

IF.

"If I were a man," the woman said,
"I'd make my mark ere I was dead;
I'd lead the world with a battle-cry,
And I'd be famous ere I should die—
If I were a man."

"If I were a youth," the old man cried,
"I'd seize all chances, I'd go with the tide;
I'd win my way to the highest place,
And stick to honor, and seek His grace—
If I were a youth."

"If I were rich," the poor man thought,
"I'd give my all for the poor's support;
I'd open my door, and I'd open my heart,
And goodness and I would never part—
If I were rich."

And lo! if all these its came true,
The woman a man, the man a youth,
The poor man rich—then in all truth,
This world would be, when we got through,
Just as it is!
—James Oppenheim, in New York Sun.

THE EXPLOIT OF ANTOINE AND PIERRE.

By Franklin Welles Calkins.

This is the true story of an exploit of Antoine and Pierre Le Beau, lads who were born in the little French-Indian village of La Saussail. Their father, Baptiste Le Beau, was a trader in peltries and their mother a half-blood Mandan woman.

Pierre was two years the older and very Indian and lazy by nature. Antoine was more like the French, and clever, and therefore was sent away to school in St. Louis, where he remained until his father was killed, an accidental victim, in a fight between Red Dog and Three Feathers' bands of Bois-Brules.

Antoine found that during the four years of his absence the fur trade had been ruined. Settlers and stockmen had come into the country across the river from La Saussail. He found Charbonneau, his father's partner, in possession of the store and his mother and Pierre with nothing left them save a few ponies, the log house they lived in and the Indian title to a tract of land above the village.

Although but 15 years old, Antoine, thrifty and clever, saw his opportunity in the control of the land, which included some excellent grazing ground. The stockmen across the river had great droves of horses and cattle, and they were already crowded for room. So Antoine took horses to herd. He succeeded in gathering 300 during the first spring and received two dollars per head for the season. He lost but two out of this "bunch," and the animals did so well that more than 500 were placed in his charge the following year.

So the Le Beaus were again highly important among the people of mixed complexion of La Saussail. Pierre wore the gayest of blanket jackets, lived merrily and sometimes amused himself by going fishing. He loafed much in Charbonneau's dingy store, which smelled of hides, dried fish and stale tobacco.

Now it happened one chilly morning, when Antoine had come in to warm his hands by Charbonneau's fire, that a couple of young men from the settlements were in the store seeking to buy rope and blankets.

"This old rope—no good," said Pierre, as one of the newcomers stopped to examine a coil upon the floor. "My brudder Antoine, hees buy some of dat rope las' summer, and de knots dey rot off hees picket-pins." At this Charbonneau flew into a rage, called Pierre some hard names in French and ordered him out of the store. Then, as Pierre merely grinned, Charbonneau rushed at him and flung him violently upon the floor.

Antoine's French-Indian blood got the upper hand of his school training at this. He seized the irate trader by the beard, thrust a pistol in his face and said such emphatic things that Charbonneau's legs shook like willows in the wind, and his customers left in alarm.

Charbonneau begged pardon, and Antoine's wrath quickly subsided. The lad was rather ashamed, in fact, for he knew Pierre had been impertinent in talking to customers about Charbonneau's goods.

The matter would have ended amicably but for Charbonneau's Ogalalla wife, who was of a temper quite as choleric as her husband and far more steadfast. She was greatly enraged when she learned that Charbonneau had been taken by the beard, which she seemed to consider a most humiliating thing. It made her despise Charbonneau and thirst for revenge on Antoine.

When the first warm days came after the going out of the ice Madame Charbonneau gathered her small effects and departed in a canoe with her children, a well-grown boy and girl. This little family paddled far down the Missouri and thence up White River to the big Ogalalla town.

Whether the angry squaw-wife appealed more signally to the spirit of revenge or of cupidity among her friends is not quite clear, but certain it is that shortly after her appearance among them a party of Ogalallas set out across the great stretch of plain to the northward, descended upon Antoine's horse-corral one night in June and drove off all the herded stock.

