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The Hero Rivals

By JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD

THEY both met her on the day the ship left Liverpool. From that hour they were rivals. She was a piquant little blonde, filled with a love of the romantic. And the man from India had apparently passed through amazing adventures. He was a good talker, and at the table he entertained little Miss Hope, and the others who sat near them, with thrilling accounts of the many perils he had passed through. The other, a quiet-faced young American from the West, was put in the shade, so to speak. And as he was a thoroughly likable looking chap, those at the same table pitied him, for it was evident that he was deeply in love with the little blonde. He had listened to a score or more of his rival's Munchausen-like tales, and no one expected him to have any particularly thrilling experience of his own to relate, when one day at dinner he begged pardon, and asked permission to tell of a trifling experience of his own.

"It isn't very much," he apologized, especially when compared with the wonderful achievements and adventures of Mr. O'Trigger, who seems to have been particularly fortunate in living ten men's lives in the space of his own years. I was out West, when, because of circumstances which I need not mention here, I was forced to hold up a stage. The coach held sixty thousand dollars in gold, besides its passengers, and although it was guarded by six armed men, I did not hesitate in the course I had determined upon. Hiding behind a clump of bushes, I waited until the coach was within a few yards of me, when I dashed out, masked, and with a big six-shooter in either hand, cried out in a loud voice for the outfit to stop. At the same time I put a bullet through the brain of one of the leading horses.

"So complete was the surprise that all of the guards but one held up their hands. That one attempted to draw his revolver, but before he could fire I broke his pistol arm with a third shot. I then proceeded at my leisure to rob the coach, and did not forget to relieve three very beautiful young women, as well as several portly elderly people, of their watches and other jewelry, and then, unable to resist my opportunity, I made each of the young ladies give me a kiss, after which I chivalrously returned their valuables. Although sixty thousand dollars in gold weighs two hundred pounds, I threw the entire treasure over my shoulder, and retreated, firing several warning shots as I went, and to prove my marksmanship, knocking a pipe from the mouth of one of the guards.

"As you may imagine, it was not long before a strong posse was in hot pursuit. I succeeded in making a temporary escape by stopping a mounted ranchman and taking his horse. As I was about to ride away the ranchman pulled a gun from his pocket, and I was compelled to shoot him, and he fell in the road. Unfortunately for me, my pursuers were armed with rifles, and while I succeeded in dropping two of them with my pistols, a rifle bullet at last struck my horse, and broke a leg. I was forced to fly to the thick cover on foot. Concealing my gold, which I had thus far carried, under a great rock, I ran deeper and deeper among the rocks and woods. And then a bullet struck me—in the shoulder. I fell, but was up in an instant, turned into a narrow trail, and ran fairly up to the open door of a cabin.

"In front of that door stood one of the most beautiful girls I had ever seen. It is strange how quickly human hearts may act, and as I flung myself at her feet, telling her swiftly what had happened, and entreating her to save me, I saw in her face and eyes more than astonishment and alarm. It was *love*. In that moment our hearts beat as one. Quickly she led me into the cabin, and pointed to the huge chimney of the open fireplace. I crawled up that. My pursuers came, questioned her, and searched, and all went away, believing that I was not there, with the exception of one—a rough and powerful brute who remained behind purposely to insult the lovely creature to whom I owed my life.

"When I heard his insulting voice, when I heard my loved one cry out, I forgot my own peril, and slipping down from the chimney I engaged him in deadly conflict, and ended by sticking a knife between his ribs. And then, as the girl flung herself into my arms, I knew that my days of lawlessness were over. Her purity, her sweetness, her love, saved me, and then and there I swore—with my face turned to God—that I would go forth, and that I would return for her when I had made a man of myself. I escaped, and two years later I came back, having made a million in mines."

He stopped. There was not a sound of breath or movement at the table. Every eye was staring at him. The little blonde's soul was in her eyes. And then his rival sniffed, and said sneeringly:

"And I suppose you're going to finish by saying the girl had married someone else, or died of heartbreak, or——"

"Oh, not at all," interrupted the American quietly. "Everything ended happily. I belonged to a moving picture company."

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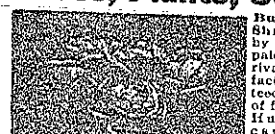

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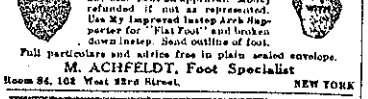

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How to Make the Farm ...

(Continued from page 146.)

soil did need was lime to sweeten ... Don't depend entirely upon what y... or hear of another doing. The t... do is use your own brain, make y... experiments and get an agricultural ... to help you if you can.

Make the slogan for 1913—"A ... DRED BUSHELS OF CORN FO... ERY ACRE." You can do it, y... double last year's output, not only ... but also in wheat and oats and eve... that you raise. An agricultural ex... your county will help you.

I suggest that you call a meeting ... the next ten days, invite your neigh... meet with you, and then discuss th... lem, and if they are willing to try ... plan with you, draw up and file wi... township and county officers, the C... of your State, your Congressman, th... Agricultural College, and the Dep... at Washington a petition for the a... ment of the expert, and then organi... community into a "Scientific Leagu... keep up the fight until you get result...

At the end of each period of four ... the farmers should meet with the ... tural expert in convention at the ... Court House for the purpose of di... work undertaken, results obtained, ... recommendations, and hearing the o... of others, and the county authoriti... State Agricultural College authoriti... press, and others interested should be i... At the close of the first year, if the ... ers agree that this agricultural exp... failed to render valuable service, his ... could be dispensed with.

After you have filed your petitio... have organized the "Scientific L... let me hear from you. Give ... names and addresses of your office... members and I will undertake to writ... ter or say something to you and each... ber through LESLIE'S.

How a Girl Sought Work ... Great City.

(Continued from page 148.)

The girls in the office, keenly alert ... that was going on, smirked, and o... tiously banged the keys of the typew... The office boy, pert, and likewise aw... the effect that the new girl was mak... his employer, said, in an aside, "Y... got nothing on her."

With a friendly and presumably e... aging pat the man who had employ... gathered up the letters I had writte... carried them off to his private office ... signature. The girl at the bookke... desk nodded to me. "He'll ask y... lunch, Smithy." "Well, I won't go, I'... three lettuce sandwiches and I don't ... his lunches," I replied hotly. I was p... frightened at the atmosphere whic...