MIGGLES.

[From the Overland Monthly.]

We were eight, including the driver. We had not spoken during the passage of the last six miles, since the jolting of the heavy vehicle over the roughening road had spoiled the Judge's last poetical quotation. The tall man beside the Judge was asleep, his arm passed through the swaying strap and his head resting upon it—altogether a limp, helpless-looking object, as if he had hanged himself and been cut down too late. The French lady on the back seat was asleep, too, yet in a half-conscious propriety of attitude, shown even in the disposition of the handkerchief which she held to her forehead and which partially veiled her face. The lady from Virginia City, traveling with her husband, had long since lost all individuality in a wild confusion of ribbons, veils, furs and shawls. There was no sound but the rattling of wheels and the dash of rain upon the roof. Suddenly the stage stopped and we became dimly aware of voices. The driver was evidently in the midst of an exciting colloquy with some one in the road—a colloquy of which such fragments as "bridge gone," "twenty feet of water," "can't pass," were occasionally distinguishable above the storm. Then came a lull, and the mysterious voice from the road shouted the parting adjuration:

"Try Miggles'."

We caught a glimpse of our leaders as the vehicle slowly turned, of a horseman vanishing through the rain, and we were evidently on our way to Miggles'.

Who and where was Miggles? The Judge, our authority, did not remember the name, and he knew the country thoroughly. The Washoe traveler thought Miggles must keep a hotel. We only knew that we were stopped by high water in front and rear, and that Miggles was our rock of refuge. A ten minutes' splashing through a tangled byroad, scarcely wide enough for the stage, and we drew up before a barred and boarded gate in a wide stone wall or fence about eight feet high. Evidently Miggles', and evidently Miggles did not keep a hotel.

The driver got down and tried the gate. It was securely locked.

"Miggles! O Miggles!"

No answer.

"Migg-ells! You Miggles!" continued the driver with rising wrath.

"Migglesy!" joined in the expressman, persuasively. "O Miggy! Mig!"

But no reply came from the apparently insensate Miggles.

So we rose up and called on Miggles in chorus. Then separately. And when we had finished, a Hibernian fellow passenger from the roof called for "Maggells!" whereat we all laughed. While we were laughing the driver cried "Shoo!"

We listened. To our infinite amazement the chorus of "Miggles" was repeated from the other side of the wall, even to the final and supplemental "Maggells."

"Extraordinary echo," said the Judge.

"Extraordinary d—d skunk!" roared the driver, contemptuously. "Come out of that, Miggles, and show yourself! Be a man, Miggles! Don't hide in the dark; I wouldn't if I were you, Miggles," continued Yuba Bill, now dancing about in an excess of fury.

"Miggles!" continued the voice, "O Miggles!"

"My good man! Mr. Myghall!" said the Judge, softening the asperities of the name as much as possible. "Consider the inhospitality of refusing shelter from the inclemency of the weather to helpless females. Really, my dear sir ——" but a succession of "Miggles," ending in a burst of laughter, drowned his voice.

Yuba Bill hesitated no longer. Taking a heavy stone from the road, he battered down the gate, and with the expressman entered the inclosure. We followed. Nobody was to be seen. In the gathering darkness all that we could distinguish was that we were in a garden—from the rose-bushes that scattered over us a minute spray from their dripping leaves, and before a long, outstanding wooden building.

"Do you know this Miggles?" asked the Judge of Yuba Bill.

"No, nor don't want to," said Bill, shortly, who felt the Pioneer Stage Company insulted in his person by the contumacious Miggles.

"But, my dear sir," expostulated the judge, as he thought of the barred gate.

"Lookee here," said Yuba Bill, with fine irony, "hadn't you better go back and sit in the coach till yer introduced? I'm going in," and he pushed open the door of the building.

A long room lighted only by the embers of a fire that was dying on the large hearth at its further extremity. The walls curiously papered, and the flickering firelight bringing out its grotesque pattern. Somebody sitting in a large arm-chair by the fire-place. All this we saw as we crowded together into the room, after the driver and expressman.

"Hello, be you Miggles?" said Yuba Bill to the solitary occupant.

