ROMANCE

THE RESULT OF A HUNT.

(By Frank Pratt.)

There was a price upon his head and I, a special detective in the Cuban service, was after it.

Mr. Mills and I could easily spend $1,000, and that was the reward offered by the Cuban Provincial Government for the Rolling and street of Juan Caliato Gonzales.

The money changed into American coin would not be quite as much, but it would be welcome. Mr. Nell and I had a wedding in our minds.

Gonzales had been an officer in the Cuban Army and had deserted to Spain. Then when Spain went all to pieces in the island, Gonzales had joined the Americanos.

"AFTER AN HOUR'S SEARCH."

Then suddenly he flared up as a spy of Spain, hiding in the woods back of Santiago, giving the Cuban supplies to the Spanish transports, and doing all sorts of strange, uncertain things—so they said!

There was a murder just after Thanksgiving and the Cubans laid it to Gonzales with the evidence pretty strong against him.

The Cuban Government made up its mind that there would be no peace in Cuba, with so dangerous a character at large; and, therefore, there was posted in the woods back of Santiago the legend that Gonzales was wanted and $1,000 would be paid to the officer who would bring him to Santiago.

I set out upon the quest the day after Christmas, for I knew pretty well where he was and only waiting one or two days in which to find him.

The first day's riding was the worse, for Santiago is honeycombed by hills and the path is rough and the way uncertain. I rode carefully up hill armed to the teeth, for Gonzales would be no easy bird I knew.

That night I slept with Rico out and my horse carefully covered to keep him warm and contented, with feed within munching distance of his mouth.

The next day I rode on and reached the hills which took so beautifully over the sea. From the path became dangerous again, for there was a deepest and I struck out into the woods where the canyon and Gonzales could be found some time or one of these cows. I felt pretty safe, and I made up my mind to be my home and go on foot after them.

Just as I was asking for a good place to dismount I heard a shot from down the hill and my horse shied at it.

Something must have spoken the magic word—Liberty, for he stood on his hind legs, then dashed forward and I went off over his head. I struck upon my head, turned a somersault, landed my feet, and, lo! Rico, dashed forward down the hill—and straight over a precipice. That was the last I knew!

When I awoke I found myself lying outside a small wooden cabin which looked as though newly built, from the freshly cut boughs of trees. Beside me over me was a sweet faced young woman, scarcely more than a girl, who affectately shaded my hands and put water upon my head trying in woman's way to make me comfortable.

"Are you better?" she asked with a strong Spanish accent.

"Yes, much better," I said.

"Then drink this," said she. "It is very good."

She held to my lips a rude wooden cup containing some of the finest wine I ever tasted. And as I sipped it a child came running out of the cabin.

"This is little Estelle," said she adding to the child, "Estelle you must be very quiet for the gentleman is sick."

I was soon able to rise to my feet, and, turning to go, I said, "I do not know to whom I am indebted, but Madame, I thank you! It is not enough you to pay for hospitality, but I am sure that in these troublesome times you will pardon me if I decorate you for the trouble to which I have placed you." And taking an American gold piece out of my purse I laid it in her hand.

"Oh, no," said she, smiling, "I cannot take it. There are no rebels, but there are troublesome times. Still we have enough."

At this moment a step came crashing through the brush, and into the clearing stepped a man. He started when he saw me and changed color. Glancing around quickly he put his finger to his lips motioning me to silence.

The woman turned and with a glad cry of welcome rushed over to him and threw her arms around his neck.

"You have been gone so long," said she, "that I began to be worried about you. And little Estelle, too, has been asking for papa for an hour."

Then turning to me she said with old-time courtesy, "Juke let me introduce you to our guest." Juke was a gentleman whose name I do not even know; sufficient to say that he is an stranger and in distress. He was thrown off his horse and landed in the rock hole where Estelle and I found him. Some time ago, he had been in the water poured over his head and must soon have drowned. It was only a few minutes away and I managed to drag him here."

Here she laughed, holding out a pair of tiny hands, adding, "Though I will say it was hard work for he was very heavy. He was sadly hurt, Jules, and I was so afraid that he would never open his eyes."

