

**THE SOFT BLACK EYES**



**W**HAT a trivial thing will color the whole of a man's life! How small an incident, compared to the large future he has mapped out for himself, may make or mar it! I learned all this, and more, one sultry May day in Mexico, five years ago.

I had been sent to Mexico, as chief of a surveying corps, to establish the boundaries of the Santa Antia grant, which lay along the Rio Clara just outside the city of Chihuahua. It was a responsible position for a young man and I held my head high.

It was the day of La Fiesta de Guadalupe. The saint himself had been dead, I understood, several hundred years, but in Mexico that doesn't make any difference; the longer folks are dead there, the more they seem to be thought of, and the bigger a birthday party they have. Almost every other week contains the "feast day" of some dead saint or saintess, and trade and commerce are suspended to do the occasion justice. The natives of Mexico are the most perennially pious people on earth. Why, I have known them—men in my employ—to be so enthused over the posthumous birthday of some long-dead saint that they would get up in the gray dawn to go about celebrating it. This morning—the morning of Guadalupe's feast day—the whole force of peons under me had struck. No Chinamen, no flagmen, no axmen, were left me. Only Sims and Bailey, my two American assistants, stayed behind. When I began abusing them for the customs of Mexico, they said while they did not care even remotely for the saint to whom it was dedicated, still they were glad it was a holiday, and they thought they would go up-stream and fish awhile. They were only indifferent laymen, without any religious feeling.

When I was left alone in camp, I

maturer wisdom, I can see that I should have declined that job on the grounds that it was un-aesthetic. But I didn't. On the contrary, I accepted it effusively. There was a touch of romance about it that appealed to me—the day itself began to appeal to me for the first time. I began to feel something of the enthusiasm for feast days that had taken my men out before day-break. I would not be so hard on them again, I thought. Truly it was a very pretty custom, and I began to sympathize with it and to understand it better. If San Guadalupe had not been so long interred, in the gladness of my heart I would have sent him a bouquet. All this I tried to confide to Lucia. It touched her; it sounded, she said, like stories she had read in the convent.

Her name was a poem in itself, Lucia Eulalia Garcia y Valdez. And mine? After that poem it seemed common to say that I was plain "Jack Biggs." But she anticipated me; she pointed to one of my business cards that had escaped my vest pocket when I threw it on the sand. "Meester Beegs, que no?" she lisped, and it did not sound at all badly from her lips.

It was pleasant to know that she did not dislike my name; this was one way of saying, as everybody knows, that its owner was not disagreeable to her.

As we talked, we washed; and long before noon the gentlemen's shirts were all floating in the breeze from the low chaparral along the river bank.

Lucia Eulalia glanced gratefully and alternately at the snowy linen and at me. My natural thoughtfulness led me to suggest that we might as well do the family washing while we were about it. Her brother, Antonio, the sheepherder, whom she had mentioned with sisterly affection—did not his things have need of water? "There was no time like the present," I said; "it might set in to-morrow and rain for months—who knows?"

Lucia Eulalia looked at the contracting blue of the skies, and laughed at my weather prophecies, but she ran to her adobe dwelling a few rods away and brought from it a bundle of Antonio's "things." They had apparently been waiting for me for years. His

"all," like the wronged hero in the last act. I would say, vehemently: "This is not me regular-business-I'm-a-civil-engineer-at-two-fifty-a-month-I'm-only-doing-this-for-fun," etc. But while I was doing this—how often are our best intentions thwarted thus!—Maxwell coughed. It was not a consumptive cough. It was just a little grating sound that contained more painful surprise, and pity, and regret than a volume of Browning could. That froze me as I stood—or sat. Fixedly I gazed at the Sierra Madres over his head, as if trying to fathom the "lost" mines hidden there.

Maxwell's watch ticked in the painful silence.

"Alice," he said, sternly, "we must not miss that train."

Out of my life they went, with the clothes I had washed for them, as suddenly as they came in. I strained my ears to hear them say "Poor fellow! To come to that—rather bright at college, but this country seems to rob a fellow of ambition!" Maxwell, I knew, was never a secretive man; they are going east, and well—

Lucia Eulalia gathered up the extra coins he had thrown for me, and said, softly: "Have you said, señor?"

