

The Queenstown News.

JOHN M. AKER, Editor.

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PEPITA.

Up in her balcony where
Vines through the lattices ran,
Spilling a scent on the air,
Setting a screen to the sun,
Fair as the morning's first fair,
Sweet as a blossom in sweet
Dwells in her rosy retreat
Pepita.

Often a glimpse of her face,
When the wind rustles the vine
Parting the leaves for a space
Gladness this window of mine—
Pink in its leafy embrace,
Pink as the morning is pink,
Sweet as a blossom I think
Pepita.

I who dwell over the way
Without whose Pepita is hid—
Safe from the glass of the day
Like an eye under its lid:
Over and over I say,
Name like the song of a bird,
Modestly in a word,
"Pepita."

Look where the little leaves stir!
Look, the green curtains are drawn!
There in a blossomy blur
Peeps a diminutive dawn;
Dawn and the pink cheeks her—
Name like a lay of the south,
Fit for a rose's small mouth,
Pepita!

—Frank D. Sherman, in The Century.

TOM'S EXPLOIT.

"Allo? 'Ead 'im hoff! 'Ead 'im hoff! There ain't honey meat hat the station."

English Tom, as the boys called him, was a tenderfoot if ever there was one. He went from Castle Garden to Galveston, Texas, and then came directly to the front frontier, where he was employed as one of the stage drivers. He had not been in the country over a month, and therefore was new to the ways of the people, and also to life on the border. At that time the stage line extended from Fort Worth, Texas, to El Paso, passed on westward through New Mexico and Arizona, and had its western terminus at San Diego, Cal. Branches extended from San Antonio to Fort Concho, and from Mesilla, N. M., northward through that Territory to Colorado, but the main line, to San Diego, a distance of about 4,000 miles. This was the longest stage line in the world. And what a country was traversed by those heavy, rocking coaches with their four wild mules!

From Fort Worth to El Paso, a distance of 700 miles, there was not a town. The first place of any importance west of Fort Worth was Fort Concho, over 200 miles away, and then El Paso, 1,000 miles. About every thirty miles was a stage "station," occupied by a "station-keeper," a "stock tender" and a guard of about four or five soldiers. Further west was Stockton, still further Fort Davis, and then El Paso. At each station, a number of gambling places and a store or two comprised the "town" at each of these forts; but all along that stretch of 700 miles there was not a human habitation except the few soldiers at each station, and five soldiers at each station acted as a guard in case Indians attacked the place, as they often did. Each stage also carried one soldier, who sat beside the driver, and who was supposed to represent the United States Army in case the coach was ambushed by Indians or attacked by road agents. The drivers drove about sixty miles. Every other station was a "swing" station, where the mules were changed and every other station was a "home" one, where the drivers had stopping at one "home" station when going west and the other when going east. Life at these far posts of civilization was dreary and monotonous enough, but still it had its pleasures, and not infrequently hardships and perils.

The second station west of Fort Davis was a "home," and was called Van Horn's Wells. The stage company had some considerable money on, or rather in these wells, but at a deep place, and two hundred feet were as dry as at the top. The next station westward was Eagle Springs, and here was a large spring of clearest water. The distance between the two stations was about twenty miles, and two men were constantly employed hauling water from Eagle Springs to supply the men and mules at Van Horn's Wells. The poorest mules owned by the company were used with this water-wagon, but the drivers, and animals that could not, by any possible urging or abuse, be induced to go faster than a very slow walk. The wagon was a common affair, containing barrels that were filled with water. The road between the two stations led along gulches and washouts where the tall grasses and bushes afforded easy ambuscades. Sometimes it led through small canyons, where the Indians had been known to hide behind their rocks and shoot the men on the wagon. The only water in the region was at Eagle Springs, and for many years it had been a favorite stopping place for the roving bands of Apaches and Comanches.

"English Tom" made his appearance at Van Horn's Wells in the summer of 1877. The first thing he did upon arriving at the station was to become the possessor of a wolf-skin cap, with a long tail hanging down the back. The boys told him that the cap was worth something, and so he sweltered and suffered and wore it.