The man stepped forward at this and shook me by the hand. "Whoever you are," said he, "you must stay and share our simple noonday meal. It is not a great feast, but such as it is you are welcome," and with a quick steady look at me, "and welcome to what comes afterwards also, but indeed you are welcome."

I bowed my thanks and as the woman went into the house the man, Gonzales, or I knew him to be, said in a low tone:

"Well?"

"Are you ready?" said I.

"Yes, I am," said he, "I knew it had to come sooner or later, but she knows nothing. Keep it safe from her until we have finished, then I will write her a letter telling her where the money is—for her and the baby—and that I have gone to Spain. She will think, poor Estelle, that I have deserted her but"—here he pressed his forehead on his hands—"there is no time for it. They have put on a price on me, I know it—and I have been expecting them."

At dinner the child prattled about pains, and the wife busied herself with the comfort of her lord. While she was called upon to bring fresh all the savory dishes of which the wild cabin was capable, she told me of the people life they had there. The life, as she described it, of a woodman's family, she pointed out how they were housed in rude trees and cliffs on every hand, and how delightful they were with their lovely woodland home.

We hope to sail for Spain, which is my home, in a few days. Juke has already taken passage for us. When can we do so you think, my Juke?" and she addressing him.

Gonzales had been talking little but at this he answered, "Oh, very soon, my dear, very soon."

"I am so glad," said she with a sigh, "for though I love this island, it is so pleasant in my home."

Visions of my Nell came before me and somehow the money seemed less attractive as I looked upon this happy little home.

"What more am I," said I to myself, "than this man? I'a spy—a very thing at best—in the employ of Spain, for money."

After dinner I had a talk with Gonzales, and he told me the truth of the charges against him, which, as I heard them from his lips, seemed more ungenerous—charges such as are followed in trying times to shield the truly guilty.

"You have been foolish," said I. "Not not really criminal. Now to end a bad matter, suppose you hide a little and take passage to-day. Would you do it?"

The man's eyes flashed gratitude.

"I have to a Spanish transport down in the bay now, to-day," said I. "Have you transports that would carry you aboard?"

He hesitated, looking toward the cabin.

"You and—the rest"—I said, nodding that way. He produced a few slips of paper.

"Well," said I, "I am not a rich man, but I never do anything for money only. I am going to take a little walk into the woods to look up my horse, and when I come back I shall expect to find the cabin empty."

The man and I understood each other.

A minute later, without saying farewell to my hostess, I was climbing my cliff leading from the canyon retreat; and when, after an hour's search for my horse, I peered down over the rocks again I saw that the doorway was empty, and listen though I did, I heard no prattle issuing from the hut; nor was the stillness broken except by the singing birds as they enjoyed a feast at the deserted table.

ONE TOO MANY.

(By Peter Olsen.)

"That was a capital dance, Miss Hendricksen! I could have waltzed to forever if the music had only held out; this was what Mr. Doubling said, but he thought to himself, 'Poor Jim, I make me too heavy to dance with a tall girl with a high kicker action and more than half carry her because she can't keep step.'

But Mr. Doubling was a successful society man, and when he had a thought like this he effused it from his own soul, as quickly as possible by saying something exactly opposite to do so went on:

"You promised me that waltz three weeks ago—the day the cards for this ball were out—and I have been counting on it and living up to it ever since."

"Was engaged! I have been engaged for that. I am sure," said Miss Hendricksen, with a touch of sarcasm in her voice, but her face was softened under the compliment. She was so pretty, her sweetie called her stiff and cold-hearted, but her friends called her a good-natured girl, and her friends only called her a great heiress, for the courts had decreed her $1,000,000 in her own right and the newspapers had sprinkled it with her picture.

"Now let me take you to a cooler place than this," said Mr. Doubling, as he saw it was nearly passing after his dance, "out into the galleries, or balconies, or the conservatory."

Miss Hendricksen was delighted, and with a bow and a smile away she went on the arm of Mr. Doubling, in and out of the brilliant crowds of the assembly room, down the long halls and through the rooms of the conservatory. It looked cool here, with its parlands of orchids, its green palms and trees and sparkling fountains.

