

"JACK, WHERE BE YOU?"

BY CHARLES KELSEY GAINES.

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PART I.

There is a brutal pastime in vogue among the lumbermen of Maine and New Hampshire, so intimately connected with the tragic story which I am about to relate, that I shall begin by describing it. This game, known as "Jack, where be you?" is especially popular during the long winter evenings, when the gang is assembled in camp after the day's work is finished. To the spectators it has the keen interest of the prize fight or the contest of the prizefighter. It is a rather serious affair, but would seem to more civilized men. But hard heads enjoy hard knocks, and volunteers are easily found.

come and go—they were, in the days when I knew the place, of New England origin, with a sprinkling of Canadian French. They were not, on the whole, a sad-hearted, nor yet a bad-hearted people. Their religion was chiefly of the "revival" type. There was plenty of good fellowship, though fierce disputes were frequent, and they lived with the dare-devil abandon of men who felt that tomorrow might see them writing in torment, here or elsewhere—for most of them sincerely expected to go to hell at last. But they seemed to think that hell would stand it. Life at Arctic Falls was certainly good preparation.

The wives and daughters of these men were the natural products of their environment—sturdy, coarse-featured, but sound-hearted, self-respecting and respected. Life was a battle, and they fought it out and held their own. They were rather more religious than were the men, but not much more tender-hearted. Nevertheless wooing and wedlock went on here as in other places, and sawmill society, though brutal, was not corrupt.

The belle of the place was Sally Harden. She was big, bold and rosy, rough as her company, but sound to the core. Presume an inch too far, and you got a knock down cuff for your pains, but there was no malice in it; you were at liberty to join the laugh and resume the flirtation—for she was something of a flirt withal. Great coils of copper-red hair turbaned her head. Red hair was a taint in the sawmill settlement, but she led the dance none the less; her beauty was of the chromo sort which millhands and lumbermen could appreciate. She wore heavy, gold-plated jewelry, and an excess of expensive rings; but all this seemed to suit her style and she would hardly have wished her to change it. Her dresses were of trying and often positively painful hues, but really, she could carry off a big dose of bad taste with success.

She had many admirers, but only two, Jim Jones and Nick Burdo, were serious in question. Jim was robust, florid young, six feet in height and almost as handsome as Sally herself. His face was slightly scarred—for he never shirked a fight—but, as yet, hardships and disputation had made but little impression on him. He was strong and clever, a general favorite.

Nick was more feared than liked. He was some years older than Jim, tall, dark and sinewy, with the fierceness and endurance of a wolf. His fights were rarely fist fights. Though doubtless of Canadian origin, his command of language surpassed that of any other man in the settlement. His glib and specious tongue was apt to gain its point, yet even while it persuaded it seemed somehow to arouse distrust.

The scene is laid. Now comes the tragedy.

PART II.

It was on the Fourth of July. The mills were shut down and the day had been celebrated with drunkenness and riot to an extent unusual even at Arctic Falls. Already there had been several fights.

That evening a dance was held. In the woods, close by the big, ramshackle boarding house of the principal mill, a floor had been laid, and a multitude of lanterns, both white and red, were hung upon the waving branches over and around it. The vendors of ice cream, candy and drinks were doing a great business. The men were all flushed with whiskey, and many of the women had not altogether combed their hair. The lemonade, though two large wash tubs full of this rather poisonous beverage stood ready for their use. The dance was uproarious. The men threw in fags and double shuffles that almost beat holes in the planks of the floor, and now and then gave yells like Comanches. They were having a glorious time. More and more the music varied in tuneless discords, and strove to make up in violence what it lacked in melody; while the hoarse, drunken voice of the leader bawled out impossible combinations for the dance. Who cared? The music was the greater the fun. Sally was there, of course. Indeed, her father—who was running the nearby boarding house—was director of the dance. And the rivals were there, both feeling particularly ugly

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A little circle had formed in the crowd. "That won't do," said Nick. "I'll fight you all right, ye cussed whelp, but she's got to marry the one that likes." The sentiment was echoed back from the crowd. "She's fooled with ye long enough, feller. Make her come to time."

It was not seriously meant, but it caught the fancy of the mob. There was a roar of approbation. A huge form came shouldering the throng. It was Harden. He staggered a little; no man present had drunk more whiskey that night, yet he was plainly the soberest as well as the biggest of them all, and their master.

"What's the row?" he demanded. The matter was explained. "Drawn on Jim, did he? Well, boys, ye're right. It's time this thing was settled, and at this here's a good way, Jim, can ye strap the hide clean off'n the sneakin' cuss?"

