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ЛОНДОН**

THE
NIGHT-BORN

Джек Лондон
The Night-Born

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The Night-Born:

Содержание

THE NIGHT-BORN	4
THE MADNESS OF JOHN HARNED	25
WHEN THE WORLD WAS YOUNG	48
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	53

Jack London

The Night-Born

THE NIGHT-BORN

It was in the old Alta-Inyo Club – a warm night for San Francisco – and through the open windows, hushed and far, came the brawl of the streets. The talk had led on from the Graft Prosecution and the latest signs that the town was to be run wide open, down through all the grotesque sordidness and rottenness of man-hate and man-meanness, until the name of O'Brien was mentioned – O'Brien, the promising young pugilist who had been killed in the prize-ring the night before. At once the air had seemed to freshen. O'Brien had been a clean-living young man with ideals. He neither drank, smoked, nor swore, and his had been the body of a beautiful young god. He had even carried his prayer-book to the ringside. They found it in his coat pocket in the dressing-room... afterward.

Here was Youth, clean and wholesome, unsullied – the thing of glory and wonder for men to conjure with... after it has been lost to them and they have turned middle-aged. And so well did we conjure, that Romance came and for an hour led us far from the man-city and its snarling roar. Bardwell, in a way, started it by quoting from Thoreau; but it was old Trefethan, bald-headed

and dewlapped, who took up the quotation and for the hour to come was romance incarnate. At first we wondered how many Scotches he had consumed since dinner, but very soon all that was forgotten.

“It was in 1898 – I was thirty-five then,” he said. “Yes, I know you are adding it up. You’re right. I’m forty-seven now; look ten years more; and the doctors say – damn the doctors anyway!”

He lifted the long glass to his lips and sipped it slowly to soothe away his irritation.

“But I was young... once. I was young twelve years ago, and I had hair on top of my head, and my stomach was lean as a runner’s, and the longest day was none too long for me. I was a husky back there in ‘98. You remember me, Milner. You knew me then. Wasn’t I a pretty good bit of all right?”

Milner nodded and agreed. Like Trefethan, he was another mining engineer who had cleaned up a fortune in the Klondike.

“You certainly were, old man,” Milner said. “I’ll never forget when you cleaned out those lumberjacks in the M. & M. that night that little newspaper man started the row. Slavin was in the country at the time,” – this to us – “and his manager wanted to get up a match with Trefethan.”

“Well, look at me now,” Trefethan commanded angrily. “That’s what the Goldstead did to me – God knows how many millions, but nothing left in my soul... nor in my veins. The good red blood is gone. I am a jellyfish, a huge, gross mass of oscillating protoplasm, a – a...”

But language failed him, and he drew solace from the long glass.

“Women looked at me then; and turned their heads to look a second time. Strange that I never married. But the girl. That’s what I started to tell you about. I met her a thousand miles from anywhere, and then some. And she quoted to me those very words of Thoreau that Bardwell quoted a moment ago – the ones about the day-born gods and the night-born.”

“It was after I had made my locations on Goldstead – and didn’t know what a treasure-pot that that trip creek was going to prove – that I made that trip east over the Rockies, angling across to the Great Up North there the Rockies are something more than a back-bone. They are a boundary, a dividing line, a wall impregnable and unscalable. There is no intercourse across them, though, on occasion, from the early days, wandering trappers have crossed them, though more were lost by the way than ever came through. And that was precisely why I tackled the job. It was a traverse any man would be proud to make. I am prouder of it right now than anything else I have ever done.

“It is an unknown land. Great stretches of it have never been explored. There are big valleys there where the white man has never set foot, and Indian tribes as primitive as ten thousand years... almost, for they have had some contact with the whites. Parties of them come out once in a while to trade, and that is all. Even the Hudson Bay Company failed to find them and farm them.

“And now the girl. I was coming up a stream – you’d call it a river in California – uncharted – and unnamed. It was a noble valley, now shut in by high canyon walls, and again opening out into beautiful stretches, wide and long, with pasture shoulder-high in the bottoms, meadows dotted with flowers, and with clumps of timberspruce – virgin and magnificent. The dogs were packing on their backs, and were sore-footed and played out; while I was looking for any bunch of Indians to get sleds and drivers from and go on with the first snow. It was late fall, but the way those flowers persisted surprised me. I was supposed to be in sub-arctic America, and high up among the buttresses of the Rockies, and yet there was that everlasting spread of flowers. Some day the white settlers will be in there and growing wheat down all that valley.

“And then I lifted a smoke, and heard the barking of the dogs – Indian dogs – and came into camp. There must have been five hundred of them, proper Indians at that, and I could see by the jerking-frames that the fall hunting had been good. And then I met her – Lucy. That was her name. Sign language – that was all we could talk with, till they led me to a big fly – you know, half a tent, open on the one side where a campfire burned. It was all of moose-skins, this fly – moose-skins, smoke-cured, hand-rubbed, and golden-brown. Under it everything was neat and orderly as no Indian camp ever was. The bed was laid on fresh spruce boughs. There were furs galore, and on top of all was a robe of swanskins – white swan-skins – I have never seen

anything like that robe. And on top of it, sitting cross-legged, was Lucy. She was nut-brown. I have called her a girl. But she was not. She was a woman, a nut-brown woman, an Amazon, a full-blooded, full-bodied woman, and royal ripe. And her eyes were blue.

“That’s what took me off my feet – her eyes – blue, not China blue, but deep blue, like the sea and sky all melted into one, and very wise. More than that, they had laughter in them – warm laughter, sun-warm and human, very human, and... shall I say feminine? They were. They were a woman’s eyes, a proper woman’s eyes. You know what that means. Can I say more? Also, in those blue eyes were, at the same time, a wild unrest, a wistful yearning, and a repose, an absolute repose, a sort of all-wise and philosophical calm.”

Trefethan broke off abruptly.

“You fellows think I am screwed. I’m not. This is only my fifth since dinner. I am dead sober. I am solemn. I sit here now side by side with my sacred youth. It is not I – ‘old’ Trefethan – that talks; it is my youth, and it is my youth that says those were the most wonderful eyes I have ever seen – so very calm, so very restless; so very wise, so very curious; so very old, so very young; so satisfied and yet yearning so wistfully. Boys, I can’t describe them. When I have told you about her, you may know better for yourselves.”

“She did not stand up. But she put out her hand.”

“‘Stranger,’ she said, ‘I’m real glad to see you.’”

“I leave it to you – that sharp, frontier, Western tang of speech. Picture my sensations. It was a woman, a white woman, but that tang! It was amazing that it should be a white woman, here, beyond the last boundary of the world – but the tang. I tell you, it hurt. It was like the stab of a flatted note. And yet, let me tell you, that woman was a poet. You shall see.”

“She dismissed the Indians. And, by Jove, they went. They took her orders and followed her blind. She was hi-yu skookam chief. She told the bucks to make a camp for me and to take care of my dogs. And they did, too. And they knew enough not to get away with as much as a moccasin-lace of my outfit. She was a regular She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed, and I want to tell you it chilled me to the marrow, sent those little thrills Marathoning up and down my spinal column, meeting a white woman out there at the head of a tribe of savages a thousand miles the other side of No Man’s Land.

“Stranger,” she said, ‘I reckon you’re sure the first white that ever set foot in this valley. Set down an’ talk a spell, and then we’ll have a bite to eat. Which way might you be comin’?’

