IN RELIGION'S REALM.

Expressions From the Various Religious Newspapers.

The Religious Thought of the Day as Expressed in the Sectarian Press —Matters of Interest.

The New York *Churchman* (P. E.) notes a growing spirit of religiousness in the people. It says: "That there has been a gradual but strong development during the last decade is clear from the demands upon the secular as well as religious press. The editors of one of the foremost daily papers say that they must now have three or four editorials a week on religious topics. Ten years ago a religious editorial could rarely be found in the columns of the secular press. The denominational movements and the position and proceedings of the church on questions of social life are minutely reported. The individual sentiments of church leaders and workers are diligently sought for. Sermons or synopses of religious addresses occupy several columns in both daily and weekly papers. These are usually on themes pertaining to the practical religious life. If there are divisions, or progressions, or persecutions, or conflicts on creed, or dogma, or discipline, the secular press gives its opinion as the expression of popular judgment. All church and religious movements and measures have now a friendly criticism. Even the Sunday paper furnishes its editorial sermon. All this comes of the demand among all classes of people to know what is going on in the religious world. They have a vital interest in the spread of Christian truth. The public sincerely desires that the church shall commend herself in her mission for the world to the common sense."

The Chicago *Interior* (Pres.), in reverting to the Briggs case, deprecates the attacks that have been made in the Presbyterian press upon the position of the New York Synod, and asks whether their course is "not giving countenance to the agnostic clamor that the foundations of Christian doctrine have been broken down in a large and influential section of the church. If it were true," it continues, "it would be a tremendous and far-reaching disaster. But there is absolutely no evidence of it whatever. As we have shown, the presbytery of New York decided an issue of fact, not an issue of doctrine. If the presbytery had found that any such attack was being made, it would have promptly silenced the man who was doing it from teaching or preaching as a Presbyterian minister. And so would the synod of New York, and so would any presbytery, synod or assembly in the whole church. There is no breach in the walls of Zion. We have no infidel presbyteries, or synods, or sessions. The confessional doctrine of the holy scriptures will be maintained in every session, presbytery, synod and assembly in the Presbyterian Church. We must expect the clamor of the agnostic daily press, but we should be careful not to allow ourselves to be misunderstood as sanctioning it."

"Considering the influences that are predominant in the Presbytery of New York it is not at all strange that its Committee on Revision had no desire to reinforce the conservative sentiment in the revision work," says the New York *Observer* (Pres.). "It has thrown its weight into the scale of a revision radical enough to rid the confession of preterition and to nullify its teaching in regard to the nature of effectual calling. It has done this in accordance with convictions that are not in harmony with the confession as it is, and that are believed to be in the interest of greater evangelical power and wider blessing. This action requires no explanation under the circumstances. It does, however, require some explanation to account for the fact that the majority of the Presbytery accomplished this work of 'theological evolution' almost without effort or opposition. It is true that a few voices were heard in defense of the character and truthfulness of confessional statements, but they were extremely brief and chiefly general, and were put forth for conscience's sake, not with any hope that they would influence the decision. Many were absent whose opinions on any religious question would be heard with interest and received with warm consideration. This apathy on the part of the more conservative portion of the Presbytery was the result of their conviction that the report of the committee was acceptable to the majority, and that the discussion of topics that had been controverted in every possible light for several centuries, was at this crisis entirely useless. * * * It may be depressing to some to see what appears to be a falling away from the old and tried foundations. But how much better is this than open or secret hostility to the ideas and sentiments which are characteristic of the faith that is professed! No church can tolerate this kind of infidelity without losing its power to elevate, spiritually or morally, the world by which it is surrounded."

The Chicago *Interior* (Pres.) suggests the publication of a "Rainbow Bible," in which different passages should be printed in different colors, to show their authorship and the critical authority determining it. There will be difficulties, it admits, in the way of the editors. "For instance, Kuenen has some claims to be considered a critic; but if Kuenen's views of the Bible are to be accepted, we might dispense with the Bible itself. Professor Green has some claims to be considered a Hebraist; but if his view be accepted, we may dispense with the revision. How can we arrive at any 'consensus' of men diametrically opposed? Wellhausen cannot be ignored, nor Robertson Smith, nor Professor Harper; and yet not one of these would consent to be represented by the other's views. We see no way out of it but for the editors to give each critic a dash with the brush and let the resultant color, whatever it prove to be, stand for the aggregate judgment of the learned upon the make-up of the book, chapter or verse. The result, it is to be supposed, would be curious. It might make each page look like a rain-chart in a census report. For variety of hue and combination of tint a Brazilian parrot would be nothing beside it, and a crazy-quilt, in comparison, fit for a Quaker shawl. Now that we think of it, it seems strange that the idea has never been worked out before. Rival publishers can issue rival editions of the Rainbow Bible, toned up or softened down to suit the times. Churches can choose between editions that are of orthodox hue or 'off color.' What an infinite variety of high, low, or broad-churchism can be represented by giving to a passage a shade more or less of authority from Moses or St. Paul. As every line of the Bible has been subject to some critical objection, a man might by diligent search find a Bible to suit his (spiritual) complexion, and before using it in the family could make sure that the story of the rich man in torment, while not rejected, was not printed in colors too vivid."

