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A LORD ON THE RANGE

By ROGER POCOCK

I had better own up at once that I ain't a writer, but was only raised to punch cows, and not to tell stories. And, anyway, this no-account story which I have to tell is only about a British lord which I met with once in Arizona. It lays no claim to Sunday-best English, but only stakes itself out for being truth.

Away back in '86, me being restive in old Texas and wishful just to see the ocean, I pulled out 'on the long trail for California.

In the first hundred miles or so I was no way adventurous. I reckon the good traveler shies clear of dangers before they come, and the most excitement happen on the worst man's journey. Still, sometimes a danger comes along pressing and insists on getting right in the way. Before I left Texas a bad man tried to get my outfit, pointing his gun from behind a rock, but he was hurt when we parted and needed a surgeon bad.

Then, in New Mexico, a bear happened into my camp, and, not disturbing me, politely walked off with my provisions. Further on, the water holes seemed to stray out of my course a whole lot, or else they saw me coming along thirsty and dried up cautious. Near the edge of Arizona one of my ponies died of rattlesnake, aggravated by a bullet through the head. Still, on the whole, I didn't get scalped by Indians or wiped out by border ruffians or diminished by hunger and thirst to any great extent. The betting was in favor of my winning through to the Pacific Ocean.

The day after my little mare's death I was riding along and driving the pack horse, when I heard in the silence the small voice of a rifle far off to the left. Maybe some hunter was missing a deer in the distance, so I pointed that way to inquire. After a mile or so I heard the rifle speaking again, and three guns answered, spluttering quick and excited. That sounded mighty like a disagreement, so I concluded I ought to be cautious and roll my tail at once for foreign parts. I went on slow, nearing a little hill. Again a rifle shot rang out from just beyond that hill, and two shots answered—muzzle-loading guns. At the same time the wind blew fresh from the hill, with a whiff of powder, and something else which made my horses shy. "Heap bad smell!" they snuffled. "Just look at that!" they signalled with their ears. "Ugh!" they snorted.

"Git up!" said I, and charged the slope of the hill.

Near the top I told them to be good or I'd treat them worse than a tiger. Then I went on afoot with my rifle, crept up to the brow of the hill and looked over through a clump of cactus.

At the foot of the hill, two hundred feet below me, there was standing water, a muddy pool perhaps half an acre wide, and just beyond that on the plain a burned out camp fire beside a couple of canvas-covered wagons. It looked as if the white men there had just been pulling out of camp with their teams all harnessed for the trail, for the horses lay, some dead, some wounded, mixed up in a struggling heap. As I watched, a rifle shot rang out from the wagons, aimed at the hillside, and when I looked right down I could see nothing but loose rocks scattered below the slope. After I watched a moment a brown rock moved. I caught the shine on an Indian's hide, the gleam of a gun barrel. Close by was another Indian, painted for war, and beyond him a third lying dead; so I counted from rock to rock until I made out thirteen of the worst kind of Indians—Apaches, all edging away from cover to cover to the left, while out of the wagons two rifles talked whenever they saw anything to hit. One rifle was slow and cool, the other scared and panicky, but neither was getting much meat.

For a time I reckoned, sizing up the whole proposition. While the Apaches down below attacked the wagons, their sentry up here on the hill had forgotten to keep a lookout, being too much interested. He never turned until he

heard my horses clattering up the rocks, but then he yelled a warning to his crowd and bolted. One Indian had tried to climb the hill against me and been killed from the wagons; now the rest were scared of being shot from above before they could reach their ponies. They are making off to the left, in search of their ponies. Off a hundred yards to the left was the sentry, a boy with a bow and arrows, running for all he was worth across the plain. A hundred yards behind him, down in a hollow, was a mounted Indian coming up with a bunch of ponies. If the main body of the Apaches got to their ponies they could surround the hill, charge and gather in my scalp. I did not want them to take so much trouble with me.

Of course, my first move was to up and bolt along the ridge to the left, until I gained the shoulder of the hill. There I took cover and said: "Abide with me and keep me cool, if you please," while I sighted, took a steady bead and let fly at the mounted Indian. At my third shot he came down flop on his pony's neck, and that was my first bird. The bunch of ponies smelt his blood and stampeded promiscuously.

