

LADD'S CHANGE OF HEART.

The cats, the dogs, the cattle and the chickens instinctively shunned Farmer Jacob Ladd. He was harsh with his hard-working wife, had been unkind to his only son, and a bitter, unreasoning hatred rankled in his heart against many men.

His wife, a gentle and timid woman, was beloved by people who feared and hated her husband. In the little shed-room, back of the room where her husband sat in the doorway, she was busily at work mending a quilt.

Another woman was in the room—a neighbor who, for the sake of seeing Mrs. Ladd, had braved the chance of encountering Jacob. Mrs. Ladd paused in her work, and said with a sigh:

"Did yer see them pore critters, Mis' Lindsey? They passed right along by our gate. I tried to keep from lookin' at 'em, 'ca'se I couldn't bear to see his sufferin'. The idea o' Poke Baker, it is a sheriff, drivin' a pore boy 'long the big road, just as if he was a yearlin' calf, 'fore he's been proved guilty o' the murder! It's a shame!"

"Yes," the other admitted, "they ought to treat 'em human; but I reckon the's no doubt under the sun 'at he killed Squire Broadenax. He laid all night close by the Broadenaxes, an' when they cotch 'em in Spring Place he had two hundred dollars in 'is pocket. I reckon he did the killin', 'er how could a pore tramp like 'im, 'thout a whole rag to 'is back, have so much money?"

Mrs. Ladd sighed again, and her motherly face grew more serious. She let the quilt glide to the floor.

"It looks mighty bad," she said. "They'll likely find 'im guilty an' hang 'im for it, pore boy! He passed as nigh to me as that bedpost, an' it made me think o' my Tobie. Who knows whar on earth my boy is today? I haint hardly been able to close my eyes for the last month, for thinkin' about 'im. I'm afeared he's dead; Texas is mighty onhealthy."

"I haint had a letter from him in more than two months," she went on presently. "It's been two year sence he let his father's hoss drown, and Jacob driv' 'im off."

She told again the sad story, familiar to her guest; how Tobie had driven the horse into the river, ignorant that the water had risen; how the animal had become entangled in the harness, and had drowned in spite of the boy's efforts to save him; and how his father had driven him away, and forbidden him to return until he could bring back the money that the horse had cost.

"I believe he's dead," Mrs. Ladd sighed. She wiped her eyes on her needle-punctured fingers, and went slowly over to a wooden box in a corner. Raising the lid she lifted out a black coat and waistcoat, a pair of trousers of light color, and a pair of calfskin boots with high heels and red tops.

"His Sunday clothes," she explained, huskily. "Tobie was mighty proud of 'em, but he wouldn't take 'em with 'im. He said he wanted to rough it—that he didn't want to put on style; he said I could save 'em till he got back. But he 'lowed if he never did git back, for me to give 'em to some feller that needed 'em."

Jacob Ladd still sat in the doorway. The dusk was falling over the hushed earth, when a man under a slouched hat rode up.

"Hello, Jake!" he called out, pausing at the gate. "Ladd rose quickly and went to him. "I've senced 'em all," said the man, in a whisper. "We'll meet at the store to-night at seven. Morgan is in for it, heart an' soul. He 'lows hangin' is too good for such a cold-blooded rascal."

"All right," said Ladd, "I'll be thar. We'll save the county the expense of a long trial. It'll be that much in the pockets o' the tax-payers."

It was late in the night at the cross-roads' store. Peter Morgan, the store-keeper, had closed and locked the door, and stood leaning against it. Some twenty rough men were sitting and standing about in whispering groups. The last two to arrive were Jacob Ladd and a burly black man.

"You fetched Ike, I see," remarked Morgan, as he cautiously admitted them. "Of course!" grunted Ladd. "Who else kin climb a tree like him? You know he's afeared to give us away, an' he is fond o' sech amusements."

The negro smiled grimly. "Well, we are all here, I believe," said Morgan, "and fur as I'm able to see, ye'll put it of one mind. But to make shore, I'll put it to a vote. All in favor hold up the right hand."