"Our good Presbyterian brethren need not be disturbed," says the New York *Examiner* (Bapt.) "by the sudden outbreak of violent admiration for Calvin and his teachings in the daily press. They need not fear to adopt changes that seem necessary to bring the Westminster Confession into harmony with itself, with the Scriptures and with the actual present beliefs of Presbyterians, because the daily press calls such changes stultifying, a surrender of the old faith, a proof of rapid disintegration in the church. These are only devices by which hatred of the church and its doctrine is ill-concealed. The adversaries of the church and of Christian truth believe that the Westminster Confession is extremely vulnerable to their attacks, as, no doubt, in parts it is. They know that a careful revision would free it from reasonable criticism, except by such as avowedly and frankly reject its teachings. Consequently they wish it kept as it is, in a form to be easily attacked, in a form that creates unnecessary prejudice against its contents. This explains their sudden and violent love of the old orthodoxy, their fear lest the ark of God may suffer from the presumptuous touch of unauthorized hands."

The New York *Christian Advocate* (Meth.) makes the following remarks: "One of the most distinguished preachers of the Protestant Episcopal Church in this city is preaching a series of sermons to his congregation on the Bible. He is spending a great deal of time and study to make out that the Bible is not an infallible book. His object is to present the solid results of critical Biblical scholarship. He affirms that David wrote but few Psalms; that Solomon's Song was not first sung by Solomon; that the Book of Esther contains no religious sentiment; that the Book of Daniel is not a book of prophecy, but of tradition; that it was not written in Babylon, but in Palestine; that there was a greater and lesser Isaiah, and much more of similar purport. These are the solid results of critical scholarship. How very dogmatic certain thinkers become when they set themselves to overthrow cherished opinions. They state their views with as much assurance as though they were divinely revealed truths. Although other scholars of equal ability differ with them, they make no account of this. They give out their notions as oracular responses. All these opinions concerning the Bible are old, yet they are handed out as if they were fresh discoveries of critical research. The scholarly rector who proposes to entertain and refresh his hearers with the solid results of recent critical study is not infallible. These great men are all liable to err. Some of us can more easily believe in the inerrancy of the Bible than in the inerrancy of its critics. This wind will change by and by and blow from another quarter. It has ever been thus, and ever will be."

The *Congregationalist* of Boston is uneasy over the condition of the church in that city. It says: "Something over a year ago a movement started in Boston for the purpose of promoting the growth of Congregational churches in and about the city. It went so far as the calling of a meeting to organize a Church Extension Committee. A year has passed, and any report from that committee would be of public interest, if, indeed, it ever organized itself so far as to consider the subject and make a record. The need of some organization to represent the churches and to lead them in united and aggressive work constantly grows more apparent. Important churches within the city have long been pastorless, while others are declining in numbers and strength. Meanwhile new and rapidly-growing communities are being formed in the suburbs, some of which, if surveyed by a competent committee, might wisely be selected for the planting of new churches. Others recently organized need the aid and encouragement of sister organizations. Is it not time to hear from the committee to which we have referred, or to start a new movement which will accomplish something?"

With regard to the suggested union of the Universalists and Unitarians the Chicago *Universalist* observes: "Universalists of this generation did not need the extended debate in the Worcester Convention to teach the lesson of fraternity and good-fellowship towards the Unitarians. Here in the West, certainly, we are well removed from the animosities and prejudices that prevented fraternal concord between the Unitarians and Universalists in New England half a century ago. But here and everywhere in distinctive Universalist circles, the fact is recognized that the two denominations are separated by dividing lines, which, while they exist, will demand that each body keep on its own parallel. While Universalism stands for what it signifies today and Unitarianism also occupies its present well-known position, the only kind of 'union' possible is that which is based on mutual good-will and fraternity of spirit; and this, so far as Universalists are concerned, embraces the Unitarians 'and all other Christian churches.'"

On the question of the Jewish Sabbath the *Jewish Voice* of St. Louis says: "We are pleading for the traditional Sabbath-day of Israel. Fervently, devoutedly, we cling to the principle which establishes the *Seventh Day* as *the* Sabbath which is a sign of the covenant between God and Israel, and through Israel to humanity. To us, giving up that *day* means giving up that principle, breaking the covenant of which it is the seal. We are pledged to this Sabbath by the blood of our fathers, by the history of their martyrdom, by the hopes kindled in us by the fiery tongues of the divine messengers of old; this thrice sacred pledge is one of the forces driving us on irresistibly to fight for the maintenance of the Sabbath against foes within our own ranks and outside of the same."