Antoine had built his corral a mile above the village. As these horses were under "sacred medicine" and in charge of "one of the blood" there was no danger that they would be stolen by Cheyennes, Gros Ventres or other tribes of the upper reserve. Another and final element of safety lay in the fact that most of the horses

were of a large breed not much in use, except for beef, among the Sioux. Thus Antoine had felt doubly secure in leaving the animals at night unguarded in the corral. He could not watch all night and work all day, and Pierre could not be depended on for guard duty.

On the morning of his loss he rode home from the broken corral with despair in his heart. His occupation and his reputation were gone unless he could recover the stock. The owners of his herd and other whites across the river would not hesitate to accuse him of having a hand in such a wholesale robbery unless he could prove his innocence absolutely, and they would trust him with no more horses.

It was barely daylight, so early was he out of a morning, when Antoine aroused his mother and Pierre. The woman immediately took a canoe and paddled across the river to warn the owners of the stolen horses. As for Pierre, he suddenly awoke to the importance of doing something. His Indian blood was aroused, and he readily joined Antoine in an arduous chase after the horse thieves.

Sunrise saw the brothers well mounted and galloping hard to westward. The broad trail of the herd led straight away toward the Bad Lands of the Little Missouri. The animals had evidently been taken from their corrals in the early night and were being pushed hard, for when the pursuers had mounted the bluffs above the Missouri they saw no cloud of dust upon the miles and miles of nearly level plain. At night they passed down into the valley of Thunder Creek, which marked the limit of the country they knew. They camped on this creek, nearly 70 miles from home.

They were up and off again at break of day, and night brought them to the breaks of the Bad Lands—warm, at last, upon the trail of the stolen stock. Hitherto they had passed three camps where the Ogalallas—more than 20, as the brothers had made out by the signs—halted to rest and graze the stock, and at one of them the skull and ashly picked bones of a horse were found.

Just before sunset the brothers rode to the summit of a red butte and looked back over their trail. Were the stockmen following the stolen horses? On all the vast stretch of sun-baked plain there was no slightest cloud or trail of dust to cheer the boys with hope or aid from the settlements. In another direction lay rough ridges of chalk cliffs and a narrow, gorge-like valley cast in forbidding shadows. At some point or turn in that tortuous, fading canyon the stolen horses would be guarded for the night. But dared any two pursuers venture their lives in that narrow pass?

Did the brothers turn back? Did the lazy Pierre, dust-begrimed, choked by thirst and half-famished from a slender diet of dry, chopped beef, want to go home? Not he. The Sioux's persistence and the white man's boldness had seized upon the lads and urged them on to a deed almost incredibly daring and yet planned with great shrewdness.

From the appearance of the trail below they knew the stock thieves were two hours' ride in advance and that they would go into camp soon after dark. So, with plans already formed, the two rode down the red bluff into the narrow valley.

Upon reaching the creek—a swift, shallow stream—they turned their ponies loose, quenched their thirst and immediately set out to search the banks. They found a bog hole where were tufts of old dry grass which had escaped the fall fires. Of this they gathered enough for their purpose.

With dry twigs and bark of willows they twisted dry grass ropes some two inches in diameter and half the length of a lariat. To prevent these ropes from untwisting they tied them here and there with interlacing twine.

The task finished, the brothers ate some stringy chips of dried meat and stretched themselves on the ground for an hour or so of rest. Thus refreshed, they remounted and rode leisurely and cautiously along the trail. Turn after turn of the narrow valley was made. They moved in a silence broken only by the light footfalls of their ponies. Their animals were kept at the shuffling, nearly noiseless trot characteristic of the Indian-bred pony.

On either hand loomed the chalk cliffs; fringes of cottonwoods and willows marked the crooked channel of the creek. The trail, a broad swath

in the thin, tall grass of the bottom lands, was easily followed.