The Apaches, being left afoot, couldn't attack me none. If they tried to stampede they would be shot from the wagons, while I hovered unpleasantly above their line of retreat, and if they stayed I could add up their scalps like a sum in arithmetic. They were plumb surprised at me and some discouraged, for they knew they were going to have disagreeable times. Their chief rose up to howl, and a shot from the wagons lifted him clean off his feet. It was getting very awkward for those poor barbarians, and one of them hoisted a rag on his gun by way of surrender.

Surrender? This Indian play was robbery and murder, and not the honest game of war. The man who happens imprudent into his own bear trap is not going to get much chance by claiming to be a warrior and putting up white flags. The game was bear traps, and those Apaches had got to play bear traps now, whether they liked it or not. There were only two white folks left alive in the wagons, and one on the hill, so what use had we for a dozen prisoners who would lie low until we gave them a chance and then murder us prompt! The man who reared up with the peace flag got a shot from the wagons which gave him peace eternal.

Then I closed down with my rifle, taking the Indians by turns as they tried to bolt, while the quiet gun in the wagon camp arrested fugitives, and the scary marksman splashed lead at the hill most generous. Out of sixteen Apaches, two and their boy got away intact, three damaged and the rest were gathered to their fathers.

When it was all over I felt unusual solemn, running my paw slow over my head to make sure I still had my scalp, then collected my two ponies and rode around the camp. There I ranged up with a yell, lifting my hand to make the sign of peace, and a man came limping out from the wagons. He carried his rifle and had a yearling son by the paw.

The man was tall, clean built and of good stock for certain; but his clothes were in the lo-and-behold style—a deer-stalker cap, pans of glass on the off eye, stand-up collar, spotty necktie, boiled shirt, riding breeches with puffed sleeves (most amazing), and the legs of his boots stiff like a brace of stovepipes. His near leg was all bloody and tied up with a tourniquet bandage. As to his boy, Jim, that was just the quaintest thing in the way of pups ever saw loose on the stock range. He was knee high to a dawg, but trailed his gun like a man and looked as wide awake as a little fox. I wondered if I could tame him for a pet.

"How d'ye do?" squeaked the pup, as I stepped down from the saddle. I allowed I was feeling good.

"I'm sure," said the man, "that we're obliged to you and your friends on the hill. In fact, very much obliged." Back in Texas I'd seen water go

to sleep with the cold—but this man was cool enough to freeze a boiler.

"Will you—er—ask your friends," he drawled, "to come down? I'd like to thank them."

"I'll pass the glad word," said I; "my friends is in Texas."

"My deah fellow, you don't—aw—mean to say you were alone?"

"Injuns can shoot," said I, "but they cayn't hit."

"Two of my men are dead, and the third is dying. I defer to your—er—experience; but I thought they could—er—hit."

Then I began to reckon I'd been somewhat hazardous in my gun play. It made me sweat to think.

"Well," I said, to be civil, "I calculate I'd best introduce myself to you all. My name's Chalkeye Davies."

"I'm Lord Balshannon," said he, mighty polite.

"And I'm the Honorable Jim du Chesny," squeaked the kid.

I took his paw and said I was proud to know a warrior with such heap big names. The man laughed.

"Well, Mr. Balshannon," says I, "your horses is remnants, and the near fore-wheel of the wagon is sprung to bust, and them Apaches has chipped your laig, which it's broke out bleeding again, so I reckon—"

"You have an eye for detail," he says, laughing, "but if you will excuse me now, I'm rather busy."

He looked right into my eyes, cool and smiling, asking for no help, ready to rely on himself if I wanted to go. A lump came into my throat, for I sure loved that man from the beginning.

"Mr. Balshannon," says I, "put this kid on top of the wagon to watch for Indians, while you dress that wound. I'm off."

He turned his back on me and walked away.

"I'll be back," said I, busy unloading my pack horse; "I'll be back."

I called after him, "when I bring help."

At that he swung sudden and came up against me. "Er—thanks," he said, and grabbed my paw. "I'm awfully obliged, don't you know."

I swung to my saddle and streaked off for help.

II.

With all the signs and the signal smokes pointing for war, I reckoned I could dispense with that ocean and stray round to see the play. Moreover, there was this British lord, lost in the desert, wounded, helpless as a baby, game as a grizzly bear, ringed round with dead horses and dead Apaches, and his troubles appealed to me plentiful. I scouted around until I hit a live trail, then streaked away to find people. I was a bit doubtful if I had done right in case that lord got massacred, me being absent, so I rode hard and at noon saw the smoke of a camp against the Tres Hermanos Mountains. It proved to be a cow camp, with all the boys at dinner.