The figure neither spoke nor stirred. Yuba Bill walked wrathfully toward it, and turned the eye of his coach lantern upon its face. It was a man's face, prematurely old and wrinkled, with very large eyes, in which there was that expression of perfectly gratuitous solemnity which I had sometimes seen in an owl's. The large eyes wandered from Bill's face to the lantern, and finally fixed their gaze on that luminous object, without further recognition.

Bill restrained himself with an effort.

"Miggles! Be you deaf? You aintdumb anyhow, you know;" and Yuba Bill shook the insensate figure by the shoulder.

To our great dismay as Bill removed his hand, the venerable stranger apparently collapsed—sinking into half his size and an undistinguishable heap of clothing.

"Well, dern my skin," said Bill—looking appealingly at us, and hopelessly retiring from the contest.

The Judge now stepped forward, and we lifted the mysterious invertebrate back into his original position. Bill was dismissed with the lantern to reconnoitre outs do, for it was evident that from the helplessness of this solitary man there must be attendants near at hand, and we all drew around the fire. The Judge, who had regained his authority and had never lost his conversational ability—standing before us with his back to the hearth—charged us, as an imaginary jury, as follows:

"It is evident that either our distinguished friend here has reached that condition, de-described by Shakespeare as "the sere and yellow leaf," or has suffered some premature abatement of his mental and physical faculties. Whether he is really the Miggles—"

Here he was was interrupted by "Miggles! O Miggles! Miggleay! Mig!" and, in fact, the whole chorus of Miggles in very much the same key as it had once before been delivered unto us.

We gazed at each other for a moment in some alarm. The Judge, in particular, vacated his position quickly, as the voice seemed to come directly over his shoulders. The cause, however, was soon discovered in a large magpie who was perched upon a shelf over the fireplace, and who immediately relapsed into a sepulchral silence, which contrasted singularly with his previous volubility. It was undoubtedly his voice which we had heard in the road, and our friend in the chair was not responsible for the Ahrimanian courtesy. Yuba Bill, who re-entered the room after an unsuccessful search, was loth to accept the explanation, and still eyed the helpless sitter with suspicion. He had found a hand in which he had put up his horses—but he came back dripping and skeptical. "That aint nothing; my hand would hold miles of the shanty, and that yer d—d old shaver licks kitterbit."

But the faith of the majority proved to be authority enough. Bill [illegible] grumbling, before we heard a quick step outside the door, the door flung open, and with a flash of white teeth, a sparkle of dark eyes, and an utter absence of ceremony or diffidence, a young woman entered, shut the door, and panting leaned back against it.

"O, if you please, I'm Miggles!"

And this was Miggles! This bright eyed, full-throated young woman, whose wet gown of blue stuff could not hide the beauty of the feminine curves to which it clung; from the chestnut crown of whose head—topped by a man's oil-skin sou'wester—to the little feet and ankles—hidden somewhere in the recess of her boy's brogans, all was grace—this was Miggles, laughing at us, too, in the most airy, frank, offhand manner imaginable.

"You see, boys," said she—quite out of breath, and holding one little hand against her side, quite unheeding the speechless discomfiture of our party, or the complete demoralization of Yuba Bill, whose features had relaxed into an expression of gratuitous and imbecile cheerfulness—"You see, boys, I was mor'n two miles away when you passed down the road. I thought you might pull up here, and so I ran the whole way, knowing nobody was home but Jim—and—and—I'm out of breath—and—that lets me out."

And here Miggles caught her dripping oil-skin hat from her head, with a mischievous twirl that scattered a shower of rain drops over us; attempted to put back her hair; dropped two hair-pins in the attempt; laughed and sat down beside Yuba Bill, with her hands crossed lightly on her lap.

The Judge recovered himself first, and essayed an extravagant compliment.

"I'll trouble you for that hair-pin," said Miggles, gravely. Half a dozen hands were eagerly stretched forward; the missing hair-pin was restored to the fair owner; and Miggles, crossing the room, looked keenly in the face of the invalid. The solemn eyes looked back at hers, with an expression we had never seen before. Life and intelligence seemed to struggle back into the rugged face. Miggles laughed again—it was a singularly eloquent laugh—and turned her black eyes and white teeth once more toward us.

