The Influence of Faro Nell

"That's no doubt about it," observed the Old Cattleman, apropos of the fairer, better sex—for woman was the subject of our morning's talk, "thar's no doubt aboutit, females is a refinin' an' ennoblin' influence; you-all can put down your chips on that an' bet 'em higher than a cat's back! An' when Faro Nell orders them requests that time, she's ondoubted moved of feelin's of pity. They shore does her credit, and motifs does. Which if she asked Cherokee, or Jack Moore, or even Texas Thompson, things would have come off as effectif, an' a mighty sight more pleasant. But since he's leadin' thar, all casooal an' accidental, Nell ups an' recroots Dan Biggs on the side of humanity that way, an' tharupon Dan goes butting thoughtless an' without doo reflection, an' sets them Mexicans examples which to give 'em a best deception is shore some bad. It isn't Nell's fault, but Dan is a gent of sech onusual impulses that you-all can't know wherever Dan will land when you goes pokin' up his h'ar-trigger sensibilities with su'gestions that is novel to his game. Still, you can't help it; an' in view of what we-all knows to be the female record since ever the world begins I reckons, onhesitatin', that effects a woman is good. She subdooes the males, subjoogates the rebellious, calms the frivlous, burns the ground under the indolent moccasins of the male she's roped up to in holy wedlock's bonds, an' p'ints the way to a higher, happier life. That's whatever, an' this yere dramy of existence, as I once hears Colonel Sterrett say, would be 'a frost an' a failure an' bog plumb down if you leave to cut out the leadin' lady roles and ring up the curtain with nothin' but bucks in the cast.'

'Narrow an' contracted as you may deem said camp to be Wolfville it offers plenty proof on this head. Thar's Dave Tutt: Whatever is Dave, I'd like fer to inquire, after to Tucson Jennie runnin' her lady brand onto him an' redoocin' him to domesticity? No, thar's nothin' so evil to Dave neither; an' yet he has his little ways. For one thing, Dave's about as extemporaneous a proposition as ever sets in a saddle, an' thar's times, when you give Dave licker an' let him be fully dressed—that is, have his guns—and then go on an' convince him it's an occasion for joobilation, an' you-all wouldn't have to leave no 'call' with the clerk to insure yourself being out early in the mornin'. Son, you would nacherally keep that camp settin' up all night.

'But once Dave comes onder the fascinatin' spells of Tucson Jennie, things is changed a whole lot. Tucson Jennie knocks Dave's horns off durin' the first two weeks; he gets quiet an' circumspect; an' tharby makes better poker an' grows more like a man.

'Now thar's Missis Rucker; as fine a lady as ever bakes a biscuit! Even with all the burdens of the O. K. restauraw, she still finds energy to improve old Rucker to that extent that he rides off towards the setting sun one mornin' an' never does come back no more.

'"Doc," he says to Doc Peets, while he's fillin' a canteen in the Red Dog, prior to his start, "I won't tell you what I'm aimin' to accomplish because the Stranglers might regard it as their dooty to round me up. But thar's something common to the public, Doc, so I yereby leave word with you that next week, or next month, or later, if news is expressed of my fate, that I'm still flittin' an' flutterin' about the scenery some'ers an' am a long ways short of dead. An' as I fades from sight, Doc, I'll take a chance to say that the clause in the constitution of this yere country which states that all gents is free an' equal wasn't meant to incloode no married man.' An' with these crood words Rucker chases forth for the Klondike.

'Yes, the camp don't do nothin'; no word gets passed 'round that old timer's gone prospectin'; an' will be missed in our midst whenever thar's a roll call. As for Missis Rucker, personal, from all we can jedge lookin' on—for thar's shore none knows who's that locoed we ups an' asks—I don't reckon now she ever knows that Rucker's quit.

'Here's how it is, the time when Faro Nell, her heart bleedin' for the pain's of dumb an' he'pless brutes employs Dan Boggs in errants of mercy, an' Dan's efforts to do good are ill advised. Not that Dan is willing brought so he regyards his work as erroneous; Enright has to remind Dan outright in plain, set speech, an' assoomes airs of high seriousness before Dan allows he even entertains a doubt.