Every hand in the room was raised. The storekeeper handed out a coil of new rope. "That's the stuff," said Ladd, taking it in his hand, and handing it to the negro. "Make yore knot, Ike, or I'll have t'other end for yore neck."

Ike smiled good humoredly, tied the knot quickly, and passed the rope to the group of men nearest him. They nodded as if satisfied, and handed it back, some of them refusing to touch it.

Ladd took a lantern and led the silent band from the store and down the little shaded forest road to the village, where the jail stood.

Ladd rapped upon the jail door with the head of his walking-stick, and his fellows moved up close behind.

"Hello! Who's thar?" sounded in gruff tones from the room occupied by the jailer and his wife.

"Git up an' see, Nelse Murray!" answered Ladd.

The men pressed nearer together. Some of them drew their revolvers and pulled their hats down over their eyes. Ladd's face was entirely hidden.

A chain rattled on the door and a pale, bearded face appeared in a slight opening. "What's it you want?" asked the jailer in an unsteady voice.

"Jest yore prisoner, Murray, that's all," replied Ladd, in a guttural, unrecognizable voice. The others crowded about him. "Turn over yore keys an' go back ter bed; we'll do the rest."

"Boys," exclaimed the jailer, "this aint right. The prisoner haint been proved guilty. Go off, an' let me do my duty." Murray was trembling so violently that the rattling of the chain on the door could be heard. Ladd coolly cocked his revolver. A dozen other weapons clicked.

"Hold on! Give 'im a minute!" exclaimed Ladd. The jailer's hand suddenly came out into the moonlight. A bunch of keys rattled in his fingers and fell jingling upon a stone step.

"I wash my hands uv ye," the jailer faltered. Ladd unlocked the door, and the men entered. They gathered around a large cage of iron in the middle of the room, in which they saw, by the light of the lantern, a handsome man about twenty-two years old.

"I see what you want," said the young prisoner. "but I'll swar I'm no guilty! I didn't kill that man—I don't know anything about it. Give me a chance to prove it!"

"Tell that to some other gang o' 'white caps,'" said Ladd, coolly unlocking the cage and leading the man out. "Yon needn't bother to spend yore wind—you'll need it atter awhile. Tie 'is hands, Ike, an' put the rope 'roun' 'is neck."

Most of the band were awed by the prisoner's cool deportment. A sudden look of angry fearlessness seemed to sweep over his young face. As the negro approached him, he voluntarily crossed his hands behind his back for them to be tied.

"All right," he said, in a tone of resignation, mixed with contempt. "I'll show yer how an honest man kin die when he's overpowered by a mob o' cowards. Lead the way!"

Ladd preceded the prisoner and Ike down the stairs; the others brought up the rear. Silently they crossed the shaded court-yard, passed out into the open moonlight in the street, and entered the woods.

"What time is it?" asked Jacob Ladd, of a man by his side. "I dunno," was the reply, and the speaker shuddered at the sound of his own voice.

"It's about quarter after two," said the prisoner, very calmly. "I heard the clock strike twice jest fore yore fellers knocked on the door."

Every man that heard the voice seemed to feel a cold hand upon his heart. Presently Ike stopped the prisoner beneath a huge oak, and looked around with a question in his gleaming eyes.

"This one'll do," said Ladd, in an uneven voice. Then, at his command, Ike hung the rope over the lowest limb of the tree.

"If yer hev any prayer ter pray, say it fore I give the order," said Ladd.

"My prayers are said, thank yer," said the young man; "but I've got a straight request to leave behind me, if there's one among yer that 'ud like to see justice done."

"Out with it, then," said Ladd. As he spoke he let the rope fall slack. "I've done said I'm innocent, so I won't go over that. But I've tramped it all the way from Texas to do somethin' for a divin' man, an' this hangin' will prevent it. That money, two hundred dollars, 'at the sheriff took from me, an' which he intends to hand over to the dead man's wife, don't b'long ter her, and never was in the possession of the man that was killed."