“There it was, that tang again. But from now to the end of the yarn I want you to forget it. I tell you I forgot it, sitting there on the edge of that swan-skin robe and listening and looking at the most wonderful woman that ever stepped out of the pages of Thoreau or of any other man’s book.

“I stayed on there a week. It was on her invitation. She promised to fit me out with dogs and sleds and with Indians that

would put me across the best pass of the Rockies in five hundred miles. Her fly was pitched apart from the others, on the high bank by the river, and a couple of Indian girls did her cooking for her and the camp work. And so we talked and talked, while the first snow fell and continued to fall and make a surface for my sleds. And this was her story.

“She was frontier-born, of poor settlers, and you know what that means – work, work, always work, work in plenty and without end.

“I never seen the glory of the world,’ she said. ‘I had no time. I knew it was right out there, anywhere, all around the cabin, but there was always the bread to set, the scrubbin’ and the washin’ and the work that was never done. I used to be plumb sick at times, jes’ to get out into it all, especially in the spring when the songs of the birds drove me most clean crazy. I wanted to run out through the long pasture grass, wetting my legs with the dew of it, and to climb the rail fence, and keep on through the timber and up and up over the divide so as to get a look around. Oh, I had all kinds of hankerings – to follow up the canyon beds and slosh around from pool to pool, making friends with the water-dogs and the speckly trout; to peep on the sly and watch the squirrels and rabbits and small furry things and see what they was doing and learn the secrets of their ways. Seemed to me, if I had time, I could crawl among the flowers, and, if I was good and quiet, catch them whispering with themselves, telling all kinds of wise things that mere humans never know.’”

Trefethan paused to see that his glass had been refilled.

“Another time she said: ‘I wanted to run nights like a wild thing, just to run through the moonshine and under the stars, to run white and naked in the darkness that I knew must feel like cool velvet, and to run and run and keep on running. One evening, plumb tuckered out – it had been a dreadful hard hot day, and the bread wouldn’t raise and the churning had gone wrong, and I was all irritated and jerky – well, that evening I made mention to dad of this wanting to run of mine. He looked at me curious-some and a bit scared. And then he gave me two pills to take. Said to go to bed and get a good sleep and I’d be all hunky-dory in the morning. So I never mentioned my hankerings to him, or any one any more.’

“The mountain home broke up – starved out, I imagine – and the family came to Seattle to live. There she worked in a factory – long hours, you know, and all the rest, deadly work. And after a year of that she became waitress in a cheap restaurant – hash-slinger, she called it. She said to me once, ‘Romance I guess was what I wanted. But there wan’t no romance floating around in dishpans and washtubs, or in factories and hash-joints.’

“When she was eighteen she married – a man who was going up to Juneau to start a restaurant. He had a few dollars saved, and appeared prosperous. She didn’t love him – she was emphatic about that, but she was all tired out, and she wanted to get away from the unending drudgery. Besides, Juneau was in Alaska, and her yearning took the form of a desire to see that wonderland.

But little she saw of it. He started the restaurant, a little cheap one, and she quickly learned what he had married her for... to save paying wages. She came pretty close to running the joint and doing all the work from waiting to dishwashing. She cooked most of the time as well. And she had four years of it.

“Can’t you picture her, this wild woods creature, quick with every old primitive instinct, yearning for the free open, and mowed up in a vile little hash-joint and toiling and moiling for four mortal years?

“‘There was no meaning in anything,’ she said. ‘What was it all about! Why was I born! Was that all the meaning of life – just to work and work and be always tired! – to go to bed tired and to wake up tired, with every day like every other day unless it was harder?’ She had heard talk of immortal life from the gospel sharps, she said, but she could not reckon that what she was doin’ was a likely preparation for her immortality.

“But she still had her dreams, though more rarely. She had read a few books – what, it is pretty hard to imagine, Seaside Library novels most likely; yet they had been food for fancy. ‘Sometimes,’ she said, ‘when I was that dizzy from the heat of the cooking that if I didn’t take a breath of fresh air I’d faint, I’d stick my head out of the kitchen window, and close my eyes and see most wonderful things. All of a sudden I’d be traveling down a country road, and everything clean and quiet, no dust, no dirt; just streams ripplin’ down sweet meadows, and lambs playing, breezes blowing the breath of flowers, and soft sunshine over

everything; and lovely cows lazying knee-deep in quiet pools, and young girls bathing in a curve of stream all white and slim and natural – and I'd know I was in Arcady. I'd read about that country once, in a book. And maybe knights, all flashing in the sun, would come riding around a bend in the road, or a lady on a milk-white mare, and in the distance I could see the towers of a castle rising, or I just knew, on the next turn, that I'd come upon some palace, all white and airy and fairy-like, with fountains playing, and flowers all over everything, and peacocks on the lawn... and then I'd open my eyes, and the heat of the cooking range would strike on me, and I'd hear Jake sayin' – he was my husband – I'd hear Jake sayin', "Why ain't you served them beans? Think I can wait here all day!" Romance! – I reckon the nearest I ever come to it was when a drunken Armenian cook got the snakes and tried to cut my throat with a potato knife and I got my arm burned on the stove before I could lay him out with the potato stomper.

"I wanted easy ways, and lovely things, and Romance and all that; but it just seemed I had no luck nohow and was only and expressly born for cooking and dishwashing. There was a wild crowd in Juneau them days, but I looked at the other women, and their way of life didn't excite me. I reckon I wanted to be clean. I don't know why; I just wanted to, I guess; and I reckoned I might as well die dishwashing as die their way."

Trefethan halted in his tale for a moment, completing to himself some thread of thought.

“And this is the woman I met up there in the Arctic, running a tribe of wild Indians and a few thousand square miles of hunting territory. And it happened, simply enough, though, for that matter, she might have lived and died among the pots and pans. But ‘Came the whisper, came the vision.’ That was all she needed, and she got it.

“‘I woke up one day,’ she said. ‘Just happened on it in a scrap of newspaper. I remember every word of it, and I can give it to you.’ And then she quoted Thoreau’s Cry of the Human:

“‘The young pines springing up, in the corn field from year to year are to me a refreshing fact. We talk of civilizing the Indian, but that is not the name for his improvement. By the wary independence and aloofness of his dim forest life he preserves his intercourse with his native gods and is admitted from time to time to a rare and peculiar society with nature. He has glances of starry recognition, to which our saloons are strangers. The steady illumination of his genius, dim only because distant, is like the faint but satisfying light of the stars compared with the dazzling but ineffectual and short-lived blaze of candles. The Society Islanders had their day-born gods, but they were not supposed to be of equal antiquity with the... night-born gods.’

“That’s what she did, repeated it word for word, and I forgot the tang, for it was solemn, a declaration of religion – pagan, if you will; and clothed in the living garmenture of herself.

“‘And the rest of it was torn away,’ she added, a great emptiness in her voice. ‘It was only a scrap of newspaper. But

that Thoreau was a wise man. I wish I knew more about him.' She stopped a moment, and I swear her face was ineffably holy as she said, 'I could have made him a good wife.'

"And then she went on. 'I knew right away, as soon as I read that, what was the matter with me. I was a night-born. I, who had lived all my life with the day-born, was a night-born. That was why I had never been satisfied with cooking and dishwashing; that was why I had hankered to run naked in the moonlight. And I knew that this dirty little Juneau hash-joint was no place for me. And right there and then I said, "I quit." I packed up my few rags of clothes, and started. Jake saw me and tried to stop me.