"Yes," I said, "I have sadness, also sickness; I would go back to camp at once."

As I drew on my spattered coat and vest over tired arms, I said, most earnestly: "Lucia Eulalia Garcia y Valdez, I shall never forget this day of the fiesta of San Guadalupe."

Nor have I.

**DELICIOUS REED BIRDS.**

Only Philadelphia Knows How to Cook and Eat Them.

Philadelphia is the only city in the world where the reed bird can be found in a state of overrunning obesity, and the only place where it can be cooked to perfection. In New York the French cooks conceal its delicate toothsome-ness in rich dressing. There they know as little about reed birds as they do about terrapin, scrapple and pepperpot. Recently there was given in this city a dinner in which reed birds were served in thirteen different forms. Among the courses were soup made from reed birds, birds stuffed with blue-point oysters, reed birds placed inside a hollow potato and roasted, reed birds stuffed with herb filling and baked, reed birds stewed with fresh mushrooms, reed birds split and broiled—an abominable practice, by the way—reed birds saute and a seeming pie, from which, when the crust was lifted, two dozen reed birds flew forth and around the room. But, after all, there is only one way to cook and eat the succulent reedies—saute! Select birds which have little clumps of yellow fat on both sides of the part last over the fence. Place them in a saucen—or, better still, a chaffing dish—with plenty of the best butter, salt, black pepper and plentiful sprinkling of paprika—the sweet ungarian pepper which nowadays can be found in any first-class grocery. They must not be split and their heads must not be removed. Cook them for five to six minutes, according to the size of the bird and the heat of the fire, but do not allow the yellow fat to become browned. Nothing could be simpler, and yet, very few cooks can prepare a reed bird without destroying its toothsome-ness. There is an art also in the eating of his daintiness, but it can only be applied to birds of the character and prepared in the manner described above. Wring off the head and sink your teeth into and absorb the brains. Then hold the little darling aloft by the protruding bones of both legs, and slipping him into a watering mouth, crunch your way through his carcass until not a bit of him remains but the leg bones. Then cast your eyes above and say graciously: "That's eating reed birds, that is."

**RAM'S HORNS.**

Fauntless people have few friends. The bearer of good news always has a sweet voice. One of the best helps toward heaven is a good mother. Wherever God's will is law, nothing but purity can exist. Many a supposed giant has turned ing, but God never has. Everything good lost in this world will be found in heaven. Love never has to be watched to see that it does honest work. Let flowers bloom all the year round, and the bees will quit work. When our hearts refuse to pray as Christ teaches, he is no longer our Lord. Do right yourself, and you will help some other man to behave himself. The poorest people in the world are those who try to keep all they get. The devil fears no man's profession when it is higher than his practice. Make home like heaven, and you will make the children want to go there. Every trial God permits us to have, is to teach us something new about Christ. The man whose heart is set on things perishable, loses all when they perish. As soon as we begin to have peace with God, we begin to have war with self. Prove that there is no devil, and every man in the world will be your friend. As long as love has a drop of blood left, it has something it is willing to give up. The better a man is pleased with himself, the better the devil is pleased with him. The devil will get a hard blow in the face, on the day women is given the ballot. If some people would think twice before they speak, they would keep still most of the time. There would be more revivals, if more of the preaching were done to the sinners in the church.—Ram's Horns.

**FARM AND GARDEN.**

**MATTERS OF INTEREST TO AGRICULTURISTS.**

Some Up-to-Date Hints About Cultivation of the Soil and Yields Thereof—Horticulture, Viticulture and Floriculture.



The illustration on this page is of Echimium vulgare, commonly known as Blue-weed, Blue-Thistle, or Bugloss. Bugloss is formed from two Greek words equivalent to bous (ox) and glossa (tongue) which combines into bugloss (ox-tongue). This plant is a member of the borage family, known botanically as Boraginaceae (hairyleaved). Gray describes this family as "a rather large family of innocent mucilaginous, and slightly bitter plants; the root of some species yielding a red dye."

