skirted the river bottom and drew rein. Before them lay the prairie burned brown by the sun stretching away to meet the faint gray lines of the horizon.

The sheriff's face was lean and dark with the sharpened, watchful look of a timber wolf on the trail of its prey. His eyes glanced keenly from underneath the hand which he had raised to shade them, as he scanned the prairie long and attentively.

The deputy shifted to an easier position in the saddle and pushed the sombrero back from his heated forehead. He was a young man with a heavy, stolid cast of features. The curling ends of his red-brown hair reached almost to his shoulders. His long, muscular throat rose like a column from the loose collar of his coarse wool shirt.

The stout little broncho upon which he sat pulled peevishly at the bridle and blew the foam from its nostrils. They had traveled far and fast since sunrise and there was still the prospect of a long, hard gallop before them. The deputy felt that his strength needed reinforcement. This fact was the more vigorously impressed upon him since the means of reinforcement was at hand. He drew a flat, black bottle from his hip pocket and held it up to the light. It showed a little more than half-full. He put it to his mouth and drank with evident zest of the contents. The sheriff took his hand from his eyes and eyed him thirstily.

"Have some, Bill?" the deputy said, speaking with his soft, lazy drawl and extending the bottle toward the sheriff, who received it without comment and drank deeply in his turn. The deputy wiped his mouth on his wrist and gave a hitch to his cartridge belt.

"Well, what's the next move?" he asked, when the bottle had been restored to its former security in his pocket.

The sheriff leaned forward, resting his elbow upon the pommel of his saddle and rubbing his prominent, unshaven chin thoughtfully with the palm of his hand. His narrow, deep-set eyes were contracted until only a tiny gleaming line of light showed between the lids.

"Our man's gone north," he said, at length. "Struck out straight for the Rio Grande. He's got a good horse under him and five hours the start; but—" He straightened up suddenly and thrust his feet farther into the stirrups.

"We're after him, and it's a good man that can git away from the sheriff of Bandera county with a hull skin. I reckon he'll make for the north fork. He won't trust himself to the open prairie in broad daylight. If I can head him off before he gits thar—" He looked at his deputy, who answered with a look that said plainly they could not.

The sheriff touched his wild-eyed little mare with a spur. She plunged forward, with the deputy's broncho close upon her track. A fine yellowish dust lifted itself from the withered grass stalks and weeds and hung about them as they rode. The sun poured its level rays full upon the parched and lifeless prairie and upon the two men galloping with grim set faces in the pursuit of man and horse.

All day long the man upon the black horse had been steadily making for the Mexican border. It was nearing sunset now. The man's slight figure dropped wearily in the saddle. His head had sunk upon his breast and the reins lay loosely in his relaxed fingers. The black horse still galloped, but slowly. His nose was thrust far forward and either wide nostril gave a glimpse of the red within. Great flakes of foam dripped from his bit or floated back upon the wind of his motion against his quivering shoulders.

All day long he galloped—galloped almost without pause, under the burning southern sun, across the scorched earth toward the creek there, whose gleaming shallow tide the sunset had colored until it had looked like a trail of blood. They had long since left the prairie behind them. Here the ground was newer, broken by sloping hillocks and clumps of chaparral and here and there a scrub oak, afford-

ing excellent advantages for hiding. He must be keen of scent indeed who would ferret out a man in such a place—keen of scent and sharp of eye, with a long and efficient training in thief-catching.

With a deep-drawn breath of relief Trenbar brought the black horse to a standstill in the shadow of a clump of chaparral and slipped heavily down from the saddle. He was all but spent with hunger and weariness and nervous tension. His face was pale and his knees shook under him. Yet his first thought was not for himself, but for the animal beside him.

He removed both saddle and bridle and rubbed down the tired limbs. Then he led the horse by the mane down to the creek, and they drank together—Trenbar throwing himself prone upon the sand with his lips laid to the water. It was so still there in the low western light the ripple washing faintly, the horse's heavy breathing as he drew the water in long draughts—these were the only sounds, but they smote the air with thrilling distinctness.

Once the horse flung up his head with a start and thrust his head sharply forward in the attitude of listening. In that moment Trenbar's heart seemed to stand still, but he smiled when the horse dropped his nose again upon the water.

"Poor old Chief," he said; "I reckon you're as nervous as I be."

Lower and lower sank the sun until it rested a globe of fire upon the rim of the horizon. Soon it would drop from sight and night would be upon the prairie. Trenbar at full length on the grass in the shadow by the chaparral watched it drowsily, thinking that before it set again he and Chief would be safe beyond the Rio Grande. Five hours the start and the fleetest horse in southwestern Texas to carry him had given him an advantage which even the sheriff of Bandera county would find it hard to cope with, and yet—

To use his own expression Trenbar had been born under an unlucky star. He had drifted down to Bandera county from a point far north a year before bringing with him all he possessed in the way of goods and chattles—the black horse Chief.

Chief soon won for himself a reputation both for beauty and speed and Trenbar received many offers to sell him one and all of which he put aside for the horse was dear to him beyond anything on earth. Many and many a time he had gone hungry that Chief might be fed and well nigh barefoot that Chief might be shod. Dire indeed would be the necessity which would bring about a separation between them.