"What you doing?" he says.

"Divorcin' you and me,' I says. 'I'm headin' for tall timber and where I belong.'"

"No you don't,' he says, reaching for me to stop me. 'The cooking has got on your head. You listen to me talk before you up and do anything brash.'

"But I pulled a gun-a little Colt's forty-four – and says, 'This does my talkin' for me.'

"And I left."

Trefethan emptied his glass and called for another.

"Boys, do you know what that girl did? She was twenty-two. She had spent her life over the dish-pan and she knew no more about the world than I do of the fourth dimension, or the fifth. All roads led to her desire. No; she didn't head for the dance-halls. On the Alaskan Pan-handle it is preferable to travel by water.

She went down to the beach. An Indian canoe was starting for Dyea – you know the kind, carved out of a single tree, narrow and deep and sixty feet long. She gave them a couple of dollars and got on board.

“Romance?” she told me. ‘It was Romance from the jump. There were three families altogether in that canoe, and that crowded there wasn’t room to turn around, with dogs and Indian babies sprawling over everything, and everybody dipping a paddle and making that canoe go.’ And all around the great solemn mountains, and tangled drifts of clouds and sunshine. And oh, the silence! the great wonderful silence! And, once, the smoke of a hunter’s camp, away off in the distance, trailing among the trees. It was like a picnic, a grand picnic, and I could see my dreams coming true, and I was ready for something to happen ‘most any time. And it did.

“And that first camp, on the island! And the boys spearing fish in the mouth of the creek, and the big deer one of the bucks shot just around the point. And there were flowers everywhere, and in back from the beach the grass was thick and lush and neck-high. And some of the girls went through this with me, and we climbed the hillside behind and picked berries and roots that tasted sour and were good to eat. And we came upon a big bear in the berries making his supper, and he said “Oof!” and ran away as scared as we were. And then the camp, and the camp smoke, and the smell of fresh venison cooking. It was beautiful. I was with the night-born at last, and I knew that was where I belonged.

And for the first time in my life, it seemed to me, I went to bed happy that night, looking out under a corner of the canvas at the stars cut off black by a big shoulder of mountain, and listening to the night-noises, and knowing that the same thing would go on next day and forever and ever, for I wasn't going back. And I never did go back.'

"Romance! I got it next day. We had to cross a big arm of the ocean – twelve or fifteen miles, at least; and it came on to blow when we were in the middle. That night I was along on shore, with one wolf-dog, and I was the only one left alive.'

"Picture it yourself," Trefethan broke off to say. "The canoe was wrecked and lost, and everybody pounded to death on the rocks except her. She went ashore hanging on to a dog's tail, escaping the rocks and washing up on a tiny beach, the only one in miles.

"'Lucky for me it was the mainland,' she said. 'So I headed right away back, through the woods and over the mountains and straight on anywhere. Seemed I was looking for something and knew I'd find it. I wasn't afraid. I was night-born, and the big timber couldn't kill me. And on the second day I found it. I came upon a small clearing and a tumbledown cabin. Nobody had been there for years and years. The roof had fallen in. Rotted blankets lay in the bunks, and pots and pans were on the stove. But that was not the most curious thing. Outside, along the edge of the trees, you can't guess what I found. The skeletons of eight horses, each tied to a tree. They had starved to death, I reckon, and left

only little piles of bones scattered some here and there. And each horse had had a load on its back. There the loads lay, in among the bones – painted canvas sacks, and inside moosehide sacks, and inside the moosehide sacks – what do you think?”

She stopped, reached under a corner of the bed among the spruce boughs, and pulled out a leather sack. She untied the mouth and ran out into my hand as pretty a stream of gold as I have ever seen – coarse gold, placer gold, some large dust, but mostly nuggets, and it was so fresh and rough that it scarcely showed signs of water-wash.

“‘You say you’re a mining engineer,’ she said, ‘and you know this country. Can you name a pay-creek that has the color of that gold!’

“‘I couldn’t! There wasn’t a trace of silver. It was almost pure, and I told her so.

“‘You bet,’ she said. ‘I sell that for nineteen dollars an ounce. You can’t get over seventeen for Eldorado gold, and Minook gold don’t fetch quite eighteen. Well, that was what I found among the bones – eight horse-loads of it, one hundred and fifty pounds to the load.’

“‘A quarter of a million dollars!’ I cried out.

“‘That’s what I reckoned it roughly,’ she answered. ‘Talk about Romance! And me a slaving the way I had all the years, when as soon as I ventured out, inside three days, this was what happened. And what became of the men that mined all that gold? Often and often I wonder about it. They left their horses, loaded and tied,

and just disappeared off the face of the earth, leaving neither hide nor hair behind them. I never heard tell of them. Nobody knows anything about them. Well, being the night-born, I reckon I was their rightful heir.”

Trefethan stopped to light a cigar.

“Do you know what that girl did? She cached the gold, saving out thirty pounds, which she carried back to the coast. Then she signaled a passing canoe, made her way to Pat Healy’s trading post at Dyea, outfitted, and went over Chilcoot Pass. That was in ‘88 – eight years before the Klondike strike, and the Yukon was a howling wilderness. She was afraid of the bucks, but she took two young squaws with her, crossed the lakes, and went down the river and to all the early camps on the Lower Yukon. She wandered several years over that country and then on in to where I met her. Liked the looks of it, she said, seeing, in her own words, ‘a big bull caribou knee-deep in purple iris on the valley-bottom.’ She hooked up with the Indians, doctored them, gained their confidence, and gradually took them in charge. She had only left that country once, and then, with a bunch of the young bucks, she went over Chilcoot, cleaned up her gold-cache, and brought it back with her.

“‘And here I be, stranger,’ she concluded her yarn, ‘and here’s the most precious thing I own.’

“She pulled out a little pouch of buckskin, worn on her neck like a locket, and opened it. And inside, wrapped in oiled silk, yellowed with age and worn and thumbed, was the original scrap

of newspaper containing the quotation from Thoreau.

“And are you happy... satisfied?” I asked her. ‘With a quarter of a million you wouldn’t have to work down in the States. You must miss a lot.’

“Not much,” she answered. ‘I wouldn’t swop places with any woman down in the States. These are my people; this is where I belong. But there are times – and in her eyes smoldered up that hungry yearning I’ve mentioned – ‘there are times when I wish most awful bad for that Thoreau man to happen along.’

“Why?” I asked.

“So as I could marry him. I do get mighty lonesome at spells. I’m just a woman – a real woman. I’ve heard tell of the other kind of women that gallivanted off like me and did queer things – the sort that become soldiers in armies, and sailors on ships. But those women are queer themselves. They’re more like men than women; they look like men and they don’t have ordinary women’s needs. They don’t want love, nor little children in their arms and around their knees. I’m not that sort. I leave it to you, stranger. Do I look like a man?”

“She didn’t. She was a woman, a beautiful, nut-brown woman, with a sturdy, health-rounded woman’s body and with wonderful deep-blue woman’s eyes.

“Ain’t I woman?” she demanded. ‘I am. I’m ‘most all woman, and then some. And the funny thing is, though I’m night-born in everything else, I’m not when it comes to mating. I reckon that kind likes its own kind best. That’s the way it is with me, anyway,

and has been all these years.’

“‘You mean to tell me – ’ I began.