Echimium is from echis (Greek for viper) and is distinguished in the family by having the corolla funnel-form, unequally 5-lobed, and with stamens protruding. The stem is from two to three feet high, rough, hairy and leafy. The leaves vary from lanceolate to linear, the lower ones 5 to 8 inches long, becoming shorter above, the uppermost bract-like and shorter than the flowering racemes. Like the stem they are roughened with stiff whitish hairs, which have a stringy quality. The upper part of the stem, sometimes for more than half its length, bears numerous short, axillary spikes or racemes of flowers. These racemes are one to two inches long, and are coiled backward in bud, but straighten out as they expand. The flowers are rather crowd-

The development of the branches seems to keep pace with the development of the roots in the soil. Where the soil is rich and soft the roots force their way easily, and the growth of the tree above the ground is smooth and rapid. The limbs are long between joints and everything bespeaks a luxuriant existence.

The Magwey. The cactus family are remarkable for their power of withstanding drought, growing as they do in a climate that is for a great part of the year almost destitute of water, and being found as they are on arid soils and bare rocks some of them are, notwithstanding all this, represented as containing a store of wholesome juice of which both men and cattle avail themselves. But perhaps the most remarkable of all is a plant not properly a cactus, but in some respects similar, called the Agave or American Aloe; and another species, the Mexican variety, or Magwey plant, being the same as cultivated in our conservatories under the name of Century plant. The Mexican variety grows to an enormous size, and is cultivated in that country as a hedge plant. The fibres of the leaves are under the name of Magwey used for the manufacture of thread, twine, ropes, etc., but its principal value is for the juice, which yields sugar, and which, when diluted with water and subjected to four or five days' fermentation, becomes an agreeable but intoxicating drink called Pulque, which is the national beverage of the Mexicans. This liquor is obtained by cutting or scooping out a basin in the very heart of the plant, into which a juice called honey-water flows at the rate of from four to eight quarts a day, according to the size of the plant, and continues to flow, according to our account, for a period of three months whether the weather be wet or dry. Humboldt describes it as flowing for a year to a year and a half, but let which will be the correct account there is something not easily explained in the

**Meaning of Some Feminine Names.**

Mary signifies "exalted;" Martha signifies "bitterness." Anne, Anna, Hannah and probably Nancy are from the same source, and signify "kind," or "gracious." Ellen, originally Helen, the Latin being Helena and the French Helene—the meaning being, according to some, "alluring," and, according to others, "one who pities." Jane signifies the same as Sarah, "a princess and the morning star." Susan, "a lily;" Rebecca, "plump;" Lucy, "brightness of aspect;" Louisa or Louise, "one who protects;" Frances or Fanny, "frank or free;" Catharine, "pure or chaste;" Caroline and Charlotte, "queens;" Sophia, "wisdom;" Emma, "tender;" Margaret, "a pearl or a daisy;" Elizabeth and Eliza, "true;" Julia, Juliette and Julietta, "soft-haired;" Agnes, "chaste;" Amelia and Amy, "beloved;" Clara, "clear or bright;" Eleanor, "all faithful;" Gertrude, "all truth;" Grace, "favor;" Laura, "a laurel;" Matilda, "a noble or brave maid;" Phoebe, "light of life;" Amanda, "amiable;" Isabel, "true and loving;" Pauline, "little one;" Olive, "peace;" Edith, "happy."

**The Combination Wouldn't Work.**

Willie Garvin was always a good fellow, and in due course of time he got married, as a good fellow should. He acquired his growth long ago; not so with his family. Whenever he makes his census returns he changes the figures. Up to a year ago he had accumulated "one little, two little, three little Garvins"—three beautiful, blooming sons. Each time, without exception, it was a boy.

Being a school teacher and not wishing to get rusty in his addition, multiplication, etc., he occasionally adds one to the list. The last addition came recently. A friend at once telegraphed: "Call him Lazarus on Scriptural authority; the Lord said, 'Lazarus, come forth!'"