"Ye all 'low I'm guilty, 'ca'se I had that money, an' couldn't tell the man's name I was fetchin' it to. Now I was away out on the prairie in North Texas, twenty miles from a white man's house, when I ran across a young man by 'isself in a cabin, jest about to die with a fever. Thar wasn't nobody in reach, so I couldn't get help. Jest fore he died he give me that money, an' made me promise to take it to his father."

"He said he owed it to 'im fer a hoss he drowned, an' he'd promised to pay fer. He hed jest told me that his father lived in this county, an' started to tell his name, when he tuk a fit o' coughin', and died 'thout makin' it known."

"I buried 'im thar, an' tramped all the way here, 'ca'se I had no money o' my own. But so many young fellers has gone West 'at I couldn't find the father o' this one."

"All I want to ax is that some o' you will try to see that justice is done, in case anything turns up ter prove me innocent atter I'm gone. Now I'm ready."

Every eye in the group was directed toward Jacob Ladd. He was leaning against a young tree, as pale as death.

"What was the boy's name?" he gasped, staring the prisoner in the face. "I tol' yer I didn't know," replied the other.

"Did he have red hair an' blue eyes?" "Yes, an' a blood-red birthmark on his cheek."

Ladd was quivering in every limb and feature. The men had dropped the rope as it had stung their hands. The whole forest seemed hushed in suspense.

The prisoner began to look around him in astonishment, but he could meet nobody's eyes.

"O my boy!" burst from Ladd's lips, and he staggered toward the bound man; "is he dead?"

"Who?" "The boy that give you the money." "Yes, an' under the ground. I buried 'im the best I could. Do you know anything about 'im?"

"He was my son!" Almost without a word the young man was released. The mob gradually dispersed, and Ladd was left alone with him.

"Come along with me," said Ladd. "I'll see you clear with the sheriff. I want you to tell the boy's mother about it."

By and by they reached Ladd's cottage. The light from a kitchen fire shone through the window. "She's up a ready," said Ladd. "You wait here till I get up and sorter break it to her."

He leaned wearily against the fence, and Ladd staggered across the potato patch and entered the door. The stranger listened, expecting to hear some sound of grief from the house, but it did not come. In a few moments Ladd emerged from the house and came slowly toward him.

subonnet hid her face, and she did not look up. The visitor sat down. His bare toes showed through his shoes. A nude knee parted a wide rent in his trousers, and his elbows were exposed.

Ladd muttered something to his wife about going out to feed his horses, and slunk from the room.

"You mus' be hongry," Mrs. Ladd said; and she raised a most pallid, woebegone visage. "I'll have breakfast ready in a few minutes."

She gave him food, and then showed him the way into the little bedroom, where Tobie had slept. Before he retired, he told her the story of the boy's death and burial. No tears came to the woman's eyes as she heard the recital, but she staggered as she went about her work.

He had slept soundly fifteen minutes before she cautiously put her grey head in at the door. She shrank back as if she had been smitten in the face when she saw the outlines of his form under the covers of the bed her son had used. Then she stole into the room, and softly lifted the sleeper's tattered clothing and shoes from a chair near the bed, and bore them back to her room.

She looked at them aghast; they were beyond repair. For twenty minutes she sat helplessly looking at the heap of rags, unable to think. A tear of pity for the young man asleep in the adjoining room came into her eye, although she had not yet wept over the death of her only child.

All at once her breast heaved. She arose, and going to the box in the corner, took out the suit of clothes she had shown her neighbor the day before.

"It 'ud be a shame to 'low 'im to go away in them rags," she muttered softly; and all at once she buried her rigid face in the clothing, and held it there for a silent moment. "Besides Tobie 'lowed if he never come back, to give 'em to some feller 'at needed 'em; an' 'it I wisht I might a-kep' 'em, to look at once in a-while."