“‘Never,’ she said, and her eyes looked into mine with the straightness of truth. ‘I had one husband, only – him I call the Ox; and I reckon he’s still down in Juneau running the hash-joint. Look him up, if you ever get back, and you’ll find he’s rightly named.’

“And look him up I did, two years afterward. He was all she said – solid and stolid, the Ox – shuffling around and waiting on the tables.

“‘You need a wife to help you,’ I said.

“‘I had one once,’ was his answer.

“‘Widower?’

“‘Yep. She went loco. She always said the heat of the cooking would get her, and it did. Pulled a gun on me one day and ran away with some Siwashes in a canoe. Caught a blow up the coast and all hands drowned.’”

Trefethan devoted himself to his glass and remained silent.

“But the girl?” Milner reminded him.

“You left your story just as it was getting interesting, tender. Did it?”

“It did,” Trefethan replied. “As she said herself, she was savage in everything except mating, and then she wanted her own kind. She was very nice about it, but she was straight to the point. She wanted to marry me.

“‘Stranger,’ she said, ‘I want you bad. You like this sort of

life or you wouldn't be here trying to cross the Rockies in fall weather. It's a likely spot. You'll find few likelier. Why not settle down! I'll make you a good wife.'

"And then it was up to me. And she waited. I don't mind confessing that I was sorely tempted. I was half in love with her as it was. You know I have never married. And I don't mind adding, looking back over my life, that she is the only woman that ever affected me that way. But it was too preposterous, the whole thing, and I lied like a gentleman. I told her I was already married.

"Is your wife waiting for you?" she asked.

"I said yes.

"And she loves you?"

"I said yes.

"And that was all. She never pressed her point... except once, and then she showed a bit of fire.

"All I've got to do,' she said, 'is to give the word, and you don't get away from here. If I give the word, you stay on... But I ain't going to give it. I wouldn't want you if you didn't want to be wanted... and if you didn't want me.'

"She went ahead and outfitted me and started me on my way.

"It's a darned shame, stranger," she said, at parting. 'I like your looks, and I like you. If you ever change your mind, come back.'

"Now there was one thing I wanted to do, and that was to kiss her good-bye, but I didn't know how to go about it nor how she

would take it. – I tell you I was half in love with her. But she settled it herself.

“‘Kiss me,’ she said. ‘Just something to go on and remember.’

“And we kissed, there in the snow, in that valley by the Rockies, and I left her standing by the trail and went on after my dogs. I was six weeks in crossing over the pass and coming down to the first post on Great Slave Lake.”

The brawl of the streets came up to us like a distant surf. A steward, moving noiselessly, brought fresh siphons. And in the silence Trefethan’s voice fell like a funeral bell:

“It would have been better had I stayed. Look at me.”

We saw his grizzled mustache, the bald spot on his head, the puff-sacks under his eyes, the sagging cheeks, the heavy dewlap, the general tiredness and staleness and fatness, all the collapse and ruin of a man who had once been strong but who had lived too easily and too well.

“It’s not too late, old man,” Bardwell said, almost in a whisper.

“By God! I wish I weren’t a coward!” was Trefethan’s answering cry. “I could go back to her. She’s there, now. I could shape up and live many a long year... with her... up there. To remain here is to commit suicide. But I am an old man – forty-seven – look at me. The trouble is,” he lifted his glass and glanced at it, “the trouble is that suicide of this sort is so easy. I am soft and tender. The thought of the long day’s travel with the dogs appalls me; the thought of the keen frost in the morning and of the frozen sled-lashings frightens me – ”

Automatically the glass was creeping toward his lips. With a swift surge of anger he made as if to crash it down upon the floor. Next came hesitancy and second thought. The glass moved upward to his lips and paused. He laughed harshly and bitterly, but his words were solemn:

“Well, here’s to the Night-Born. She WAS a wonder.”

THE MADNESS OF JOHN HARNED

I TELL this for a fact. It happened in the bull-ring at Quito. I sat in the box with John Harned, and with Maria Valenzuela, and with Luis Cervillos. I saw it happen. I saw it all from first to last. I was on the steamer Ecuadore from Panama to Guayaquil. Maria Valenzuela is my cousin. I have known her always. She is very beautiful. I am a Spaniard – an Ecuadoriano, true, but I am descended from Pedro Patino, who was one of Pizarro's captains. They were brave men. They were heroes. Did not Pizarro lead three hundred and fifty Spanish cavaliers and four thousand Indians into the far Cordilleras in search of treasure? And did not all the four thousand Indians and three hundred of the brave cavaliers die on that vain quest? But Pedro Patino did not die. He it was that lived to found the family of the Patino. I am Ecuadoriano, true, but I am Spanish. I am Manuel de Jesus Patino. I own many haciendas, and ten thousand Indians are my slaves, though the law says they are free men who work by freedom of contract. The law is a funny thing. We Ecuadorianos laugh at it. It is our law. We make it for ourselves. I am Manuel de Jesus Patino. Remember that name. It will be written some day in history. There are revolutions in Ecuador. We call them elections. It is a good joke is it not? – what you call a pun?

John Harned was an American. I met him first at the Tivoli hotel in Panama. He had much money – this I have heard. He

was going to Lima, but he met Maria Valenzuela in the Tivoli hotel. Maria Valenzuela is my cousin, and she is beautiful. It is true, she is the most beautiful woman in Ecuador. But also is she most beautiful in every country – in Paris, in Madrid, in New York, in Vienna. Always do all men look at her, and John Harned looked long at her at Panama. He loved her, that I know for a fact. She was Ecuatoriano, true – but she was of all countries; she was of all the world. She spoke many languages. She sang – ah! like an artiste. Her smile – wonderful, divine. Her eyes – ah! have I not seen men look in her eyes? They were what you English call amazing. They were promises of paradise. Men drowned themselves in her eyes.

Maria Valenzuela was rich – richer than I, who am accounted very rich in Ecuador. But John Harned did not care for her money. He had a heart – a funny heart. He was a fool. He did not go to Lima. He left the steamer at Guayaquil and followed her to Quito. She was coming home from Europe and other places. I do not see what she found in him, but she liked him. This I know for a fact, else he would not have followed her to Quito. She asked him to come. Well do I remember the occasion. She said:

“Come to Quito and I will show you the bullfight – brave, clever, magnificent!”

But he said: “I go to Lima, not Quito. Such is my passage engaged on the steamer.”

“You travel for pleasure – no?” said Maria Valenzuela; and she looked at him as only Maria Valenzuela could look, her eyes

warm with the promise.

And he came. No; he did not come for the bull-fight. He came because of what he had seen in her eyes. Women like Maria Valenzuela are born once in a hundred years. They are of no country and no time. They are what you call goddesses. Men fall down at their feet. They play with men and run them through their pretty fingers like sand. Cleopatra was such a woman they say; and so was Circe. She turned men into swine. Ha! ha! It is true – no?

It all came about because Maria Valenzuela said:

“You English people are – what shall I say? – savage – no? You prize-fight. Two men each hit the other with their fists till their eyes are blinded and their noses are broken. Hideous! And the other men who look on cry out loudly and are made glad. It is barbarous – no?”

“But they are men,” said John Harned; “and they prize-fight out of desire. No one makes them prize-fight. They do it because they desire it more than anything else in the world.”

Maria Valenzuela – there was scorn in her smile as she said: “They kill each other often – is it not so? I have read it in the papers.”

“But the bull,” said John Harned.