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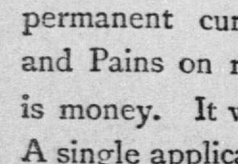

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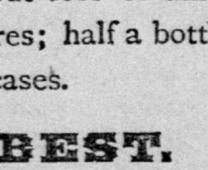

IT IS THE BEST.

GRIZZLY DAN.

A short, slim, wiry, silent, strange man was Dan—a man who seemed out of place in Salt Flat, or, for the matter of that, out of place in any Western mining camp at all. He could shoot, lie or drink with any man in the camp; but his ways were not their ways. He never forced a quarrel or cheated his friends—at least not openly—and he was never known to be drunk. Lastly, he went about, not only in his own hat and coat—it was the custom in Salt Flat for these articles to change hands, whether at a bargain or otherwise, pretty often—but by his own name. This was looked upon by the rest of us almost as an insult. There was hardly a man among us there who hadn't some very good reason to keep his real name as much as possible in the background. Joe Carr, the bartender—whose real name was Joe Palmer—was universally accounted one of our foremost citizens, and an excellent fellow—as we went—but his best friends would have fought shy indeed of addressing him as Palmer. I had heard him called many names, some of which would have given ground for libel actions in England ten times over; nay, I have myself called him thief—with a prefix—and he did not seem much hurt; but never that. So it was a sore point with us all that Grizzly Dan should thus insinuate a superiority that none of us would allow.

"He mought ha' tacked on another name," said Frank Menner, our butcher, "from back East," as he was careful to inform us on every possible occasion, "when he come here, if it was only to be sociable. You say old Jim at the saw-mill knew his father down in Missouri, and his name was Hunter there, too. Wal, maybe so, maybe so," he added reflectively, "but he arn't the only good man among us, not even the best by a long way; likely he find so some day. We didn't go much on 'sass' back East, and there was generally some one put the kibosh on it before long."

I think, though, Menner must have been the only one of us that actually bore Dan enmity. The quiet and soberness of the man angered us at times—when we fell more than usually below his level—as much as this very "nominal" matter ever did; but we most of us liked him individually. He was always welcome, and always ready, too, to play in a table of euchre or "all fours," though he seldom played high and always on the square, and if it had not been for public opinion he would have had more than one opportunity of going partners with men who worked the more paying claims higher up the gulch. As it was, he seemed well enough content. He worked his one claim alone, and, though it paid little or nothing, he never borrowed or ran up bills.

He had not been among us long before there came to Salt Flat a party—husband, wife and child—from Michigan. They came well "heeled," with cattle and horses, and settled in Salt Flat to rest before crossing the range into California. Mr. Bollen, as we all called him from the first, on account of his—to us—aristocratic looks and ways, and his thousand dollars in cattle and horses, was hail-fellow-well-met at once, and Salt Flat seemed almost self-sacrificing in helping him with his herding and getting his family fixed. There was no room for wonder. To us miners, working and living together, with little female companionship, the advent of Jenny Bollen was an event that sent most of us into a very pleasurable state of excitement. It acted upon us in different ways.

It was early winter, and the night after Mr. Bollen's arrival the one saloon of Salt Flat contained the entire population of the camp. Mr. Bollen's two cowboys were there, too, and so many times were they called upon to drink, and so many questions were they asked, that, at 2 o'clock, thinking discretion the better part of valor, they apologized for having to leave so early, and retired unsteadily to the wagon. Bill and Harry Welch, after arguing for nearly an hour over the color of Jenny's hair, came to blows, and were forcibly ejected by the rest of us, and stuck head downwards in the snow. We sat late that night, or rather morning, discussing Jenny's virtues. After mature, though rather vehement deliberation, the following resolutions were unanimously carried:

"That her eyes were like rock crystal; that her hair was better nor Mrs. Snaggles—the wife of our uncertificated doctor; that she was between sixteen and twenty-four"—on this delicate question scarcely two of us agreed; "that her face was a 'pictur'."

But Mrs. Snaggles or no Mrs. Snaggles—who, after all, could only provoke comparison in the unimportant item of hair—Jenny Bollen was undoubtedly a very pretty girl, and there were two men in the camp, at least, who had already fallen—after their fashion—very much in love with her. These were Frank Menner and Grizzly Dan. Frank "made the running" from the first, and though Jenny laughed at them both, it was clear that she liked Frank the better of the two. There was little time, however, even for such scant courtship as men in Salt Flat thought necessary.

Mr. Bollen struck his tent, loaded his wagon, and passed on over the great Divide with his horses, his cattle, his wife and his daughter. Two or three of us took upon ourselves, as many other people have done before, to offer rough sympathy and gratuitous advice.

"Struck a snag, ain't you, Frank? But don't you cave, my boy; plenty more where she come from."