For answer Jim unbuckled his heavy leather belt, and swung it above his head until it shrieked like a buzz saw. "Spow ye wants us ter hev it out in a game o' Jack, where be ye, or some such devilish nonsense," growled Nick. "Ye must fight fair," she cried, "and there mustn't be no pistol shooting' now nor after."

"I'll see fair play," said Harden. "Now, Sally, ye clear out. Go to yer room an' get yer hair done. Her answer was taken out of her mouth. "Well, I'm ready whenever ye can get that blasted coward to stand up to me," sneered Nick.

A blow full in the face was the answer. Nick's pistol leaped out as the head of a serpent springs from coil. Sally's quick hand struck up the muzzle, yet the bullet sheered through Jim's curly locks, and the powder blackened his brow.

"How dare you?" screamed the girl. "Fight air, or I shan't promise nobody. I won't have no pistol shooting." "Spow ye wants us ter hev it out in a game o' Jack, where be ye, or some such devilish nonsense," growled Nick. "Ye must fight fair," she cried, "and there mustn't be no pistol shooting' now nor after."

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A ring was formed, and straps thrown on the floor for the combatants to make choice of. "Them things ain't no use," cried Nick, contemptuously. "If I'm licked I'll shoot him later on, an' if he's licked he'll lay for me. Ye can't hinder us. Give us knives, so we can settle it right now. We can play 'Jack' just the same with knives."

"You ain't goin' back on a feller now?" "I ain't goin' back on nobody," she answered, "but I wish it was Jim."

"Come along, then," he said, glancing around uneasily. "Don't ye see I can't be loatin' here?" She looked at her father. "They fit out fair," he said, slowly, "an' ye give yer word. I hain't nothin' to say."

The girl shuddered. "But tonight you git home. Set up, Nick, blast ye. Ef ye want her, come tomorrow an' ask fer her, an' I'll see ye git yer rights. Set up, I say. Go long, Sall."

Tomorrow dawned. The tragic grove was deserted. Some of the lanterns still flickered with a dingy gleam. And in their midst, just over the bloody floor, stiff and cold and drenched with dew, dangled a sprawling figure. It was riddled with bullets, and blood was dripping from it in sullen clots upon the stark floor that lay beneath.

Thus it chanced that Nick never claimed his bride. And Sall? They did not find her in her room that morning. But they found her two days later, on the white beach below the gorge; and the corpse was carried down the rough road to the distant graveyard.

Garfield on the Free Silver Movement. From the Cleveland Leader. In the works of James Abram Garfield, vol. xi, page 240, is a speech delivered by him before the house of representatives July 12, 1878. It was a proposition to virtually adopt the free coinage of silver, at such a ratio, or proportion, that sixteen ounces of silver should be made by law equal in value to one ounce of gold, when each was coined. At that time the amount of silver required to make a silver dollar had not the market value of a dollar—the same as is the case, to a much greater extent, today. The proposition was the issue that now exists between the Democratic and Republican parties on the money question.

In opposing the free coinage of silver, President Garfield used the following impressive words: "Mr. Speaker: I can hardly conceive a situation in which the house could be brought more directly face to face with what seems to present, on the one hand, public honor, and on the other, the DEPENDENT PEOPLE OF THE COUNTRY. It has happened in the fluctuation of these metals that there is now a notable opportunity to cheat seven millions of men by adopting the baser metal as the standard of payment, and thus accomplish a swindle on so great a scale as to make a silver dollar worth only about one-third of its face value. The proposed measure, one-fifth of the enormous aggregate of public and private debts can be WIPE OUT WITH A SPONGE. This nation owes \$2,100,000,000, and private citizens of the United States probably over \$1,000,000,000, possibly more. At the present moment the relation of debtor and creditor in the United States involves nearly \$3,000,000,000. It is proposed by the amendment of the gentleman from Indiana that, at one fell stroke, one-fifth of all these enormous sums shall be wiped out, BETRAYED, and that the process shall be called HONEST LEGISLATION. Since I HAVE BEEN IN PUBLIC LIFE, I HAVE NEVER KNOWN ANY PROPOSITION THAT CONTAINED SO MANY ELEMENTS OF VAST RASCALITY, OF COLossal SWINDLING, AS THIS."

"Gentlemen may remember the financial shock of 1837, the later shock of 1857, and the still later shock of 1873. CONCEIVE THEM ALL IN ONE VAST CRASH, AND THE FINANCIAL RUIN, THE OVERTHROW OF BUSINESS, WOULD BE LIGHT IN COMPARISON WITH THE SHOCK WHICH WOULD FOLLOW. "Put in operation the provision now suggested, and all our gold coin will leave the country as fast as it can be carried abroad. Do this and a REVOLUTION IN OUR MONETARY AFFAIRS, UTTERLY UNPARALLELED."