She measured the two suits together; she put the soles of shoes against the bottoms of the high-heeled boots, and was satisfied with the measurement. Then she folded the ragged clothes up in a bundle, and put them behind some rubbish in a corner.

Taking the other suit and the boots, she placed them noiselessly upon the chair near the stranger's bed, and softly withdrew.

About three hours later the guest put his head cautiously out of his room and caught her eye.

"I cayn't find my clothes," he said, huskily; and she coughed a little behind her hand. "Yore'n was 'bout played out. Yore welcome to 'em—I reckon they'll fit yer."

When he came out wearing the suit, and she looked up suddenly and saw him standing near the water-shed, she fell to shaking so violently that the pan she held fell to floor. She stopped to pick it up, and without giving him another glance, quickly left the room.

While the young man stood in the door, Ladd and the sheriff rode up to the gate and called him to them. They had come to restore the money that had been taken from him, and to tell him that a man had been arrested in the next county with Broadenax's money in his possession, and the man had confessed the crime.

The young man took the money. "Thar's the money yore boy sent yer," he said to Ladd. "An' now I think I'll go. I've been away from my folks for three year, an' I aint thought much about home, but somehow I've got the strongest hankerin' to see my mammy I ever had in all my life. Good-by. Tell yore wife I'm much obliged fer 'er kindness. I know how she feels, an' I won't bother 'bout tellin' 'er farewell."

Ladd tried to speak, but could not. He walked on down the road by the young man's side to a tree where his favorite mare was tied. There were tears in his eyes, and his features were softer than they had been since his childhood.

"Hold on," he said. He put his hand upon the neck of the mare, and looked appealingly into his companion's face. "Fer heaven's sake don't refuse what I'm agwine to ax yer," he began. "I b'lieve on my soul I'll die if yer do! You've got 40 mile ter go—I want to give you my mare, fer yo' ter keep fer good. I've packed some victuals in the saddle-bags. Don't refuse me!"

"I cayn't take yore hoss, man," said the other. "You needn't feel like I'm agwine to harbor any ill-will agin yer. I aint that sort."

"You must take 'er!" groaned the farmer. "I cayn't take no refusal."

The young man looked into the streaming old eyes for a moment; then he said: "All right, sence yer insist on it, I think I see what's botherin' yer, an' if I kin he'p yer, I'm willin'."

Ladd watched the horseman ride away. When he was almost out of sight down the long road Ladd turned, and found his wife at his side. Her face was as hard in expression as a statue's. But she showed surprise when she noticed the tears in her husband's eyes, and his transfigured visage.

She looked away in the sunshine after the departing horse and rider. Then her face lighted up with sudden eagerness.

"Did you give 'im Betty, Jacob?" she asked. He nodded.

She wavered an instant; then threw her arms around him, and with her white head on his breast, burst into tears.—YOUTH'S COMPANION.

Two Men.
Two men toiled side by side from sun to sun, On mount or plain;
Both sat with children, when the day was done, About their door.
One saw the beautiful in crimson cloud And shining moon;
The other, with his head in sadness bowed, Made night of noon.
One loved each tree and flower and singing bird,
No music in the soul of one was stirred By leaf or rain.
One saw the good in every fellow man,
And hoped the best;
The other marvelled at his Master's plan, And doubt confessed.
One, having heaven above and heaven below,
Was satisfied;
The other, discontented, lived in woe,
And hopeless died.

Those who would go to heaven when they die must begin their heaven while they live.—Henry.

THE NEW MONTE CARLO.

WHERE THE FAMOUS GAMBLING CASINO WILL BE LOCATED.

Driven From Its Old Home, It Will Flourish in Future in Ignorant and Secluded Andorre—How the Right to Gamble Will Be Obtained.

The downfall of the world-famed gambling casino at Monte Carlo has created a sensation in all the European capitals. The Prince of Monaco has refused to renew the concession under which the casino is operated, and which expires next year. With Monte Carlo gone, there will not remain a public gaming table in Europe operated with the authority of the law.