"This afflicted person is"—hesitated the Judge.

"Jim," said Miggles.

"Your father?"

"No."

"Brother?"

"No."

"Husband?"

Miggles darted a quick, half-defiant glance at the two lady passengers who I had noticed did not participate in the general masculine admiration of Miggles, and said, gravely: "No—it's Jim."

There was an awkward pause. The lady passengers moved closer to each other. The Washoe husband looked abstractedly at the fire; and the tall man apparently turned his eyes inward for self-support at this emergency. But Miggle's laugh, which was very infectious, broke the silence. "Come," she said, briskly, "you must be hungry. Who'll bear a hand to help me get tea?"

She had no lack of volunteers. In a few moments Yuba Bill was engaged like Caliban in bearing logs for this Miranda; the expressman was grinding coffee on the verandah; to myself the arduous duty of slicing bacon was assigned; and the Judge lent each man his good-humored and voluble counsel. And when Miggles, assisted by the Judge and our Hibernian "deck passenger," set the table with all the available crockery, we had become quite joyous, in spite of the rain that beat against windows, the wind that whirled down the chimney, the two ladies who whispered together in the corner, or the magpie who uttered a satirical and croaking commentary on their conversation, from his perch above. In the now bright, blazing fire we could see that the walls were papered with illustrated journals, arranged with feminine taste and discrimination. The furniture was extemporized, and adapted from candle boxes, packing cases, and covered with gay calico, or the skin of some animal. The arm-chair of the helpless Jim was an ingenious variation of a rocking chair, there was neatness and even taste for the picturesque to be seen in the few details of the long low room.

The meal was a culinary success. But more, it was a social triumph—chiefly, I think, owing to the rare tact of Miggles in guiding the conversation, asking all the questions herself, yet bearing throughout a frankness that rejected the idea of any concealment on her own part. So that we talked of ourselves, of our prospects, of the journey, of the weather, of each other—of every thing but our host and hostess. It must be confessed that Miggles's conversation was never elegant, rarely grammatical, and that at times she used expletives, the use of which had generally been yielded to our sex. But they were delivered with such a lighting up of teeth and eyes, and were usually followed by a laugh—a laugh peculiar to Miggles—so frank and honest that it seemed to clear the moral atmosphere.

Once, during the meal, we heard a noise like the rubbing of a heavy body against the outer walls of the house. This was shortly followed by a scratching and sniffling at the door. "That's Joaquin," said Miggles in reply to our questioning glances; "would you like to see him?" Before we could answer, she had opened the door, and disclosed a half-grown grizzly, who instantly raised himself on his haunches, with his forepaws hanging down in the popular attitude of mendicancy, and looked admiringly at Miggles, with a very singular resemblance in his manner to Yuba Bill. "That's my watch-dog," said Miggles in explanation. "O, he don't bite," she added, as the two lady passengers fluttered into a corner. "Does he, old Tompy?"—(the latter remark being addressed directly to the sagacious Joaquin). "I tell you what, boys," continued Miggles, after she had fed and closed the door on *Ursa Minor*, "you were in big luck that Joaquin wasn't hanging around when you dropped in to-night."

"Where was he?" asked the Judge.

"With me," said Miggles. "Lord love you; he trots round with me nights like as if he was a man."

We were silent for a few movements, and listended to the wind. Perhaps we all had the same picture before us—of Miggles walking the rainy woods, with her savage guardian at her side. The Judge, I remember, said something about Una and her lion; but Miggles received it as she did other compliments, with quiet gravity. Whether she was altogether unconscious of the admiration she excited—she could hardly have been oblivious of Yuba Bill's adoration—I knew not; but her very frankness suggested a perfect sexual equality that was cruelly humiliating to the younger members of our party.

The incident of the bear did not add anything in Miggles's favor to the opinions of those of her own sex who were present. In fact, the repast over, a chilliness radiated from the two lady passengers, that no pine boughs brought in by Yuba Bill and cast as a sacrifice upon the hearth could wholly overcome. Miggles felt it; and suddenly declaring that it was time to "turn in," offered to show the ladies to their bed in an adjoining room. "You boys, will have to camp out here by the fire as well as you can," she added, "for that nest hat the one room."