"Hello, Frank," said another, "sorry the gal made a fool of you; better luck next time. You see, gals think so much about the looks of a feller."

But he was soon silenced.

"I reckon you chaps," drawled Frank, "thinks as you know all about most things, and Jenny and me in particular. But you've let the dollar drop this time. You are right about looks, Josh; old Bollen wouldn't ha' gone off so quick on'y he saw your face, and was afeard the heifers might stampede. See here," and he threw us a little note.

I caught it, and looked at the address. It was marked, "Frank, Butcher, Salt Flat." He had evidently forgotten to tell her his surname. It was written on the merest scrap of paper. Cattle dealers don't carry around portfolios in the west of Colorado. But it was folded in what was to us a most remarkable manner—so remarkable that it took us some time to get the creases out and read its contents, while Frank leaned back against his signboard—F. Menner, Butcher, from the East—with all the careless nonchalance that a five-cent cigar and an easy attitude could lend to his appearance. After much difficulty we spelled out the following:

We shall be at Oretown to-morrow. There is a church there. JENNY.

We handed back the note without attempting to refold it.

"I guess you haven't read it yet yourself," said Josh, thinking of the difficulty we had experienced.

"Read it? Gals always fix letters so back East. I'm off to-morrer," said Frank, stuffing the little note into his pocket, as if it was only one among many that he had already received.

"Stage goes to-night," we suggested.

"Maybe; but, you see, I am going to marry now, and mustn't chuck my dollars away on feeding Nathan's horses this trip."

So, in another hour, the story had gone abroad that Frank was going to Oretown to bring back Miss Bollen as his wife, and needed money, and Salt Flat had made a very solid collection for him. It was nothing if not miscellaneous; some contributed their washings of gold ore for that day; some, in default of the "ready," gave a note of hand; others money; while among the various subscriptions were a pipe and a pair of snaps. But Frank was more than satisfied, and thanked us all heartily, and that evening he started for Oretown by the stage. All Salt Flat turned out to see him off, and just as the driver was gathering up his reins preparatory to giving the deafening crack of his long whip which was a signal to the half-broken broncoes to leap into a gallop for the start, Grizzly Dan stepped out of the crowd.

"Frank," he said, "I hain't got nothing to put in the bag to-day; but maybe I'll strike ile by when you gets back, and, if so, I'll get you a wedding present then."

"I want no wedding present from you, Dan Hunter; I shan't mind getting no welcome from you; and I guess you won't feel much to give away. When we have settled down a bit you can come and give my wife your congratulations."

Frank was standing up in the old wagon which did duty as a stage, his eyes glittering with hate, and his whole face working with jealousy even now; but he failed to raise even the least spark of anger in Dan's face.

Then the whip cracked, the horses sprang into motion, and the lumbering tage wa gon rolled out of sight.

Dan did not appear at Simpson's saloon for some days after this, and we were getting to wonder what he was doing, when, one evening, he walked into the "Salt Flat General Store," where I and some others were sitting at the stove, and said:

"Boys, I've struck it."

We jumped to our feet, and shook his hand cordially. Public feeling had had a reaction. Most of us thought, after that day when Frank went off on the stage, that Dan would have made Jenny the better husband, while all the camp was in a ferment over the discussion as to which was "the best man," for that Frank and Dan would fight some day—unless one or other should show the white feather—there was every livelihood. Bets and wagers were freely made, and Dan was made favorite—with pistols—at three to two. So that we were not sorry that he had got a slice of luck at last.

"'Taint much, boys," he went on; "but I wish it had come sooner. I reckon it's the end of the old lead Myers struck last fall down by the creek."

It was not many days after this that Frank and Mrs. Menner came back to the Flat. They had spent some time together at Oretown, and old Bollen had given Jenny twenty head of prime cattle to take back with her. For some time all went smoothly. Jenny was not demonstrative, but on the whole they were an affectionate couple; but toward the end of winter things began to tone down. Jenny was observed to fail in her spirits, and Dan, of course, noticed it. He seldom spoke to her, and when he did, it was only as any other of us. But she made it very clear that, next to her husband, she looked upon him as her best friend in Salt Flat. Frank Menner was consumed with jealousy. At last the first meeting took place. It occurred, of course, in the Salt Flat saloon. High words had passed from Frank to Dan, and Dan had quietly sipped the abominable mixture that was sold as whisky—finest old rye—and said nothing. At last Menner, emboldened by the other's silence, threatened him.

"And see here, Dan Hunter, if I catch you sneaking around my wife again I'll cut out your liver where you stand. You may do as you like about other fellows' wives, but you shall not hang after mine."

