

## A WAIF OF THE PLAINS.

You can't change the nature of a human being any more than the leopard can change its spots. Take a savage and make a civilized creature of him; he will probably behave well while amongst civilized people, but should he come into contact with savages again, the old man will show itself; and the reverse holds good. Take a Christian boy (or girl) and bring him up with savages, but, so soon as the strange influence is removed, you will see the old nature asserting itself.

I've seen instances of both. I've knocked about a good deal, and I know it's a fact. Why, I met with an instance of the latter kind whilst I was serving in the United States army. Ah, yes, I ought to have remembered before I began talking that I should let myself in for an hour's yarn spinning and a dry throat. Well, I'll do you the justice of saying that I believe you when you affirm that my throat shall not be allowed to become parched.

It was the case of a child of Scandinavian descent who had fallen into the hands of the Apaches—goodness knows how—and had been 'brought up' by them. Yet she quickly developed as good a specimen of the modern American girl as—. But there, it's a poor way to tell a story by commencing in the middle! So here goes to tell it in proper form.

For days and weeks those of us who had not flown to the safety of the town and the larger camp had watched for the coming of the Apaches, who had been raiding the outlying ranches and the smaller mining camps; and at last they came.

It seemed as though millions of howling, sharpshooting demons had surrounded the camp, and every man who could handle a rifle was needed.

Driven back from the surrounding hills to the confines of the camp proper into our very cabins, where the women and children were—bullet after bullet was sent after an unseen enemy who lay behind the rocks. Then—

There came a bugle call of which we knew not the technical meaning, but we did know that troops from Fort Bayard had come to our rescue, and that we and ours were saved.

Lieutenant Horton was in the thick of the fight, and so busy chopping at the Indians that he never knew what did happen that night, not exactly. He remembered only that when the trouble was all over in this (his first) engagement, he was the possessor of a shattered arm, a broken rib or two, a cut head, and a small, blonde prisoner, whom he had captured at the point of the sword when the troopers found the obscure canyon in which the Indians had concealed their families.

Horton's prisoner came along with surprising willingness. Her complexion was tanned by the sun and winds almost as dark as that of any Apache, but the same influences had served only to bleach her naturally light hair to an unmistakably tow and molasses color. She must have retained some recollection of her Scandinavian parents, else she had not come along with Mr. Horton so willingly, for she had a temper, as was presently discovered by several persons. Yet she could not, or would not, speak a word aside from the Apache dialect, and we could learn nothing through the interpreters of her origin or as to the time she had lived among the Indians.

It was embarrassing to all of us to know what we should do with this waif. Those of Apache parentage we could, and would return to this reservation. But this one—

The women had talked it over with doubtful shakes of the head, when John Marcus Horton strode modestly into the breach, and offered to send her to his mother in Ohio—an offer gladly accepted.

And as it was arranged, Olga as she was called was sent to his mother in Ohio. A couple of months afterwards he obtained a leave of absence, and was away for three weeks. During that time he had been to visit his people, to return with glowing accounts of the manner in which Olga was

getting on with her studies and the ways of polite society.

He managed to get away for a day or so at fairly frequent intervals, and after each of these trips it was 'Olga this' and 'Olga that,' until we were tired of hearing of his little 'Norwegian Apache,' as one of the boys ungallantly dubbed her one time when Horton was not present. In fact we grew quite tired of it.

But when, after his third visit east, Horton returned to Silver City, bringing with him his mother and the little 'Norwegian Apache,' what a change of ideas and a surrender of hearts! Instead of an angular, awkward young person, possessed with points that might make her, when developed, a beauty of the 'lily' type, behold a petite young woman, with a wealth of pile golden hair, beautiful teeth, complexion of roses and cream, and a decidedly vigorous constitution which called for lots of horseback riding and other outdoor exercises. All of us, even the ladies, were charmed with her.

Then they began to think that it would be well if Olga captivated one of the young men and left the wealthy Horton for one of the girls, and upon this basis, campaign went on, much to the evident amusement of Olga, who, with womanly intuition and a knowledge of the ways of women far beyond her years, put two and two together and told Horton it was all very funny. 'Fancy those army frumps, Jack, being jealous of me—poor me! Jack' (this with mock solemnity), 'are you in love with me?'

'Olga, I wish you would not talk in that frivolous manner. It isn't like you, and you should have enough consideration for me to believe those people sincere in their attentions.'

And Horton turned away with a pained look; but Olga's arms were round his neck and her face was close to his. With wet eyes she whispered:

'Jack, dear, have I hurt you?'

