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Choice Poetry.

THE FARMER'S SONG.

Some thirty years have passed, Kate,
Since you and I were young,
And, in the tones of confidence,
Our mutual love we sung:
But now we're growing old, Kate,
Our locks are turning gray;
But still we live and love Kate,
As in our youthful day.

What tho' the world may laugh, Kate,
And call it vain desire!
As tho' the frosts of age, Kate,
Confined no potent fire!
The heart that can forget, Kate,
The love that children moves,
Never felt the love—what think you, Kate?
Of him who truly loves.

Yes, do we love in age, Kate;
Tho' wrinkled is the brow,
And fire is cold in the cheek, Kate,
That shows old age now.
But still the heart is warm, Kate,
And beats in style of youth,
That we, though old and gray, Kate,
Still love as in our youth.

Let others boast of wealth, Kate,
We have a happier lot;
Our mutual love a treasure is—
Our children and our cot;
We have all that we need, Kate,
If Heaven our labor bless;
Our farm, tho' small, is greater than
The richest land possess.

My head upon your bosom, Kate,
Rests as in former days,
And heart to heart beats quick, Kate,
Around them Cupid plays:
His dart, tho' not so sharp, Kate,
Still reaches to the core,
And fastens them together, Kate,
As in the days of yore.

As down the vale of life, Kate,
We travel "to that bourne
From whence no traveler, Kate,
Can ever more return,"
We'll live and love each other, Kate,
As man and wife should love,
And when at last we've passed the tomb,
We'll live and love above.

THE BROKEN HEART.

For her they bade the dance and song,
Through their stately halls resound:
They hoped that 'midst the glittering throng
A solace to her grief she found.

They hailed the smile that sometimes play'd
So sadly o'er her pallid face—
Their useless cares were well repaid,
One gleam of brighter days to trace.

The hectic fire on her fair cheek
They hailed as health's returning bloom:
The tears of that eye so meek—
As triumph, gained o'er the tomb!

Thus lured by hope, they scarcely perceived
The fearful progress of decay;
Nor, the idol of their hearts believed
Of death, the doomed—the willing prey!

Alas! the taper when 'tis spent
Shoots forth one vivid ray!
A brightness, but in mockery lent,
Ere it forever fades away!

Select Tale.

(*From Porter's Spirit of the Times.*)

THE BANDIT AND THE BORDERER.

BY LARIAT.

(*Concluded.*)

CHAPTER III.

Three years had passed away since Ben left his home, and for half this period he had not seen old Ramrod's face; for once, one night, on an ash-timbered creek, the Pawnees had surprised them at their camp, and *sauve qui peut* was the word. Both had plunged into the thicket, each taking a different course; and since that time neither believed the other alive.

One evening, near the close of October, the last rays of the setting sun shone obliquely upon the camp of a small band of trappers, who had put up for the night near the Padowa, or south fork of the Platte river, and but a few miles from the regularly travelled emigrant route to Oregon. The party was composed of six men, of various ages, all dressed in the usual prairie costume—buck-skin coats and leggings, ornamented with leathern fringes down the seams, moccasins of Indian make, and shoulder-belts, sustaining their powder-horns and bullet-pouches, and the various instruments essential to the complete outfit of the trapper. A glance would have sufficed to show that they were all experienced hunters. A small fire burned in the centre of the encampment, around which five of the number were busily engaged in toasting some slips of venison and buffalo meat. Not far off, the trapper's horses were grazing quietly, with their fore-legs confined by hobbles of raw hide; while farther out, the guard was slowly pacing up and down, or, anon, he ascended the bluffs of the river bank; or, betimes, caused and leaned on his rifle, as his watchful eye swept the prairie horizon, to see if he could discover any sign of hostile Indians. But he finally came in; and having drawn his rifle-cover over the barrel, seated himself beside his companions, and with them greedily partook of the smoking viands, now done to a turn, and emitting a delicious savor, which would have readily provoked an appetite in one by no means hungry. Cross-legged and low bent, they plied their knives industriously, for they had ridden hard that day in quest of game, as the buffalo and all the smaller animals had gone farther south for the winter.

But ere they had their meal half finished, the air had chilled perceptibly; and as the twilight deepened, a fleecy vapor spread across the sky, rapidly shutting out the few straggling stars that heralded the coming night; while far away to the eastward, a dense, black cloud seemed rapidly lifting above the horizon, most ominous of a tedious night.

"Thar 'll be trouble to-night boys," said one of the youngest of the party, "for rain's a-comin'; and these diggin's hain't none of the handsomest."

