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D. G. SMITH, EDITOR & PROPRIETOR

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THE FIERCE SERI INDIANS

LIVE ON TIBURON ISLAND IN THE GULF OF CALIFORNIA.

Most Entomable of Savages and Most Primitive Inhabitants of the Continent.

The Seri Indians, of Tiburon Island, in the Gulf of California have become famous by reason of their extraordinary ferocity and also because they are the most primitive savages in North America, having not yet advanced beyond the civilization of the Stone Age.

One of the most remarkable things about the Seri, is that they seem to keep on growing all their lives. Whether this be in truth the case or not, they continue to increase in stature until after they are forty years old, certainly a strange phenomenon, from a physiological point of view.

They have long been reputed giants, and for this idea there is some ground inasmuch as the men average six feet in height, and the women nearly, if not quite, five feet nine inches. For this reason all of the younger men and women appear to fall below this mean, while all the older ones are above it.

There are no fat people among the Seri, and in respect to physical vigor they are extraordinary. Of erect yet easy carriage, great breadth and depth of chest, very slender of limb and possessing unusually large feet and hands, they exhibit a bodily activity such as can hardly be equalled by any other people on the face of the earth.

The skin of their feet and lower legs is so hard and calloused as to resemble the hide of a horse or camel, so that they are able to run through cactus thickets so thorny as to stop horses and dogs, or over beds of stones so sharp that the very coyote avoids the trail.

One of the strangest things about these savages is that they seem to have no knife sense, as one might call it. In other words, they never think of using a cutting tool under any circumstances. If they capture an animal and kill it they do not cut it into pieces, but prefer to tear it to fragments with their hands and teeth, breaking the larger bones, perhaps, with a stone. They are known to adopt this method with a horse, throwing the brute so as to break its neck, and then setting upon the carcass literally with tooth and nail.

A leg of a cow will furnish a family, with food for some days, and when anybody happens to be hungry he takes a chew at it, tearing off the flesh, just as any wild animal might do.

The Seri have always kept themselves aloof from other tribes; they have an hereditary hate and horror of aliens. From their viewpoint the shedding of alien blood is the most virtuous of actions, while the blackest crime they know is the transmission of their own blood into alien channels. They consider it as much a matter of course to kill a stranger as the white man does to destroy a snake. Isolated to an extent unparalleled, they are homeless wanderers, roving from place to place and sleeping wherever exhaustion overtakes them. Carrying their entire stock of personal belongings with them, as well as food and water, they are perpetual fugitives.

They regard the neighboring territories of other tribes as their own domain, and there they have been in conflict for many years with ranchmen. When they surround and capture horses or kine they never think of mounting the beasts, even when pursued, or of using ropes, but immediately break the neck and knock out the brains of the animal perpendicular to the tearing body into quarters and flee for their lives with the reeking flesh still quivering on their heads and brawny shoulders. Scores of vaqueros agree in the assertion, wholly incredible if it were supported by fewer witnesses, that even when so burdened the robber Seri skim the sand wastes of the desert more rapidly than averaging horsemen can follow them.

The Seri boys go out after jack rabbits in threes and fours and catch them by outrunning them. When a rabbit is started they scatter, one following it slowly while the others set off obliquely in such a manner as to head it off and keep it in zigzag course until it tires. Then they close in, and finally grab the animal by hand, frequently bringing it in alive to prove that it was fairly caught, for among these aborigines it is deemed creditable to take game animals without giving them a chance for escape or defence. They capture deer also by running, scattering at sight of the quarry, gradually surrounding it, bewildering it by confronting it at all points, and at length closing in and seizing it with their hands.