Dan dropped his glass to the floor, where it broke into twenty pieces. For a moment his hand sought the pistol at his side. Then he withdrew it quickly, while his face for once showed signs of a greater anger than he could command. With clenched fist he strode to where Frank was standing. The latter was not slow to seize his advantage. In an instant he had drawn his revolver and fired. At the same moment Dan struck him. There was a dull thud as a heavy body fell to the ground, and, as the smoke cleared, we saw that Frank lay stunned upon the sanded floor of the saloon, while Dan, his left arm hanging limp and shattered to his side, stood above him. Planting one foot heavily on his antagonist's body, he strode over him, and in total silence we saw him walk toward his claim by the river till the last house in Salt Flat's one street hid his retiring form.

CHAPTER II.

After the row at Simpson's saloon, there was a truce to open hostilities for some time. It was generally felt, and no doubt Frank knew it himself, too, that Dan could have killed him if he had wished. The lightning-like rapidity with which his hand, dropping his glass, had flown to his revolver, before Frank had had time to make a movement, was evidence enough of this. But there was another reason for the deceptive calm that fell over the camp. Western morality is lax, and its law, in many cases, entirely in the hands of Judge Lynch; but we were not disposed to allow any but fair fighting. Dan kept himself very much to himself. He never referred to the cause of his broken arm; and though he could not at present work his claim he had already taken out a very tolerable pile, and had no need to do so. Frank came down twice a week as usual to the store to see if any beef was wanted, but his reception was never a very hearty one.

"The boys hev been getting among the deer lately. We shan't want beef again till black-tail and elk play out."

So Frank thrust his hands a little deeper into his pockets, and went off whistling to his cabin by the creek. But sometimes, though he would deny it to himself furiously, the thought would strike him that he was not at home with his wife; that he had married too far above him. Neither in word nor deed could he find reason to reproach Jenny, however. She was not as affectionate as she might have been in her ways, perhaps; but he did not look for that. Indeed it would have bored him. But he felt that he was too rough for her, and even in his language he would sometimes forget that he was not in Simpson's saloon, and shock the poor girl's ears with some profanity. At such times he would remember how her father had fought against the match, had threatened never to speak to his daughter again, and how she, sacrificing much and braving all, had yet married him in her father's teeth. Then he would throw himself passionately on his knees by her side, strong man as he was, and in broken words beg and implore her to forgive him. The very vehemence of his repentance frightened the girl and made her even more afraid of him; and she would sit leaning back, with her hands clasped tightly over her heart, and looking with far away frightened eyes at him kneeling at her feet.

"Oh, yes, yes; but, Frank, don't say such things to me again."

And there was a deadlier danger yet; a worse than Damocles' sword hanging over his head, a demon that whispered mockingly in his ear: "All this is nothing; wait—wait till you have hurt her worse, and you will be powerless to seek the forgiveness that she could never give you."

Day after day he had passed the sign, "Simpson's Forty Rod Whisky," outside Salt Flat saloon, and tried to accustom himself to looking on the burning letters and the laughing crowd within, to hear the clink of the glasses and the rattle of the dice, and to think of them as things that had nothing to do with him. He had long ago finished the little keg of finest old rye in his cabin, taking it sip by sip when temptation became too strong for him; but the last few days' total abstemiousness had told upon even his powerful constitution, and this evening, as he was walking home, a sickness overcame him, and he staggered and fell heavily on the snow-covered ground.

There we found him, and carried him back to the saloon he had been so anxious to avoid, and forced brandy between his lips. It was a long time before the many doses administered had their effect and Frank opened his eyes at last.

His eyes stared blankly before him, so they gave him more brandy; and then, when at last he rose, with their help, to his feet, and wished to go, they would not hear of it till he had sat down and rested.

"Take a drink, old chap, and tell us about it," they insisted.

It was a long "rest" that Frank took that night in Simpson's saloon. Toward midnight he began to look less pale and ill. A bright color shone in his face and a fierce light in his eyes. He asked where Dan was.

"Ain't bin nigh the town but once since—you know," they told him.

Then, looking round at the familiar decorations (!) on the walls, and the old thumb-worn dice-boxes on the table before him, he said:

"Seems like old times, boys, to-night; like as if I had been dreaming the last month or two. Shake you drinks, Tom?"

The dice were brought, and the game, if such it could be called, went on for some time. Now they shook for money and Frank lost. But still he played higher. Then he lost his horse; then his wife's cattle.

"Come, Frank, you've had enough for to-night," said one well-meaning miner.

But a fierce oath was the only answer; and the one man who tried that night to save Frank Menner shrugged his shoulders and left the saloon.

"See here, fellers, any man 'ut 'll back his claim against mine—any man in'r room."

And again he lost. Still he did not go. He had seven or eight dollars in silver still. The bar stood by his elbow. He was thirsty.

When Frank returned home in the gray of the morning, it was leaning on the arms of two companions, to find the light burning still in one window there. Jenny was sitting up, watching, wondering. Frank saw it, and, for a moment, stood up without help, a shuddering horror seizing him. The other two cast significant looks at one another and slunk back the way they had come.

