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THE JOURNAL.

H. S. HUNN, Editor.
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BOLLO THE COWBOY.

CHAPTER I.

"Ho Blitzen! What are you acenting? Indians or Mexicans?" The speaker was a youth of eighteen or nineteen, slim but wirily built. His dark brown hair hung down about his shoulders and his keen blue eyes glanced in the direction that Blitzen (his horse) was sniffing the air. A broad brimmed sombrero shaded his face, a lariat was coiled on the right side of his saddle, and a pair of heavy six-shooters hung from a belt that encircled his waist.

To his left were the steep banks of the Rio Grande, while to the right, stretched the grassy plains of southwestern Texas.

"Or Blitzen," said the boy, as he turned his horse's head in the direction of a ford up the river, "there is something ahead, for you never deceive me, you have a keen pair of ears and a nose better than a blood hound's."

He had not proceeded more than a quarter of mile before he reached the crossing, and although it was growing dark, he could plainly see a number of men on the other side carefully examining the ford.

"Greasers, as I expected," muttered the youth, "probably some of Night Hawk's gang fixing for a raid upon the cattle ranches."

Before he had finished the sentence there appeared twelve more well mounted, and at their head rode one taller than the rest, with a mask over his face.

"That must be Night Hawk himself," thought the boy, for they say he always goes masked.

"I've seen enough," thought he, "to know that some mischief is intended. So I'll git for the ranch and tell old Martin and the boys. And if an attempt is made to drive off any cattle tonight will have a lively old time."

Turning down the river he proceeded cautiously until he thought he was far enough not to be seen, then turning towards the north, he swept across the prairie like the wind. He soon reached the ranch and could see lights in the windows of the building. Springing from his horse he went to the door and opened it. There, sitting by the fire was a girl of about fifteen. In her hand she held a book but was not reading, was looking into the fire and was so much occupied with her own thoughts that she did not notice the door being opened.

The boy stood for a moment regarding her with admiration. To him she seemed the very image of beauty. She wore a crimson dress which fitted her faultless figure to perfection, her dark glossy hair hung down below her waist, and her dark brown eyes had such a look of intelligence. At length he broke the silence by saying, "Leona." She sprang to her feet with an exclamation of surprise.

"Why Rollo! when did you come? I have not seen you for over a fortnight."

"No, I have been off on the trail of some stray cattle. But Leona where is your father?"

"Gone with the boys to drive some cattle off east."

"And you here alone?"

"No, old Sarah, the colored servant is here."

"When do you expect them back, Leona?"

"At any time. They may come back this very night."

"What shall I do," thought Rollo. "I cannot well remain passive while I believe the cattle are being stolen, and I cannot leave her here almost alone, while I know there is a band of Mexican cutthroats near." But he did not hesitate long, he concluded he would not leave her, he would wait the arrival of Mr. Martin, get the boys and go in pursuit of the cattle.

"The masked Bollo," continued Leona, "you must be tired after riding all day."

He drew a chair up to the fire and sat down, then asked, "Leona, are you not afraid to stay here with no one but old Sarah while your father is gone?"

"No," she answered, "there is no danger. And if there was isn't there my father's rifle?" she said, pointing toward a Winchester in the corner of the room. "And here is the pistol you gave me," she continued as she held out a small silver mounted revolver, "and you know I am a good shot."

Rollo smiled as he said, "I know you are the bravest girl on this side of the Rocky Mountains. But Leona have you seen Don Sancho lately?" He saw that she blushed slightly as she answered, "yes, he was here the day before my father left."

"And do you not love him, Leona?"

"No, you know I almost hate him, so why did you ask that?"

"Because you blushed when I mentioned his name?"

"I will tell you," she said, "for I don't care if you know. You know it is reported that Don Sancho is very rich, and besides he has a title. I don't know why he should have ever taken a fancy for me, a mere child, but it seems that he did. I rejected his suit, but my father encouraged it, and urged me to accept him. But finding that I was determined, he told Don Sancho the last time he was here that he might as well stop coming, for I was determined, and he would not force me to marry him. So he went away angry and I have not seen him since."

She had hardly finished the last sentence when some one knocked at the door.

"I reckon that is father," said Leona as she sprang up and opened the door.

A tall dark man stepped into the room. He would be pronounced handsome by most people, his hair was black as a raven, he wore a heavy mustache of the same hue, and his eyes black as night were keen and piercing, and as restless as a caged hyena.