"*Well*, they 'ain't," replied one with emphasis, at the same time jerking a well-picked bone towards a couple of half-famished wolves, that sat whining and howling near the camp. "Buffler ain't runnin' now, and a starved Rapaho wouldn't be no-ways back'ard about makin' a raise of our mules and packs, you may depend. I shouldn't wonder if the sneakin' devils are about now. Whose hand was it you saw yesterday, Ben?"

"Yellow Bear's," replied the man, who was no other than Ben Morton. "But he was a-putting for Arkansas, and won't come this way, I'm thinking. So thar's one bad feller out of the way."

"That's so; though one's bad as another, for the most part. Howsever Injuns be darned. Clar away these fixins, and let's have another log on the fire, for this child's going to smoke. Any ——"

The speaker paused suddenly, and with head averted, stared eagerly into the gloom, while his finger rested upon his rifle-trigger, ready to pull it at a moment's warning. The others, also, listened breathlessly, as faint sounds to windward pested of those whose visitange might not be altogether welcome. Presently, the dim outline of a single figure was seen moving slowly towards the camp; and as he came nearer, it was plain enough that he was a white man. But he was a-foot and alone, and carried his rifle wearily, and paused not on his way until he had come within the light of the blazing fire. The man was about fifty years old, dressed in the usual style; but his clothes were all torn, and bedaubed with dirt, and his long gray hair drooped from below the rim of an old black felt hat, once too big, but now made to fit the head by means of a stick with which it was looped up behind. His swarthy cheeks were hollow, and his cadaverous jaws spoke of hard "doings" and long fasts, as if a cut of tender-loin would hardly come amiss. Without pausing to question the intruder, the party tendered him the never-failing invitation to "sit and eat," which he did at once, falling to with an avidity really pleasing to see. Piece after piece of the savory meat he stowed away in his capacious cheeks, nor paused till he had finished the last morsel before him. Then leisurely wiping his knife, he returned it to its place in his belt.

None knew the old man; and none seemed disposed to break the silence while he ate. But now he turned his face full towards the fire, and Ben Morton uttered a sudden cry of surprise and delight, as its light fully revealed his features. It was old Ramrod! Springing to his side he grasped his hand.

"Why, Ramrod, old hoss, can this be you! I thought you was under long ago!"

"What—Ben?" exclaimed the old man.—"Well, if here ain't him as was rubbed out on Pawnee Fork two years ago, I wouldn't say so! How do you come on?"

"Slick, old hoss. But how afoot now, and whar from? What brings ye into camp this time o' day as famished as a white wolf, without kit or kiver? and what's the sign on the perairie?"

"Bad enough, and fresh, too; and all the way down the river at that," replied Ramrod. "The red devils been awful bad hereabouts, and more an one poor feller's had his har raised since this day week. It's more besides wolves as 'ull be howlin' round this camp to-night, if I'm any judge of Indian sign."

"That just our mind, stranger," responded one of Ben's comrades. "But hadn't you better let me get that arrow out of your shoulder, for it ain't pretty, no-how! That looks like fighting some, I guess;" and he proceeded to extract the weapon, which was found only to have penetrated through the coat, slightly scratching the skin. "Whar did you get this here?"

"Wagh!" growled old Ramrod with a savage grin. "The varmint as flung that skewer, left his ticket for his pains," and he clapped his hand upon his belt, where hung a blood-stained Indian scalp. "We had a hard time of it that night, though. Me and Bob Salvely was ahead for meat in the morning, and had jest sighted a couple of black-tails, when all of a sudden they takes heels away, and at the same time up hops twenty red-skins above the bluff, and when they sees us, they comes tearing away arter our har like mad. But when they seed two good rifles pointed at their gizzards, ready to give 'em death and destruction, they stopped that game, and tried to circumvent us by makin' a surround. But Ben puts a ball into the highest of 'em, and drops him slick, I tell you. When the Injins knew one of our guns was empty, they began to close in, and fling their arrows smart. At the same time one comes rushing at Bob with his lance. 'Give the nigger h—!' cries Bob to me, at the same time a-ramming down the ball. So I ups old Ginger, and lets him have it plump in the eye; and Bob, he gets his ball down at last, and blazes away, and made another come right handsome. But what could we do now, for both our guns was empty, and the Injins were just ready to take our scalps? However, as good luck would have it, up come the rest of our party just then, and charging right into the thick of the Injins, took 'em right and left, and them what warn't laid on the ground, took heels away, shorter. But me and Bob was full of arrows as a porkypine.