The alarm of the sporting fraternity has been diminished by the news that although Monte Carlo must go, the gambling establishment will simply change its locale. In the quaint little republic of Andorre, nestling among the highest and wildest reaches of the Pyrenees, it has found a home, and there a new Cercle des Etrangers, a new casino will begin a new history of shame, of lawless pleasure born of mad excitement, of fabulous profits garnered from the wreck of lives and the ruin of fortunes.

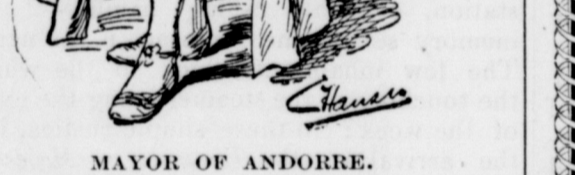
The three magnates of Monte Carlo have formed a new incorporation, under the title of the Cercle des Etrangers d'Andorre (Strangers' Club of Andorre). They have capitalized it at fifty millions of francs, and it is said that all these offered for general subscription, 20,000,000 of francs, was gobbled up at a premium in a few days by Parisian rastaquoueres and fast speculators on the Bourse.

The plans contemplate the erection of a Casino with theatre and all other buildings as at Monte Carlo, and in addition a mammoth hotel. They are to be located at Escaldes, a hot sulphur bath in the Andorran territory near Andorre, the principal village and seat of government. The construction of from 50 to 100 miles of post road is an immediate necessity, and an extensive fast diligence service must be established. A railway is ultimately contemplated from Foix or some other convenient point now reached by rail, to the village of Andorre, a distance of probably 40 miles.

The State, like Monaco, owes a feudal allegiance to the government of France, which is shared, however, by the bishop of Urgel in Spain. The sovereignty of the two powers is joint and equal in every way, and in the Casino matter the bishop, who is one of the poorest prelates in existence, is relied upon to uphold the gamblers against the influence of France. It will be worth his while to do this for the sake of the enormous income he will derive from his share of the profits, for he is counted very much in the deal. All he gets from his sovereignty at present is some 450 francs a year, while the tribute to France is about 950 francs.

The territory of Andorre is about 160 square miles and cannot, therefore, be much over twelve miles in length and breadth. It is rather on the French side of the Pyrenees.

It remains almost unknown to the rest of the world and is ignorant of the world to an incredible degree. The people are of the same race as the Catalans, and their language is of the same family.



MAYOR OF ANDORRE.

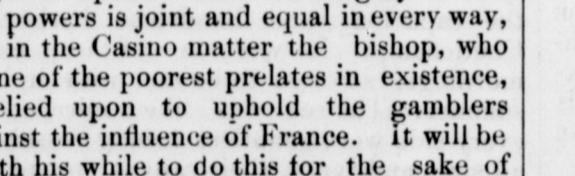
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ANDORRE, THE NEW MONTE CARLO.

The ignorance of the population is dense. Not over a hundred persons can read, and not so many can speak French. There is no book in the Andorran language, and those who can read do so as a rule in Catalan. The men wear homespun knee breeches and the short Andalusian jacket, showing the shirt between its edges and the trousers belt. They ordinarily wear the Catalan bonnet, a headdress identical with what is generally called a "Liberty cap." The women dress in homespun, too. They are kindly treated, but rather as inferiors to the men. They never sit down to eat with their lords and masters and they are never consulted in any of the transactions of life.

The government is a kind of landed aristocracy. The legislative function is vested in a council of 24—four from each of the six parishes into which the State is divided. These elect a first and second syndic, who are the executive officers. I send you a picture of Don Gil Areny, the present first syndic, as he appears in his official costume. It is the same that his predecessors have worn for a couple of centuries, so slow in change is this place. The long coat, the knee breeches and the wonderful hat are black, and the syndic's waist is girt with a crimson scarf.



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