“The bull is killed many times in the bull-fight, and the bull does not come into the the ring out of desire. It is not fair to the bull. He is compelled to fight. But the man in the prize-fight – no; he is not compelled.”

“He is the more brute therefore,” said Maria Valenzuela.

“He is savage. He is primitive. He is animal. He strikes with his paws like a bear from a cave, and he is ferocious. But the bull-fight – ah! You have not seen the bullfight – no? The toreador is clever. He must have skill. He is modern. He is romantic. He is only a man, soft and tender, and he faces the wild bull in conflict. And he kills with a sword, a slender sword, with one thrust, so, to the heart of the great beast. It is delicious. It makes the heart beat to behold – the small man, the great beast, the wide level sand, the thousands that look on without breath; the great beast rushes to the attack, the small man stands like a statue; he does not move, he is unafraid, and in his hand is the slender sword flashing like silver in the sun; nearer and nearer rushes the great beast with its sharp horns, the man does not move, and then – so – the sword flashes, the thrust is made, to the heart, to the hilt, the bull falls to the sand and is dead, and the man is unhurt. It is brave. It is magnificent! Ah! – I could love the toreador. But the man of the prize-fight – he is the brute, the human beast, the savage primitive, the maniac that receives many blows in his stupid face and rejoices. Come to Quito and I will show you the brave sport of men, the toreador and the bull.”

But John Harned did not go to Quito for the bull-fight. He went because of Maria Valenzuela. He was a large man, more broad of shoulder than we Ecuadorianos, more tall, more heavy of limb and bone. True, he was larger of his own race. His eyes were blue, though I have seen them gray, and, sometimes, like

cold steel. His features were large, too – not delicate like ours, and his jaw was very strong to look at. Also, his face was smooth-shaven like a priest's. Why should a man feel shame for the hair on his face? Did not God put it there? Yes, I believe in God – I am not a pagan like many of you English. God is good. He made me an Ecuatoriano with ten thousand slaves. And when I die I shall go to God. Yes, the priests are right.

But John Harned. He was a quiet man. He talked always in a low voice, and he never moved his hands when he talked. One would have thought his heart was a piece of ice; yet did he have a streak of warm in his blood, for he followed Maria Valenzuela to Quito. Also, and for all that he talked low without moving his hands, he was an animal, as you shall see – the beast primitive, the stupid, ferocious savage of the long ago that dressed in wild skins and lived in the caves along with the bears and wolves.

Luis Cervillos is my friend, the best of Ecuatorianos. He owns three cacao plantations at Naranjito and Chobo. At Milagro is his big sugar plantation. He has large haciendas at Ambato and Latacunga, and down the coast is he interested in oil-wells. Also has he spent much money in planting rubber along the Guayas. He is modern, like the Yankee; and, like the Yankee, full of business. He has much money, but it is in many ventures, and ever he needs more money for new ventures and for the old ones. He has been everywhere and seen everything. When he was a very young man he was in the Yankee military academy what you call West Point. There was trouble. He was made to resign.

He does not like Americans. But he did like Maria Valenzuela, who was of his own country. Also, he needed her money for his ventures and for his gold mine in Eastern Ecuador where the painted Indians live. I was his friend. It was my desire that he should marry Maria Valenzuela. Further, much of my money had I invested in his ventures, more so in his gold mine which was very rich but which first required the expense of much money before it would yield forth its riches. If Luis Cervallos married Maria Valenzuela I should have more money very immediately.

But John Harned followed Maria Valenzuela to Quito, and it was quickly clear to us – to Luis Cervallos and me that she looked upon John Harned with great kindness. It is said that a woman will have her will, but this is a case not in point, for Maria Valenzuela did not have her will – at least not with John Harned. Perhaps it would all have happened as it did, even if Luis Cervallos and I had not sat in the box that day at the bull-ring in Quito. But this I know: we DID sit in the box that day. And I shall tell you what happened.

The four of us were in the one box, guests of Luis Cervallos. I was next to the Presidente's box. On the other side was the box of General Jose Eliceo Salazar. With him were Joaquin Endara and Urcisino Castillo, both generals, and Colonel Jacinto Fierro and Captain Baltazar de Echeverria. Only Luis Cervallos had the position and the influence to get that box next to the Presidente. I know for a fact that the Presidente himself expressed the desire to the management that Luis Cervallos should have that box.

The band finished playing the national hymn of Ecuador. The procession of the toreadors was over. The Presidente nodded to begin. The bugles blew, and the bull dashed in – you know the way, excited, bewildered, the darts in its shoulder burning like fire, itself seeking madly whatever enemy to destroy. The toreadors hid behind their shelters and waited. Suddenly they appeared forth, the capadores, five of them, from every side, their colored capes flinging wide. The bull paused at sight of such a generosity of enemies, unable in his own mind to know which to attack. Then advanced one of the capadors alone to meet the bull. The bull was very angry. With its fore-legs it pawed the sand of the arena till the dust rose all about it. Then it charged, with lowered head, straight for the lone capador.

It is always of interest, the first charge of the first bull. After a time it is natural that one should grow tired, trifle, that the keenness should lose its edge. But that first charge of the first bull! John Harned was seeing it for the first time, and he could not escape the excitement – the sight of the man, armed only with a piece of cloth, and of the bull rushing upon him across the sand with sharp horns, widespreading.

“See!” cried Maria Valenzuela. “Is it not superb?”

John Harned nodded, but did not look at her. His eyes were sparkling, and they were only for the bull-ring. The capador stepped to the side, with a twirl of the cape eluding the bull and spreading the cape on his own shoulders.

“What do you think?” asked Maria Venezuela. “Is it not a –

what-you-call – sporting proposition – no?”

“It is certainly,” said John Harned. “It is very clever.”

She clapped her hands with delight. They were little hands. The audience applauded. The bull turned and came back. Again the capadore eluded him, throwing the cape on his shoulders, and again the audience applauded. Three times did this happen. The capadore was very excellent. Then he retired, and the other capadore played with the bull. After that they placed the banderillos in the bull, in the shoulders, on each side of the backbone, two at a time. Then stepped forward Ordonez, the chief matador, with the long sword and the scarlet cape. The bugles blew for the death. He is not so good as Matestini. Still he is good, and with one thrust he drove the sword to the heart, and the bull doubled his legs under him and lay down and died. It was a pretty thrust, clean and sure; and there was much applause, and many of the common people threw their hats into the ring. Maria Valenzuela clapped her hands with the rest, and John Harned, whose cold heart was not touched by the event, looked at her with curiosity.

“You like it?” he asked.

“Always,” she said, still clapping her hands.

“From a little girl,” said Luis Cervillos. “I remember her first fight. She was four years old. She sat with her mother, and just like now she clapped her hands. She is a proper Spanish woman.

“You have seen it,” said Maria Valenzuela to John Harned, as they fastened the mules to the dead bull and dragged it out. “You

have seen the bull-fight and you like it – no? What do you think?

“I think the bull had no chance,” he said. “The bull was doomed from the first. The issue was not in doubt. Every one knew, before the bull entered the ring, that it was to die. To be a sporting proposition, the issue must be in doubt. It was one stupid bull who had never fought a man against five wise men who had fought many bulls. It would be possibly a little bit fair if it were one man against one bull.”

“Or one man against five bulls,” said Maria Valenzuela; and we all laughed, and Luis Cervallos laughed loudest.