"Well we had another turn that night, and the Injins made a raise that time; for what could we do agin two hundred of the devils? Five of us went under, and the Injins took the whole cavayard. That was three days agone, and this child has carried empty paunch ever since. So thar's what fotched me here, and no mistake. Halloo! if it don't rain I'm dogged! What's to keep Injins from being about such a night as this, I should like to know?"

While the old trapper had been narrating his adventures, the wind had risen considerably, and the first big drops of the coming storm had attracted his notice, as they pattered on the packs, or fell hissing into the fire.

"Let's have another stick on," he said, "and the boys can bring in the hosses. It's no use running risks being out too late o'nights; for, as I say, thar's brown skin knocking around, and thar may be some hair-swapping afore morning."

Accordingly, the animals were brought near the camp, and securely picketed. Fresh fuel was added to the fire, which now began to blaze brightly, notwithstanding the rain. Then each man spread his buffalo-robe and blanket on the bare ground, to which they added a Navajo or fire-point Mackinaw, as an out-side covering, to keep out the rain from the beds. Having completed their preparations for the night, and seen their rifles and powder securely protected by being placed between the blankets, each man lit his black-stemmed pipe, and sitting with their feet to the fire, prepared to beguile the tedious hours with a smoke and marvellous yarns, until tired nature should compel them to seek repose in sleep.

The hours dragged slowly, and nothing had occurred to disturb the cheerless camp. Only the rain fell more copiously, and the chiding of the wolves was heard but at intervals, when the wind paused to gather its strength for fresh blasts. The animals ceased to graze, and humped their backs to the force of the storm. The tobacco in the pipes grew low, and the blazing camp-fire was reduced to glowing embers. Old Ramrod stirred up the ashes with his foot, and glanced uneasily around.

"Who's fust guard to-night?" he asked.

"Joe Travis."

"Well, put one more with him, and let the boys lock well to the cavayard, for thar will be powder burned afore morning."

Old Ramrod's injunction was readily obeyed, for all seemed instinctively to acknowledge him as a leader, though there were those in the party as old as he. Then all crawled in between their blankets, and composed themselves for the night; and with the injunction to "keep their eyes skinned for red-skins," the guard commenced their duties.

Two hours dragged heavily by, and midnight came; but it brought no abatement of the storm. It was nigh time for the guard to be relieved. Old Ramrod rested uneasily. His sleep came by snatches, and he tossed upon his hard bed, occasionally raising his head and peering into the thick gloom, or casting his eye anxiously towards the animals which were picketed near by. Perhaps it was the extraordinary toil he had undergone the past few days, that made him restless. Once he started up suddenly from his soaked bed, when one of the mules snorted, and cocking his rifle, walked out from camp, and cautiously reconnoitred the premises; but he saw nothing. The guard were on the alert, and all seemed quiet. Concluding that his drowsiness had aided his imagination, he returned, and once more composed himself to rest, expressing his vexation at being thus disturbed by a sullen growl:

"Darn sich doins', say I! Ugh! Injins about, be they? Well, *reckon* they *are*; but they can't come it over *this* child—they can't come it over *this* child. Ugh!"

Then he closed his eyes for a moment, but presently turned upon his other side, and glanced toward his pack-mule.

'Ugh—old grizzle-head! got yer top-eye open, have ye? That's right—keep it so—or may-be you'll get roped afore day-light.'

The animal seemed to comprehend the language of its master, and cocked its ears; and Ramrod presently fell into a quiet doze. The first guard had come in, and the second was prepared to go out, when the animals gave a sudden snort. Then came a startling sound, like the swift rush of many feet trampling over the turf; the horses gave a loud, quick snort, threw up their heads, and dashing wildly to the full length of their ropes, stood trembling and staring into the thick gloom. In an instant, every man had sprung from his bed; and grasping their ready rifles, they flung themselves flat on the ground beyond the light of the fire, ready to receive the second attempt of the Indians upon their animals, which they had very good reason to expect. But they waited in vain. It was evident that the Indians, having once failed of success, had not courage to renew the attack, or else they planned some different manœvre. The latter was most probable.

'Darn the sneakin' red devils!' said Ramrod, at length, as he rose from the earth, and shook himself. 'If them ain't the meanest kind of Injins, I wouldn't say so. We might as well up stakes at once, for it won't do to stop here, no how. This child hain't no notion of having his top-knot swinging from the end of a Rapaho's wiping stick—so let's out.'

