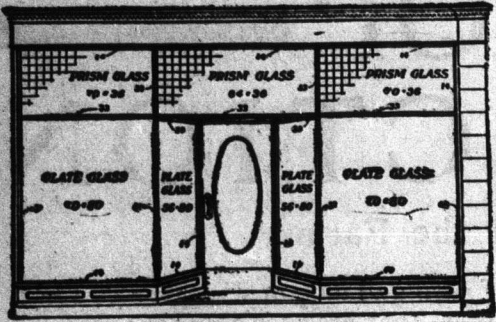


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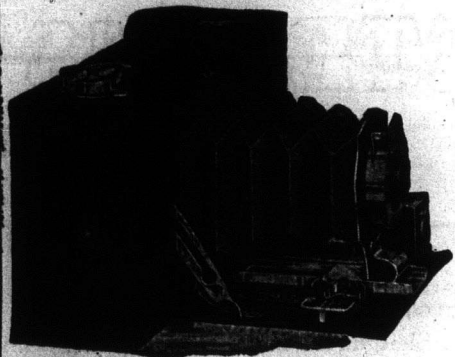
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The Chief Vanquished.

By Vera Dredge, of Saskatchewan



It was a sultry August day and in the passenger department of the large audit office of a back Eastern railroad, in one of the big cities, could be heard the busy hum that is made by the turning of pages of numerous letters, statements and books, and the voices of many clerks calling out figures here and there all over the great room.

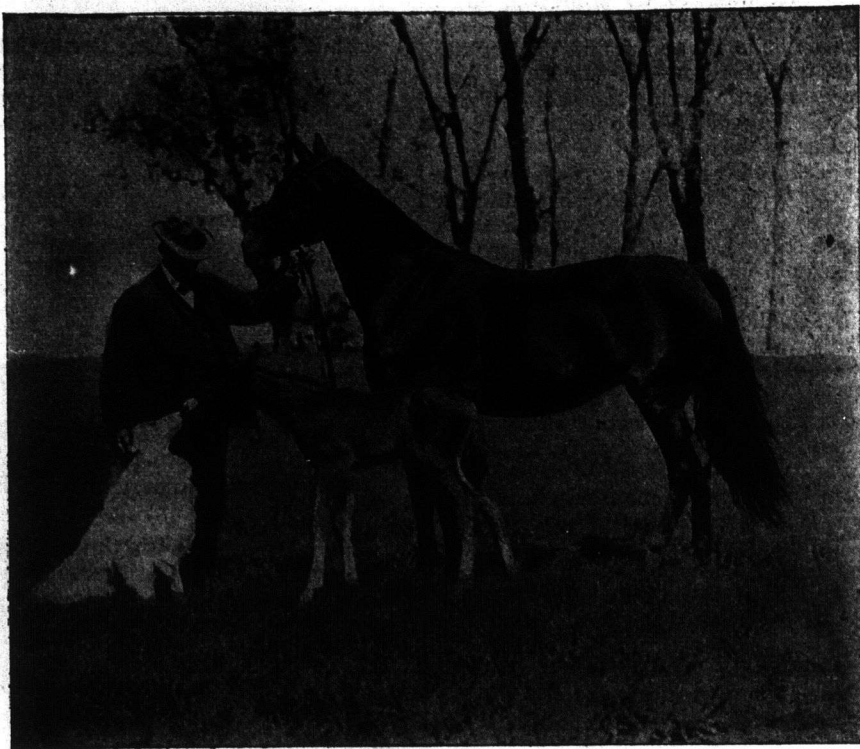
At his desk, elevated above those of his assistants, sat the chief clerk poring over the pile of papers placed before him for his consideration, or signature, but he was not too busy nor too much oppressed by the heat but that he could, by a glance now and then, discern what was going on around him.

He was a rather handsome man of

brutal man, how dare you speak to a woman in that way? Did you never learn that a woman should not be treated like a dog or horse? You—you are the most selfish monster I ever met. Can you not see that this poor girl is nearly fainting with fright and yet you sit there and abuse her with words uttered in such a tone as to make a man feel like knocking you down."