Leona sprang back with a look of surprise, and Rollo's hand dropped to the butt of his pistol, but, remembering himself, he quickly removed it.

Leona was first to speak. "Why, Don Sancho, I thought you understood that your visits here would not be agreeable."

"Certainly," he said, in a calm tone, "but I came upon business. Where is your father?"

"Gone East."

"When will he be back?"

"Probably tonight."

"Well, tell him when he comes that I wish to see him upon some important business. So good night. And casting a searching glance at Rollo, he left the room.

About this time old Sarah's head appeared at a door on the opposite side of the room, with, "how do, Massa Rollo, when you git back?"

Rollo told her he had just arrived. Then, putting on his hat, he walked toward the other door.

"Where are you going, Rollo?" asked Leona.

"I'm going to keep an eye on Don Sancho," he answered, "for I have some suspicions concerning your worthy admirer."

He was soon mounted and following the retreating form of Don Sancho. He did not know that the keen eyes of the latter had seen him mount and follow, so he kept in sight until Don Sancho reached an old tree about a mile from the ranch, where he stopped and blew a shrill blast with a whistle. About this time a cloud passed under the moon and Rollo lost sight of him. The cloud soon passed away and the moon shone out brightly again, but nowhere could Don Sancho be seen.

"Where could he have gone?" thought Rollo, as he proceeded cautiously towards the spot where he had last seen him. He had not gone far before his horse shied off to one side and he drew a pair of revolvers just as a dark form rose from the tall grass and threw lasso. The noose fell over his shoulders, but before it could tighten there was a flash and report, and the man who held the other end lost his hold and fell forward on his face. Two more sprang up to fall back dead as his pistols flashed again. But the noose of a second lasso tightened around his neck and he found that he had enemies in the rear, but before he could turn he felt himself jerked violently to the ground and saw his horse go bounding off. He tried to gain his feet, but found himself covered by a half dozen Mexicans, and in less time than it takes to tell it, his hands were tied and he was a complete prisoner.

"I've run right into a trap," he said, as he looked up and saw at least two dozen men gathered around him, and one in the crowd was the same tall man with the mask on that he had seen that evening at the crossing, and who

notorious cattle thief.

Rollo heard him give some orders in Spanish; then he selected six out of the band and sent the others off under the leadership of one of his lieutenants. Then pointing toward Rollo, he said: "Here, boys, swing this bound over the limb of that tree and leave him there as food for the ravens. He has been trailing the wrong game tonight."

A man threw one end of the lariat over the limb, three or four caught it on the other side, and in a few seconds the form of Rollo was swinging between the earth and sky.

How long he hung there he did not know, for when he next knew anything, he was lying with his back upon the ground, and when he started to rise he found that his hands were tied and a lariat was around his neck. Then all that had happened went through his mind like a flash.

He soon gnawed the cords in two that bound his hands; then, slipping the noose of the lariat from around his neck, he was once more free.

After looking around, he saw how he had been saved. The wind had risen during the night and the limb that he was hung to, being rotten, had broken off and let him fall to the ground.

He then began searching the ground where he had been jerked from his horse and soon found his revolvers where he had dropped them. He stuck them in his belt and started towards the ranch, but soon stopped, took a whistle from his pocket and blew a keen blast, saying to himself as he did so, "if Blitzen hears that he will be sure to come."

He did not have to wait long before Blitzen came galloping up with all his trapping on. "Now take me to the ranch quick as a streak of lightning," he said, as he sprang into the saddle.

His horse seemed to understand him, for he darted off like an arrow, and in a few moments Rollo leaped from his back in front of the house he had so lately left. He saw that the door stood open but everything within was dark and still. He called Leona, then old Sarah, but nothing save the echo of his own voice answered him. He sprang into the room, stepped into something slippery and came near falling. By striking a match he could see by the light it gave that it was blood he had stepped into, while lying a few feet away was a Mexican, and in one corner of the room lay old Sarah with a bullet hole through her head, but in her right hand she still clutched with a death grip a long-bladed knife.

(To be continued.)

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"Why, Grace," said the teacher, "you cannot have the answer so soon."

"Oh yes I have, teacher! You don't have to wait at all, because A. M. Baker is selling summer silks at 45c. Mamma bought a dress of it yesterday, and also one of that lovely Camel's Hair Check Suitings. She says it is the best bargain she ever saw."

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