Accordingly, the lariats of the animals were speedily loosened, and the party then quietly removed to a spot some fifty rods distant; for to remain longer before their bright fire, was but to expose themselves as targets for Indian sharpshooters, to whom the darkness was cover sufficient to protect them from the aim of the whites, who could not see beyond the little circle of light around them. Having again picketed their animals, they seated themselves upon the ground, drew their blankets around them to protect their limbs from the cold and rain, lighted their pipes, and waited patiently for the dawn. That came at last. The Indians molested them no more that night, and as soon as the first grey streak appeared in the east, they mounted horses, and took the route which would soonest carry them out of that part of the country; for, as Indians were plenty, and game was scare, the inducements to remain were not great.

After a two hours' ride, and while they were proceeding leisurely at an ambling gate, they descried a small band of the Indians in the distance; and on coming nearer, the Indians began making signals of peaceable intentions. The Indians being but six, their overtures were readily accepted, and they were allowed to come up. They proved to be a hunting-party of Ogallalah Sioux. After receiving some tobacco, they volunteered the information that a large party of Arappahoes were out on the Platte until to intercept such trains as should not be too strong for them, and advised the trappers not to pass that way. For this they received some additional trifles "on the prairie," (free gift,) and went on their way. Heading now for the Platte, the trappers soon struck the wagon-trail along the river. Here fresh wheel-tracks attracted their attention, which were pronounced but an hour or two old. From the sign, it was plain there were but two wagons; but there were a number of outside horse-tracks, which indicated either a party of horsemen, or a cavalcade of loose animals. The trappers followed on without mending their pace, and after an hour's ride, it was evident the wagon train was now not far in advance; for even at this moderate gate, they would soon overtake the slow, lumbering vehicles. Soon after, they came to a turn in the river, and just beyond, they perceived that the wheel-tracks became scarcely discernable thro' numerous hoof-prints, as if a large party of horsemen had followed immediately in their rear. After a little, the wheel-tracks again became distinct. Then deep irregular ruts were seen, as if the horses had shied suddenly, and signs of a scuffle were visible. All these needed no interpretation, and the trappers mended their pace.

'Ho, boys! let's help them chaps out of this scrape, if it ain't too late, already,' said Ramrod, as he tightened his reins, and drove his spurs into his horse's flanks. The others instantly quickened the speed of their animals. 'It goes against my grain,' he said, 'to see white folks made wolf-meat of by a set of darned red-skins. And why should they, when thar's those at hand that can help 'em?'

'That's my talk, exactly,' said Ben Morton. 'It's plain enough, the odds ain't equal, and the Injuns have got the best of 'em. Ha! what's this?' he said, quickly, as he spied some object in the road, a little distance a-head. It was a woman's bonnet. 'Ho! put out, boys! put out!' he cried sharply. 'Thar's women in the scrape; and who knows, but that they've already lost their hair! Put out, I say! We'll see more when we turn that timber, as sure as shooting!'

Instantly, every swift steed was flying over the turf at the top of his speed, urged by whip and spur, their long tails streaming in the wind; and soon a loud shout rose from every tongue, as the wagons have in full view. But the trappers paused not, but plunged their spurs still deeper; for they saw not a moment was to be lost, if they would aid those whom they sought to rescue. The wagons were still a good half-mile in advance; but they could see distinctly the desperate strait they were in. The whites had some dozen of loose animals with them; and these they were attempting to defend from the attacks of a large party of Indians, who had surrounded them, and were now galloping around on every side, whooping and yelling, shaking their buffalo robes, and trying in every conceivable way to stampede them, or lasso them from the guard. But the whites did their duty well. They had halted the wagons, and placed them at right angles to each other; and, having driven the animals into this partial enclosure, they had drawn themselves up in line outside, and kept a bristling front of rifle-barrels always towards their assailants, on the side most exposed. But the Indians were too numerous by far, and had now divided their force, and, by a preconcerted plan, made a simultaneous attack, both in front and rear. The whites repelled them as best they could, receiving their charge with a volley of rifle-shot, every ball bringing its man to the earth. But their rifles only cracked once, and they had not time to re-load. Their only remaining resource was their pistols and their knives; and, with the fury of desperation, they now sprang to the hand-to-hand encounter.

All this happened while the trappers were flying to their assistance; and, so engaged were both parties, that neither noticed their approach. Now, for the first time, the trappers perceived that a number of white men were evidently aiding the Indians. There were three of them in all, and these were foremost in the fight. But now, leaving the Indians to their own bloody work, they sprang to the wagons, and dragged out the women, who had been placed therein for better security. In vain the women resisted; and their friends could not help them, for they had more than they could do to defend themselves from the Indians, and two of their number had already fallen. Around these, a half-dozen savages were yelling like fiends, and fighting for their scalps; while near at hand, a stalwart teamster was engaged in an unequal contest with two naked warriors, who fought with the fury of wild beasts; and a little farther on, a tall old man, with a huge bowie-knife, was vainly endeavoring to defend himself against a dozen that surrounded him. These had already forced him upon his knees, and one now twisted his fingers into his long grey hair, and drew his knife around the scalp, to separate it from the skull. But he suddenly paused from his work, as a yell most fierce and loud sounded upon his ear; and the maddened trappers, with showers of imprecations, bounded into the thickest of the fight, prostrating more than one Indian warrior in their headlong charge.