They had heard nothing about Apaches on the war trail, but when I told what I knew they came glad, on the dead run, their wagons and their pony herd following. We found the Britisher digging graves for three dead men, and looking apt to need a fourth for his own use.

"Er—good evening," says he; and I began to wonder why I'd sweated myself so hot to rescue an iceberg.

"Gentlemen," said he to the boys, "you'll find some coffee ready beside the fire—and afterward, if you please, we will bury my dead."

The boys leaned over in their saddles wondering at him, but the lord's cool eye looked from face to face, and we had to do what he said. He was surely a great chief, that Lord Balshannon.

The men who had fallen a prey to the Apaches were two teamsters and a Mexican, all known to these Bar Y riders, and they were sure sorry; but more than that they enjoyed this short-horn, this tenderfoot from the East, who could stand off an outfit of hostile Indians with his lone rifle. They saw he was wounded, yet he dug graves for his dead, made coffee for the living and thought of everything except himself. After coffee we lined up by the graves to watch the bluff he made at funeral honors. Lord Balshannon was a Colonel in the British Army, and he stood like an officer on parade, reading from a book. His black hair was touched silver, his face, yellow and gaunt with pain, was strong, hard and manful, and his voice quivered while he read from the little book:

For I am a stranger with thee,
And a sojourner, as all my fathers were;
O spare me a little, that I may recover my strength
Before I go hence, and am no more seen.

I reckon that there were some of us sniffing as though we had just caught a cold, while we listened to that man's voice and saw the loneliness of him. Afterward Dick Bryant, the Bar Y foreman, walked straight up to Lord Balshannon.

"Britisher," said he, "you may be a sojourner, and we hopes you are a whole lot, but there is no need to be a stranger. Shake!"

So they shook hands, and that was the beginning of a big friendship. Then Lord Balshannon turned to the crowd and looked slowly from face to face of us.

"Gentlemen," he said, kind of feeble, and we saw his face go gray while he spoke, "I'm much obliged to you all for—er—coming. It seems, indeed—ah!—that my—er—little son Jim and I have found friends and—er—neighbors. I'm sorry that you should find my camp in such—aw—in such a beastly mess; but there's some fairly decent whisky in this nearest wagon, and—er—" The man was reeling and his eyes seemed blind. "When we get to my new ranch at Holy Cross, I—I hope you'll—friends—aw—and"—

And he dropped in a dead faint.

The Bar Y foreman knelt down to loosen the stranger's collar, while one of the boys brought water from the camp, and the rest of us stood watching. "These Britishers," says he, "runs to two breeds, the lords, which they say 'er—haw' and the dunkeys, which cast their aitches and says 'orse' for 'haws.' That's how you know their brand, and this Mister Balshannon here is a sure lord. I reckon, boys," he looked all round at us, "that wealls has met with a man which we're sure to be proud to have for a friend and neighbor."

"Er—haw!" said one of the boys.

"Hay-men!" squeaked another.

That's how it all began, and I put in twelve long years at Holy Cross, riding for Lord Balshannon.—Black and White.

Climate in Philippines.

When the treaty with Spain by which we acquired the Philippines was under debate in 1898, ex-United States Senator Edmunds in public speech affirmed that the climate of those islands was so fatal to a white man that no American could expect to live there and bring up a family. At that time the Oregonian quoted the fact that Englishmen had lived many years in a worse climate—that of tropical India; that Macaulay was able to do hard legal work in Calcutta when the mercury stood at 96 degrees above zero; that Thackeray was born in India, where his parents had lived for many years, and that Lord Roberts had campaigned over forty years in India. Secretary of War Taft is over six feet and weighs 320 pounds—not a very good subject to endure a tropical climate—and yet he returned from the Philippines in perfect health, and he suggests that the newspapers "can help the American Government by denying the lies circulated about the terrible climate there." Of course, no man of common sense fails to adjust himself and his habits to his environment. No man wears the same clothing in winter or summer in western Oregon that he would wear in western Massachusetts. There are vast areas of country in the United States where no white man can live long because of malaria. Neither the bottom lands of the Mississippi nor the swamps of South Carolina, where negroes can live, are healthful for a white man. There are, doubtless, such lands in Cuba, in Porto Rico, in Africa, in India and in the Philippines; but it is not necessary that white men should pick out a patch of malarial country for a homestead.—Portland Oregonian.

