

THE DYING YEAR.

Ding-dong! the Old Year's dying—
It is weary;
Hark the night-wind's singing,
Miserere!
Ding-dong the bells are pealing—
Soft are the last hours stealing:
Human souls are feeling
Sad and dreary.
Ding-dong! the moments flying,
Drawing nearer;
Youth is worth the buying
When it's dearer;
But no wealth can ever
Stay the flowing river—
Life comes from the Giver,
Not the sharer.

Ding-dong! the night is waning,
Almost vanished—
A few short breaths remaining
Ere it is dead.
Hush! the bells are ceasing;
New tenants now are leasing;
The past is still increasing;
The Old Year's dead!
—James Lavellan.

FERGUSON'S AVENGERS.

A Story of Partisan Days.

"This for the gallant Ferguson!"

The foregoing five words had instituted a reign of terror in one of the loveliest districts of the Palmetto State—a district entered by the Catawba and Parolet rivers and their gentle tributaries.

In the month of September, 1780, Cornwallis detached the notorious Col. Ferguson to the frontiers of North Carolina, for the ostensible purpose of encouraging the Tories of that region to take up arms for the king. Ferguson's force consisted in part of the most profligate and abandoned characters of the partisan days, and his march was marked by atrocities of the most shocking description. The hardy men of Carolinas, Kentucky and Virginia rose against the marauders, and, led by Boone and other backwoods worthies, gave them a decisive defeat at King's Mountain. Ferguson was slain in the battle, and his fellow foragers, numbering about one thousand, were nearly all captured or killed.

This conflict revived the hopes of the southern patriots, and forced Cornwallis to return to Charleston, discomfited and cast down.

"We shall have rest now," the patriots said, after the battle. "Ferguson, the dreaded, is dead, and the few Tories who escaped with their wretched lives are not strong enough to do us harm."

Everywhere in the vicinity of the battlefield the Americans breathed freer, and the loyalists in whose interests Ferguson had marched to his death, curbed their loyalty, and in secrecy swore revenge. But the settlements were soon to learn that the victory of King's Mountain had nerved the arm of the foe more terribly than any which they had hitherto known.

The existence of the new terror was discovered by a boy one morning about a fortnight after the battle. He found the family of Archibald Mettson murdered in their own house, and to the corpses had been pinned a paper bearing these words:

"This for the gallant Ferguson!"

This terrible atrocity aroused the country, and the excitement was quickly heightened by the finding of the body of another murdered patriot. On the cold breast, which had been pierced with pistol balls, was the pallid paper, and its words of terrible import, and the country knew that a terrible vengeance would be taken for King's Mountain.

During the week that followed the discoveries I have mentioned, the work of the avengers was terrible. They fell upon patriot houses at dead of night, and left on the bosoms of their victims the five words which had already terrorized the country. It was in vain that the patriots summoned their cunning and energy for the capture of the band of demons, which as it had been discovered, numbered six men, masked, and mounted on black horses. They came and went like ghosts, but always left behind the terrible sentence which had made their existence execrable. At times they fell upon their hunters and left them upon the roadside marked with the sign of vengeance.

Fear began to paralyze the Carolinians; many abandoned their homes for the sake of their families; and it is probable that the entire district would have been depopulated in a short time, had it not been for the courage of one woman.

Her name was Alice Beauchampe.

It was a dark night in the last week of October, when the heroine of my story at the house of a friend. Her own house, which had been deserted for several days, not far away, and she had determined to turn it for the purpose of securing articles of apparel left behind in her flight.

As she set out on her journey, she dreamed of the dangers that environed her, she smiled, and declared she did not fear them. She could enter the kitchen without a light, and return to her friends.

She had often traversed the route, but she made good her way, and reached her home without the slightest accident. The lifting of the curtain revealed to the young girl the kitchen, across the threshold, she raised the weapon, but lowered it again, as if playing with the life of the leader of the six, whose burly form was revealed by the light of the fire.

She saw the fowls, smoking and well burned, placed on the table, and watched the greedy men crowd around for their shares. Their tongues and movements told her that stolen liquor was doing its accustomed work on all save the giant, who had superintended the cooking of the late repast. This man appeared perfectly sober, and the angry glances which he often cast at his companions told that he did not sanction their bacchanalian conduct.

"Come! enough of this!" he suddenly cried, rising from the table, which had

by the manner in which we treated the father has fled somewhere for protection."

