

THE ST. JOHN EVENING TIMES, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 1904.

Hemming, The Adventurer. By THEODORE ROBERTS.

Hemming started at the free and easy language of the mariner, and at O'Rourke's good-natured way of taking it, for he had not yet become entirely accustomed to the ways of the world outside the army, and this O'Rourke, though unshaven and in tatters, was certainly a gentleman by Hemming's standards. The master of the Laura may have read something of this in his passenger's face, for he turned to him and said: "Mr. O'Rourke and I are pretty good friends. We've played ashore together, and we've sailed together more than once, and when I call him a fool, why, it's my way of saying he's the longest-up, straight-grained man I know. I never call him a fool before his inferiors, and if it came to any one else calling him anything, why—"

On the locker, mooring peacefully, and O'Rourke still clicked at the typewriter. Hemming stole quietly in and poured himself a glass of water from the electric bottle on the rack. "Don't let me disturb you," he said to the worker. "I'll just have a smoke to kill wakefulness." "If you can't sleep," said O'Rourke, "just listen to this as long as your eyes will stay open." He sorted over his pages of copy and began to read. His voice was low-pitched, and through it sounded the whispering of the steamer's passage across the rooking waters. The style was full of colour, and Hemming was keenly interested from start to finish. Not until the last page was turned over did O'Rourke look up. "What! not asleep yet!" he exclaimed. "That seems to me very fine," said Hemming, seriously, "and I should certainly take it for literature of an unusually high order if I did not know that journalists cannot write literature."

"Oh, go easy," expostulated O'Rourke, "you've only read one article of mine—the twenty-page result of five weeks' sugar-cane and observation." "It was remarkable stuff," mused Hemming. "The younger man had the grace to bow. 'You don't look like the kind of chap who is lavish with his praise,' he said. Lighting a potent local cigar, he leaned back in his rickety chair, and shouted something in Spanish. The owner of the place appeared, rubbing his hands together and bowing. He was a fat, brown man, smelling of native cooking and native tobacco. O'Rourke talked, at some length, in Spanish, only a few words of which Hemming understood. The proprietor waved his cigarette and gabbled back. Again O'Rourke took up the conversation, and this time his flow of monoglot Spanish was pricked out with blunt English oaths. Hemming asked what it was all about. O'Rourke gave him all up to laughter. "I have been trying to sell our mules," he said, at last, "but find that the market is already glutted. Hemming shook his head disconsolately. 'I fail to see the joke,' he said. "Mine host here informs me that a Cuban gentleman arrived shortly after daylight this morning," continued O'Rourke, "and sold a mule to the American consul."

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