Our sex—by which, my dear sir, I allude of course to the stronger portion of humanity—has been generally believed from the imputation of curiosity, or a weakness for gossip. Yet I am convinced that, notwithstanding this, we should all have liked to have seen Miggles thus crowded together, whispering, smoking, laughing, and exchanging suspicions, surmises, and a thousand speculations in regard to the strange, untoward fate that had thrown the women together. I fear that we even hinted that Miggles, in the absence of the husband, might be a married woman, and that the husband, for some reason, was not to be mentioned to the wife. Of all this, of course, we talked in whispers, for the walls of the room were—as I have intimated—of the thinnest. We—that is, the married men of us—even made a bet upon the subject, and I—who have a wife in San Francisco—am ashamed to confess that I lost the bet.

But not, apparently, the same Miggles who a few hours before had flashed upon us. Her eyes were downcast, and as she hesitated for a moment on the threshold, with a blanket on her arm, she seemed to have left behind her the frank fearlessness which had charmed us a moment before. Coming into the room, she drew a low stool beside the paralytic's chair, sat down, drew the blanket over her shoulders and said, "If it's all the same to you, boys, as we're rather crowded, I'll stop here to-night," took the invalid's withered hand in her own and turned her eyes upon the dying fire. An instinctive feeling that this was only premonitory to more confidential relations, and perhaps some shame at our previous curiosity, kept us silent. The rain still beat upon the roof; wandering gusts of wind stirred the embers into momentary brightness, until, in a lull of the elements, Miggles suddenly lifted up her head and throwing her hair over her shoulder, turned her face upon the group and asked:

"Is there any of you that knows me?"

There was no reply.

"Think again! I lived at Marysville in '53. Everybody knew me there, and everybody had the right to know me. I kept the Polka Saloon until I came to live with Jim. That's six years ago. Perhaps I've changed some."

The absence of recognition may have disconcerted her. She turned her head to the fire again and it was some seconds before she again spoke, and then more rapidly:

"Well, you see I thought some of you must have known me. There's no great harm done, anyway. What I was going to say, was this: Jim here"—she took his hand in both of hers as she spoke—"used to know me, if you did'nt, and spent a heap of money upon me. I reckon he spent all he had. And one day—it's six years ago this winter—Jim came into my back room, sat down on my sofa, like as you see him in that chair, and never moved again without help. He was struck all of a heap, and never seemed to know what ailed him. The doctors came, and said as how it was caused all along of his way of life—for Jim was mighty free and wild like—and that he would never get better, and couldn't last long anyway. They advised me to send him to Frisco to the hospital, for he was no good to any one and would be a baby all his life. Perhaps it was something in Jim's eye, perhaps it was that I never had a baby, but I said 'No.' I was rich then, for I was popular with everybody—gentlemen like yourself, sir, came to see me—and I sold out my business and bought this yer place, because it was sort of out of the way of travel, you see, and I brought my baby here."

Hidden in the darkness, but still holding his hand, she went on:

"It was a long time before I could get the hang of things about yer, for I was used to company and excitement. I could'nt get any woman to help me, and a man I dursent trust; but what with the Indians hereabout, who'd do odd jobs for me, and everthing sent from the North Fork, Jim and I managed to worry through. The Doctor would run up from Sacramento once in a while. He'd ask to see 'Miggles' baby,' as he called Jim, and when he'd go away, he'd say, 'Miggles, you're a trump—God bless you;' and it did n't seem so lonely after that. But the last time he was here he said, as he opened the door to go: 'Do you know, Miggles, your baby will grow up to be a man yet and honor to his mother; but not here, Miggles, not here!' And I thought he went away sad—and—and"—and here Miggles' voice and head were somehow both lost completely in the shadow.