Don Manuel Encinas, son of the owner of a ranch, was endeavoring on one occasion, to induce a Seri man, who was a famous hunter, to do some work for him. There was peace for the time being, and a band of the savages was sojourning temporarily near the ranch. It was a hot afternoon, and the fellow begged release from his task, saying that the spirit of catching a deer had taken hold of him. He was excused on condition that the deer be brought entire to the ranch, and two hours later he was seen driving in a full grown buck. On approaching the dwelling quarters the terrified animal turned this way and that in wild efforts to avoid the human habitation; yet the hunter kept it under control, heading it off at every turn and gradually working it nearer until at a sudden turn he was able to rush upon it and catch it. Throwing it over his shoulders, he ran into the ranch house with the beast still struggling and kicking.

In another instance a Seri caught a horse in a still more expeditious fashion. The animal, which belonged to the ranch, was offered the band on condition that a single one of the Indians should catch it within a fixed distance, about two hundred yards, from the gateway of the corral. The offer was promptly accepted, and to make the test of fleetness a fair one a vaquero was called in to frighten the horse and start him to running around the interior of the corral, while a boy stood by to drop the bars at the proper moment. When the animal had gained its best speed the bars were dropped and it bolted for the open plains. But before the two hundred yard limit was reached the hunter had overtaken it, leaped upon its withers, caught it by the jaw in one hand and the forelock in the other, and thereby thrown it in such a manner as to break its neck.

Early one morning Senor Encinas and some attendants left the ranch for the town at Hermosillo, leaving behind, among others, a seri matron with a sick child nearly a year old. In the evening the child got worse, and the woman, being alarmed about its condition, took the trail of the absentees about dusk in the hope of getting medicine from the Senor. At dawn next morning she was at Molino del Encinas, forty-five miles away, with her child and a pack of fending in the form of a jack rabbit, which she had run down and caught in the course of her journey.

The Seri are reputed cannibals. They never cook their food, apparently though they have been known to parboil the hoof of a horse, after the leg had been wrenched off at the hock, until it was sufficiently softened to be knocked off with a stone. Then half a dozen matrons and maidens gather about to gnaw the gelatinous tissue investing the "coffin bone." They possess but a single tool practically and apply it to a wide variety of purposes. It is merely a wove worn pebble and with it they crush bones, peat tendons, grind seeds, rub face powder and bruise wove tissue to aid in breaking sticks for house poles or mosquito roosts for harpoons, both being afterward finished by firing. The pebble is discarded when sharp edges are produced by use or fracture. Their houses are mere temporary shelters, and not dwellings in any proper sense. Sometimes they are of stones piled up and roofed with a huge turtle shell.

A SUGGESTION TO THE INTENDING TRAVELLER. Ethel Ramsey gives some suggestions which though intended primarily for those going abroad are pertinent to those who travel at home. A few of her observations follow: "Persons who are traveling on a definite and limited sum of money should as far as possible know what their expenses will probably be and should allow as margin at least one-fifth of the whole sum. A simple way to perform this calculation is to plan the projected trip and find the actual cost of transportation. When the margin has been subtracted from the original sum, and afterward the transportation, divide the remainder by the number of days to be spent abroad, to know what is left for a daily allowance. This sounds like elementary arithmetic, but traveling under the most favorable conditions is very tiring and every effort toward convenience is worth while. The systematic arrangement of money matters is a perceptible help; one knows exactly what to expect, and avoids the unpleasantness of a sudden penny-less funds will not hold out.

"A difficulty which the guide-book does not help is the attempt to share expenses when two or three persons are traveling together. An excellent plan which we found saved us much time and temper was the use of a common purse, which was handed to the head arithmetician and spokesman of the party. Each of us put into the purse an equal amount, calculated to last during the day, or excursion, and divided whatever was left over when one of the party left us, or when we wished to make up our individual accounts. Instead of disputing each time whose turn it was to pay for tickets, or trying to divide the fee of four cents among five persons, it was all done from the common fund and entered as a sum total for the day's expenses."

"This idea of a common purse, where two or three or more persons are traveling together and each paying his or her own expenses, seems an admirable one, and calculated to save vexatious worry over small expenses and details in trying to 'settle up.' And to divide the responsibilities of leadership by each carrying the purse on alternate days is a good idea also.

