

CUPID— POSTMASTER

A Fortunate Mistake

By Clarissa Mackie

The postmaster at Saltpeter Canyon took his feet down from the counter and lounged over to the little pigeon-hole box where the letters were distributed. The door opened, and a man strode in and pressed a bronzed face close to the stamp window.

"Howdy! Any mail for the Lone Bull?" he asked.

Simeon Carter reached down a packet of letters and thumbed them over deliberately. Occasionally he paused to expectorate over his shoulder, improving each opportunity by indulging in a prolonged stare at the face in the window. Presently his curiosity found utterance. "Seems like I've seen you before," he hinted.

"Where?" asked the other with disconcerting promptness.

"I-I don't remember," admitted Simeon sheepishly, and then gruffly, "I don't know as I'm inclined to give the Lone Bull mail to anybody that comes along."

"I hope you don't feel that way," said the other cheerfully, "but I guess you had better give it to me. I've got Boss Clintock's order somewhere about me, but I reckon my face is order enough to get the mail from a little 2 by 4 cracker box like this."

"Young fellow, that face of yours will be your passport to a much hotter place than Saltpeter Canyon," grunted Simeon as he leaned an elbow on the window ledge. "To get down to business, here's a letter for Theodore Crane, a hull bunch for the boss, a paper for Jim Lewis, and, let me see, there's a postal card for Harry Barry from his uncle at the Springs saying—um—ah, yes; here's a postal card for Harry Barry, and that's all."

"Thanks," said the other briefly as he bestowed the mail matter in his various pockets and turned away.

Now Simeon Carter's leathery face was pressed to the window. "There



"I RECKON MY FACE IS ENOUGH ORDER TO GET THE MAIL."

might be a letter for you, young fellow," he insinuated, "only I don't happen to know your name."

"I'm not looking for a letter," said the other imperturbably. "I never get any letters."

The postmaster's face reddened angrily. "Think you'll string me, eh? Spose you'd rather go without your letter than tell your name."

"I don't mind telling my name," said the other cowboy carelessly, "only you didn't ask me outright. Ask me plumb out, and I'll tell you. Fair and square is my method."

Simeon swallowed his indignation and grinned back at the handsome youth. "What's your name, young man?" he asked bluntly.

"Timothy Lewis," said the other promptly.

"Well, that does beat the bugs!" chuckled the postmaster. "Here's your letter, Mr. Tim Lewis, and a big fat one it is too." He shoved a large square manila envelope through the opening, and the other glanced at it curiously and thrust it in an inside pocket.

Arrived at the ranch office, he gave the mail into the hands of Mr. Clintock and went on to the bunk house.

There was no doubt about the matter. The envelope was addressed in a feminine hand to "Mr. Tim Lewis, care the Lone Bull ranch, Saltpeter Springs, Mont." The postmark was Sioux City.

Timothy drew out his knife and slipped the blade under the flap. Inside was something wrapped in white tissue paper.

With wondering curiosity Timothy unfolded the wrappings and disclosed a photograph—the picture of the prettiest girl he had ever seen.

Yet she was an utter stranger to Timothy Lewis.

Across the bottom of the picture a few words were penciled in the same handwriting, only here the "L" was unmistakable. To Jim, with Nell's love. That "Jim" proved the owner of the picture to be Jim Lewis, who was doubtless waiting impatiently below for his weekly budget of mail. A thin sliver was his this time—a faded newspaper that was all.

He propped the picture on his shelf and studied it closely. She was the sweetest— He stopped and drew a sharp, pained breath. Of what was he thinking? There was every evidence that this girl was Jim Lewis' sweetheart. Was it not well known that that gentleman was economizing on tobacco in an endeavor to raise the price of a marriage license? And so this was the girl!

There would have to be explanations, of course, and possibly Jim Lewis might take offense because Tim had opened the letter. Nevertheless it was up to the postmaster at Saltpeter Canyon. Timothy shrugged his shoulder and tucked the picture away in his breast pocket. He would await a favorable opportunity before presenting it to its rightful owner.

At the supper table they were scoffing at Jim Lewis' use of cheap tobacco. Harry Barry was passing around his handsome new Stetson with all the solemnity of a deacon passing the contribution plate.