Indians had murdered the driver of the water wagon, and the company had considerable difficulty in getting any one to undertake the dangerous and monotonous task of hauling water to the men and animals at Van Horn. Finally "White Buffalo," a reckless young chap, who had lost his last cent with the monte players at Fort Davis, was induced to take the place at double pay, and "English Tom" was sent to fill the barrel with water and help "White Buffalo." The latter said when he saw his assistant, but said, "He'll do, I reckon. I'll try him anyway."

A coyote had jumped up from a hiding place near the road and started away with a long howl. "White Buffalo" sprang from his seat, and "English Tom" sprang from the wagon, waved his wolf-skin cap in the air, and started after the foot-logged coyote as fast as he could run. Then it was that he exclaimed, "Ead 'im hoff! 'Ead 'im hoff! There ain't honey meat hat the station!"

The rifle dropped from White Buffalo's

hand and he fell on the seat in a fit of laughter, that threatened to result in serious convulsions. It would be easier to catch an antelope than a coyote, and even if it had been shot no civilized man ever heard of eating one.

Many a joke was played on "English Tom" during the trip, but he followed, and his mistakes and absurd blunders seemed to promise a fund of inexhaustible fun for the drivers. Beside the boys felt a strong contempt for the Englishman, for it was thought he was something of a coward. But there came a day when the lives of a dozen men depended upon English Tom, and he nobly did his duty.

The sun sank behind the hills along the Rio Grande. Soon the "too-hoo-too-hoo" of owls echoed dimly through the canyons, as if the birds knew there was trouble in the air, and the men in the rude cabin looked at each other. One tried to tell a story and another essayed a song, but the story fell flat and the singer lost the key. Then they relapsed into silence. The station-keeper was the first to speak of the things that were all thinking about. "I wonder if he will try to 'pipe' me!" he said. The barrier had been broken, and they freely discussed the situation. "White Buffalo" endeavored to follow the Indians in order to ascertain if they were only passing through the country, or would he make a still-hunt in case they contemplated an attack on one of the stations or on a stage-coach!

The Indians were at least a dozen in the band, and perhaps there were more.

It was about midnight when they heard the feet of the mule in the rocky gulch. White Buffalo stripped the saddle and the animal, turned and fired the first bullet into the corral, and came in. His supper had been kept hot, and he sat down to eat with a very serious face, but without saying a word. English Tom was highly excited, and finally burst out with, "I say, you know, hold fellow, can't you tell us hat bit about the blooming Indians, you know?"

"Not much to tell," said White Buffalo. "There's fifty of them, and twenty of them are on foot, and will probably try to get the stock here or at Van Horn. They may try for the mules on the water wagon, but I don't reckon they'll attack the stage."

The men took turns standing on guard that night, and early the next morning White Buffalo and English Tom started for Van Horn with the water wagon. The latter drove the four sorry and lazy mules, and White Buffalo sat up in the front end of the wagon with his rifle in his hands. He kept his eyes on every bush and rock near the road, and several times he left the wagon to scout ahead through some rocky canyon or gulch. They were a mile or two within a few miles of the station when he laid a hand on Tom's shoulder and pointed to a range of low hills about ten miles ahead. In that clear atmosphere of dawn, the hills looked like a range of sentinels, and a party of Indians could be readily seen descending toward the station.

"The boys at Van Horn don't know there are Indians about, and I'm afraid they'll be caught off their guard," said the station-keeper. "Put up the mules. They don't see us, and they'll get behind that butte directly."

Then the men waited and watched the Indians trail off to sight behind one of the hills, and they tried to get some speed out of the mules, but the load was heavy and the mules old, and weak, and lazy. White Buffalo was about to suggest that they mount two of the animals, and try to reach the station ahead of the Indians when being bang! a dozen rifles spoke from the high grass that lined the gully. White Buffalo swayed a moment as he stood, tried to bring his rifle to his shoulder, but it was too late. The first bullet hit first out of the wagon, striking his rifle with him. Two of the mules were shot. The others stood still. English Tom sprang from the wagon and raised his rifle. A wave seemed to pass over the Indians' faces, as a strange look came into his eyes. He sat up. He laid his Winchester across one of the spokes of the wheel, and as the Indians sprang out of their ambush he fired—once, twice, thrice—so rapidly that one could hardly believe that he was shooting. Three Indians fell, and the others, taken by surprise, jumped back into the gully. English Tom sprang beside the wheel and began stripping off its harness. Meanwhile White Buffalo was firing rapidly and the Indians began to retreat. Tom tried to induce White Buffalo to mount the mule, but the latter only said:

"Ride, you blamed idiot! Ride for your life and theirs!"