These words drew every vestige of color from the listener's face; they told her who the men below were, though she could not see even the outlines of their persons. One week prior to her visit, her father, one of the King's Mountain heroes, was found dead in a palmetto grove, and the words of Ferguson's Avengers lay on his breast. Then she had deserted her home, knowing that the hand that had struck the father would not spare the daughter.

Well might the lone girl tremble when she found herself so near the dreaded scourges of the country, and she did not move until she heard the front door opened, and heavily booted feet in the room below.

Then a calm thought of her situation drove fear from her heart, and Alice Beauchampe prepared to perform one of the most daring deeds of the revolutionary war.

The noise in the house increased, and oaths and rude jests preceded and followed the lighting of a fire on the hearth.

Alice, who had longed for a sight of the dreaded six, crept to a spot near the bureau where there was a crevice in the floor. There applying her eye to the hole she saw six wild-looking men directly beneath her.

They were beyond a doubt, the Avengers of Ferguson's death, for several masks lay on the table, along with three or four bottles of wine which they had taken from some patriot's cellar. Tall, rough, devil-may-care-looking fellows they were, armed with pistols, carbines, and sabers, the kind of men who never court the smiles of mercy or listen to the pleadings of innocence. Just such fellows as they were, Alice had supposed them to be, for she had seen many of the prisoners taken at King's Mountain, and she longed for the presence of a band of patriots. There were true men in South Carolina at that time who would have given their arms for a chance to exterminate the Avengers, and Alice remembered where a little party of patriots lay, but alas! they were not very near.

"We'll rest here and finish that wine!" said one of the leaders of the band, whose face told that already he had imbibed freely. "Bring in the poultry, and on old Beauchampe's hearth we'll prepare a feast."

"How's the horses?" asked one of the Avengers, as the man flung the poultry on the table.

"Standing like rocks," was the reply. "Such horses as they don't need watching and besides there isn't a rebel within ten miles of this accursed place."

"Why there's the Widow Hartzell." "I didn't think of her," was the reply. "How bitterly old Hartzell, hated us, but we caught him at last."

"And presented him with a breast pin! Ha! ha!"

And the laugh went round the room.

Alice Beauchampe did not wait until the laugh was ended; while yet it filled the house with its devilish echoes, she glided across the room to a window that looked out upon the dark palmetto grove behind the building.

There was no sash in the window, and the cool winds of the night kissed the pallid cheek of the partisan's daughter. For a moment she tried to pierce the darkness beneath the window; but failing her endeavors, she crept over the sill resolved to trust to fortune for success.

The distance to the ground was not very great, and the daring girl alighted without injury.

She was now free to make her escape to the friends she had lately left; but immediate flight in that direction was not her intention. "Heaven help me," she murmured, as she glided around the old house and approached the horses which the Tories had left tethered to some trees a few yards from the door.

A glance into the room revealed the forms of the Avengers discussing the merits of the wine with oath and jest, or watching the roasting of fowls. They had completely terrorized the country, and under the sway of their lawlessness it was fast becoming a desert.

Alice counted them before she touched a single rein; and then in a brief period of time she loosened the horses and quietly led them into a small copse not far away. The steeds did not refuse to obey her guidance, and when she reached the copse, she struck them with a whip which she found beneath the saddle. It was a smart blow that she administered, and the steeds started forward and disappeared in an instant.

Thus in a few moments Ferguson's Avengers had been deprived of their horses.

Flushed with triumph, Alice Beauchampe returned to the house, and again looked in upon the hilarious tenants.

She now held a pistol in her hand—a weapon which a hostler had granted her, and she crept to the edge of the porch before she halted. There was a flash of vengeance in the dark eyes of the partisan girl while she gazed upon the party beyond the threshold. Once or twice she raised the weapon, but lowered it again, as if playing with the life of the leader of the six, whose burly form was revealed by the light of the fire.

She saw the fowls, smoking and well burned, placed on the table, and watched the greedy men crowd around for their shares. Their tongues and movements told her that stolen liquor was doing its accustomed work on all save the giant, who had superintended the cooking of the late repast. This man appeared perfectly sober, and the angry glances which he often cast at his companions told that he did not sanction their bacchanalian conduct.

"Come! enough of this!" he suddenly cried, rising from the table, which had

been dragged to the center of the room. "Get up, boys, and let's be going. I told you at Wiley's that you had wine enough, but you must bring some here and drink yourselves stupid. Tom Scott, and you Blakeson, I am ashamed of you! What would we do if a gang of rebels should catch us in this condition? You understand the mercy we would get, and yet you sit there as careless as statues—drunk as old Bacchus himself!"