"For Jim's marriage license," explained Mr. Barry as he poked the hat under Timothy's nose. "We're all doped with that brand of herbs he's smoking. Get back to the Broncho brand, Jimmy. We'll raise the money for the wedding."

Timothy frowned a little as he thought of the race pressed against his heart, but tact required that a contribution be made, so with what grace he could muster he dropped a handful of cigarettes in the hat and went on with his supper.

Jim Lewis was growling over his newspaper. "I'll eat old Simeon alive if he's keeping back any more of my letters."

"Heard anything more about that Tim and Jim letter?" asked Crane from behind his coffee cup.

"Nary. Maybe it's because I haven't been near the old scallawag for ten days. I've thrashed it out with him for the last time. I feel pretty billing mad tonight, and I've got a mind to go over and thrash him good and plenty," said Mr. Lewis savagely.

"We might go over and wipe out the hull place, take your letter and get," suggested Harry Barry eagerly. "It's mighty dull nowadays. I feel like I could lick a regiment."

"I'll attend to my own licking," observed Jim dryly. "When I go to hunt down a weazened old scallawag like Simeon Carter I guess I ain't feeling so poorly that I have to take along six picked men, a battery of machine guns and an airplane scout to help me out. Nixey. That is to be a duel—just Simeon and me, and me coming home with the letter which he says is not for me."

In this mood Mr. Lewis was not to be trifled with, and one by one the men dropped away to indulge in a quiet game of poker near the glowing stove.

Timothy Lewis resolved to postpone his interview with his comrade until morning had brought the gloomy one to a more amiable frame of mind. Incidentally Timothy could have another look at the picture, which he hesitated to surrender.

Toward morning he was awakened by a touch on his shoulder, and he started up to find Jim Lewis sitting on the edge of the bed in a flood of moonlight.

"Well," said Timothy sharply, "what's wanted?"

Lewis crossed one leg over the other and pulled reflectively at his mustache. "I just been over to Saltpeter Canyon and licked that postmaster. On the side I've rifled the United States mail, and I'm liable for most anything, and when it was all over but the shouting old Simeon barks out he'd give the letter to Mr. Tim Lewis, which is you, I believe." Mr. Lewis' voice was dangerously silly.

"That's my name," snapped Timothy, now wide awake. "That letter was given to me by mistake. It surely was addressed so it looked like 'Tim,' and I opened it. Of course as soon as I saw what was in it I knew it wasn't for me. I was going to give it to you in the morning."

"Honest?" demanded Jim Lewis.

"Yes," returned Timothy quietly, and such was his reputation among his comrades that his word was never doubted. Jim Lewis held out his hand, and Timothy reached under his pillow and drew out the letter. "Here it is," he said.

"You're taking plenty good care of it," commented Jim Lewis as he peered curiously in the end of the letter and then drew forth the photograph. He held it to the moonlight and stared and stared again at the face. Then he scanned the superscription on the envelope. "Well, I'm hanged if it isn't little Nell! Of course I thought it must be from Lulu!" The disappointment in his tone emboldened Timothy to ask a question.

"Who is Nell?" he asked bluntly.

"My sister," said Jim Lewis proudly. "She teaches school in Sioux City, and she's the prettiest girl out—except Lulu Gilbert—of course always except the future Mrs. Lewis." He tucked the picture away in his pocket and seemed smitten with some happy thought, for he asked suddenly, "What'd you have it under your pillow for? Now, that's pretty good, Tim. Don't you blow to the chaps about my sis, and I'll keep it dark about your blushing over Nell's picture. What say?"

"Agreed!" said Timothy promptly.

"And I say, Jim, the next time you go to Sioux City will you take me along?"

"Sure thing. I'm going to marry Lulu there in about two weeks, so you can go along and be best man. It's to be done in style. If you ever call me brother-in-law, Tim Lewis, you can thank that old scallawag at the post-office."

"Scallawag!" breathed Timothy fervently. "The only name that's good enough for Simeon Carter is Cupid, postmaster!"

Here is a woman who speaks from personal knowledge and long experience. Mrs. F. H. Brown of Wilson, Pa., who says: "I have from experience that Chamberlain's Colic, Cholera and Diarrhoea Remedy is the only medicine that will cure these troubles in all cases."