The old mule was getting excited, but English Tom held her. Then he bodily lifted his companion to her back, sprang on behind himself, and jabbing his heels into the animal's ribs, started on a swinging gallop.

It was no easy task to hold a wounded and dying man on the mule, but Tom did it. They had approached within half a mile of the station, and Tom could see several of the men sitting under the shadow of the cabin and playing cards. He was about to yell at the top of his voice to attract their attention, when once again the lives of ambushed Indians spoke from their hiding places. He had been intercepted by the Indians, they had seen behind the wagon was attacked!

"Bang! bang!" went the rifles and bang! bang! replied English Tom's six-shooter. Once the mule stumbled, it had been hit, but did not fall. The wounded man hung on somehow, and Tom emptied his pistol with a rapidity and accuracy no one supposed him capable of. The fight was over in a few seconds. The mule had not let up on his gallop, and in a few moments he had carried his riders to safety, but a ball found

heart and it plunged to the ground, hurrying the two men over its head. White Buffalo fell, but he was not hurt. English Tom was up in an instant, and standing boldly beside his fallen comrade he poured a steady fire from White Buffalo's Winchester, which the latter was slung to a strap. The men at the station heard the hoarse and hoarse, and rescue on the run. The Indians retreated on seeing their approach, but fired a parting volley, and English Tom fell.

They found him lying on his back. A ball had struck him full in the center of the forehead. Tenderly they carried him to the station. They buried him near the house, and many an eye was wet with tears as they heaped stones over his grave. White Buffalo eventually recovered from his wounds. Nobody knew the poor English boy's true name, none knew his people, but on the pile of stones White Buffalo erected a neatly pointed slab bearing these words:

Here Lies the Body of
"English Tom."
He Was Only a Tenderfoot, but He
Lost His Life to Save Those
Who Had Taken Him for a Fool.
Slab in Honor of
His Memory.
Sept. 22, 1877.

—Chicago Mail.

National Capitol Pages.

For years it has been the privilege of the pages in the Washington to make quite a lot of pocket money each session in collecting autographs. The pages of the Senate, for instance, will collect the signatures of all the Senators in an album, turn the book over to some younger member of the House who gets the Congressmen's names, then to one of the pages in the Supreme Court for the autographs of the Justices, and finally to the riding pages of the Senate who are constantly going between the Capitol, the White House, and the several departments and bureaus of the Government. The latter get the names of the President, the Cabinet and the other prominent officials. For such a collection the boy who starts the collecting receives whatever he could get out of his customer, trusting to his own sharpness and the latter's generosity. When he gets his money—and \$10 is the usual price—he sets with the other pages who have assisted him, on a stack of papers, willing to make. The ordinary terms of settlement have been \$5 to the contractor, \$2 to the House page, \$2 to the boy who gets the President and Cabinet, and \$1 to the youth in the House who gets the autographs of the Justices. But an equal division of profits is now demanded by the boys. I took an album which had been sent me by a friend in the West to one of the Senate pages the other day, and asked him to get the autographs of the states for me as he had done before. I had formerly paid him \$10 for such a job, but he informed me that the boys had organized a union and had advanced the price to \$15. He said that the boys in the House kicked because the Senate boys were making more money than they, and had struck, so it became necessary to organize and have a stated card of rates.

"Don't you see," he said, "people who want autographs of some of the boys go to the Senate first. We have got \$5 for getting the names of seventy-five Senators, and have given the 'kids' in the Senate \$2 for getting 325 names. When they happened to catch on to a job they got the \$5, and the boys in the House for the Senators' autographs, but for every one book they get we get a dozen. They were told to get more than \$5. There was a kid in the House who cut under them, and got some names not long ago for \$3, but when the other boys found it out they got hold of the book and tore out the leaves."—New York Tribune.

Scenes of Carnage at the Pyramids.