"The folks about here are very kind," said Miggles, after a pause, coming a little into the light again. "The men from the Fork used to hang around here until they found they was n't wanted, and the women are kind—and don't call. I was pretty lonely until I picked up Joaquin in the woods yonder one day, when he wasn't so high, and taught him to beg for his dinner; and then that's Poll [illegible] knows no end of tricks, and makes it quite sociable of evenings with her talk, and so I donn't feel like as I was the only living being about the ranch. And Jim here," said Miggles, with her old laugh again, and coming out quite into the firelight, "Jim—why, boys, you would admire to see how much he knows for a man like him. Sometimes I bring him flowers, and he looks at 'em just as natural as if he knew 'em; and times, when we're sitting here alone, I read him those things on the wall. Why, Lord!" said Miggles, with her frank laugh, "I've read him that whole side of the house this winter. There never was such a man for reading as Jim."

"Why," asked the Judge, "do you not marry this man to whom you have devoted your youthful life?"

"Well, you see," said Miggles, "it would be playing it rather low down on Jim, to take advantage of his being so helpless. And then, too, if we were man and wife, now, we'd both know that I was *bound* to do what I do now of my own accord."

"But, you are young yet and attractive—"

"It's getting late," said Miggles, gravely, "and you'd better all turn in. Good night boys;" and throwing the blanket over her head, Miggles laid herself down beside Jim's chair, her head pillowed on the low stool that held his feet, and spoke no more. The fire slowly faded from the hearth; we each sought our blankets in silence; and, presently, there was no sound in the long room, but the pattering of rain upon the roof, and the heavy breathing of the sleepers.

It was nearly morning when I awoke from a troubled dream. The storm had passed, the stars were shining, and through the shutterless window the full moon, lifting itself over the solemn pines without, looked into the room. It touched the lonely figure in the chair with an infinite compassion, and seemed to baptize with a shining flood the lowly head of the woman whose hair, as in the sweet old story, bathed the feet of him she loved. It even lent a kindly poetry to the rugged outline of Yuba Bill, half-reclining on his elbow between them and his passengers, with savagely-patient eyes keeping watch and ward. And then I fell asleep and only woke at broad day, with Yuba Bill standing over me, and "All aboard" ringing in my ears.

Coffee was waiting for us on the table, but Miggles was gone. We wandered about the house and lingered long after the horses were harnessed, but she did not return. It was evident she wished to avoid a formal leave-taking and had so left us to depart as we had come. After we had helped the ladies into the coach, we returned to the house and solemnly shook hands with the paralytic Jim, as solemnly settling him back into position after each hand-shake. Then we looked for the last time around the long, low room, at the stool where Miggles had rest, and slowly took our seats in the waiting coach. The whip cracked and we were off!

But as we reached the high-road Bill's dexterous hand laid the six horses back on their haunches and the stage stopped with a jerk. For there on a little eminence beside the road stood Miggles, her chair flying, her eyes sparkling, her white handkerchief waving, and her white teeth flashing a last "good bye." We waved our hats in return. And then Yuba Bill, as if fearful of further temptation, briskly lashed his horses forward, and we took back in our souls. We exchanged [illegible] until we reached the North Fork. All the stage drew up at the Independence House. Then, the stages being unlocked, we walked into the bar-room and took our pizen [illegible]

"Ask your friends to drink," said Bill, handing the bottle and glasses.

[illegible]

"Well, I don't care if I do, [illegible] whiskey."

[illegible]

"Well, gentlemen, this is [illegible]

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Collections and Commissions promptly attended to; particular attention paid to the delivery of Express Letters at all points on our lines. New York Exchange sold.
1tf R. T. GILLESPIE, Agent, Helena, M. T.

F. BARTON. A. K. WILL.
Barton & Will,
MANUFACTURERS OF
Jewelry, Dealers in American and Foreign
Gold and Silver Watches,
MAIN STREET, 35 HELENA, M. T.
ENGRAVING AND ENAMELING
In the very best style.
1-3m

T. C. Groshon,
DEALER IN
Foreign and Domestic
Wines and Liquors,
PURE COPPER DISTILLED
AND
Rectified Whiskies!
All the choice brands of Tobacco at prices that defy competition.
First Door below Bentley's Block,
MAIN STREET, - - HELENA, MONTANA.
1-3m

Helena Advertisements.

