

BRONCHO BERTIE.

The Daughter of the Rangers—A Texan Romance.

Late in the Winter of '80, Jeff and I were members of a raiding party that penetrated the fastnesses of the mountains of Death, in search of a family of cow and horse thieves named Taylor, writes a correspondent. The scattered remnants of Chief Victoria's band were lurking about that section of country then, awaiting an opportunity to cross the Death plain to a more secure hiding place in the Sierra Diablo. And we were continually finding fresh signs as we slowly trailed the cow thieves to their mountain camp. One morning we entered a little canon, through which ran a stream of water. About midway down the canon, on the bank of the run, the scout in advance made a horrible discovery, and we were quickly to his side. The three Taylor boys, whom we were in search of, and a Mexican vaquero had been ambushed and killed by the Indians, and their stiffened bodies, bloody and scalped, lay across the trail. They had been killed during the previous night, and the coyotes had not scented them out. All their arms and their ponies had been carried away by their murderers.

We hastily dug a shallow grave with our hunting knives on the bank of the creek and buried them side by side. Then continuing on we crossed the next divide and reached their camp in a canon similar to the one we had just left. The Indians had taken a nearly opposite direction, climbing the other wall of the canon.

The camp of the outlaws was a rude affair, consisting of a small tent, a camp fire, a brush corral and a heavy wagon. Several head of ponies and cows were grazing in the canon, and the sergeant commanding our party ordered several of the boys to round up the stock, while he dismantled and inspected the camp. Just as he was about to lift the fly of the tent a shrill treble voice, which came from the direction of the brush corral, cried:

"Say, thar, mister man, that's my tent. Keep out'n hit."

We all turned at sound of the voice and the queerest little girl, in a dress of faded calico, and bare-headed and barefooted crept from under the corral gate and walked toward us. She was not above 7 years of age, and she had the shrewdest face and brightest eyes imaginable.

"Keep out'n the tent," she repeated, walking toward the sergeant. "Hit's mine, I tell ye."

"And who might you be?" asked the sergeant, smiling and dropping the tent flap. "I'm Broncho Bertie," was the quick answer, and she tossed her head saucily. "Leastways, that's what the boys call me."

"And who are the boys?"

"My buddies, Jim, Bill and Dan. Ye all know 'em well enuff, an' I know you; you're rangers, an' if you think you'll git the boys, yer left. They're out yonder in the mountains, an' they'll shoot quicker'n a wink."

We crowded around the little maiden, and one of the boys, in as tender and simple words as he could command, told her of her bereavement. She didn't shed many tears, but a great lump that rose in her throat was swallowed with difficulty, and her shrill voice softened and trembled when she spoke.

"I knowed they'd git laid out some day," she said, shaking her head mournfully, "but hit's better that-a-way than to be drapped by you'ns."

She peered into the face of every man, and finally, stepping to the side of Reckless Jeff, laid her brown hand in his.

"I like yer looks," she said, "an' I'll go with you."

We took her back to camp, and on the road she taught us several lessons that set the men to thinking. We were a pretty rough lot, and when on man, for some trifling cause, began to curse, she raised her small hand warningly, and said:

"Ye mustn't curse. 'Tain't perlite when ladies is about, an' hit's wicked, too."

When we made camp that night Broncho Bertie ate her supper in silence, and when one of the boys spread some blankets and told her it was to be her bed for the night, she thanked him gravely, and, folding her hands, knelt down and prayed. I noticed that the eyes of several of the boys were moist when she finished, and, when she walked around the circle and lifted up her dimpled mouth to each bearded face to be kissed, she received a succession of convulsive hugs that must have bruised her frail body. The entire company held a consultation over the matter the night we reached our permanent camp, and it was formally decided to adopt this brown waif as "the child of company E." When Bertie was informed of our action by a committee delegated for the purpose, she nodded her head and made answer in her quaint fashion.

"I like ye, boys, an' hit's a go!"

The best tent was fitted up for her especial use, and if a man had gone to the post and not brought back a present for "The Broncho," his life would have been placed in jeopardy. She exerted a wonderful influence over these rough men, and there was not one in the company who would not have laid down his life for her. Reckless Jeff in particular was her devoted slave, and "The Broncho" was always in his company. She loved him and would sit for hours in his strong arms listening to the stories that fell from his lips, occasionally commenting in her old fashioned way. Never was princess draped out more gorgeously with ribbons and fine dresses than Broncho Bertie. Once when she was sick, a man killed his horse riding for the post surgeon, and the men tip-toed their way about camp lest "The Broncho" should be disturbed. Mad Milton taught her to read and spell, and the captain bought her the gentlest pony that could be had for money.

One day—no member of company E will ever forget it—Reckless Jeff and Mad Milton went to the post and came back to camp under the influence of liquor. We had just finished a shooting match when they rode in, and both men laughed at our marksman ship.

"See here, boys," cried Jeff, pulling out his six-shooter. "I'll show you what shooting is, Broncho!"

The little maiden stepped forward, and, whispering something in his ear, Jeff handed her an ordinary bottle cork. She ran to a tree about 20 paces distant and, facing us set the cork on top of her curly head and folded her arms. Jeff cocked his six-shooter and slowly raised it.

"Don't, Jeff!" we cried in chorus, for he lurched unsteadily.

Two of the men started forward to prevent the rash act, but they were too late. Jeff's eye ran along the barrel of his revolver, his finger pressed the trigger and, as the report rang out, Broncho Bertie threw up both her arms and staggered towards him.

"My God!" he cried, and ran toward her. The blood was streaming from her head and she was reeling blindly, but when he caught her in his arms she smiled faintly and gasped:

"You—didn't—mean to—Jeff—good—"

Her curly head dropped and she was dead. He laid the body down and stood for a moment regarding the lovely form. Then starting suddenly, he lifted his still smoking six-shooter to his temple, pulled the trigger, and his soul joined hers in the unknown.