Long after Harnessed H. Cambyse came, and on the pyramid plain conquer the Egyptians, mutilated the face of the Sphinx and broke into the true outlines of the pyramids—ruthless conquerors, vandals and destroyers that he was. Twenty-four centuries after, Napoleon, with his conquering hosts, met the gold-covered Mamelukes, who, riding as swift as the wind and as a flame of fire, backed the bayoneted French guns with their blades of Damascus steel. It was like a blazing volcano. All was smoke and blood and mutilation, as though an earthquake had come. Drowning their heads to the saddle bow, the fearless Mamelukes rode forward and met the awful volleys of the invader, but only to sink in the sand. Without horses then, and laying upon their backs wounded, they cut at the legs of the enemy with their keen sabres, never yielding until conquered by death.

And there, close to the Sphinx, one can see now the very place whence came up the clouds of smoke and flame amid the yells of the demons who fought, slain by the masses of dead and dying, where the depleted ranks of the victor moved along with bristling arms and broken standards—moaning and swirling like the sea that refuses to be quiet after the storm.

The Armies of Europe.

"The bloated armaments of the great military powers of Europe" display their proportions in a very striking manner in Colonel Vogt's work on "The European Armies of the Present." The mobilized strength of France is set down at 2,031,438 troops, exclusive of the territorial army, which is equally large; that of Russia at 1,922,405; Germany, 1,493,890; and Austro-Hungary, 1,045,935. The military strength of Italy has now attained proportions that would have been deemed incredible ten years ago. Including militia, it is said to amount to 3,387,322 men. If, however, a similar inclusion be made in the case of Russia, the military strength of that power will probably be found to exceed even that of the French republic. Compared with these figures the numerical proportions of the British army ought almost to satisfy the members of the Peace Society. Including our militia and volunteers, as well as the Indian army, we can muster 281,677 troops. And these have to serve for the defence of territory distributed over a very much wider area than that ruled by any of the other powers.

—Non-Combatant.

LIFE IN A LIGHTHOUSE.

THE MEN WHO DO DUTY ON SOLITARY BEACON ROCKS.

They Waged Their Glee—A Charming Home Made For Falmers Island by Captain Brooks.

"Speaking of lighthouse keepers," said the Captain of a vessel in the coastwise trade to a New York *Reporter*, "there is not one of them in the service who receives a higher salary than \$1,000 a year, and there are some who get not more than \$100. There are at least 1,000 keepers in the employ of the Government, and under a recent act of Congress their pay averages \$60 a year. That makes \$60,000 the Government pays in wages for warning sailors of dangerous ground, and the maintenance of the lighthouses comes to hundreds of thousands beside."

No branch of the public service is stricter discipline and greater attention to duty insisted on than in lighthouse keeping. The service is controlled by a Lighthouse Board, and the best men obtainable are selected as keepers. Preference is given to men who have spent years of service in the army or navy, as they know what discipline is, and know by experience that orders are to be obeyed to the letter, and without question. They are made to receive strict orders and mates who are to-day doing duty on solitary and isolated beacon rocks, where they hear no sound but the moan and roar of the ocean, except their own voices and those of their families, if they have any, for months at a time.

"One of the most accomplished and cultured men that ever was in the employ of any Government was for more than thirty years in charge of one of the United States lighthouses. That man was Captain Oliver Brooks. He kept the great light going on Falmers Island, five miles off the Connecticut coast, on Long Island Sound. He had been a sea captain for many years before entering the lighthouse service, and his example and methods as a lighthouse keeper so improved the capability of all other keepers that he should have met with more substantial recognition from the Government who starts the receiver, and his reluctance at parting with him, genuine and sincere as it must have been, Falmers Island light first faded out upon the sea to warn vessels away from that dangerous locality one night eighty-seven years ago, and the lighthouse failed to light its welcome beacon a single night since. That light is one of the most important on our coasts. Falmers Island lies directly in the track of all the coasting trade, and the light is on Long Island Sound, and on a night its light should fail to catch the eye of the sailor on such a vessel the consequences might be fearful to relate. The lighthouse is nearly 100 feet high, and its signal beams sweep the sea in a circle of 360 degrees, across a flash panel, operated by the most perfect clockwork machinery, contrived by Captain Brooks, revolving about the tower's summit, with unvarying regularity. The sailor on watch for one hour, and the lighthouse failed to light its welcome beacon a single night since. That light is one of the most important on our coasts. Falmers Island lies directly in the track of all the coasting trade, and the light is on Long Island Sound, and on a night its light should fail to catch the eye of the sailor on such a vessel the consequences might be fearful to relate. 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