Then an expression of contempt passed over the man's face, and, stooping, he exclaimed:

"Up! up! the rebels are coming!"

But his cry of alarm did not infuse much life into the men at the table. One or two heads were raised, but the drunken leer that made their faces hideous was enough to provoke a smile, even from the mad tory.

"Men!" he sneered, contemptuously! "Dogs! every one of you. I've a mind to ride down to the Pacolet swamp and tell the rebels hiding there that the men they hate are in their power. I have thought that I commanded men, not drunkards!" and he struck the table with the butt of his pistol, but could not rouse his stupid followers.

The next moment, with an oath on his lips, he stood to the door, which he jerked open, and stepped upon the porch.

"Curse such dogs as I lead!" he hissed. "I suppose I must lead the horses up, and tie each fool in the saddle."

He was stepping from the porch for the purpose of attending to the horses which he supposed were still tethered to the trees, when a form rose before him and he started back with a gasp of terror.

"Who in the mischief—"

"Alice Beauchampe," was the interruption of the apparition. "The daughter of the old man basely murdered by your hands! Down upon thy miserable knees, Godfrey Lang, and beg for the mercy you have never granted others Down, I say."

Perhaps the shadows of the window sash did not permit him to see a pistol that was clutched in the hand of the fearless girl, else his rashness might have been curbed.

"Kneel to you! Never!" he cried.

The weapon that he raised dropped before the flash that followed his last words and with a groan of pain he staggered back to drop dead among his drunken comrades.

Alice Beauchampe, amazed at her own courage, stood silent amidst the smoke of her own pistol. She saw the bacchanities try to shake off their terror at sight of their stricken leader, and one rose to his feet to fall as soon as he needed support. "Now for the swamp," she cried with triumph, and the next minute rushed from the disgusting sight.

An hour passed away, and the drunken Tories began to recover; their chief, who had dropped to the floor, seemed to sober them with his cold face and staring eyes, and when they had almost recovered their scattered wits, the foe they dreaded was upon them.

Alice Beauchampe's voice had fired the hearts of a patriot band for vengeance. On her way to the swamp she had encountered the patriots who had captured one of the flying horses, and were following the trail.

The conflict between patriot and tory was brief and almost bloodless.

The five Avengers were made prisoners, and sued like cowards for the mercy they had never granted to a living being.

I need not describe the scene that followed. Suffice it to say that the trees in front of Alice Beauchampe's home bore the strangest fruit that ever hung from living limb.

The vengeance of the patriots was terrible, and when the glorious sun rose again, the dreaded men of the lovely district had ceased to frighten people.

Alice Beauchampe, whose course had led to the extermination of the avenging hand, became the heroine of the day, and after the termination of hostilities, wedded a lieutenant of Marion's men. Her heroism is venerated, and her gallant exploit narrated daily by hundreds of her descendants in the Palmetto State.

A Reminiscence of Senator Morton.

A correspondent gives this reminiscence of Senator Morton in the Cincinnati Commercial: One of the pleasantest occasions of that visit to California, when your correspondent had the honor of accompanying Senator Morton and his family, was a trip to Virginia City. Among other places of interest we visited was the Consolidated Virginia mine. Very agreeable arrangements were made to convey the Senator down the shaft into the mine. The platform was covered with canvas and seats were provided for the party. At the last he declined going on account of his wife not being quite strong enough, but he came and seated himself by the side of the shaft to witness the descent of other members of the party. When I add that the ladies were obliged to don a complete suit of male attire, some idea will be formed of the undertaking, the ladies were three in number, two lovely young girls the daughter and niece of Senator Cooper, and an elderly lady. Mr. Mackey and another gentleman comprised the party. The costume of the ladies was a dread-naught overcoat worn over blue flannel shirt and cloth pantaloons. Heavy shoes and a slouch felt had completed the outfit. On account of the of intense heat of the mine the overcoat was worn only in descending and ascending the shaft, and in the absence of suspendings the pantaloons were tied with a tow string tightly around the waist. The costumes of the gentlemen were not less striking, and no one enjoyed its ludicrous aspect like Senator Morton. He laughed immoderately, and had the patience to remain seated until we returned, flushed with heat and dripping with perspiration. There was not the suspicion of a curl left in the locks of the young ladies, and they looked

as fresh and pretty as a child just out of the bath. Senator Morton, who relished the exit even more than the departure, said they reminded him of the old song of the rose just washed by the rain.