'Suppose I does retire that greaser's hand from cirk' latin',' says Dan, sort o' dispootatious with Enright an' Doc Peets, who's p'intin' out Dan's faults. 'Mexicans ain't got no more need for hands than squinch owls has for hymn books. They won't work; they never uses their members except for dealin' monte or clawin' a guitar. I regyrads a Mexican's hands that a-way, when considered as feachers in his makeup, as plumb footile. To go shy one don't make no more real difference in his destinies than a button off his coat.'

"'Dan, you shore is the most perverse sport,' says Enright, makin' a gesture of impatience an' at the same time refillin' his glass in hopes of a ca'mer frame of mind. 'This yere ain't so much a question of hands, as it's a question of taste. Nell's requests is right, an you're bound to go about the rescoo of said chicken as the victim of them crooelties. Where you-all falls down is on a system. The method you invokes is impertinent. Don't you so regyard it, Doc?'

"'Which I shorely does,'" says Petts. 'Dan's conduct is absolutely oncouth.'

"Dan says the basis for these yere strictures in the follin' fashion: It's a fiesta with the Mexicans—one of them noomerous saints' days they gives way to when every greaser onbuckles an' devotes himse'f to merriments—an' over in Chihuahua, as the Mexican part of the camp is called, the sunburnt portion of Wolfville's pop'lation shore broadens into quite a time. Thar's hoss races, an' monte, an' mescal, and pulque, together with sech roode music as may be wrung from primitiff instruments like the guitar, the fiddle, an' tin cans half filled with beans.

"Faro Nell, bein' only a child, as you-all might say, an' ready to be engaged an' entertained with childish things, goes trippin' over to sort o' size up the gala scene.

"Thar's a passel of young Mexicans who's ridin' for the chicken's head. This yere is a sport something like gander pullin'; same as we-all engages in on Thanksgivin' days an' Christmas back when I'm a boy in Tennessee. You saveys a gander pullin'? Son, you shore don't mean sech ignorance! Thar must have been mighty little sunshine in the life of a yooth in them morose regions where you was raised, for you-all never to disport yourself, even as a spectator, at a gander pullin'! It wouldn't surprise me none after that if you ups an' informs me you never shakes a fetlock in that dance called moneymusk.

"As I su'gests, we onbends in this pastime at sech epocks as Christmas an' Thanksgivin'. I don't myse'f take actooal part in any gander pullin's. Not that I'm too delicate, but I ain't got no hoss. Bein' a pore youth, I spends the mornin' of my c'reer on foot, an' as a hoss is a necessary ingredient to a scientific gander pullin', I never does stand in personal on the festival but is redooced to become a envy-bitten looker-on.

"Gander pullin's is conducted near a tavern or a still house, so's the assembled gents won't want the inspiration befittin' both the season an' the scene; an' it is commonly held onder the auspices of the proprietor tharof. Thar's a track marked out in a cirkle like a little race course for the horses to gallop on. This yere course runs between two poles pinned into the ground; or mebby it's two trees. Thar's a rope stretched that a-way from pole to pole, taut an' stiff, she's stretched! An' the gander who's the object of the meetin' with his neck an' head greased a heap lavish, is hing head down from the rope by his two hind laigs. As that gander hangs thar, what Colonel Sterrett would style 'the cynosure of every eye,' you'll notice that a gent standin' high in the stirrups can get a grip of the gander's head.

"As many as determined to distinguish themse'fs in the speculation throws a two-bit piece into a hat. Most likely thar'll be forty partic'pants. They then organizes, Injun file, an' goes caperin' round the course each holdin' his place in the joyous procession. As a gent goes onder the rope he grabs for the gander's head; and that party who's expert enough to bring it away in his hand wins the hat full of two-bit pieces yeretofore adverted to.

"Which, of course, no gent succeeds the first dash outen the box, as a gander's head is on some good and strong; an' many a saddle gets emptied by virchoo of them backward yanks a party gets. But it's on with the dance! They keeps a whoopin' an' shoutin' an ridin' the cirkle' an' grabbin at the gander, each in his cheerful turn, ontil some strong or lucky party b'ars off the prize, assoomes title to the two-bit pieces, struttin' to the licker room, an' buys licker for the pop'lace tharwith.