“Yes,” said John Harned, “against five bulls, and the man, like the bulls, never in the bull ring before – a man like yourself, Senor Cervallos.”

“Yet we Spanish like the bull-fight,” said Luis Cervallos; and I swear the devil was whispering then in his ear, telling him to do that which I shall relate.

“Then must it be a cultivated taste,” John Harned made answer. “We kill bulls by the thousand every day in Chicago, yet no one cares to pay admittance to see.”

“That is butchery,” said I; “but this – ah, this is an art. It is delicate. It is fine. It is rare.”

“Not always,” said Luis Cervallos. “I have seen clumsy matadors, and I tell you it is not nice.”

He shuddered, and his face betrayed such what-you-call disgust, that I knew, then, that the devil was whispering and that he was beginning to play a part.

“Senor Harned may be right,” said Luis Cervillos. “It may not be fair to the bull. For is it not known to all of us that for twenty-four hours the bull is given no water, and that immediately before the fight he is permitted to drink his fill?”

“And he comes into the ring heavy with water?” said John Harned quickly; and I saw that his eyes were very gray and very sharp and very cold.

“It is necessary for the sport,” said Luis Cervillos. “Would you have the bull so strong that he would kill the toreadors?”

“I would that he had a fighting chance,” said John Harned, facing the ring to see the second bull come in.

It was not a good bull. It was frightened. It ran around the ring in search of a way to get out. The capadors stepped forth and flared their capes, but he refused to charge upon them.

“It is a stupid bull,” said Maria Valenzuela.

“I beg pardon,” said John Harned; “but it would seem to me a wise bull. He knows he must not fight man. See! He smells death there in the ring.”

True. The bull, pausing where the last one had died, was smelling the wet sand and snorting. Again he ran around the ring, with raised head, looking at the faces of the thousands that hissed him, that threw orange-peel at him and called him names. But the smell of blood decided him, and he charged a capador, so without warning that the man just escaped. He dropped his cape and dodged into the shelter. The bull struck the wall of the ring with a crash. And John Harned said, in a quiet voice, as though

he talked to himself:

“I will give one thousand sucres to the lazar-house of Quito if a bull kills a man this day.”

“You like bulls?” said Maria Valenzuela with a smile.

“I like such men less,” said John Harned. “A toreador is not a brave man. He surely cannot be a brave man. See, the bull’s tongue is already out. He is tired and he has not yet begun.”

“It is the water,” said Luis Cervallos.

“Yes, it is the water,” said John Harned. “Would it not be safer to hamstring the bull before he comes on?”

Maria Valenzuela was made angry by this sneer in John Harned’s words. But Luis Cervallos smiled so that only I could see him, and then it broke upon my mind surely the game he was playing. He and I were to be banderilleros. The big American bull was there in the box with us. We were to stick the darts in him till he became angry, and then there might be no marriage with Maria Valenzuela. It was a good sport. And the spirit of bull-fighters was in our blood.

The bull was now angry and excited. The capadors had great game with him. He was very quick, and sometimes he turned with such sharpness that his hind legs lost their footing and he plowed the sand with his quarter. But he charged always the flung capes and committed no harm.

“He has no chance,” said John Harned. “He is fighting wind.”

“He thinks the cape is his enemy,” explained Maria Valenzuela. “See how cleverly the capador deceives him.”

“It is his nature to be deceived,” said John Harned. “Wherefore he is doomed to fight wind. The toreadors know it, you know it, I know it – we all know from the first that he will fight wind. He only does not know it. It is his stupid beast-nature. He has no chance.”

“It is very simple,” said Luis Cervillos. “The bull shuts his eyes when he charges. Therefore – ”

“The man steps, out of the way and the bull rushes by,” Harned interrupted.

“Yes,” said Luis Cervillos; “that is it. The bull shuts his eyes, and the man knows it.”

“But cows do not shut their eyes,” said John Harned. “I know a cow at home that is a Jersey and gives milk, that would whip the whole gang of them.”

“But the toreadors do not fight cows,” said I.

“They are afraid to fight cows,” said John Harned.

“Yes,” said Luis Cervillos, “they are afraid to fight cows. There would be no sport in killing toreadors.”

“There would be some sport,” said John Harned, “if a toreador were killed once in a while. When I become an old man, and mayhap a cripple, and should I need to make a living and be unable to do hard work, then would I become a bull-fighter. It is a light vocation for elderly gentlemen and pensioners.”

“But see!” said Maria Valenzuela, as the bull charged bravely and the capador eluded it with a fling of his cape. “It requires skill so to avoid the beast.”

“True,” said John Harned. “But believe me, it requires a thousand times more skill to avoid the many and quick punches of a prize-fighter who keeps his eyes open and strikes with intelligence. Furthermore, this bull does not want to fight. Behold, he runs away.”

It was not a good bull, for again it ran around the ring, seeking to find a way out.

“Yet these bulls are sometimes the most dangerous,” said Luis Cervillos. “It can never be known what they will do next. They are wise. They are half cow. The bull-fighters never like them. – See! He has turned!”

Once again, baffled and made angry by the walls of the ring that would not let him out, the bull was attacking his enemies valiantly.

“His tongue is hanging out,” said John Harned. “First, they fill him with water. Then they tire him out, one man and then another, persuading him to exhaust himself by fighting wind. While some tire him, others rest. But the bull they never let rest. Afterward, when he is quite tired and no longer quick, the matador sticks the sword into him.”

The time had now come for the banderillos. Three times one of the fighters endeavored to place the darts, and three times did he fail. He but stung the bull and maddened it. The banderillos must go in, you know, two at a time, into the shoulders, on each side the backbone and close to it. If but one be placed, it is a failure. The crowd hissed and called for Ordonez. And then

Ordenez did a great thing. Four times he stood forth, and four times, at the first attempt, he stuck in the banderillos, so that eight of them, well placed, stood out of the back of the bull at one time. The crowd went mad, and a rain of hats and money fell on the sand of the ring.

And just then the bull charged unexpectedly one of the capadors. The man slipped and lost his head. The bull caught him – fortunately, between his wide horns. And while the audience watched, breathless and silent, John Harned stood up and yelled with gladness. Alone, in that hush of all of us, John Harned yelled. And he yelled for the bull. As you see yourself, John Harned wanted the man killed. His was a brutal heart. This bad conduct made those angry that sat in the box of General Salazar, and they cried out against John Harned. And Urcisino Castillo told him to his face that he was a dog of a Gringo and other things. Only it was in Spanish, and John Harned did not understand. He stood and yelled, perhaps for the time of ten seconds, when the bull was enticed into charging the other capadors and the man arose unhurt.

“The bull has no chance,” John Harned said with sadness as he sat down. “The man was uninjured. They fooled the bull away from him.” Then he turned to Maria Valenzuela and said: “I beg your pardon. I was excited.”

She smiled and in reproof tapped his arm with her fan.

“It is your first bull-fight,” she said. “After you have seen more you will not cry for the death of the man. You Americans, you

see, are more brutal than we. It is because of your prize-fighting. We come only to see the bull killed.”

“But I would the bull had some chance,” he answered. “Doubtless, in time, I shall cease to be annoyed by the men who take advantage of the bull.”