Never before had John Horton been so tempted. Should he now tell her what for two years had been in his heart of hearts, unknown to anyone?

It was a momentary struggle, then Horton was himself again.

'Yes, you have, dear. Please don't speak of my friends again in that way,' he said, disengaging her arms.

Olga's mouth drooped, and there was a piteous look in her eyes as she replied:

'I won't, John.'

Then, with a sudden kiss she walked away as though she intended to go to her room for a big, feminine cry.

Horton stood for some seconds, her parting kiss burning upon his cheek, her path before him, as he had seen it when she left him still before his mind's eye.

'I'm an old brute!' he told himself. 'A man of my age, (he was twenty-eight) talking to a buoyant, irrepressible child in that manner merely because I am supposed to be her guardian! Jack, you old scoundrel, you ought to be ashamed of yourself!'

It there was a male person in southwestern New Mexico who did not fall down and worship that little 'Norwegian Apache' he failed, probably through fear, to disclose himself, but the case of Danoy of the Ninth was the most serious.

He all but neglected his duties to be at her side when she and Mrs. Horton were stopping at the post, and, even in his inattention, almost compromised her by falling in love with one of her mad friends one day when he had obtained leave of absence, and riding with her unchaperoned to Lordsburg and back, returning at dead of night.

For this, Horton took both of them seriously to task as soon as he learned of the affair, as he did the evening following through his shocked and distressed mother, who rode into town in an army ambulance in order to tell him.

But a week or two later he proposed to her at a picnic given by the ladies of the garrison in honor of Olga's departure from the fort. She refused him, she was kind enough to him, and all that, but Danby took it rather hard and swore he'd resign his commission, retire to the mountains, and adopt hermits as a profession. Instead, however, he exchanged to a northern post, fell in love again and married his colonel's wife's sister, who was plain, but who had money enough to disguise the fact somewhat.

Fielding comes next. He was a leading light of the local bar at one of the larger Arizona towns, and attended to a good deal of business for Horton, who was interested in copper over there. He came to Silver City to consult with his client, met the 'papoose,' and a heart theretofore considered impenetrable capitulated at first glance, and Fielding was lost. He neglected his other suits to attend to this one to such a degree that it hurt his practice, and in the end he met the same fate at the charmer's hands as had poor Danby—with a difference. Miss Olga told him that if he remained of the same mind until the following year he might propose again, and she 'might' then consider the matter.

Meanwhile if Mrs. Horton did not object he might write to her at school, but she would not answer his letters.

Poor Fielding was utterly cast down, not even the permission to write affording him any hope, and all that kept him from suicide was an earnest request from Horton neither to make an ass of himself nor to die on the premises, after which that severe guardian lectured his ward quite harshly for her flighty ways, especially when her arts were practiced upon his own personal friends.

'But I don't mean to, Jack, really I don't. What makes them act so? I can't help it!' sobbed the culprit.

'Yes, you can,' said her mentor severely, adding mentally, 'but they can't!'

He looked out of the window a moment, then turned to her.

'Papoose,' he said in a strained voice. 'I think it best you and mother should curtail your visit and go back to Ohio as soon as you can pack up. I'll speak to mother about it tonight, and, well, I'll see you at Christmas, anyway.'

There was a quiet sob from the sofa, which gave Horton suicidal feelings, and in another moment he would have gone to comfort the weeper, but just then he heard his mother's step on the walk, and when she entered Olga had fled to the privacy of her room.

It was rather more than a year later that Horton wrote his ward a letter somewhat to the following effect:

'There has been enough of this sort of thing. I suppose you do your flirting now with the high-toned and dignified professors for want of better material. Now, Olga, this must stop. Here is Jim Fielding, one of the best, brightest, most intelligent fellows in the world, going to the dogs on your account. I want you to be serious and think things over, and when you come down here this time do give Jim a chance.'

Olga came at the regulation time, with Mrs. Horton and it was very shortly after her arrival—not more than two days—that Fielding again declared himself.

But it was a different Olga to whom he spoke this time. It was a girl with the same old way, the same odd fancies, but yet a girl who could understand and appreciate his feelings and pity him with her whole heart, without making her pity obnoxious. She had known, she said, that this was coming, and had dreaded, yet hoped for this talk, but she did not tell him of her stormy interview with John Horton that afternoon when that orge had told her that she must accord Fielding a hearing, or—or—there would be infinite trouble.