C. C. HUNTLEY,
Half Daily
Stage and Express Line!
and Carrier of the United States Mail
Helena to Blackfoot, Deer Lodge City,
and all Western Camps.
Leave Helena alternate days at 6 o'clock for
BLACKFOOT,
GOLD CREEK,
BEARTOWN,
SILVER BOW,
CABLE CITY,
and all intermediate points.
Passengers & Express Matter
Carried with regularity, dispatch, and at cheap rates.
☞ Office at the Stable, Edwards Street, Helena. ☜
tf S. S. HUNTLEY, Agent.

F. TAYLOR. H. THOMPSON. W. A. RUMSEY
TAYLOR, THOMPSON & CO.,
WHOLESALE
Grocers and Commission
MERCHANTS.
No. 81 Main Street, Helena, M. T.
DEALERS IN
GROCERIES
AND
LIQUORS.
☞ Advances Made on Consignments. ☜
1-3m

Hirschman Brothers,
DUNPHY & BENTLEY'S BLOCK,
HELENA, MONTANA.
Wholesale and Retail Dealers in
GENTS' CUSTOM MADE CLOTHING,
Furnishing Goods.
Hats and Caps,
Boots, Shoes, etc. etc.
BOYS' READY MADE CLOTHING.
A Large and well-selected stock of
RUBBER GOODS,
YANKEE NOTIONS,
HOSIERY, TRUNKS,
AND VALISES.
1-6m

L. H. HERSHFIELD, A. HERSHFIELD.
L. H. HERSHFIELD & BROS.
BANKERS.
Main Street, adjoining Bentley's Block,
HELENA, - - - - - - - MONTANA.
Sight Drafts on all parts of the United States and Europe.
Dealers in Gold Dust, Coin, Currency,
AND UNITED STATES SECURITIES.
Collections made in all parts of the Territory, and remittances promptly forwarded.
jy9-6m

Billiards, Billiards, Billiards!
Wm. Mather. Frank Crocker.
MATHER & CROCKER,
Occidental Billiard Hall,
Main Street, Bentley's Granite Block,
HELENA, - - - - MONTANA.
Billiards by Gaslight!
THIS popular Billiard Hall is entirely refitted with first-class tables, balls and cues, and presents attractions to lovers of the game unequalled in Montana.
THE FINEST WINES, LIQUORS, AND CIGARS,
1-6m kept constantly at the Bar.

Saint Louis Hotel,
HELENA, MONTANA,
THE POPULAR HOTEL OF MONTANA.
Newly painted and furnished, and the Table supplied with the best of everything eatable.
Employees attentive and courteous.
Unlimited Accommodation for Guests.
BESIDE the extensive apartments of the Hotel proper, I have fitted up for lodging rooms other convenient fire-proof buildings, and can accommodate satisfactorily all guests.
1-3m C. D. SULLIVAN, PROPRIETOR.

Montana Hide and Fur Co.
Corner Rodney and O'Bannon Streets,
HELENA, - - - - MONTANA.
HIGHEST price paid for Beef Hides, Sheep and Calf Skins, and every description of Furs. We have offices at Blackfoot, Flint Creek and Virginia City for the purchase of Hides, Skins, etc., and for the sale of NEATS FOOT OIL and CLEAN WOOL.
Also, at our Warehouse on the Missouri River at
Musclesholl City.
We are prepared to receive Merchandise, make advances on consignments and forward goods to any point in the Territory, and do a general forwarding and commission business.
1-1y J. P. MABBETT, Gen'l Agent.

New Trading Post.
SMITH & GRAETER,
OF BANNACK CITY,
WOULD respectfully announce to the inhabitants of Jefferson Valley and vicinity, that they have opened a House at
SILVER STAR,
On the Jefferson River, where they offer, at the lowest market rates,
Groceries, Liquors, Cigars and Tobaccos,
Hardware, Tinware, Glassware,
Crockeryware, Drugs, Medicines,
Clothing, Hats, Caps, Underwear,
And a full assortment of
Gurney & Co's. Boots and Shoes.
We sell as low as any House in Virginia. Country produce taken in exchange.
Store fixtures for sale to Jobbers and Country Dealers.
1-6m SMITH & GRAETER.