

## ZEB WHITE

He Tells How His Son Joe Tackled a Railroad.

[Copyright, 1905, by L. T. Richards.]  
HAD been down to the general store at the "Corners", with the old possum-hunter of Tennessee to buy powder and tobacco, and among the idlers at the store was a pert young man who had a good deal to say about himself. On our way home and after a long period of silence old Zeb suddenly exclaimed:

"That that young Perkins! He's got the big head the worst way, and I'm hopin' that auntin' comes along to give him a shock. Most young men seem to want to make fools of themselves."

"But they got over it after awhile," I replied.

"Yes, if they don't die first. I had a powerful pert son who didn't live to git over his braggin' days. Sometimes I feel bad about it, and, ag'in, I think it happened for the best."

I asked him for the yarn, and after walking along for a quarter of a mile he began:

"One spring, when my son Joe was eighteen y'ars old, he got the big head mighty bad. I seen it comin' on him and knowed that'd be trouble, and the ole woman she seen it comin' and said to me:

"Zeb, our son Joe is gittin' ready to make a fool of himself, and I want you to keep an eye on him. He imagines he's as big as a mountain, and he feels that he kin lick ten men all to once."

"When the big head gits hold of a young man it takes a powerful dose of medicine to cure it. Joe kept growin' wuss and wuss. He got lazy, and he got to braggin' and blowin', and from the way he looked at me now and then outer the corner of his eye I knowed he was achin' to tackle me. Just to let him know that his ole pop was on deck I grabbed him one day and throwed him sky high over the fence, and he was mo' humble arter that."

"It didn't cure him, however. He went around rubbin' ag'in folks and steppin' high, and one day he comes home and sez to me:

"Pop, did yo' ever tackle a railroad?"

"No, sonny, I never did. I've tackled men and b'ars and wildcats and circuses, but not a railroad."

"They've got one over in the valley, and I think I kin whop it in about five minutes."

"Joe had never seen a railroad," explained the old man, "and they had jest run one down Little Valley, twelve miles away. I told him what it was



HE STOOD THERE AND JUMPED UP AND DOWN.

like, but he wasn't a bit discouraged. He jest humped up his shoulders and spit on his hands and said:

"Shuck my hide, but I'm dyin' to whop somebody, and I'll go over to-morrow and tackle that railroad. If nobody around yere has ever tackled a railroad, then it will be all the more glory for me."

"Joe, don't go and make no fool of yerself," sez I.

"As to how?" sez he.

"As to tacklin' a railroad, there are some things as even yer pop can't do, and one of 'em is tacklin' a railroad. Jest yo' go out and find a b'ar and hev some fun with him and git over this nonsense."

"He didn't say nuthin' to that, but I knowed he wouldn't mind what I said. He went to bed airy, and jest at daylight I heard him movin' around. I told him if he was bound to go over to Little Valley I'd go along with him arter breakfast and see fa'r play, and so he waltzed. When we sot out, he was in high spirits. He whooped and hollered and pranced, and the road wasn't wide 'nuff for him to walk in. Befe' I left the house the ole woman sez to me:

"Zeb, are yo' gwine to let our Joe fout a railroad?"

"That's the idea," sez I.

"Will he git whopped?"

"He will. He'll git whopped so powerful quick and hard that he'll be as humble as a nursin' babe fur a y'ar to cum."

"We got over to the valley 'bout 10 o'clock in the mawnin'," continued the old man, "and Joe got his first sight of a railroad. He was disappointed. That wasn't nuthin' but the iron rails to fout, and that was tears in his eyes as he sot down on a stone and sez:

"Pop, that's nuthin' to fout, and we've walked twelve miles fur nuthin'."

"I'm feelin' that this state of Tennessee is ag'in me."

"Joe," sez I arter thinkin' things over, "that ain't nuthin' yere to fout, jest as I told yo', but mebbe it woul' console yo' to bluff one of them bulgins."

"I can bluff anything from a mountain to a grasshopper! What's yer bulgine?"

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## INTERIOR PORTUGAL

MUCH HIGH ART AND PLenty OF DIRT TO BE FOUND.

Some Interesting Impressions by an Observant Traveler—Discomforts of a Journey in the Old Little Kingdom—Some Things That King Edward Did Not See and Sample During His Recent Visit.

If King Edward had prolonged his visit to Portugal and visited the interior, he would have experienced some of the roughest traveling of his life, and if he could he conceived of as stopping at the so-called hotels of the country he would also have slept in some of the most doubtful beds of his life and sampled perhaps the very worst cookery.

Estremoz is a town in the interior of the country in the Province of Alentejo. As you approach it by rail from Lisbon you see it standing upon a hill in the distance, Moorish, picturesque and inviting. When you reach the station, however, you find the town itself of Estremoz is two miles away, and, like the journey of life, the road leads uphill all the way. It is a wretchedly bad road too. There is only one hotel in the town and a very poor one. Some of the bedrooms open off the dining-room. They are mere dark dens without windows.

The streets of Estremoz are sociable and barmy-like. On Friday droves of pigs and goats are "shoed" through the streets to the market place and confined until Saturday morning, market day. Not all the pigs and goats are kept over, however. Some of them are sold at once on Friday, and the sale is clinched immediately by the slaughter on the spot in the open street of the hapless kid or squealing pig. This public killing is enough to make a sensitive soul forswear flesh eating, but the natives mind it not at all, neither the health authorities, if there are any.

And yet this same dirty, miserable town would delight the soul of the artist. As in most Latin race towns, dirt and high art flourish together. There are probably more marble and marble carving in Estremoz than in any other small city. In the old houses are marble halls and carved marble staircases that would give beauty to the palaces of kings. From marble public fountains the water



VILLAGE STREET, NORTH PORTUGAL. There are marble seats along the roads give rest to tramp and beggar. If Estremoz had paved streets, the paving would be marble, too, but it has few of these. Like all old Latin towns, Estremoz has its public square, around which important buildings are grouped. One cannot find out why it is, but rather oddly almost the cleanest and best of the common people of Portugal are the peasant population around Estremoz. It has been said of them that they are "very honest and hard working and very clean." Their rude stone cottages are white-washed continually inside and out, and there seems to be something of the neatness and thrift of the old time Holland Dutch about middle south Portugal land folk.

Different it is in northern Portugal. There the houses are dirty and the people are dirty. Perhaps this sad unpleasant condition of things may be accounted for by the fact that the women apparently do all the hard outdoor work. The coarse, constant drudgery seems to crush out of them the womanly instinct of cleanliness and tidiness even if they had any time to tidy up their houses. These poor northern women are real beasts of burden, carrying their loads upon their heads instead of drawing them, as horses and oxen do.

With good roads and decent hotels Portugal would soon become a favorite touring region. Its climate is agreeable; its fruits are delicious. Upon the slopes of Alentejo great olive orchards abound. The wines of Portugal were famous before America was discovered. It is so little known to the tourist that it can furnish all the novelty which the wealthy tourist seems to be forever seeking.

As it is, however, the traveler in the primitive little kingdom must put up with discomforts and the absence of conveniences that civilized globe trotters demand. Lisbon, Oporto and other leading cities swarm with those beggars and human deformities which are a revolting feature of all Latin race countries except France. Occasionally you see in your cable news the announcement that smallpox is ravaging Oporto. Well, in Oporto itself no uncommon sight is patients in the early stages of smallpox walking freely about the streets and riding in street cars. And, like the Latin races again, the Portuguese are awfully cruel to dumb brutes. You will see here the brutes that can speak forcing draft oxen up the steep streets with a sharp iron spike stuck into the end of a club.

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