'Will you shake hands with me, Mr. Fielding?' the girl asked tremulously, when she had finished telling him how she had long thought it over, and found she could not love him. 'I suppose it's useless to say I'm sorry, although I hope you know I am. So—'

'I know you are, Miss Horton. I believe in your sympathy and your kindness of heart as thoroughly as I believe in human existence. And I believe in myself enough, I went on more firmly, 'to think that I might be the successful one, were it not for another—some one. Good night. God bless you both!'

They shook hands at two ordinary acquaintances might have done, and Olga disappeared through the hall, and up the stairs.

That very day, Horton had made himself practically certain that the future of his giddy ward was assured; that, true to his behests and the promptings of a conscience, he had done everything to make worldly Olga engage herself to Jim Fielding. Then, after all his guests had gone to bed and he was left alone in his library, this great, big ex-soldier, thinking it was all over, leaned his head on the table and cried like a baby.

He was a baby, too, for presently someone entered the room quietly, and, kneeling beside him said:

'Tell me, Jack—tell your mother.'

Some women are jealous of their son's loves. Jack's mother was not one of these, no matter what her other faults might be.

'You can't direct a woman's affections, darling, any more than you can direct the tides or the winds. And it seems to me—you have done a good deal for Mr. Fielding in this case.'

There must have been at least twenty guests at Horton's house to celebrate the home-coming, and these had progressed through nearly every course, when one of the girls who sat opposite Olga, remarked suddenly:

'Why, Olga Horton, where's your pretty solitaire? The last time I saw it—'

Olga flushed, then paled, as she arose, trembling, and showed the solitaire (a gift from Mrs. Horton from among the family heirlooms) on the third finger of her left hand.

It's just changed hands, that's all,' she said, trying to speak brightly, because Jack and I are to be married next summer. Then she smiled on them all and was gone, and presently Jack, utterly bewildered, but entirely happy, found her in the garden crying.

'Sweetheart!'

'Go away! I hate you! I—'

'Another day!' commented Jack judiciously but exultantly. 'However, you're forgiven for the sake of the cause in which it was told. But here, Sapphira, how are we to explain things?'

'Why, just go and tell them that you're an old slow-poke, and a duffer, and that I'm a silly school girl, but that what I say 'goes'—and Jack, it's just seven years ago

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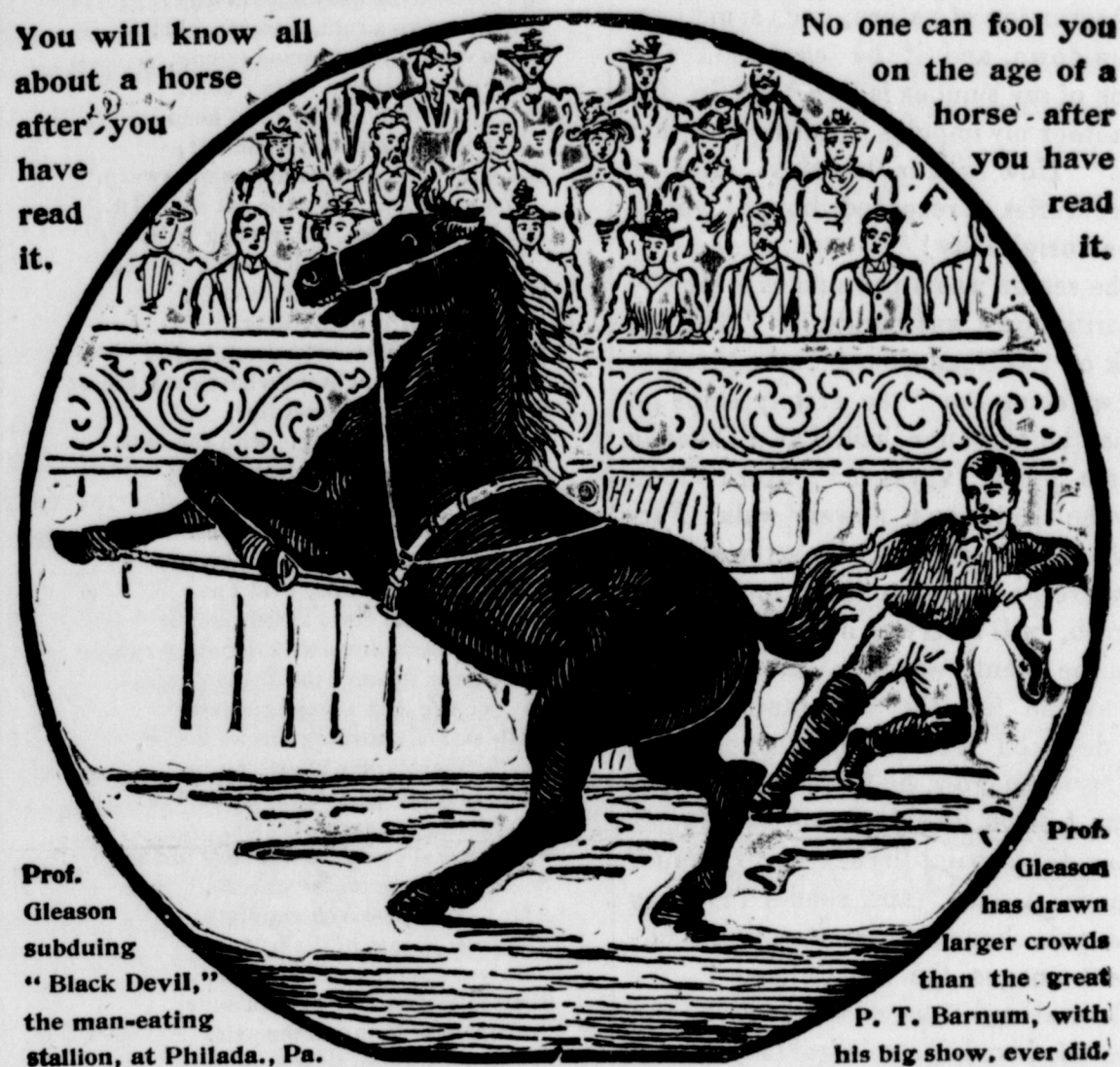
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this time that you found me, and it's leap year, too, and, Jack, you're not cross, are you?