The bugles blew for the death of the bull. Ordonez stood forth with the sword and the scarlet cloth. But the bull had changed again, and did not want to fight. Ordonez stamped his foot in the sand, and cried out, and waved the scarlet cloth. Then the bull charged, but without heart. There was no weight to the charge. It was a poor thrust. The sword struck a bone and bent. Ordonez took a fresh sword. The bull, again stung to fight, charged once more. Five times Ordonez essayed the thrust, and each time the sword went but part way in or struck bone. The sixth time, the sword went in to the hilt. But it was a bad thrust. The sword missed the heart and stuck out half a yard through the ribs on the opposite side. The audience hissed the matador. I glanced at John Harned. He sat silent, without movement; but I could see his teeth were set, and his hands were clenched tight on the railing of the box.

All fight was now out of the bull, and, though it was no vital thrust, he trotted lamely what of the sword that stuck through him, in one side and out the other. He ran away from the matador and the capadors, and circled the edge of the ring, looking up at the many faces.

“He is saying: ‘For God’s sake let me out of this; I don’t want

to fight,” said John Harned.

That was all. He said no more, but sat and watched, though sometimes he looked sideways at Maria Valenzuela to see how she took it. She was angry with the matador. He was awkward, and she had desired a clever exhibition.

The bull was now very tired, and weak from loss of blood, though far from dying. He walked slowly around the wall of the ring, seeking a way out. He would not charge. He had had enough. But he must be killed. There is a place, in the neck of a bull behind the horns, where the cord of the spine is unprotected and where a short stab will immediately kill. Ordonez stepped in front of the bull and lowered his scarlet cloth to the ground. The bull would not charge. He stood still and smelled the cloth, lowering his head to do so. Ordonez stabbed between the horns at the spot in the neck. The bull jerked his head up. The stab had missed. Then the bull watched the sword. When Ordonez moved the cloth on the ground, the bull forgot the sword and lowered his head to smell the cloth. Again Ordonez stabbed, and again he failed. He tried many times. It was stupid. And John Harned said nothing. At last a stab went home, and the bull fell to the sand, dead immediately, and the mules were made fast and he was dragged out.

“The Gringos say it is a cruel sport – no?” said Luis Cervillos. “That it is not humane. That it is bad for the bull. No?”

“No,” said John Harned. “The bull does not count for much. It is bad for those that look on. It is degrading to those that look

on. It teaches them to delight in animal suffering. It is cowardly for five men to fight one stupid bull. Therefore those that look on learn to be cowards. The bull dies, but those that look on live and the lesson is learned. The bravery of men is not nourished by scenes of cowardice.”

Maria Valenzuela said nothing. Neither did she look at him. But she heard every word and her cheeks were white with anger. She looked out across the ring and fanned herself, but I saw that her hand trembled. Nor did John Harned look at her. He went on as though she were not there. He, too, was angry, coldly angry.

“It is the cowardly sport of a cowardly people,” he said.

“Ah,” said Luis Cervallos softly, “you think you understand us.”

“I understand now the Spanish Inquisition,” said John Harned. “It must have been more delightful than bull-fighting.”

Luis Cervallos smiled but said nothing. He glanced at Maria Valenzuela, and knew that the bull-fight in the box was won. Never would she have further to do with the Gringo who spoke such words. But neither Luis Cervallos nor I was prepared for the outcome of the day. I fear we do not understand the Gringos. How were we to know that John Harned, who was so coldly angry, should go suddenly mad! But mad he did go, as you shall see. The bull did not count for much – he said so himself. Then why should the horse count for so much? That I cannot understand. The mind of John Harned lacked logic. That is the only explanation.

“It is not usual to have horses in the bull-ring at Quito,” said Luis Cervallos, looking up from the program. “In Spain they always have them. But to-day, by special permission we shall have them. When the next bull comes on there will be horses and picadors-you know, the men who carry lances and ride the horses.”

“The bull is doomed from the first,” said John Harned. “Are the horses then likewise doomed!”

“They are blindfolded so that they may not see the bull,” said Luis Cervallos. “I have seen many horses killed. It is a brave sight.”

“I have seen the bull slaughtered,” said John Harned “I will now see the horse slaughtered, so that I may understand more fully the fine points of this noble sport.”

“They are old horses,” said Luis Cervallos, “that are not good for anything else.”

“I see,” said John Harned.

The third bull came on, and soon against it were both capadors and picadors. One picador took his stand directly below us. I agree, it was a thin and aged horse he rode, a bag of bones covered with mangy hide.

“It is a marvel that the poor brute can hold up the weight of the rider,” said John Harned. “And now that the horse fights the bull, what weapons has it?”

“The horse does not fight the bull,” said Luis Cervallos.

“Oh,” said John Harned, “then is the horse there to be gored?”

That must be why it is blindfolded, so that it shall not see the bull coming to gore it.”

“Not quite so,” said I. “The lance of the picador is to keep the bull from goring the horse.”

“Then are horses rarely gored?” asked John Harned.

“No,” said Luis Cervallos. “I have seen, at Seville, eighteen horses killed in one day, and the people clamored for more horses.”

“Were they blindfolded like this horse?” asked John Harned.

“Yes,” said Luis Cervallos.

After that we talked no more, but watched the fight. And John Harned was going mad all the time, and we did not know. The bull refused to charge the horse. And the horse stood still, and because it could not see it did not know that the capadors were trying to make the bull charge upon it. The capadors teased the bull their capes, and when it charged them they ran toward the horse and into their shelters. At last the bull was angry, and it saw the horse before it.

“The horse does not know, the horse does not know,” John Harned whispered to himself, unaware that he voiced his thought aloud.

The bull charged, and of course the horse knew nothing till the picador failed and the horse found himself impaled on the bull’s horns from beneath. The bull was magnificently strong. The sight of its strength was splendid to see. It lifted the horse clear into the air; and as the horse fell to its side on on the ground the picador

landed on his feet and escaped, while the capadors lured the bull away. The horse was emptied of its essential organs. Yet did it rise to its feet screaming. It was the scream of the horse that did it, that made John Harned completely mad; for he, too, started to rise to his feet, I heard him curse low and deep. He never took his eyes from the horse, which, screaming, strove to run, but fell down instead and rolled on its back so that all its four legs were kicking in the air. Then the bull charged it and gored it again and again until it was dead.

John Harned was now on his feet. His eyes were no longer cold like steel. They were blue flames. He looked at Maria Valenzuela, and she looked at him, and in his face was a great loathing. The moment of his madness was upon him. Everybody was looking, now that the horse was dead; and John Harned was a large man and easy to be seen.

“Sit down,” said Luis Cervillos, “or you will make a fool of yourself.”

John Harned replied nothing. He struck out his fist. He smote Luis Cervillos in the face so that he fell like a dead man across the chairs and did not rise again. He saw nothing of what followed. But I saw much. Urcisino Castillo, leaning forward from the next box, with his cane struck John Harned full across the face. And John Harned smote him with his fist so that in falling he overthrew General Salazar. John Harned was now in what-you-call Berserker rage – no? The beast primitive in him was loose and roaring – the beast primitive of the holes and caves of the

long ago.

“You came for a bull-fight,” I heard him say, “And by God I’ll show you a man-fight!”

It was a fight. The soldiers guarding the Presidente’s box leaped across, but from one of them he took a rifle and beat them on their heads with it. From the other box Colonel Jacinto Fierro was shooting at him with a revolver. The first shot killed a soldier. This I know for a fact. I saw it. But the second shot struck John Harned in the side. Whereupon he swore, and with a lunge drove the bayonet of his rifle into Colonel Jacinto Fierro’s body. It was horrible to behold. The Americans and the English are a brutal race. They sneer at our bull-fighting, yet do they delight in the shedding of blood. More men were killed that day because of John Harned than were ever killed in all the history of the bull-ring of Quito, yes, and of Guayaquil and all Ecuador.