A LOUD-VOICED BIRD.

A story runs that on a certain day two men, one of them very deaf, were walking by the railway. Suddenly an express train rushed by, and as it passed the engine emitted a shriek that seemed to rend the very sky. The hearing man's ears were well nigh split, but the deaf man struck an ecstatic attitude. Then, turning to his suffering friend, he said with a pleasant smile: "That's the first robin I've heard this spring!"

APPEAL TO THE LAW.

Mrs. D'Avnoo, at front window.—Constable.

Police-man—Yes, ma'am. What's wrong, ma'am?

Mrs. D'Avnoo. Nothing's wrong; but I wish you'd step into the kitchen and tell the cook not to burn the meat, as she did last night. I'm afraid to.

DANGEROUS WORK.

The dangerous work of coal-mining is almost a third as fatal as the battlefield, for of every 1090 miners 23.2 are killed every year in the performance of their work.

AN EXCITING ADVENTURE.

A FIGHT FOR LIFE IN A BUFFALO HERD.

How a Showman Was Killed With Companion's A Few Feet Away, But Helpless.

When buffaloes could be found within half a day's ride from almost any ranch in the great plains, and killing half a dozen in a day was no particular feat, the most exciting sport was to dive into a herd with well-trained cattle-roping horses and bring out one or more yearling heifers for the purpose of raising them among the tame cattle on the ranch. It was dangerous sport, for the entire herd would unite with the greatest ferocity to defend the calves.

A cutting-out horse, that was also accustomed to the lasso, was the first essential in an equipment. Strong hair ropes, heavy revolvers and sharp hunting knives were the next things in the sportsman's outfit. As soon as the calf was thrown upon its side hoppers were placed upon its feet to limit its power to run, so that it would fall behind the stamped herd. Every precaution had to be taken for safety, since a single mistake or tardy action would cost the life of both horse and man.

When all was ready the herd was approached as near as possible through a gulch that led up near the animals or from behind a hill near which they were grazing. A sudden dash was necessary in order to prevent the bulls from getting to the point of attack before the calf was roped. Generally there was at least 100 yards of space to be covered in the run to the herd, the cow must be shot down, and the calf lassoed, tangled, thrown, hopped, and the drag rope tied to its neck, all in time for the horsemen to mount their horses and get safely away before the infuriated bulls could respond to the cries of the calf.

When there was no ravine or hill from which the animals could be approached, the hunters could usually approach within easy shooting distance by crawling up after their horses, who were caused to feed toward the herd. The first stamp or snort of a bull was the signal for the hunters to spring upon their horses and make a dash at the selected victims.

PITCHED FROM HIS HORSE.

Early in the eighties a venturesome buyer for a noted menagerie lost his life through a trivial mishap while endeavoring to assist two experienced men in roping calves in his show. A score of bulls, twice as many cows and a dozen or more calves were taken far out on the open prairie. It took an hour to come within shooting distance by the slow process of creeping through the grass after the feeding horses. Still the old leader, a ponderous bull, who stood as sentinel and guard upon a little mound around which his flock was feeding, remained immovable as a statue. Nearer and nearer the horses fed until within 50 yards, when a whiff of scent-laden air seemed to strike the bull's nostrils, warning him of impending danger. His head at once began to sway back and forth, he sounded a low, deep bellow of warning and began to paw the sand slowly as he gazed at the three horses.

"Now!" exclaimed one of the hunters. Two Winchesterers were leveled and in a moment two cows fell beside their calves. The three men sprang into their saddles and before the amazed herd could respond to the call of the sentinel bull two lassos cut the air and circled the shoulders of the bellowing calves.

The horse of the showman was trained for such work better than the man. He was at full speed when the calves were thrown upon their sides. The horse planted his front feet in the sand and came to a sudden stop, braced for a pull on the rope that he supposed had been thrown from his saddle. The showman struck the earth 10 feet or more in front of the horse.