'Of course I am,' he replied between kisses. But he did not say it with any measure of solemnity. And that proved what I said at the beginning.

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A DOG'S SENSES.

Treat the Intelligent Animal Right and They Will be Obedient Companions.

A young girl was crossing the Public Garden the other morning says a writer in the Boston Record, upon the main path

which crossed the bridge. She was accompanied by a magnificent mastiff, who strode along beside her in the most companionable sort of way, looking up into her face occasionally as if to remark casually that it was a very fine morning, or to ask if there was anything he could do for her. The two crossed the bridge together and finally came to the Charles street gate. Here the young girl, evidently not wishing to have the care of the dog in the busy streets, turned to him and said:

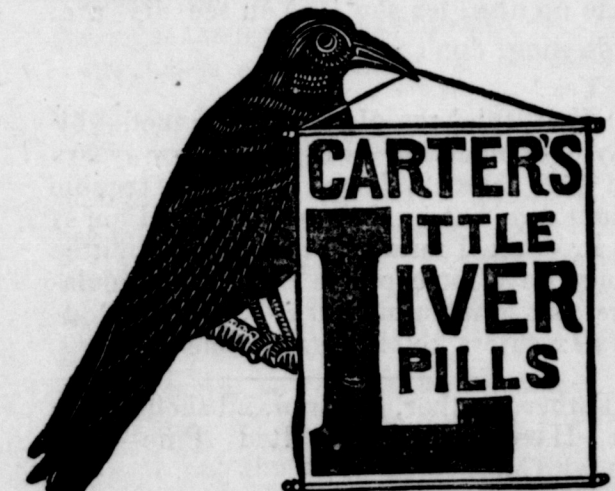
'There, that is far enough now, Marco. You need not go with me any farther, but turn about and go back home.'

She did not take her hands out of her muff to point the way, and she spoke as she would to a small brother, in a pleasant conversational voice. Marco looked at her with his large eyes, then looked across the Common, wagging his tail slowly as though he was thinking how very pleasant it would be to go the rest of the way.

Finally he turned back to her again and with a movement of his head and eyes asked as plainly as though the words had come from his mouth: 'Please let me go a little farther, it is such a fine morning.'

'No, dear; I'm going shopping, you know,' answered the girl, explaining the difficulty as if Marco were human, 'there'll be crowds of people, and I shall not know what to do with you. But go along, now, there's a good fellow, and I'll be back soon.'

Without another word Marco turned and walked back across the gardens. He did not slink away, as some dogs do when sent back, but marched leisurely along with his head in the air, stopped a moment on the bridge to watch the children skating below then trotted on toward Commonwealth Avenue. The writer watched him until he had disappeared beyond the gates, then resumed his own way, wondering whether Darwin loved dogs or not.



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