The thieves were depending upon their advantage in start, their celerity of movement and the unlikelihood of pursuit except from fort or settlement. This they hoped to elude finally among the intricacies of the Bad Lands.

Leaving the trail, the boys hugged the little stream, keeping well within the shadows of its bordering trees. It was after midnight that the rustling murmur they had listened for came to their ears. Quite plainly now they could hear the trampling of a herd, hungrily cropping the coarse, thin grass. But no fires, no sign of Indians or of horses could be seen in the night.

The brothers dismounted and led their ponies deeper within the shadows of a cluster of cottonwoods. They stripped the animals of saddles and bridles and turned them loose. Each then wound his surcingle and grass rope about his body and slid softly down the ditch-like bank of the creek. They left their saddles under the trees and carried their rolled blankets under their arms. They followed the creek channel, hugging the bank, half creeping on the shore or wading in the water with great caution where there was no foothold on land.

The creek channel led them by a curve within the shadows of overhanging cliffs, and they knew the Indians were encamped in this bend. Sounds of the herd grew more distinct, and they were creeping with greater caution when a loud, familiar whinny broke upon their ears, then yells of Indians and a brief clatter of hoofs.

What Antoine and Pierre had calculated upon had happened. Their own ponies had come on and joined the herd. There had been a momentary alarm as the animals had passed Indian guards and camps. In the darkness there was little danger that the incident would excite suspicion. The savages would simply conclude that ponies had strayed and returned or been left behind in some shelter of brush or trees.

In the meantime the lads had discovered the Sioux's camp and their first outpost. Fortunately, horse stealers do not allow dogs to follow them, and Antoine and Pierre were in no danger of discovery from these sentinel pests of an ordinary Indian camp. Thanks to the shelter of the creek bank and its fringe of willows, they passed this camp in safety. The horses were farther on. Presently the brothers ascended the creek bank upon the grass land and were in the midst of the grazing herd. They walked carelessly among the animals, talking in low tones and in the Sioux tongue, which they spoke with a perfect accent.

They were some time in finding riding ponies among the herd. At last, by cautious and friendly advance, each secured a pony, bridled the animal, strapped his blanket upon its back and mounted. They rode together boldly along the creek bank. As they passed the limits of the herd a Sioux arose from the grass a few yards distant and hailed them. Antoine replied, "We go to the hills," he said, gruffly, "to look for pursuers when light comes."

The Indian grunted approval, and the riders passed leisurely on. This simple, bold proceeding, and the noise and confusion of the stamping, snorting herd, saved an alarm. Its success, and the knowledge that the Indians were herding their booty unmounted, filled Pierre and Antoine with elation. The Sioux, as they had hoped, were giving all of their ponies complete rest for the night.

The daring riders passed on down the valley until they were well out of sight and hearing of the herd. Then they hobbled their ponies and flung themselves upon the grass. Here they waited, resting and talking in subdued voices until that darkest hour which comes before the dawn. Then they remounted, uncoiled their grass ropes and rode back toward the herd. They approached, riding cautiously, until warned by coughing snorts that the horses were near at hand.

There was no longer the rustle of tramping feet—the herd were lying at rest. So much the better for the plan the boys had adopted, a plan simple and bold, requiring dash and courage beyond ordinary conception. They were to stampede this herd of 500 horses and ride at its heels directly through and over an Indian camp. Truly, it was to be neck or nothing with them! They rode a dozen rods apart and halted. They scratched matches under the cover of their horses' flanks and lighted the frayed ends of their grass ropes.

In the next instant Antoine fired his revolver in air, and with shrill, terrifying whoops the daring fellows rode at top speed directly at the sleeping herd. They whirled their lighted rope ends, fanned to flame as their animals ran, and rushed in upon a startled crowd of horses, encircled in hissing, writhing coils of fire.

Pierre rode like one possessed and yelled like a veritable war fiend. As the herd broke away in his front he ran plump upon an Indian guard.