"He'll do now, he can stand alone all right," was the thought with which they strove to excuse their desertion.

It was never thoroughly known in Salt Flat what happened during the early hours of that fatal morning down at the cabin by the creek; but Bill Welch and Doc Snaggles, returning from a round through the woods before breakfast in search of game, heard several rifle-shots in quick succession down among the foothills, and, having had little luck themselves, took the trail leading in that direction, in hopes that they might get a shot at any deer being driven up. But none were to be seen. When they came out on to the level they saw a strange thing. A man, hatless, pale and reeling unsteadily, stood among the thick tuft grass at the edge of the foothills, gesticulating and flourishing a smoking rifle. Around him lay some five or six dead or dying cattle, and close by the side of the trail they had been following a young bull, the pride of all Bollen's herd of Shorthorns, lay, his shoulder broken by a shot, struggling painfully to rise, and filling the air with his piteous bellowings. Even as they stepped forward, another bullet, striking him in the back, ended his tortures, and the poor brute fell back dead. At this moment the man, turning round, saw them, and throwing his gun over his shoulder began rapidly ascending the hill. When he had nearly reached the top he turned, and shaking his clinched fist at them, poured out a torrent of abuse and profanity.

"Take your cursed cattle," he cried, "hoofs and hides are all you will get by me," and he recommenced climbing more furiously than ever, the thick patches of brush and cottonwood hiding him from sight.

"Come, mate," said Bill, shaking with suppressed anger, as much at the man's wanton cruelty as at his language to them—of which latter, indeed, so furiously and indistinctly had he spoken, little save the end had been intelligible—"we must fetch this news to camp. Let's make tracks sharp. Who do you reckon it was?"

"Frank Menner. I saw his face as he went over the hill. Bin on the tear, I reckon."

Bill whistled.

"Pshaw, what'll Jenny say, I wonner?"

"I calc'late she won't 'ave much more to say to that skunk. Did you hear what he gave us?"

"I heard plenty—enough for Bill. I reckon if that chap comes mooching around Salt Flat this side of Christmas there'll be two of us what'll have something to say to him—you bet your bottom dollar on that. Guess thar ain't no flies on you nor me."

So in a short time the little community were eagerly discussing this new act in the drama that was being played in their midst, while not a few went up to the foothills to see with their own eyes the dead cattle and the trail Frank had taken. Some of them, those who were best on a trail, followed him for a mile or more, and returned with the news that he had broken off into the dense pine-woods on the slopes of Hamlin's Peak, where further tracking was impossible. It was evident that he had taken to the woods to hide, there being no trail in that direction by which he could cross the range, and all that could be done now was to hurry back to the cabin by the creek, and see what awaited them there. There was a little crowd already assembled round the door, and Joe Carr held up his finger to the newcomers to enjoin silence.

"We sent Grizzly Dan in," he whispered; "he'll let us know if we're wanted."

Silently and quickly they took their places among the others and waited. Big, bearded men, wild, reckless, gambling natures—men who had most of them heavy sins on their consciences, and who acknowledged no sentiment, and perhaps had never before felt anxiety on any but their own account, stood there, troubled, anxious and pale, waiting for Grizzly Dan to come back and tell them the worst. Presently he appeared. His face was drawn and haggard, and he did not seem to look toward them.

"Doc" Snaggles stepped quickly forward, and when he reached the door he dropped his hat on the ground outside before crossing with noiseless steps the threshold of the little cabin. When he came back at last he answered at once the unspoken question of the crowd:

"No, not dead; she'll come round presently. If you chaps 'll hurry back to the Flat and get some brandy and tinned fruit, you'll maybe do more good than standing around here. But I'm afraid she's a rough time coming, poor gal. Dan 'll stay and help me all I want."

So the rest of us went back to the Flat, and sent down all the delicacies—such as they were—that our "general store" would yield. Indeed, if it had not been for some of the more reasonable among us, who suggested that Jenny had "a small appetite anyway," the little cabin would hardly have held the miscellaneous supplies we wished to contribute. Even so, there was not a man in camp whose sympathy was not represented in the offerings that Harry Welch took down to the sick girl, who, for all we knew, had suffered grievous injury at the hands of her fugitive husband. "Doc" Snaggles met him at the door, and signing to him to put down the hampers outside, led him round to where the window of the new room looked out on the half-frozen stream and the snow-burned hills beyond. On tiptoe they went forward and saw Jenny lying, very pale, her head resting on Dan's arm and talking rapidly. She was looking straight toward them, but seemed unconscious of their presence. The two men looked at each other.

"Yes, delirium. Come in; she won't know you. When's Mrs. Snaggles coming down?"

"She'll be here right away. Say, Doc, you don't think she'll die, do you?"

"If it was you or Bill, boy, I should say no; but she ain't no tough 'un like us. She's been bad, and she'll be a durned sight wus yet."