"Thar you have it, son; a brief but lively picture of a gander pullin' as pulled former in blithe old Tennessee. Gander pullin's is pop'lar a whole lot, when I'm a yearlin'; I know that for shore; though in a age which grows a heap effete, mighty likely if we-all goes back thar now, we'd fin' it fallen into disuse as a relaxation.

"In Ridin' for the Chicken's Head, a Mexican don't hang up his prey none same as we-all does at Gander Pullin's. He buries it in the ground to such degrees that nothin' but the head an' neck protroodes. An' as the Mexicans goes flashin' by on their broncos, each in turn swings down an' makes a reach for the chicken's head. The experiment calls for a shore enough rider; an' when a party is over on one side that a-way, an' nothin' to hold by but a left hand on the saddlehorn an' a left spur caught in the cantle, any little old pull will fetch him out on his head.

"This day when Faro Nell comes bulgin' up to amoose her young an' idle cur'osity with the gayeties of Chihuahua, the Ridon' for the Chicken's Head is about to commence. Which they're jest plantin' the chicken. At first Nell don't savey, as she ain't posted none deep on these yere Mexican pastimes. But Nell is plenty quick, mental; as, actin' look-out for Cherokee's bank, she's shorely bound to be. Wherefore Nell don't study there preeliminaries long before she gets onto the roodiments of some idee concernin' the amiable plans of these jocund Greasers.

"At last the chicken is buried, an' tha's nothin' in sight but its anxious head. Except that it can turn an' twist its neck some, it's fixed in theground as firm an' solid as the stumps of a mesquite bush.

"'The first greaser—he's a gay and gaudy party with more colors than you counts in any rainbow—is organizin' for a rush. He's pickin' up his reins an' pushin' his moccasins deep into his tappedaries, when as he gives his cayouse the spur, the full beauty of this exercise of Ridin' for the Chicken's Head bursts on Faro Nell. Comin' on her onexpected that a-way, Nell don't see no pleasure in it. It don't present them attractions which so alloores the heart of a greaser. Without pausin' to think, an' feelin' shocked some over the fate that's ridin' down on that buried chicken, Nell grips her little paws convulsively an' clicks her teeth. It's then her eye catches Dan Boggs, who's contemplatin' details an' awaitin' the finish with vivid interest.

"'Oh, Dan!' says Nell, grabbin' Dan's arm, 'I don't want that chicken hurt none; can't you-all make them stop?'

"'Shore!' says Dan, prompt to Nell's cry. 'I prevails on 'em to cease easy.'

"As Dan says this, that radiant cavalier is sweepin' upon the pore chicken like the breath of destiny. He's bendin' from the saddle to make a swoop, as Dan speaks. Thar ain't a moment to lose. Dan's hand goes to his gun.

"'Watch me stop him,' says Dan; an' as he does his bullet makes rags of the Mexican's hand not an inch from the chicken's head.

"For what time you all might need to slop out a drink them onlookin' Mexicans stands plumb still. Then the stoopefyin' impression made by Dan's pistol practice wears off an' a howl goes up like a hundred wolves. At this Dan gets his number two gun to b'ar, an' with one in each hand, sort o' dictates at the tancolored multitoode.

"'Thar's shore a nice shot, Nell!' says Dan, over his shoulder, ropin' for them congratulations he thinks is comin'.

"But Nell don't hear him; she's one hundred yards away, streakin' it for the Red Light like a shootin' star. She bursts in on us with the break off like a stage coach down hill.

"'Dan's treed them Mexicans!' gasps Nell, as she heads straight for Cherokee; 'you all better rustle over thar plumb soon!'

"Cherokee jumps an' grabs his hardware where they're layin' onder the table. Bein' daylight an' no game goin' an' the day some warm besides, he ait't wearin' 'em. In a second Cherokee buckles on his belts an' starts; the rest of us, however, bein' fully clothed that a-way, is already half way to Dan.

"It ain't a two-minute run an' we arrives in time. Thar's no more blood, though thar might have been, for we finds Dan frontin' up to full two hundred Greasers; their numbers increasin' an' excitement runnin' a heap high. We cuts in between Dan an the foe, an' extricates that over-vol'tile sport.