GHOST STORIES.

The events which I record in this paper have taken place either in my own family or in the families of intimate friends, or are from the narration of persons of strict veracity. I begin with one told me very lately by a pious and useful minister of the Church of England. I give this anecdote of his boyish days as much as possible in his own words.

"I was brought up by my grandfather and grandmother, who resided in the old family mansion on the banks of the Derwent, in Derbyshire. This venerable place, which had belonged to our family from the time of the Norman Conquest, had a wide reputation for being haunted, and indeed the strange noises which were heard and the strange tricks which were played, for which nothing rational could account, made the belief of general acceptance. From generation to generation no death had occurred in our family without some supernatural warning being given, and in what I am about to tell you I was the person visited for this purpose.

"When I was about 17 years of age, it was rather suddenly agreed that I should go with 'granny,' as I called her, to pay a visit of a few days to my parents, who lived in the suburbs of Manchester. During the past summer my youngest sister, Lizzie, with whom I had been very little acquainted before, had paid us a visit at the time of hay-making, and I remember thinking that she was the most beautiful child I had ever seen. Always in white, with lovely auburn hair floating in long curls over her shoulders, and playfully darting in and out among the hay-makers, she appeared to me something angelic, and when her visit was ended I quite grieved over her departure. I was therefore much pleased when granny asked me to accompany her to Manchester, as I should see my dear little sister again. A year before we had lost an aunt to whom we were deeply attached, and her bereaved husband was at the present time inhabiting one wing of our old family mansion.

It was the 19th of December, 1855, that after carefully packing my box for the journey, and laying quite at the bottom of the box as it stood in one corner of the room some articles of black crape which I had worn at my aunt's funeral, I went to pay a farewell visit to my uncle in his part of the house. After I had sat with him some time the hall clock struck 4, and just at that moment I felt a deadly chill and shivering all over me exactly as if I had been suddenly plunged into cold water. I became deadly pale, and my uncle in an alarmed tone asked what was the matter with me. I told him I did not know, but that I had never felt such a strange sensation before. My uncle imagined that I must have taken cold and recommended my going early to bed, and I was to travel the following day.

"Having quite recovered from my unpleasant feelings, I spent the evening as usual, and retired to bed at the accustomed time. Now, my bedroom was at the end of a long narrow corridor, and exactly opposite the door by which I entered was the door of a room said to be haunted, which was always kept closed, and which no servant in the house could be persuaded to enter; indeed, they very unanimously avoided going into the corridor itself after dark, though it opened into many bedrooms beside my own. I had two or three times, while a boy, been in the haunted room with my grandfather; I saw nothing remarkable about it but a good deal of moldy, old-fashioned furniture, and an immense, funeral-looking bed at one end, with hangings which had once been splendid but were now dropping to pieces from age and neglect. The bed in my room stood exactly facing the door by which I entered and the door of the haunted room across the passage. Another door on the same side of the room was blocked up by my box, which stood against it. I cannot distinctly remember whether or not in entering for the night I closed my bedroom door, but think it almost certain that I did so, for it was December and the weather very cold.

I went to bed, full of my to-morrow's journey, and not giving a single thought to either ghosts or haunted rooms, went fast to sleep. How long I slept I cannot guess, but I found myself sitting up in bed intently watching the door of my room, and the door of the haunted room, which was also open, and which I could see across the corridor as the moonlight fell upon it. From this room came a figure which I watched across the passage and which, on approaching my bed, I at once recognized as the aunt I had lost the year before, dressed in the same clothes I had last seen her in. She had a most fond and tender expression on her face, but it changed into an angry frown when, stretching over the side of the bed, I tried to embrace her, exclaiming, 'Oh, dear aunt, is that you?' I felt that I clasped the empty air, the figure vanishing in an instant from my sight, I thought I had been dreaming, and lay down again, to wake up a short time afterward and see again the figure of my aunt, but now differently dressed, advancing from the haunted room into mine, this time not coming to the bed, but going to the box I had packed and placed in the corner ready for the next day.