"Do you did not suppose too of ecstasy," he began, reverting to his own words; he spoke in a tone of gentle reproach and looked down into her eyes with a look which he had practiced upon a great many eyes and found very effective.

"I believe that was what I said—but then," Miss Hendricksen laughed uneasily, and did not finish the sentence, she had no skill at talking nothings, but she had a little skill enough for two.

"Not believe that I was constant to you?" he said with a pang in his voice at which the lady quailed a little. "You could not be so unjust—so cruel as to doubt it."

Miss Hendricksen changed color and looked down, which did not make her any prettier.

"Do look at me," he pleaded. "I hope I am not so unfortunate that I can't be heard at."

"Oh, no," she replied. "I really do not know what I meant by saying that—it is no matter. I am sure we are good friends enough."

"Are you sure?" he said, very earnestly.

"Yes," she whispered—"sure."

"But that is not enough for me," he went on with gathering ardor. "You must have more my dear, more than friendship and relationship. Let me call you Gertrude. I have the right to do so because I love you. I love you above all the women of all the world."

Mr. Doubling said this so ardently that he almost believed it himself. Miss Hendricksen was silent, looking at him with questioning eyes and parted lips. She was not used to being made love to, and was, perhaps, a little shy.

Mr. Doubling, unlucky, based into thought, he had gone too fast and admire himself. By Jove, he thought, that was a good one—all the women of all the world—I wonder if I can do that trick. This is hard work, it would draw sweat from a turnip. He can't flirt any more than a frozen post. Why didn't I practice this with a dress-maker's dummy? But aloud he said:

"Pardon me, it is such a joy and rapture to tell you that I love you, it seems to let my soul out of prison and set me free. You did not answer me, and I am sure I read your silence aright. It means, dear Gertrude, that you return my love, and that you will not repulse me, but let me destiny in your hands and ask you to be my wife."

When he had spoken this word he knew that he had fully and utterly proposed to the greatest heiress he knew. He was a man of honor, and he felt that he dropped her hand and wiped the sweat from his brow, gave the partner of his fate a look of anxiety, was it should have been disarranged by the violent in his brain cavity, he breaked for his mother. Such a heir was stamped in the burning words he had utered. He was safe—no home heiress could be so cruel as to reject a man who had proposed to her in such fervent words, and thought that her eyes looked as hard as marbles he took her hand again.

"Speak to me, Gertrude," he said softly, "for the rest my lifetime, though in the air.

Soon she was clasped in Mother Chaney's arms again.

"I knew you would, you may see her some day, for she will come down again as a beautiful white snow-crystal.

ALICE'S PRIZE

(By Helen Davis.)

"Fannie, you ought to have been at school yesterday, and heard what Mrs White said about the spelling," said Alice, as she joined her friend on her way to school one morning.

"I was sorry," answered Fannie "but Charley was taken sick just as I was getting ready to go, and mamma would be all alone with him, so I staid at home to take you home for a little while," he said.

"Oh, I am so glad!" said Snow-Flake, as Fannie came in. "You could not have seen her had you look-ed, for she was now invisible, though in the air.

"I have come to take you home for a little while," he said.

"Oh, I am so glad!" said Snow-Flake, as Fannie came in. "You could not have seen her had you look-ed, for she was now invisible, though in the air.

Soon she was clasped in Mother Chaney's arms again.

"I knew you would, you may see her some day, for she will come down again as a beautiful white snow-crystal.

"MANY HEADS BENT EARNESTLY"

The Youngest Member of the Family.

SNOW-FLAKE'S TRIP.

(By Mabel F. Seofield.)

"Snow-Flake, what makes you so afraid?" said Mother Cloud one cold, winter day. "It is time you were going down to the world and doing the work that there is for you to do. You are plump and enough now, dear. Why, all of your cousins have gone, and one of the frail children is not near as old as you are."

"I know it, mother," timidly said Snow-Flake, "but I hate to leave you, and, Oh, it looks so far down there to the Earth. I am afraid to let go of your hand and drop."

Wind will take care of you, my child. He will not let anything harm you, and you will go dancing and whirling down with him before you know."