Utterly amazed and even bewildered the chief sat and looked at the champion of the delinquent lady-clerk, and was still bewildered when she turned and led the other girl back to her seat.

The busy hum of the office had as it were suddenly ceased for all eyes had been turned towards the scene of this little unexpected play, and all ears were listening to the words of the Western girl, and many a male clerk felt like saying, "Bravo!" when he saw how utterly



Portrait of E. J. Rochon's "The Broncho" (2.004), with her foal "Broncho Bill" by "Willie Benton" (2.064), and Charles Dean, the celebrated driver and trainer of Palatine, Ill.

about thirty years, well built and proportioned and but for a certain savage look that seemed to be the outward expression of a still more savage disposition would have had a most likable and prepossessing appearance.

As his quick and experienced eye scanned the papers on his desk a sudden angry look spread over his features and turning to his office boy, seated near at a lower desk, he told him to "tell Miss Welsh to come up."

Quickly the boy darted off to inform the lady clerk that the chief wanted her.

Rising from her seat the girl hurried to obey the summons, her already colorless and delicate face looking almost ghastly, and her heart going like a sledge-hammer for well she knew by the chief's expression that he was prepared to give her a most severe reprimand and perhaps dispense with her services altogether.

Before she got well up the steps of the high desk he turned with that repelling bull-dog manner and roared at her, "Miss Welsh, what do you mean by making such an error as this?" The girl's face, before so pale now went scarlet and then back to its former pallor and she looked ready to faint for she was not strong and the heat of the day had alone been a trial to her.

"I don't know, sir," at last she managed to stammer out. "You don't know," he repeated, and his temper seemed to go beyond his control altogether. "You don't know, then if that is all the excuse you have to offer you may—" but before he could finish what he had started to say, a lithe young figure suddenly came up the steps with the spirit and dash of a war horse and confronting the glaring brown eyes with a pair of indignant brilliant blue orbs, Miss Grace Murray, the new girl from the West, said, careless of interruption, "You

dumfounded the chief still was, for not many of the men cared for the man who so often acted the tyrant because of his position.

No sooner had Miss Murray reached her

own desk than she commenced deftly putting the papers and books in order, for she knew she could not remain another hour in such a place.

Her desk in order she quietly went to the lady in charge and told her she intended to leave at once. Then going to the dressing-room she hastily donned her hat and with head held erect she bade good-bye to her career as a clerk in a railroad office and made her way home.

As she walked along she thought the matter over carefully and finally made up her mind that had she the same act to perform again she would do it in precisely the same manner.

Yet notwithstanding this generous decision she felt rather discouraged about the sudden change in what promised to be a satisfactory career.

About a year before entering the office, she had lost her father, and her mother and herself together with her brother, some years her junior, had moved from their home in the West back to the East, where her mother had lived before her marriage.

On arriving home Mrs. Murray was surprised and somewhat shocked to learn what had taken place, and the reason of Grace's early return. After talking the matter over they both felt that it would be impossible for Grace to return if the chief had chosen to retain her services.

So now there was nothing to do but for her to find a new position, as their means were limited and it was necessary that Grace should help augment the family finances.

She was sitting that evening after tea thinking over her plans for the next day when her young brother, Fred, entered the room and noticing the somewhat discouraged expression on his sister's pretty face he went up to her and said, "Never mind, Sis, you did just right, and if I had been in your place, and a man I would have knocked the coward down." "Yes, Fred, I know you mean exactly what you say and it feels good to have your sympathy but mother does not see it in the same way as we do. She thinks I behaved in a most unladylike manner and that I have spoiled my chances of getting another position."

Just as Fred was about to add a few more words of sympathy in his own way a ring was heard and he ran to attend the door.

The next minute a gentleman entered the little sitting-room in which Grace was seated.

She rose to receive the caller but she was almost too astonished to speak as her eyes took in the familiar features of the chief.

"Mr. Pryde," she managed to articulate



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