The answer went back: "Suggestion good, but combination won't work. The fourth boy is a girl."

**Atlanta and the South.**

The Chicago and Eastern Illinois R. R. will during the time of the Exposition at Atlanta, Sept. 18, to Dec. 31, 1895, offer exceptionally fine service between Chicago and the South. A low rate ticket will be sold, and through cars run to all southern points. This is 55 miles the shortest route to Atlanta, Chattanooga and the South.

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**Her Decision.**

"Could I only read the future." She nervously played with the fragile fan, while the color alternately deepened and faded upon her cheek.

"The future."

For an instant her eyes met the eyes of the man who stood waiting for her to speak.

"I have decided," she said, and it seemed that a great peace had taken possession of her soul. "Make it chocolate with lots of cream."

Then she laughed lightly as one who had never known a care.



ECHIMUM VULGARE (BLUE THISTLE).

ed, and consist of a five-lobed or cleft calyx, and a somewhat bell-shaped corolla about an inch long, which is purplish at first, but changing to a light blue. When in full flower the plant has a handsome appearance. The nutlets, of which there are about four in each flower, are small, roundish and rough, with a peculiar appearance, which has been likened to a viper's head.

This plant is a native of Europe and Asia, but has become extensively naturalized along roadsides, in waste grounds and fields, principally in the middle Atlantic States.

**Trees, Exponents of Soils.**

Soils may be indicated quite accurately by the trees that grow naturally upon them, since the native growth is the one that has appeared there after centuries of contest for the "survival of the fittest." Other trees would grow there if planted, tended and protected, but the native tree is the proprietor by natural selection.

The common beach flourishes on a soil fairly moist and naturally clayey. Pines and chestnuts choose a lighter and often a sandy soil. Oak, hickory and poplar choose naturally a soil that, when cleared, is very appropriate for wheat. Soils that produce beach and maple will also produce corn, potatoes and barley. White oak chooses a moderately rich soil. Post oak grows well on a soil that is dry and gravelly. When it is found also Spanish oak, black oak, scarlet oak, and dogwood.

Black walnut requires rich fairly dry soil, such soil as will produce also honey locust, red mulberry, shellbark hickory, black sugar maple, hackberry and red elm.

White maple seems to thrive best on the banks of streams, where pure waters flow over beds of gravel.

There seems to be a sure index of the character of soil in the manner of the growth of trees. It will be noticed that on a hard clay soil the trees are of slow growth, irregular and extremely uneven in branches. Each year's growth is very small. Frequently even the leaves are dwarfed. Yet in time trees on such soil attain an extensive development. We instance the scrub oak.

fact of a plant on arid soil, or on bare rocks in a dry climate, producing from four to eight quarts of juice per day. If this be as stated, it appears to me that teetotalers may preach up temperance and the people may sign pledges if they choose, but when liquor can be extracted from every hedge plant in such liberal quantities I should suppose there would be considerable difficulty in carrying out effectually any law prohibiting the use, or the abuse, or the manufacture of liquor.—A. Hood.

**Exhaustive Pollen Production.**

I am glad to note that we are beginning to look at things in a different way. We must look upon plant life as living animals, conscious of all surroundings, and appreciative of generous care; male and female brought into existence by the same immutable law that brings the mammal into life; that the exhaustive effort of procreation in the male animal when left to unbridled excess, produces the same disastrous effect upon the male plant and brings on the same degree of impotency. What grower has meditated and thought for a moment when his orchard was unfolding that magnificent but excessive bloom in the spring, every twig and limb loaded with beautiful flowers shedding the golden dust from the anthers which surround the pistils, that the whole life of the tree was being sapped and undermined, and when in the years following, he found his orchard dwarfed and its fruit a mass of undeveloped hulks and culms? In the animal he would have well understood the cause that made the offspring of even a thoroughbred a scrub; but when seeking the cause of decline in his orchard, he spends his time in depreciating the unfavorable seasons, the drouths, frosts and storms, forgetting that under proper restriction the vigor of the tree and potency of its pollen, and healthfulness of its pistils would be equal to these emergencies.—R. M. Kellogg.