"How long will it be before I can come back to you, mother?"

Cloud could not help letting a tear or two drop earthward at this question, for she hated to think of the separation from the youngest of her flock of little, white beauties.

"It may not be long, dear," she answered, cheerfully. "There may not be very much for you to do the first time you are there. But do all you can while you are there, take happiness to all to whom you are sent. And then, you know you will come back to me some day. Here comes Wind, now, and I know he has come for you. Good-bye, dear, and remember what I have told you.

"Good-bye, mother. Oh, I am so afraid!"

"Afraid of what?" said Wind briskly. "I'll take care of you. Come on, Snow-Flake, you are loaded down on Earth. You have a mission there."

With that he gave the little trembler a push and she was separated from Mother Cloud.

Away they went! Dancing, whirling, skimming along. Now floating lightly, now hurrying, now playing with other snow-flakes who joined them on their journey, now going round and round in circles, now straight ahead.

Snow-Flake forgot her fear and was as merry as any in the enjoyment of the journey.

As they neared the Earth they went faster and faster, and presently Wind bade them farewell, telling them he would often come to them to see how they were getting along.

Snow-Flake looked around to see where she had better light. She spied a little flower shivering with the cold and trembling on its slender stem.

"I will go there," she said to herself, "and try to shield that poor flower from the cold."

So she nestled close up to the little heart of the flower, and calling other flakes to help her, they covered up the trembling creature with a soft, white blanket and it soon crept until it should be awakened by the gentle voice of Spring.

The next day Snow-Flake left the heart of the flower, as she was no needed there, and slipped to the ground right at the feet of a little boy who was passing. Stooping down, the child gathered up our Snow-Flake along with many other fair relatives, in his little chubby hands and threw them playfully at his dog. Carlo jumped in glee at the fun, and ran off with a stocking on the tip of his shaggy tail. She stayed here for a little while enjoying the fun as much as anyone, and by-and-by the child and dog started for home, accompanied by Snow-Flake.

On the way they met a child poorly dressed, and shivering with the cold. Two little toes peeped out from the worn-out shoes, and the little hands were purple with cold.

Snow-Flake immediately left her companions and flew over to the sleeve of the little, thin jacket to let the child know she felt sorry for him. He could not help nothing the big flake that fell on his arm, and some dainty a bright smile came to the pinched face and a little voice exclaimed, "Oh, what a beautiful snow-flake!"

One little blood kept going from one place to another in this way, until one day she was taken into a schoolroom on a piece of frosty cloth and put under a microscope, so that her beauty could be seen.

"Oh, what a beautiful shape!" and other large it is!" and "What fine delicate lines it has!" exclaimed one after another. But Snow-Flake felt sorrowful—it was so warm in there, and she felt herself fainting, nothing. Soon one opened the door to go out, and Snow-Flake rushed out, carried by the air in an invisible form.

Outside whom should she meet but Wind!

"TREMBLING ON ITS SLENDER STEM."

FIDO'S TROUBLES.

Said Pido, with a sigh,
"Life is not what I thought it was
What makes my thoughtful master
Lately treat me so.

"I'm 'Now Pido, heel'
Now speak! Cut loud!
'Now, sit!' Why, I'm treated like a nobody
Before a gazing crowd.

"Then 'In a dead dog,'
Then 'Shut the door!'
And I must learn from them
And many, many more.

"FIDO, WATCH MY HAT!"

"Fido, watch my hat!"
He does, sure as fate.
And Bridgeboy says he'll 'tain
"Fido is no use now!"

1. "1234, 5 47 going to town now," said father to Dick.

2. The chicken that was 1234579 its feathers, entered the 1234 as "5479" went the cow's tail.

3. He kept saying, "How did you puncture your 1234 5?" to 78, until it grew 1234567.

4. 12, was 34 you 56 Tom who spoke to the 1234567.

5. Mary saw her pet 127 sitting on a 567, as she looked up from the 1234567 she was reading.

6. Mary put on your toy 123, 456, on the 123456," said John's mamma.

7. The child put his 123 close to the 4567 to see is 123456 was.

PUZZLE.

(Progressive Enigmas.)

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