BOLWARK OF CARCASSES.

At the first cry of distress from the calves the whole herd in fury rushed to their assistance. The bulls with lowered heads and eyes like coals of fire came bellowing upon the showman. A cannon could hardly have been heard over their roars. With great pluck he got to his knees and fired both his revolvers at the foremost animal. The bull's legs gave way under him, but his tremendous momentum threw his body forward and knocked the showman senseless several yards away. The horse dodged the lowered heads and leaped outside of the line of their charge.

Meanwhile one of the hunters had hopped his calf, fastened the trailing rope to its neck and got out of the way, but the other found himself surrounded before he could make his lariat into a trailing rope. To escape the charge of one of the animals he sprang aside and found himself separated from both his horse and the calf. The huge brutes massed themselves around the bellowing calf, and, becoming tangled in the rope, drew the horse closer and closer to them. The furious group of beasts were defeating their own purposes of revenge by crowding together in one another's way. None of them could turn upon the enemy and have the room in which to make a charge. There was an instant of confusion and then one of the bulls made a leap for the horse. A shot from the hunter killed the animal, but not before the bull had struck the imprisoned horse with such force as to knock him over upon his side. He began to sob with pain and fear. His cries immediately attracted the attention of the other buffaloes and a

INDIGESTION.

This is a disease quite common among fowl. Even the most skillful poultry raiser is liable to get it in his flock by some little neglect on his part of the help. It is not contagious, but nevertheless, half of some flocks succumb to the fatal touch. Its symptoms are similar to cholera, and it is often called such, yet there is a wide difference. While indigestion is not contagious, cholera is; while indigestion is slow in its work, cholera is quick. Cholera does its deadly work in a few hours, while indigestion may last a week or more.

The best symptom of this disease is the nature of the droppings, which are usually quite soft and are passed often. The comb turns pale and the fowl eats but little. It acts as if it were entirely worn out. It moves about, gradually getting weaker and eating less, until it dies or is cured. Hens that are fat and have a limited range get this disease quite often, but before it is over they will be very poor.

There are several causes for this annoying disease. Hens that are too fat and are over-fed will get it readily. Lack of exercise is one great cause, and improper food or too much of the same kind of food is also the cause of a great deal of it. Lack of grit even may cause it, also lack of good, pure water.

The first preventive is not to allow any of the causes to occur. Keep the fowls exercising, feed a variety, give plenty of grit and water, and do not feed too much, and you will not be liable to get the disease in your flock. Use plenty of disinfectant, such as air-slacked lime, carbolic acid water, whitewash and the like. If you find the disease in your flock, begin at once to find the cause and remove it before very many of the birds get sick.

The best cure we have ever tried was a tea made from white oak bark. This is a medicine that many of our most skillful physicians use to treat human beings, and it is equally good for the birds. Make a strong tea and put half a pint in a gallon of the drinking water. The fowls that are affected should have a tablespoonful of the strong tea poured down them if they will not drink it.

DIAMONDS AND RUBIES.

Many of the precious stones now owned by Queen Victoria formerly belonged to Indian princes. The famous Koh-i-Noor came into her possession on the annexation of the Punjab in 1849.

One of the rarest gems in Queen Victoria's collection is a green diamond of marvelous beauty. It has never been set. She owns three crowns. The most artistic one, which was made over forty years ago, is of gold, literally covered with diamonds. It is composed of 2,673 white diamonds and 523 rubies, besides many smaller stones. Before this crown was made the Queen wore a gold band studded with precious stones. This band is to be seen in most of her earlier portraits. The great crown, which rests in the Tower, is over a hundred years old.

The Queen is sentimentally attached to pearls, as is the German Empress, who has fine specimens in her jewel-cases; but as she did not wear them enough they lost their colour, and had to be immersed in sea-water for several months before they regained their beauty. This process is not often resorted to, but it was entirely successful in this case.

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J. D. B. MACKENZIE, Chatham, N.B., Sept. 24, 1898.

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