This she appeared to rummage over, displacing the contents and then tossing the things back again. I watched her with the greatest astonishment, and saw her go slowly out of my door into the door of the haunted room. I don't know whether I slept again or not, but a third time I was sitting up in bed a third time my aunt came in, this time close up to the bed, in long flowing white clothes—a

dress in which I had never seen her. I almost gasped out, 'Dear aunt, why do you come?' to which she replied very clearly and distinctly, but with something of effort, 'I come to make an important communication, but it is all comprised in these words: Poor Lizzie! But don't grieve; Lizzie is quite happy!' As she finished these words I started from the bed with outstretched arms, but she had vanished, and I fell heavily to the floor where she had stood. I suppose that after getting back to bed I slept till morning, but as soon as I saw my grandmother I told her all the circumstances and made her look at my box, which was in the greatest disorder, and all the articles of mourning which I had placed at the bottom of the box I found at the top. My grandmother looked grieved but said nothing. I still persisted in thinking it but a curious dream, and we started on our journey that very morning. I was quite in my usual spirits when we arrived at the last railway station.

From here we had still a long walk to where my parents lived, and as we were not expected, I pleased myself by thinking how surprised they would all be. We arrived, and just as I laid my hand on the latch of the garden gate to open it for granny, I felt exactly the same, deadly chill and shivering which had come over me while sitting with my uncle the evening before. When I recovered and we were going up the long gravel walk, I said to my grandmother, 'How strange the house looks, granny! All the windows are draped with white, and I never remember my mother's room having white curtains before.' Granny made no answer, and as we knocked at the door my mother opened it, led us into the hall, and received us most affectionately, but spoke in a hushed, subdued tone which frightened me. Her first words were, 'How glad I am you are come! we looked for you some hours ago.' 'How can that be,' we replied, 'when we meant to surprise you, and did not write that we were coming?' 'But did you not,' said she, 'get my two letters—the one in which I wrote of dear Lizzie's dangerous illness from scarlet fever a week ago, and one to tell you of her death at 4 o'clock yesterday, which last ought to have reached you before you started this morning?'

This was a dreadful blow to us, for, as we told my mother, we had received neither letter. When we were a little recovered from the shock, my mother told us that the day before, Lizzie knew she was dying and said she felt quite happy; she took leave of all the family then at home, and referring to me said, 'I should have liked to say good-by to dear Tom—poor Tom! Give my love to Tom!' As she said these last words she fell back and passed away; just at that moment the clock struck 4. She died, then, exactly at the time when I felt the deadly chill while sitting with my uncle.

"After my grandfather's death I was placed till I was five-and-twenty in business with a master who proved to be a professed atheist. Finding me to be an intelligent lad and more than usually well grounded in the scriptures, he made it his daily business, by specious argument and covert ridicule, to undermine my Christian belief, and often flattered himself that he was on the point of succeeding. He certainly would have done so but for my remembrance of my aunt's appearance in my bedroom at the time of Lizzie's death. Whenever I had time for reflection and thought of that, I felt assured that there was not only a state of being after death, but a directing power by whose agency even a disembodied spirit could return to the scene of its earthly pilgrimage."

Sheep Browsing about the Clouds.

Probably the largest and highest rock in the known world is the South Dome of Yosemite. Standing at the fork of the upper valley, it rears itself, a solid rocky reef, 6,000 feet above the ground. A more powerful hand than that of a Titan has cut away the eastern half, leaving a sheer precipice over a mile in height. No man ever trod the top of this dome until last year. Former visitors gazed in wonder at the spikes driven into the rock by harpy spirits, who had repeatedly endeavored to scale it. The shreds of rope dangling in the wind told the story of their failure. Last year, however, after thousands of dollars were spent, several persons found their way to the top of the dome, and this summer two sheep were discovered browsing on the hitherto inaccessible peak. Mrs. A. J. Murphy, wife of a late hotel proprietor in the valley, writes to a lady in New York as follows:

John Anderson is building stairs up to the top of the South Dome. You can go up now by holding on to a rope, but it is quite a tiresome trip. A few ladies in the valley have made the ascent, and I am sorry I did not attempt it. But I am one of the few who have seen the sun rise on the top of Cloud's Rest, and its glory will never fade from my memory.

Strange to say, two sheep found their way to the top of the South Dome this summer, a dam and her lamb. How they ever got there is more than I can tell. They found bunches of grass shoots to eat, but no water. Dew that fell on the dome Anderson was going to carry some water when I left.

A Dutchman in describing horses he had lost, said: "D much alike, specially the of look't so much like both I c other from which; when I I always catch the order, and the one most dead became kicked me."

Switzerland has passed a law that children under the age of 15 shall not be employed in any factory after the first of next May.