HUMOR OF THE DAY

Too Positive a Cure.

Even a Connecticut farmer can make a mistake. One of them did when he became over enthusiastic in his conversation with the top floor girl. The top floor girl had engaged board at the farm for three weeks, but before she had been there three days she appeared dissatisfied with her surroundings.

"What is the matter?" asked the farmer. "Aren't things as represented?" "Y-y-yes," said the top floor girl, "I suppose they are. The only thing that seems wrong is my memory. That is entirely too active. You will remember that in our correspondence I said I wanted to find a place where I could forget all my troubles, and you wrote back that this was the ideal spot for anything of that kind. You said I could forget my own name here if I tried real hard."

"Well?" said the farmer inquiringly. "Well," proceeded the top floor girl, "I think you fooled me there. I don't believe you have a Lethian spring on the place. I can remember things more distinctly now than before I came."

"That is curious," said the farmer. "The place has worked like a charm for others. It completely cured a young man that was here week before last. When he came he was suffering with the same complaint that you have. He was so lovesick—"

"What?" interrupted the top floor girl. "Me? Oh, how dare you insinuate—"

"Excuse me," said the farmer. "Maybe that ain't what ails you, but it was what ailed him. He said so. He and his girl had had a flareup, and it was a case of forget or pine away. He didn't want to pine, so he tried the oblivion dodge. I never saw anybody recuperate so fast as he did. He hadn't been here two days till he was making desperate love to every girl in the neighborhood, and when he went away he had re-covered so completely that he couldn't even remember the color of that city girl's eyes."

"What was his name?"

"Cyril—something or other."

"Cyril?" she said. "Oh, dear, I do wonder! Not Cyril Starkey, was it?"

"Yes," said the farmer. "That's him—a tall, peaked, light complexioned chap. Why, do you know him?"

"Know him?" screamed the top floor girl. "Good gracious! Know him? I wondered where he had been. We haven't spoken or even seen each other for two months. So he has been—oh, the wretch! Did you say he has been trying to forget?"

"He has," said the farmer, "and a mighty good job he made of it too."

The top floor girl raced excitedly across the yard. "Hitch up the team," she said, "while I pack my trunk. Here's a week's board. I'm going home."

The farmer's lower lip dropped. "You contracted for three weeks," he said, "at \$8 a week. And besides you said you wanted to forget."

"Forget?" shrieked the top floor girl. "I do want to, but I don't want him to. I'm going home on the next train."—Philadelphia Public Ledger.

Disappointed.

"How long have you been married?" "It will be six months next Thursday."

"And do you still regard your husband as the most wonderful man who ever was born?"

Then the poor girl broke down and sobbed piteously. When she could trust herself to speak again, she said:

"No, Charles has disappointed me terribly. I'm afraid I have wrecked my life. Last night when I asked him to get up and see if there wasn't a burglar in our room he banged his nose against the edge of the open door, and he said three simply awful swear words just as if they came natural to him."—Chicago Record-Herald.

Easily Fitted.

Colonel Jasper, having a new pair of shoes that hurt his corns, decided to give them away to one of the negro bootsters at the hotel livery stable and picked out Zeke as a likely object of his generosity when he saw the old fellow shambling toward him wearing a pair of tattered shoes that looked like sandals.

"Zeke, what size shoes do you wear?" he called to him.

The old negro stopped short in expectation.

"Any size, cunnel!" he exclaimed earnestly. "Any size!"—Judge.

At the Railroad Restaurant.

The Man—Have you dusted off the pies this morning?

The Waitress—Yes, sir.

"Sifted the sugar?"

"Yes, sir."

"Limbered up the sandwiches?"

"All done, sir."

"Well, come and help me blow through this macaroni."—Yankers Statesman.

Theatrical Item.

Address to editor of daily paper—You would oblige the very much by inserting a paragraph in your paper to the effect that I have had jewelry to the value of 200,000 marks stolen.

Editor—When did it happen?

Address—Well, let us say the end of next week.—Filagunde Blatter.

No Criterion.

Tommy—I don't think utility will stay. She didn't bring her trunk.

Johnny—Ruh! Look how long the baby has stayed, and he didn't bring anything!—Judge's Library.

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Friday, October 18th 11:30 A. M.

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