The Sioux was directly in advance and running, but turned to shoot. As he did so Pierre, whirling his fire rope, swept the blazing end directly into the savage's face, thrust cut a foot and

left him, sprawling and blinded, in the grass.

Then there was a wild and most exciting rout. The whole herd of horses fled like mad things before those circling, shrieking snakes of fire.

Despite a mob of yelling Indians, aroused from their blankets and rushing frantically hither and thither, the horses, gathered in a flying mass, swept resistlessly on, taking their own back trail instinctively.

Antoine and Pierre galloped into the Sioux camp ground, riding at the heels of the herd and in a smothering cloud of dust. They were fired upon by several Sioux, whom they nearly ran down as they came together at the tail of the herd; but bullets aimed chiefly at whirling streaks of fire and in dust and darkness, went amiss, and the daring stampedeers came off without a scratch.

They yelled and whirled their fire ropes until those effective torches had burned nearly to their finger ends, and when that happened they were beyond the Sioux camp and had the whole herd—in front of them and going like the wind. A score of disconsolate Sioux backs were left to make their way on foot to the Niobrara country.

Four days later the French-Indian boys drove the recovered stock, minus four or five head killed and strayed, down the bluffs at La Saussail.

The owners of the stock had not thought it worth while to follow the Indians, but they were delighted with the exploit of Antoine and Pierre. Even the lazy brother was a man of consequence thereafter and was allowed to assist in looking after the herd.

This recapture of stolen stock was a piece of daring so admired by the most renowned Sioux braves that even Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull always spoke of the Le Beau boys with some envy and great respect.—Youth's Companion.

COULD NOT SERVE AS JUROR.

Had Been the Victim of Circumstantial Evidence Himself.

A good story is being told about a juror who was drawn for service in the criminal court, Buffalo, recently on a murder case. He was willing to do his part as a good citizen, but he had a prejudice against circumstantial evidence which was so strong he could not dispel it from his mind, and it finally became necessary to excuse him.

He answered the questions put to him by the prosecuting attorney to qualify, but when the attorney for the defendant got down to where he asked him if he would convict a person on circumstantial evidence he hesitated.

"Why do you hesitate?" asked the judge.

"Well, I'll be frank with you," replied the juror. "I don't believe in it."

"If the evidence was so overwhelming that there could be no doubt of the guilt of the prisoner, wouldn't you vote to convict?"

"No."
"Why?"
"Judge, can I whisper to you?"
"Yes."

There was a three-minute conversation between the judge and the juror, at the conclusion of which the judge smiled, and then he said: "Juror, you are excused."

The attorneys did not forget the incident, and at the end of the day's session they asked the judge what the trouble was with Mr. —, naming the juror who was excused.

The judge said the man told him he was the owner of a farm in Cheektowaga, and among his live stock was a handsome pet calf. One day while he was out in the barnyard chopping at a fence with an axe this calf made a break to get out of the yard. With the axe still in his hand, he ran after the animal and caught him by the tail. Just as he was dragging it back from an opening in the fence a member of the family happened along, and, seeing him with the axe in his hand, concluded he was suffering with an attack of senile dementia and in his fury was trying to back the poor beast into veal cutlets.

"Judge, I was perfectly rational, and I protested that I was attempting nothing of the kind," said the juror, "but appearances were against me, and to this day I am unable to convince my family that I was not crazy and was not trying to murder that calf. That's the reason I am against circumstantial evidence."

Most Fragrant Flowers.

It is an interesting thing to know that 4200 species of plants are gathered and used for commercial purposes in Europe. Of these, 420 have a perfume that is pleasing and enter largely into the manufacture of soaps and perfumes. There are more species of white flowers gathered than of any other color—1124 in all. Of these, 187 have an agreeable scent, an extraordinarily large proportion. Next in order come yellow blossoms, with 951, seventy-seven of them being perfumed. Red flowers number 823, of which eighty-four are scented. The blue flowers are of 594 varieties, thirty-four of which are perfumed, and the violet blossoms are pleasantly odoriferous.—Tit-Eits.