So they came in and began moving aimlessly about the little room, "fixing things," as Doc said. Jenny was quieter now. Dan sat, with his head buried in his hands, in the silence that was more than words. Now and again he would look toward the girl at his side to assure himself that this sudden stillness was really another interval of sleep, and not the death he so much dreaded. When he did so they could see how drawn and pinched with horror was his own face. Only Doc Snaggles knew what he must have suffered that last hour, sitting silently in the same place, listening to the girl for whom he would willingly have sacrificed his life, repainting unconsciously the miserable details of the past night. Only Doc could, even if he had wished, have told how Dan, when he first saw her body lying on the cold floor of the little parlor, had thrown himself wildly at her side, and, with a passionate emotion of which no man would have thought him capable, bathed her poor, heated forehead with his tears, and then, rising suddenly to his feet, had invoked heaven's awful curse upon the man who had done this thing.

CHAPTER III.

Mrs. Snaggles came soon after; and, while Doc went out to meet her, Jenny began to speak again. Dan bent over her to catch the words. Presently there came a pause. She did not seem to see him, looking straight through the window to where the old wagon trailed over the range to Oretown. But a softer look came into her face when she next spoke:

"Dan."

A wild thrill of joy swept through him in spite of all his misery. He bent his head a little lower, and, for a moment, his lips touched her face.

When the others came into the room again, they saw a new light in Dan's eyes, and when Doc told him that he would no longer be needed that day he grasped his hand and shook it.

"You will do your best, Doc, I know. Think as if it was your wife—your own wife that you'd die for—you are trying to save. Oh, she must get well—she must get well!"

Harry Welch walked with him as far as the ford, where their ways parted, and Dan spoke for the first time since they left the cabin:

"Tell the boys," he said, "to let Frank be. You see, he is her husband still, I suppose. Unless," he added significantly, "unless he comes back agen."

And we followed, if we did not understand, his wish. I think that since it was clear now that Frank had gone—"vamoosed," as we said—we all looked upon Dan as having a certain right in the matter; and certainly our sympathies, which were, after all, as ready as they were rough, were entirely with the man who had been so faithful to Jenny all through; who had been so far above Frank's jealousy and spitefulness, and was even now so generous to the man who had robbed him of his love, and whom he must in heart have hated with a deadly hatred. Indeed, his feelings in this matter, his anxiety that no violence or harm should be done to Frank, simply because he was Jenny's husband, were unintelligible to us; but we respected them, and the man also for them. Never a day passed but Dan was up at the house asking for news of Jenny; and the relief he showed in his anxious face when Mrs. Snaggles would tell him she wasn't no worse, anyway, enlisted that good woman's sympathies to such an extent that she would sometimes let him come to the door and look in for a few minutes before he went back to his claim.

The latter was showing up well, and Dan worked at it for more than the usual hours, and a great deal harder. Severe manual labor did him good, and this and the delicate handling necessary for washing out the gold saved him, perhaps, from breaking down under the anxiety that lay so heavily upon him. At night he would stroll up to the Flat and join in a game of eucher; but he made an inattentive player; and once Joe Carr, standing behind him, saw him quite unconsciously discard a left bower in exchange for a nine. After a little he would get up, a trifle lighter in pocket, nod to the boys, and go off to his cabin, generally to sleep the sleep of sheer exhaustion.

One day Doc Snaggles came riding into the Flat with news. Jenny had come more to herself and was out of danger.

"But there's something I don't rightly ketch on to," he said. "She knows me and my wife, but she don't seem right in her idees. She hain't said nothin' about that night—don't remember the first thing about it, I reckon—and she's always asking where Frank is, and why he don't come home. She says she saw him often while she had the fever, but don't call to mind what he said to her. Maybe she'd get a bit clearer if she saw Dan."

So Dan was sent for, and told that Doc wanted him down at the cabin. The Snaggles were both in the parlor when he got there, and Jenny was sitting up in a chair by the table, and, pillows being scarce in Salt Flat, was propped up with a curious selection of furs and blankets. She looked terribly pale and ill, but there was a vacant expression in her soft, brown eys—a something wanting, as it were—which spoke worse for the poor girl's mind. She did not wait for Dan to speak. As soon as he was well within the room, and she could see his face, she held out her hands to him with a glad little cry.

"Oh, Frank! Frank! you have come back at last. Why have you kept away from me? I have been so ill, and I saw you every day—"

"Jenny, it is not Frank—only Grizzly Dan."

But she did not heed him.

"You are going to stay now, aren't you, dear? And we'll be happy again, like we were before—before—something happened. What was it, Frank, that happened?"

"I can't Jenny, I can't. You mustn't talk like that. I will come and see you to-morrow, and—"

"Frank's got to go to Oretown, Jenny, after stores," Mrs. Snaggles hurriedly interposed, "and must catch the stage. He'll get back soon, and you'll be better then."