It was the scream of the horse that did it, yet why did not John Harned go mad when the bull was killed? A beast is a beast, be it bull or horse. John Harned was mad. There is no other explanation. He was blood-mad, a beast himself. I leave it to your judgment. Which is worse – the goring of the horse by the bull, or the goring of Colonel Jacinto Fierro by the bayonet in the hands of John Harned! And John Harned gored others with that bayonet. He was full of devils. He fought with many bullets in him, and he was hard to kill. And Maria Valenzuela was a brave woman. Unlike the other women, she did not cry out nor faint. She sat still in her box, gazing out across the bull-ring. Her face

was white and she fanned herself, but she never looked around.

From all sides came the soldiers and officers and the common people bravely to subdue the mad Gringo. It is true – the cry went up from the crowd to kill all the Gringos. It is an old cry in Latin-American countries, what of the dislike for the Gringos and their uncouth ways. It is true, the cry went up. But the brave Ecuadorianos killed only John Harned, and first he killed seven of them. Besides, there were many hurt. I have seen many bull-fights, but never have I seen anything so abominable as the scene in the boxes when the fight was over. It was like a field of battle. The dead lay around everywhere, while the wounded sobbed and groaned and some of them died. One man, whom John Harned had thrust through the belly with the bayonet, clutched at himself with both his hands and screamed. I tell you for a fact it was more terrible than the screaming of a thousand horses.

No, Maria Valenzuela did not marry Luis Cervallos. I am sorry for that. He was my friend, and much of my money was invested in his ventures. It was five weeks before the surgeons took the bandages from his face. And there is a scar there to this day, on the cheek, under the eye. Yet John Harned struck him but once and struck him only with his naked fist. Maria Valenzuela is in Austria now. It is said she is to marry an Arch-Duke or some high nobleman. I do not know. I think she liked John Harned before he followed her to Quito to see the bull-fight. But why the horse? That is what I desire to know. Why should he watch the bull and say that it did not count, and then go immediately

and most horribly mad because a horse screamed? There is no understanding the Gringos. They are barbarians.

WHEN THE WORLD WAS YOUNG

HE was a very quiet, self-possessed sort of man, sitting a moment on top of the wall to sound the damp darkness for warnings of the dangers it might conceal. But the plummet of his hearing brought nothing to him save the moaning of wind through invisible trees and the rustling of leaves on swaying branches. A heavy fog drifted and drove before the wind, and though he could not see this fog, the wet of it blew upon his face, and the wall on which he sat was wet.

Without noise he had climbed to the top of the wall from the outside, and without noise he dropped to the ground on the inside. From his pocket he drew an electric night-stick, but he did not use it. Dark as the way was, he was not anxious for light. Carrying the night-stick in his hand, his finger on the button, he advanced through the darkness. The ground was velvety and springy to his feet, being carpeted with dead pine-needles and leaves and mold which evidently had been undisturbed for years. Leaves and branches brushed against his body, but so dark was it that he could not avoid them. Soon he walked with his hand stretched out gropingly before him, and more than once the hand fetched up against the solid trunks of massive trees. All about him he knew were these trees; he sensed the loom of them everywhere; and he experienced a strange feeling of microscopic smallness in the midst of great bulks leaning toward him to crush

him. Beyond, he knew, was the house, and he expected to find some trail or winding path that would lead easily to it.

Once, he found himself trapped. On every side he groped against trees and branches, or blundered into thickets of underbrush, until there seemed no way out. Then he turned on his light, circumspectly, directing its rays to the ground at his feet. Slowly and carefully he moved it about him, the white brightness showing in sharp detail all the obstacles to his progress. He saw, an opening between huge-trunked trees, and advanced through it, putting out the light and treading on dry footing as yet protected from the drip of the fog by the dense foliage overhead. His sense of direction was good, and he knew he was going toward the house.

And then the thing happened – the thing unthinkable and unexpected. His descending foot came down upon something that was soft and alive, and that arose with a snort under the weight of his body. He sprang clear, and crouched for another spring, anywhere, tense and expectant, keyed for the onslaught of the unknown. He waited a moment, wondering what manner of animal it was that had arisen from under his foot and that now made no sound nor movement and that must be crouching and waiting just as tensely and expectantly as he. The strain became unbearable. Holding the night-stick before him, he pressed the button, saw, and screamed aloud in terror. He was prepared for anything, from a frightened calf or fawn to a belligerent lion, but he was not prepared for what he saw. In that instant his tiny

searchlight, sharp and white, had shown him what a thousand years would not enable him to forget – a man, huge and blond, yellow-haired and yellow-bearded, naked except for soft-tanned moccasins and what seemed a goat-skin about his middle. Arms and legs were bare, as were his shoulders and most of his chest. The skin was smooth and hairless, but browned by sun and wind, while under it heavy muscles were knotted like fat snakes. Still, this alone, unexpected as it well was, was not what had made the man scream out. What had caused his terror was the unspeakable ferocity of the face, the wild-animal glare of the blue eyes scarcely dazzled by the light, the pine-needles matted and clinging in the beard and hair, and the whole formidable body crouched and in the act of springing at him. Practically in the instant he saw all this, and while his scream still rang, the thing leaped, he flung his night-stick full at it, and threw himself to the ground. He felt its feet and shins strike against his ribs, and he bounded up and away while the thing itself hurled onward in a heavy crashing fall into the underbrush.

As the noise of the fall ceased, the man stopped and on hands and knees waited. He could hear the thing moving about, searching for him, and he was afraid to advertise his location by attempting further flight. He knew that inevitably he would crackle the underbrush and be pursued. Once he drew out his revolver, then changed his mind. He had recovered his composure and hoped to get away without noise. Several times he heard the thing beating up the thickets for him, and there were

moments when it, too, remained still and listened. This gave an idea to the man. One of his hands was resting on a chunk of dead wood. Carefully, first feeling about him in the darkness to know that the full swing of his arm was clear, he raised the chunk of wood and threw it. It was not a large piece, and it went far, landing noisily in a bush. He heard the thing bound into the bush, and at the same time himself crawled steadily away. And on hands and knees, slowly and cautiously, he crawled on, till his knees were wet on the soggy mold. When he listened he heard naught but the moaning wind and the drip-drip of the fog from the branches. Never abating his caution, he stood erect and went on to the stone wall, over which he climbed and dropped down to the road outside.

Feeling his way in a clump of bushes, he drew out a bicycle and prepared to mount. He was in the act of driving the gear around with his foot for the purpose of getting the opposite pedal in position, when he heard the thud of a heavy body that landed lightly and evidently on its feet. He did not wait for more, but ran, with hands on the handles of his bicycle, until he was able to vault astride the saddle, catch the pedals, and start a spurt. Behind he could hear the quick thud-thud of feet on the dust of the road, but he drew away from it and lost it. Unfortunately, he had started away from the direction of town and was heading higher up into the hills. He knew that on this particular road there were no cross roads. The only way back was past that terror, and he could not steel himself to face it. At the end of half an hour,

finding himself on an ever increasing grade, he dismounted. For still greater safety, leaving the wheel by the roadside, he climbed through a fence into what he decided was a hillside pasture, spread a newspaper on the ground, and sat down.

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