MANILA HEMP TRADE.

THE CHARACTER OF THE INDUSTRY IN THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS.

The Plant From Which the Hemp Is Made Belongs to the Banana Family—Used for Making Rope, Cordage and Cloth—The Crude Machinery Used Injures the Fibre.

Manila hemp, called in Spanish abaca, is grown successfully in the Philippine Islands only. Attempts have been made to grow the plant elsewhere, as, for example, in Saigon, China, and in British North Borneo; but the results have not been satisfactory.

The plant from which the hemp is made belongs to the banana family and resembles very much the ordinary banana tree, its leaves, however, being darker and shorter than the leaves of that tree. The hemp plant flourishes best on hilly lands and mountain sides, where it can be well shaded by trees of thick foliage. Although it requires a considerable amount of moisture, it does not do well in swampy lands.

The province of Albay, in the island of Luzon, is the greatest hemp-producing district in the archipelago; but the finest quality of hemp comes from the island of Leyte, which also nearly equals Albay in amount of output. The other hemp-producing districts are: Provinces of Camarines Sur, Camarines Norte and Tayabas, in Luzon island; the islands of Samar, Mindanao, Cebu and Negros.

Four years from the time of planting the seed are needed before the plant leaves are ready for the knife, but only three years if shoots be set out. The general custom among planters, however, is to transplant six months old suckers. The shoots are set out in squares, about six feet between each shoot, and in starting a hemp plantation in forest lands the large forest trees are left standing to shade the young shoots. After the first three or four years of waiting, a hemp plantation is usually a safe and profitable investment, as the plants are seldom damaged by typhoons because of the protection furnished by the forest trees; the plantations are generally on high lands and therefore suffer little from floods; locusts do not attack the leaves in the way they do almost everything else green on the island; fires cannot spread far among the rank foliage; no costly machinery is required on the plantations, and no plowing is necessary, although careful weeding is required; the plants can be harvested all the year round, as they come to maturity. The leaves should be cut for the fibre, however, when the plant is flowering, nor should the plant be allowed to go to seed, for if allowed to bear fruit the fibre will be weakened. The average weight of dry fibre from one plant is about ten ounces, and the yield from a well-managed plantation is 360 pounds of dry fibre to the acre.

The method of making hemp is a very primitive one. The leaves that shoot out from the trunk of the plant, after being detached, are separated into strips five or six inches wide, and from five to six and a half feet long. To separate the fibre from the pulp, these strips or basts, as they are called, are drawn under a knife that is fastened at one end by a hinge to a wooden block. A cord and a treadle are attached to the other end of the knife, and the operator, by working the treadle, can regulate the pressure of the knife upon the bast. The edge of the knife should be smooth and keen, but too often it is serrated, as the work then is easier for the native at the treadle. As the bast is drawn through, the fibre is wound around a stick of wood. The natives work in pairs, one man stripping the bast and the other drawing it under the knife. In this way two men can turn out about 300 pounds of dry fibre in a week.

Machines to take the place of the crude apparatus described have been tried, but all have failed to answer the purpose, as all of them discolored the fibre. Machines with metal cylinders and machines with glass cylinders, to wind the fibre on, have been tried, but all injured the hemp. Dealers and growers try to enforce the use of knives without teeth or indentations, so that the fibre may be fine, clean and white, but they have met with but little success.

Manila hemp—for this name is given to the product from all of the Philippine Islands—is classified by Manila firms as first, second and third qualities. The middle men, or copadores, in dealing with the native collectors of small quantities, divide the hemp into two classes: First quality, corrieate, and second quality, colorado. Although there are few hemp plants that will give a whiter fibre than others, it is probable that all would yield first-class hemp, abaca corrieate, if the natives could be made to cut the plant during the flowering season only, draw the fibre under a toothless knife the same day that the bast is stripped and sun-dry at the first opportunity. The native, too, often strips the plant whenever he needs a few dollars, and leaves the basts exposed to the rain and all sorts of weather until they are so tanned by putrefaction and the fibres weakened, because then they are easier to work under the knife.