For a time Trenbar worked with a fair amount of industry at whatever he could find to do. He had tried pretty much everything in the money-making process, and nothing to success, for the reason perhaps that his restlessness and natural idleness would not allow of his remaining long in any one place. Then he fell into evil ways among the ranchmen and cowboys. He drank freely and when he had money gambled recklessly, so that he was soon reduced to the lowest depths of poverty and despair.

One night when he had been drinking more than usual he sold the black horse to a ranchman by the name of Cronwright for \$100 in gold and a shy little broncho with a heavy brand on the left flank and an execrable tendency toward bucking. He came to his senses the next day and marched back to Cronwright with the pony and money demanding his horse in return. The ranchman laughed in his face and as Trenbar broke out into fierce maledictions against the injustice of the thing had drawn a revolver bidding him sternly to begone; Trenbar went but he left Chief's purchase price behind him. Then and there he resolved that come what would he would have his horse again at any cost. Cronwright anticipating his purpose threatened him with lynching—the common fate of the horse thief.

True to his word two weeks later Trenbar entered the corral at dead of night and took Chief out. The horse was a willing captive. He knew his master and loved him as perhaps Trenbar had never been loved by anything, brute or human, since his half-bred mother died, leaving him still a child, to shift for himself. Trenbar remembered his mother but vaguely. Yet as he lay there beneath the chaparral watching, while the cool purple shadows drifted over the hot earth filling all its hollows to brimming over, he wished that he had been born with more of her traits and less of those that had characterized his weak, dissolute father.

It was so still and warm. Lower and lower sank the sun until only a slender arc showed above the horizon. Presently that, too, disappeared, and it was dark. The horse was feeding near by. Trenbar called him still nearer; then because the quiet was so soothing and

he so dead tired he rolled over on his face and went to sleep.

He was awakened by the quick thud of hoof and opened his eyes just in time to see Chief fly past him on the wings of the wind. At a little distance the horse wheeled and paused with his head thrown up, snorting and palpitating with excitement.

Trenbar sprang to his feet with his revolver in his hand. The moon had risen full and clear, and by its light he saw not a dozen rods away two men riding cautiously towards him.

"Halt!" shouted a voice. "Throw up your hands, Jim Trenbar. I know yer and we've got the drop on yer."

"Gentlement!" cried Trenbar. "I—"

"Throw up your hands, I say."

The sheriff dismounted from his spent pony and came forward. The moonlight glanced from polished barrels of the two revolvers which he held, one in either hand, leveled at Trenbar's breast.

"I ain't no horse thief," Trenbar said, earnestly. "Before God, I ain't. That horse is mine. I never had one cent for him. Cronwright's got the money and the broncho that he gave me to pay for him. I took them back the very next day."

"See here, Trenbar," said the sheriff, grimly. "I didn't come here to waste words. I come here to do business. My orders are to take you and the horse, dead or alive. Cronwright's got witnesses to the hull transaction, and Cronwright ain't a man to fool with. Throw up your hands!"

"Never!" cried Trenbar. His wild, black eyes met those of the sheriff unflinchingly. His slight, straight figure was drawn to its fullest height. But the sheriff had faced too many desperate men to be afraid of this one.

"Throw up yer hands, curse yer," he snarled. "I don't banker after doing any shooting, but I shall let daylight into yer in less than two seconds, if yer don't surrender peaceably."

Trenbar made a feint of throwing up his hands, but the sheriff was too quick for him. Though both men fired almost simultaneously, it was the sheriff's bullet alone that took effect. Trenbar reeled, clutched at his breast and fell heavily forward face downward in the moonlight.

When the smell of the powder had cleared away, Chief, feeling instinctively that something was wrong with his master, advanced timidly to his side and sniffed suspiciously at his clothing. So it was that the sheriff was able to catch him.—Detroit Free Press.

A Methodist's Views.

Editor Klondike Nugget:

It will be three years on the 21st of the present month since I landed at Dawson and today I know almost as little about the town as though I had never seen it. I came to the creeks immediately on my arrival, and have been here ever since with the exception of four trips made to Dawson and then I never remained in your town longer than over-night. But all this is not to the point.

I am a Canadian; was born in Ontario 55 years ago next April, and have never yet trod foreign soil, except when I crossed Chilkoot. I am also a Methodist, and when I saw in the Semi-Weekly Nugget a few days ago that Clifford Sifton had ordered the gambling rooms and dance halls in Dawson closed I actually laughed out loud, something unusual for a man to do who has mined under Sifton's laws for three years.

"A scheme to catch the vote of my fellow Methodists," I said after fully realizing the ridiculousness of the situation. Canada is full of Methodists and I am proud to say that they are opposed to gambling and, as to dancing, who ever saw a good Methodist dance?"

This is not the first time that a pretended moral wave has swept over Canada just previous to an election and I am ashamed to say that many Methodists have been deluded by these promises into voting for the party that promised the moral reform. It is an old move, but, basing an assertion on past observation in Canada, it is one which has been made too often to be effective this time. METHODIST.

Wanted a Lien.

George De Leon came into the sheriff's office yesterday afternoon and said he wanted a lien.

"All right," said the obliging official, "lean on the counter."

"No, I want a salvage lien," explained the applicant, who then went on to say that with the Marjory he had beseeched a raft of wood for a stranger the day before, and had worked hard for over an hour before being able to haul the raft out of the current. The stranger had expressed his willingness to pay for the service rendered, and had promised to do so within an hour or two. He went away and did not return, but did so sometime during the night with a steamer and took the raft

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