A Pardonable Mistake.

An Irish laborer boarded a street car and handed the conductor a rather dilapidated-looking coin in payment of his fare. The conductor looked at it critically and handed it back.

"That's tin," he said.

"Sure I thought it was foive," answered the Irishman complacently, as he put the piece back in his pocket and produced another nickel.

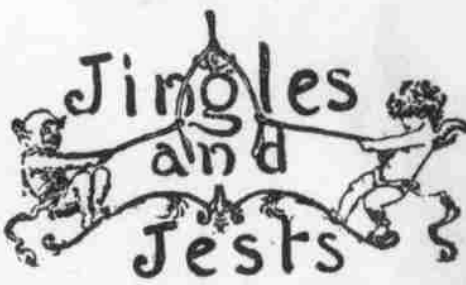
In St. Petersburg the death rate is fifty-one per thousand, the highest of any European capital. It is to be hoped that the little brush with Japan will not materially increase that rate during the next few months.

THE LOVER'S HANDY POEM.

No castle in the air build,
No pompous phantom pile,
With turrets soaring to the sky,
In shifting, shadowy style;
No blazoned embattlements I raise—
Ephemeral estate—
With misty moat and halls o' haze,
And ghostly guarded gate.

A much more modest mirage mine,
An humble dream devoid
Of highflown hopes or fancies fine,
Drawn but to be destroyed;
A simple cottage truth affirms
My edifice in air—
Modernly improved—on easy terms—

Helen
Ellen
Polly
Dolly
Mazie
Daisy
Etc.,
ad lib.
reigning there!
—Will S. Adkins, in Puck.



"Did you motor yesterday?" "No; we gasoline-launched." — Cincinnati Commercial Tribune.

Lives of great men all remind us
They have been with genius blest,
They have left such whopping footprints
They discourage all the rest.
—New York Sun.

"That's a remarkable child of Goodley's." "Think so? He struck me as being a very ordinary and quiet sort of kid." "Exactly. He is quiet and he always obeys his parents."—Philadelphia Press.

How often one will read a sketch
That strikes him very pat,
And say within his inmost heart,
"I could have written that!"
—Life.

Patron—"I'll have a piece of pumpkin pie." Waiter—"Punkin pie? Yes, sir." Patron—"Pump-kin pie." Waiter—"Oh, yes, sir. Think the Boston Club will have any chance o' winnin' the pennant this year?"—Philadelphia Ledger.

"The taste for classical music is something that comes with time and cultivation." "That's right," answered Mr. Cumrox. "I've noticed that some of these grand operas don't sound near as bad as they did at first."—Washington Star.

"Well, sir," said the author, enthusiastically, "my book is selling like hot cakes!" "Hot cakes, eh?" remarked the critic. "I can understand that. I heard a fellow say to-day that your book gave him mental dysp-sia."—Philadelphia Press.

"How nonsensical it was for them to say there was nothing original about your book," said Miss Cayenne. "You perceived its merit, then?" said the young man with sad eyes and ink fingers. "Yes, indeed. The cover design was one of the most original I ever saw."—Washington Star.

A charitable young lady, visiting a sick woman, inquired, with a view to further relief, as to her family. She asked: "Is your husband kind to you?" "Oh, yes, miss," was the instant response: "he's kind—very kind. Indeed, you might say he's more like a friend than a husband."—Brooklyn Life.

"And you say you saw the man knocked senseless by footpads and deliberately left in that condition in a lonely place?" "Sure; that's just what I did. I knew he'd come round all right." "What reason had you to be so certain that he'd come round?" "Reason! Why the man was a bill collector!"—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

"Yes," said the American traveler. "I'm delighted with your city. I wish we had your climate." "But the fog, you know," said the Londoner, in surprise; "here's its noon by the clock at this minute and yet it's dark as night." "Yes, splendid, splendid! I'm president of an electric lighting company at home, you know."—Philadelphia Press.

Windfall For the State.

The State of Minnesota is enriched to the extent of \$10,000 by the recent death of Mrs. Pureheart Wakeley, of Sharon, aged 111 years, who left no heirs. She had lived alone for many years.

A new horse disease has come to England from India by way of South Africa. It is called epizootic lymphangitis, and is very contagious.