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ED IN THE HISTORY OF OUR NATION, WILL FOLLOW. "Was President Garfield right? Is our democratic form of popular government finally to be found wanting in the balance? Are we, as a people incompetent to profit or learn by past experience, and shall a popular craze sweep all before it and carry our nation down in ruin through national repudiation and the deepest public dishonor? Is the prophecy made by the great English historian, Macaulay, forty years ago, about to be fulfilled? His words were: "The day will come in the United States when the multitude, distressed by hard times, will be called upon to choose a legislature. On one side is a statesman, preaching patience, respect for vested rights, strict observance of public faith. "On the other are demagogues ranting about the tyranny of capitalists and usurers. I seriously apprehend that the people of the United States will in some such season of adversity do things which will prevent prosperity from returning; that they will act like people who stand in a year of adversity before all the world's eyes, and thus make the next year, a year, not of security, but of absolute famine. There will be, I FEAR, SPOILATION; THE SPOILATION WILL INCREASE THE DISTRESS. THE DISTRESS WILL PRODUCE FRESH SPOILATION. "When a society has once entered on this downward progress THERE IS NOTHING TO STOP IT. EITHER CIVILIZATION OR LIBERTY MUST PERISH. Either some Caesar or Napoleon with a strong hand, or your republic will be as fearfully plundered by barbarians in the twentieth century as the Roman Empire was in the fifth; with this difference, that the Huns and Vandals, who ravaged Rome, came from without, while your Huns and Vandals will have been engendered within your own country by your own institutions."

Story of Justice Gray. The Washington Times tells the following story of Justice Gray, of the United States Supreme court. He had come down into Delaware to hold court, and was met by a deputy marshal. The fees are not large down in that section, and the deputy marshals are not the richest men around. So this deputy met the justice and was ready to walk out into town. "Where is your carriage?" asked Justice Gray. "Well, Mr. Justice, you see our fees are small, and if I hired a carriage I would have nothing left." "You get the carriage," said the justice, "there is an account to which it can be charged. Write to the marshal in Baltimore and he'll tell you what to do."

So Justice Gray rode over to the town, and the deputy marshal wrote to his superior. Shortly after the return of Justice Gray to the city he received a letter from the deputy marshal, saying the carriage bill was all right. "The marshal tells me," he wrote, "to charge it to the account of transportation of prisoners."

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SOME POOR BROKEN WRETCH LIES GROVELING.

dead-fall, until, as some trigger-like combination is loosened, the whole mass shudders and gives way, and a thunderous avalanche of foun and logs plunges down the steep sluceway. Many are the victims that this merciless wooden juggernaut has claimed. Each year, on the white beach at the foot of the rapids, are found red-shirted forms, mangled and distorted, cast up there by a swirling eddy. They are pulled out from among the murderous logs that are driven up on the same sands, and are carted away to the nearest graveyard, ten miles distant. For there are no graves at Arctic Falls—there is not so much as a hard granite floor is uncarpeted with sod. Neither are there any wells—what use to drive shafts down in the flinty rock? And the rivulets that race down from the overhanging hills have all cut through the thin film of mold, and speed over beds of smooth black stone. On the main street of the village, heavy wagons jar along a naked ledge of rock; in the forest the great roots of the trees stand out like talons, gripping for a foothold and the mountains that wall in the barren scene show scamy slopes so bare and precipitous that a loosened boulder will fly down like a cannon ball until it crashes in the thicket below. Arctic Falls fills many graves, but provides none; savage and pitiless, it casts out its dead unburied.

And the mills, they are as merciless as the torrent that drives them. The fierce shriek of the fanged saw overmingles with the howling of the waters. Night and day they run at racehorse speed in serried gangs that rip through half-a-dozen logs at once. Great dripping tree-trunks rush in a ceaseless stream up the steep incline, are tossed about like straws by the massive machinery, and fall in a heap of slab and plank before you could walk their length. The throbbing air is heavy with the odor of spray and the aromatic fragrance of fresh rounded pine. Jagged edgings, like giant toothpicks, heap up in mountainous stacks, which are burned each night; and the red flames light a scene worthy of the Inferno. Woe to the foot that slips or the hand that falls in such a place. Scarcely a week passes without some ghastly accident. The signs are all about you; faces frightful with livid-healed mutilations; men stumping about amid the pitfalls of the mill on rade wooden legs; men feeding the ravine with their flesh, that have already tasted their flesh, with an iron hook where the hand should be. You enter a hovel, and in a dingy corner some poor broken wretch lies groveling, groaning, cursing, praying for death. Things happen here too horrible for words.



"FIGHT FAIR, OR I SHAN'T PROMISE NOBODY."