

HE BURIED HIMSELF.

The Unique Method of Suicide of a Mexican Indian in California.

Jose Mendez was a Mexican Indian who killed himself in 1862 in an Jose Cal. At the time of his death Jose was 36 years of age. He had all his life been an exceedingly active man. Among the daring characters then residing in San Jose none could excel him as a rider of wild horses. He was also very ingenious, and could not only make the finest kinds of lariats, but could also use them in many original ways.

One day the daring rider came to grief. By some means he was thrown from a wild mustang, and, being stunned and made helpless by the fall, he was dragged for some distance in the stirrups. When finally rescued he was in a condition that would have been sure and almost instant death to any but a man of wonderful nerve and tenacity of life.

Injured and helpless, he recovered sufficiently to realize that he could never engage in active pursuits again, and he became very moody and despondent. A life in which he was precluded from daring riding on untrained mustangs had no charms for him, and in the midst of his sufferings from internal injuries he made frequent threats of suicide. Once in speaking of the matter to an intimate friend, who tried to dissuade him from the idea, he said that when he killed himself it would be done in such a manner that no would ever have any trouble about him. It was thought at the time he intended to drown himself in the sea, where his body would never be recovered.

Every morning for several weeks thereafter Jose crawled away from the adobe hut in which he and a number of others lived, and came back quite late every evening. On these trips he took a pick and shovel, and occasionally a piece of lumber, no one knew for what purpose. Some supposed that he was mining somewhere. By this time he had grown so despondent as to be entirely uncommunicative, and no explanation of his conduct could be obtained from him. One evening, as was expected, the invalid did not return to the adobe, and the next day a search was made in the direction in which he went.

Something like a mile from the adobe house the searching party found a small clearing in the grass and weeds. To the surprise of every one of the party a rude board box about 3 feet wide and 6 feet long and about 18 inches in depth was found lying upside down in the middle of the open place. The box was immediately overturned, but nothing but a heap of loose earth was found under it. A closer examination revealed the fact that attached to the box were a number of pieces of lariat. The explanation of all this was a mystery, and at first it was not connected with the disappearance of the Mexican.

An intimate friend of the missing man then made an explanation which was pronounced entirely plausible and cleared the mystery. The man said that the Mexican, after sustaining his injury, had been entirely dependent upon strangers for his support and sustenance, and he was determined, if possible, after he was dead not to give them a ny more trouble. He, therefore, devised a scheme by which he could not only kill but also, at the same time, bury himself. How the thing was managed was easily enough determined by an inspection of the ground. The deceased had dug a grave, a rather shallow one, in which his skeleton was found some years later.

After the grave was dug, which required some time, owing to the feeble condition of the deceased, he placed the loose earth in a box that had been made for that purpose. This earth was packed in as solid as possible, by being wet and then allowed to dry again, so that when the box was carefully stood on its side with the earth toward the ground none of it fell out. Several lariats were then stretched across from the upper side of the box, as it lay across the grave to stakes on the other side.

The box was then carefully balanced, so that any object that might fall on the lariat would cause it to fall over the grave and empty the earth it contained on top of the body. In this manner the unfortunate man not only killed but also buried himself almost in the same instant of time.

So well satisfied were those who made the surprising discovery that their theory was correct that they did not take the trouble to dig in order to ascertain that the body was underneath. The theory, however, was further strengthened by the finding of the pistol with which the shooting had been done in some loose earth near the edge of the grave. It had evidently dropped there from the suicide's hand after he fired the fatal shot. This fact convinced the searchers, and they returned without making further investigations, so that the desire of the unfortunate that no one should be troubled with burying him was realized.

Some years later the skeleton of Jose Mendez was accidentally discovered and the theory of his friends fully corroborated.—Ex.

A Misunderstanding.

Dangerous Dick—Ye tol me yer father kept a clothin' store before he died, an' now I find out he was hung for horse stealin'.

Arizona Abe (indignantly)—I never said he kept a clothin' store; I said he was in the clothes line when he died. That's what they hung him with. Understand?

Perceps with delicate throat or lungs need to be very careful at this season and have a supply of Howarth's balsam for prompt treatment of the first symptoms of cold or cough.

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