"Git away, you fool," she whispered to Dan, brushing quickly past him; "this'll bring back the fever."

So Dan stumbled out of the room, his eyes wet with a strange mist of tears. Half unconsciously he found his way to his own cabin, where, throwing himself on his knees on the bare mud floor, he prayed as he had, perhaps, not done since he was a boy in Missouri.

"Takes me for him!" he cried. "Oh, heaven help me to help her, for I love her still—love her more than ever!"

Salt Flat, of course, heard—through Mrs. Snaggles—of the scene in Menner's parlor, and many were the opinions delivered as to the course Dan should take. The majority, judging others by themselves, agreed that Dan should marry Jenny "right off," since she looked on him as her husband, if he wanted to, and ignore Frank as a man who, if he was not dead, ought to be. But Dan became so furious at the suggestion that the idea was at once dropped as a subject, which, if persevered with, would, in all likelihood, end in shooting.

"Boys," he said, "I'm not that sort, I reckon. There is on'y one way out of this for Dan Hunter, and that's the California trail. You chaps as like can 'freeze out' for my claim, and if the feller as gits it will give me a broncho I'll git through before next snowfall. That's fixed."

Dan tried hard to keep away from Menner's cabin that day; but, as the evening came, and he remembered how he had always gone to inquire after Jenny after his day's work, he found he could not resist taking the same direction once more.

"It's a sure thing," he said to himself, as he set out, "I can't skip the country without a word. Jenny, my dear, you'll never know how fond Grizzly Dan was of you."

When he got to the cabin and asked Mrs. Snaggles how Jenny was she shook her head.

"She's got 'er mind fixed on it you're Frank," she said, and she seemed quite determined not to allow him to see her.

"Maybe she won't see me again," said Dan. "I'm going over the range."

"For good?"

"Ay."

He could say no more. A lump seemed to stick in his throat as he looked piteously at her. She did not hesitate any longer.

"I'm real sorry for you, Dan," she said, as she let him in, and she left him, and went off to the kitchen. When she got back she could hear Jenny sobbing bitterly inside. Bill Welch, who had come round to inquire, stood outside the door with Dan. For a moment she looked angrily at the latter, but a glance at his face stopped her.

"Good by," she said, holding out her hand, "good by."

And the two figures moved away into the gathering darkness. Their way lay across the meadow-land, under the foothills, where Frank Menner had shot his cattle a fortnight before. The coyotes had made short work of the carcasses, and presently, as they went silently along through the crisp snow, they saw the skull of the young bull lying in their path by a small clump of aspen trees. For a moment they stopped and looked at it, each thinking of the man who had done so much wrong and harm in the last few months. Suddenly, without a sign of warning, he stood before them. He wore no hat, and his clothes were torn about him. Mad, fierce and shaken with fury, he stood there and laughed aloud.

"Caught you, hound," he cried, "coming from my house—coming from my wife."

He raised the pistol in his hand and fired wildly. Dan's hat fell to the ground. Bill Welch looked hurriedly toward him. Was the man mad? He stood there, his hands folded over his breast, silent and immovable. Again Frank stepped forward and raised his weapon, when, in an instant, his foot caught in one of the horns of the animal he had killed, and he fell headlong on his face. At the same instant the second cartridge exploded. A cry, sharp, clear and piercing, rang out on the frosty night air, and when Bill went forward and turned over his body he saw there was blood trickling from the man's side. Dead! Shot through the heart by the bullet he had intended for his rival.

Salt Flat is no more; but down on the creek, where Grizzly Dan's cabin used to stand, there is a neat little white house and Dan and his wife are well-known in Oretown and for many miles around. She still calls him Frank, and often sits by the hour puzzling over her "second marriage," and trying—trying to "remember." But she is happy, and men say that Dan is happy too. There is a rough grave among the foothills where she is never likely to pass, and a still rougher headstone. A plain piece of deal boarding stands upright in the soil—still faintly bearing the epitaph the miners of Salt Flat deemed sufficient:

'Frank Menner'
shot hisself,
the other was the best man.

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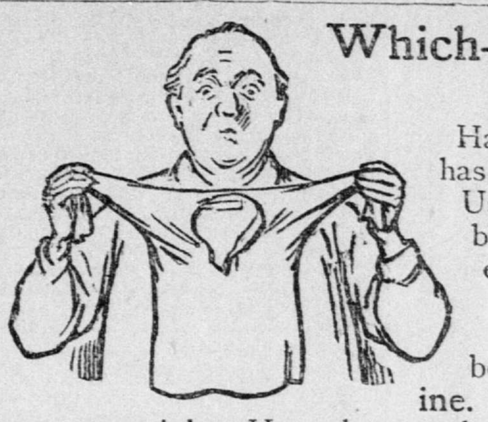

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