**Yachtwomen.**—Over one thousand sailboats and yachts are owned and sailed by young women on the coast of Maine and Massachusetts. They vary as much as men in their management, some being slow and cautious and others swift and reckless.



AS WE TALKED WE WASHED.

spent a short time on my field-notes, when it came over me that I was wasting the day. Just outside the chaparral the river was laughing and murmuring in the open. It seemed to ask me to walk beside it. The adobe huts along its bank were tenacious; their inmates had gone to the feast.

But, strange sight, there at the end of the river where the waters were the merriest, was a solitary worker, and whatever it was she was doing, she was doing it with a vim. A dark-eyed, dark-haired, dark-shawled daughter of Spain she seemed to be, and yet she was working—and working hard—on a "feast day!" A fit of curiosity seized me to know what she was doing, and why she was doing it. I approached her with the question on my lips; at what did she work, and for what? (I spell it as I said it.) Softly she raised a pair of melting orbs, and sweetly and eloquently she answered me. From her reply, in the most musical language in the world, I gathered that she would be at the feast, but that she must change the soiled linen that lay around her on the sand, for the owner of it, a gentleman who was staying at the United States hotel, wanted it by noon, and to-morrow would not do (she said this plaintively). If it were not done by noon, she finished most pathetically, she would get no dinner, and that she needed in the superlative degree. Diner! Ah, the most potent thing in Mexico to saints' days is money!

At her red lips told me this, her great black eyes wandered from the soiled clothes at her feet to the spires of the cathedral in the distance and the waving foliage of the plaza where the feasting and merry making were going on. There was a look of sadness and longing in them as she gazed. Being a kinder-hearted man, I asked her if there was aught I could do for her. In a wonderful mixture of Anglo-Spanish, which I invented while in Mexico, and which no one could ever master but myself, I assured her I was at her service if she so desired, and asked how I could assist her.

The black eyes flashed gratitude, and she said, in silvery sweet tones: "I would sit on a rock beside the river, and the saints of the saints would talk with a very small voice."

wardrobe ranged from dingier overalls. As I warmed up to the ambitious task of cleansing them, under Lucia Eulalia's approving smiles, all nature seemed to smile; the sun shone warm and warmer; the river ran blue and blue—for Lucia had "blued" it. She had also "allowed" the roof of a whole soap-tree to Antonio's garments. She was right in doing this, but, somehow, in my struggle with the sheep-herding stains of six months, I had distributed a good deal of lather over my person. When this unaccustomed fatigue began to show on me, Lucia Eulalia asked softly if I had tire.

"Oh! no!" I was declaring, "I have no tire," when some approaching American voices were heard. Lucia clapped her hands tragically, and, running to the chaparral, began hastily to gather the linen therefrom. I caught from her manner that the owner of the shirts had tired of waiting and was coming for them. I had divined aright, but I had not divined far enough. As they emerged from the alameda to the west of the river, I could see they were a lady and gentleman. I had almost managed a look of industry and innocence, as they approached us, and raised my eyes to impress them with it, when—gracious saints! Guadalupe and great Jehosaphat! Was that Maxwell! The man I had robbed of the valedictory in '87 at Ann Arbor? True, I had no grudge against him on that account, but my dream of meeting him again and "making it right" had not been like this. Maxwell it was, with his stylish bride. He threw me a careless glance at first; then I began to dawn on him, slowly but surely. He quizzed Lucia in miserable Spanish, in a cowardly way, I thought.

"Quien es?" he said, indicating me. Smilingly, as if pleased to so honor me, Lucia presented me to Maxwell and his wife as "Mi amigo, Senor Beegs." I could feel that the blushing, and the soap root, and the river water were all mingling in one grand river of perspiration toward the collar of my negligence shirt. I could feel that all the constellations in the heavens and all the mundane landscapes around me were waltzing giddily together. An intense longing for home and mother came over me that mere words cannot depict. For one wild moment I thought I would rush into my old drum's arms and tell him

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