In Manila the large export houses fix the price on corrieate abaca, and allow a proportionate price for second and third qualities.

In addition to the uses to which hemp is put up making rope and cordage, the natives weave from the fine fibres, carefully selected, a cloth called Bicol dialect, lupis; from the coarser fibres a very strong and durable cloth, called all over the archipelago sinamay, is made. This cloth is worn by all of the poorer classes. From a mixture of the fibres of the pineapple leaf and of carefully selected hemp a cloth of much finer quality, called jusi, is made. This cloth is thought by many to be more beautiful than the pina, made entirely of the pineapple fibre, for which the islands are noted.

WILL EAT UP SMOKE.

New Invention Which Will Bring Relief to Soot-Laden Cities.

A newly-patented smoke consumer was tested recently in Washington. The tests were rigid ones and were satisfactory to the witnesses. By an ingenious mechanical device the smoke from the boiler grate which usually finds access to the outer air by way of the smokestack is supplied with oxygen sufficient to cause combustion and result in the complete burning of the smoke, the flames from the latter adding to the heat received by the boiler. In the tests the grate was first filled with soft coal refuse and a hot fire reached. No smoke was observable issuing from the smokestack connected with the boiler grate until the inventor cut off the oxygen. Then it poured forth in heavy volume from the stack. In an instant after the burner was again put in operation there was no smoke perceptible. The grate was then filled with a mass of rags and dirt and the same experiment as described above again successfully carried out. The fire was drawn from the grate and the steam pressure in the boiler allowed to reduce to nothing. A new fire of wooden barrels was started, and in fifteen minutes a steam gauge of the boiler registered a pressure of 65 pounds.

By means of an aperture in the brick wall of the combustion chamber in which the boiler was located it was possible to witness the burning of the smoke and see its flames wreathing the boiler on all sides. An examination of the deposit left from the smoke after combustion showed it to be a light, almost white, impalpable powder, with none of the characteristics of soot whatever. It is claimed by the inventor that boilers and other power-producing appliances requiring great heat can be operated at half the cost now incurred for them by use of the burner, because the cheapest grades of coal which produces the greatest amount of smoke ordinarily can be used without loss of any heat-giving properties.

High Lights.

Life is a bureau drawer which sticks, and through a crack we helplessly thrust our fingers at the things we would like to reach.

Woman can't throw a stone, but when she drops a flower pot out of a window she always hits somebody.

The ideal woman is one whose preserved strawberries hold out until fresh strawberries get cheap.

Three-fourths of the bread cast upon the waters returns because it has a string tied to it.

Few women can sit through a sermon without hoping that the cook won't let the dinner burn.

In the chase after happiness there are too many crossroads and too few guideboards.

It is a wise woman who never reminds her husband that he forgot to kiss her.

After a bad dinner human nature is cross; after a good dinner it is stupid.

Man's experience is like his spectacles—seldom a good fit for any other man.

You cannot forgive a friend without lowering yourself in his estimation.—Chicago Record.

Dangerous Art.

A newly arrived German in New York city, who was apprenticed for years to a trunk and bag maker in Berlin, Germany, undertook the other day to paint his own sign, and the result looked like this—except that crooked letters cannot be made with these type: "Gustav Fritz heimer, maker of trunk sandbags." "Le me see some o' thim sandbags," said a new member of the force, deftly concealing his billy. "Sand-bags?" repeated the German. "Sand-bags? I haf no sandbag! What you mean? A bag for sant? Mine peezness is trunks and bags. I sell you a handsome bag for tollar seventy-five—" But the policeman, seeing a great light, remarked: "My friend, you are a practical joker, but go out and hire a painter to change your sign."—New York Press.

One of Many.

"George, do you know of any nice, quiet restaurant where I can get my meals for a while?"

"Why, what's the matter, old fellow—any trouble at home?"

"Yep. My wife has begun talking about taking up carpets."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.