New Naval Devices.

The demonstrated fact that a huge iron-ore, costing millions of dollars, can be sunk by one blow from a properly placed torpedo has caused all the leading nations to busy themselves with the double problem how to make their own torpedoes effective and how to parry the attacks of an enemy's. France and England have just made two noteworthy contributions to this problem, one on the side of attack and the other on that of defence.

The new English device, the invention of a young Australian named BRENNAN, who has already the guarantee of a fortune from it, has been tested for several months at Garrison Point Fort, Sheerness. Without going into minute details, it may be briefly described as employing a steam engine for driving and steering the torpedo toward its object. To the drums of the engine are fastened the ends of coils of wire wound on reels in the torpedo machine, and the unwinding of these coils, with their rewinding upon the drums of the engine, sets two screw propellers at work, which drive the torpedo through the sea with the velocity of an express train. By getting the greater pressure on one screw or the other the torpedo is steered. Lights screened from the enemy show its position at night to those who direct it, while the very small portion above the surface of the water greatly decreases the chance of its reasonable detection. Exactly what its capabilities of progress are can as yet hardly be said; but on each of the many occasions of its trial, the torpedo machine, which looked something like the section of a boat, on emerging from the Sheerness fort ran down a short railway to the beach at a speed of forty or fifty miles an hour and plunged into the sea. It is obvious that the principle of the new device is wholly unlike that of the Whitehead or the Harvey torpedo. Indeed, one of its striking peculiarities is that since the unwinding of its tight coils proceeds most rapidly toward the end, the speed of the torpedo will apparently be greatest toward the end of its course, or at the time most necessary.

The satisfaction of the British authorities with this new apparatus is undisguised. The experience of its inventor in being welcomed instead of snubbed is exceptional, and as a consequence the British Government will have the device as its property, instead of seeing it taken in disgust to some other country, like the Whitehead torpedo, and thence served out from a foreign factory to all who will pay for it.

The French device is directed to the contrary purpose, that of diminishing the destructiveness of torpedoes, by finding a new protection against them. The substance thus chosen is a most extraordinary one, consisting of a composition made from the fibre of the husk of the cocconut. It was first used as a shield for the masonry of quays, and its extraordinary action under these circumstances caused it to be applied to the protection of vessels. In pulverized cocconut tissue there lies an extraordinary counterpoise to the damage caused by hostile shot entering at or below the water line. In sundry experiments at Toulon a target was composed of a felt-like mass of this cellulose, as it is called, fourteen parts being ground husk, and one part the fibre, which helps to hold the mass together like hair in mortar. The target, which was about two feet thick, as representing the lining that would be given to a vessel, was perforated at short range by a nine-inch gun. In each case no sooner had the shot passed through than the cellulose closed up so firmly that a strong man was unable to insert his arm into the hole. A tank of water was poured

upon the place where the shot had entered, and only after several minutes a small amount of water began to trickle through; and soon the soaking of the cellulose, by augmenting its volume and density, stopped the slight trickling altogether. The cellulose having thus been proved practically watertight, the experiment was concluded by showing it to be also incombustible, burning charcoal placed in and around it being unable to set it on fire.

Music and Drama.

Lotta's reception at the Grand last week was hearty and spontaneous. The talented little lady was always a favorite with Toronto play-goers, and though the audiences she met on this visit were composed of many people who had never seen her before, yet the greeting tendered was even more cordial than on any former occasion. A *Denise de Flavie*, in "Nil Nitouche," Lotta appeared to better advantage than she does in any of her other impersonations. This is saying a great deal when it is remembered how famous she became in some of her earlier characters. The company supporting Lotta is exceptionally strong, and their efforts were deservedly applauded.

A strong Company is playing "Michael Strogoff" this week to good business.

Mr. O Neil, familiarly known as "Ty," has resigned his position in the box office of the Grand and taken the road as manager of the "A Night Off" Company.

'Tis Fashion Makes the Man.

The demand of the public of the present day is for good fitting well made garments of fashionable materials. In order to anticipate the wants of their patrons for the coming season, Petley & Petley have made a special effort to place before them a very superior stock of fine woolsens, selected by their Mr. J. W. Petley in the best markets of Europe. They have also made a complete change in their cutting department, and have secured the services of Mr. Wm. Brookland (late of London, England) as principal cutter, and they have every reason to congratulate themselves on the wisdom of their choice. We would therefore advise our readers in want of first class clothing for the coming season to visit the well known house of Petley & Petley, where elegant, perfect fitting and well made garments are to be had at very moderate prices.

The British museum has just received the great Hume collection of Indian birds. There are 63,000 specimens, of which 50,000 are new, thus making the museum's collection an unapproachable one.

In the wedding presents of Mile. De Bralvure, a young lady connected with the princely Russian house of Suwaroff, who married the Hon. L. Stanhope recently, was a quaint little model of a Russian house in gold, with a door of emeralds and diamonds, which, when it is opened, discloses a portrait.

Alma Ladies' College, St. Thomas Ont., has full staff and complete course in Literature, Music, Fine Arts, and Commercial Science. Re-opens September 10, 1885. For 50 pp. announcement, address Principal Austin, B. D.

The laborer who is worthy of his hire is also worthy of his lore.

Prevention Better Than Cure.

Many of the diseases so prevalent in these days are caused by using soap containing impure and infectious matter. Avoid all risk by using **PREPARATION** Laundry Soap, which is absolutely pure. Ask your grocer for **PREPARATION**. Manufactured only by the Toronto Soap Co.