"But Dan won't return none ontil he exhoomes the chicken, which is still bobbin' and twistin' its onharmed head where the Mexican buries it. Dan digs it out an' takes it by the laigs; Enright meanwhile cussin' him out, fervent an' nervous, for he fears some locoed Greaser will cut loose any moment an' mebby crease a gent an' so leave it incumbent on the rest to desolate Chihuahua.

"'It's for Nell,' expostulates Dan, replyin' to Enright's criticisms. 'I know she wants it from the way she grabs my coat that time. Moreover, from the tones she speaks in, I reckon she wants it alive. Also, I don't discern no reason for this yere toomult neither; which you-all is shore the most peevish bunch, Enright, an' that's whatever!'

"'Peevish or no' retorts Enright, 'as a jedge of sech warjigs I figgers that we gets here just in time. Thar you be up ag'inst the entire tribe, an' each one with a gun. It's one of the deefects of a Colt's six-shooter that it hits as hard an' shoots as troo for a Injun or a Greaser as it does for folks. Talk about us bein' peevish! What do you-all reckon would have been results if we hadn't cut in on the baile at the time we does?'

"'Nothin',' says Dan, with tones of soopreme vanity, at the same time dustin' the dirt off Nell's chicken, 'nothin', except I'd hung crape on half the 'dobes in Chihuahua.'

"As I says, however, we nacherally extricates Dan. About two hours after, when things ag'in simmers to the normal—an' while Nell is makin' her chicken a coop out to the r'ar of the Red Light—Enright gives a half laugh.

"'Dan,' says Enright, 'when I reflects on the hole we dug you out of, an' the way you-all gets in, you shore reminds me of that Thomas Benton dog I owns former when I'm a child on the Cumberland. Which Thomas Benton that a-way is a mighty fervid an' industrious dog, an' would turn over a quarter section of land any afternoon diggin' out a ground hawg. But thar's this drawback to Thomas Benton impairs his market valyoo. Some folks used to regyard it is a foible; but it's worse; its a deefect. As I states, this Thomas Benton dog would throw his whole soul into the work, and dig out a ground hawg like he ain't got a minute to live. But thar's this pecooliarity: After that Thomas Benton dog has done dug out the ground hawg for a couple of hours, you-all is forced to get a spade an' dig out that Thomas Benton dog. He's dead now these yere forty years, but if he's livin', I'd shore change his name a whole lot, an' rebrand him Dan's Boggs.'"

—Alfred Henry Lewis.

Dry as Statistics.

It is fairly obvious that the study of statistics is not exactly what would be termed a popular pastime, says Winthrop M. Daniels in The Atlantic. Librarians do not discover any extensive demand for statistical literature. Sir John Lubbock, if I remember rightly, found no place for a single volume of figures in his hundred best books, and in that flood of articles on "Books That Have Helped Me, by Authors Great and Authors Small," the same significent silence seemed to be maintained. There were some very curious books that had apparently proved helpful to certain persons, but there was unbroken testimony of a negative kind that nobody had ever been helped by a blue book.

To say of anything "as dry as statistics" is at once to consign it to the nethermost limbo of aridity. Such is the verdict upon the finished statistical product. As for the methods employed in constructing such tables—weighted averages, index numbers or curves of error—these to the wayfaring men are hidden and ingenious refinements of cruelty, to be avoided at all hazards or at least forgotten with a shudder and a prayer.—Ex.

Panama Canal Protocol

Washington, March 19.—The revision of the protocol prepared by Dr. Silva, the retiring Colombian minister, embodying the terms under which Columbia is willing to cede to the United States the rights incident to the building of a Panama canal has been completed by Dr. Concha, the new minister at Washington. It is stated that the protocol will be submitted to Admiral Walker, chairman of the Isthmian canal commission, before the end of the current week, to be by him turned over to Secretary Hay.

Favors Gradual Change

Washington, March 19.—Jacob Helander, former treasurer of Puerto Rico, was before the insular committee of the house today and gave his views regarding the proposed monetary bill for the Philippines. He said he did not believe it would be wise to place American gold standard in force at once in the Philippines—that is, to the extent of making silver redeemable in gold. He believed the change should be brought about gradually.

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