'Quit that! you cussed devil!' cried old Ramrod, as he rushed upon him, and drove the muzzle of his rifle full into his breast, firing as he did so. Then, drawing his pistols, he fired right and left, dropping an Indian at each shot, and continued the contest with his trusty knife. In like manner, the rest of the trappers did deeds of valor, rushed madly into the unequal contest—for even now, their foes were more than five to one—and compelling many a red-skin to bite the dust. But Ben Morton turned his horse's head to where one of the renegade whites had dragged one of the women to the earth, and was now struggling to bind her. Casting away his rifle, for he dared not fire, for fear of wounding the woman, he leaped from his horse, and, drawing his knife, jumped to the rescue. But the other anticipated him, and springing to his feet, boldly confronted him. Had a ghost from the spirit-world suddenly appeared to read him his final doom, he could not have been more amazed and dumb-founded than he now was, at the sight of a face that he had but too good cause to remember—the identical weasen-chaps, carroty-hair, and scar-marked eye of Bully Blink-eye! Blencoe was equally amazed. For a moment, both stood riveted to the spot, speechless. Then, the start of wonder gave place to a ferocious scowl, and, with tongues laboring for utterance, they glared at each other like two fiends.

'Ha! I have you now!' Ben fairly shrieked, at length. 'You shall not escape me this time, by the gods! Take *that!*' and poising his long knife, he gave his whole weight to the force of the blow. But the quick eye of the expert swordsman detected the thrust, and twisting his lithe body to one side, he received but a slight cut on the arm.

'Not so fast, my boy!' he growled, with a horrid grin. 'It wasn't easy to come that when this child was alive, and it ain't no easier to kill him after he's dead, I guess.' At the same time he made a pass at Morton's ribs, which brought the blood in a stream, and again he gave a grin of savage delight. He was in his favorite element now, and no man was his superior at that game. But Ben fought with the fury of madness and desperation, and though Blencoe writhed and twisted, feinted and parried, and cut and thrust, he did not, by any means, escape the furious blows of Ben's knife, and blood was already flowing from a dozen different wounds. He found Ben a tough match. But both were now becoming weak from the loss of blood, and Ben the weaker of the two. Blencoe saw his advantage, and followed it up with renewed vigor and telling effect.

But just at this crisis, the bound woman, who had just now freed herself of the cord that confined her limbs, sprang up, and with a wild shriek, threw her body between the combatants, then fell lifeless to the earth. At the same time old Ramrod came bounding to the spot. Seizing the bully by the collar of his coat, he jerked him backwards, with an oath.

'Now, you darned thievin' varmint,' he cried, 'take what I owe yer!' and raised his knife to plunge it into his breast, but Ben stayed the blow.

'Not now, Ramrod, not now,' he replied.—'Killing is too good for him. Here, boys! the rope—give us the rope quick!' he cried to two men who now came up. 'Tie him up, slick, and then fetch me a drink, for I feel faintish-like.'

The bully struggled, fought, raved and swore; but to no purpose. He was soon firmly secured, and left to his reflections. The fight was now fairly over, and Ben, though weak and exhausted, immediately turned his attention to the woman who had saved his life, and who seemed to have fallen in a swoon. While he raised her up, some one dashed cold water into her face; and opening her eyes, she turned them full upon him. And Ben, for the first time, had a fair look at her features. No wonder he started then; for he beheld in that upturned face the rosy lips and beaming eyes, and waving, auburn hair, of his long-loved, long-lost Bella May! Scarce believing his senses, he held her from him for an instant and gazed intently upon her.

'Ben, don't you know me?' she asked, half-reprovingly, while the tear-drops trembled on her lashes.

He needed no more convincing. The next moment she was sobbing on his bosom.

'Thank God you were not killed by that dreadful man,' she said. 'Are you *badly* hurt?'

'No, Bell; only a few scratches. And I am thankful that you got safely out of his clutches. But how came you here, I should like to know?'

A low, spiteful growl, near by, startled them at that moment; and turning, they beheld the eye of the bully turned full upon them, and glaring with intensest hate and baffled rage.

'I'll fix you yet,' he muttered, with a choked voice, attempting to rise.

'That's right, hoss,' answered Ben taunting-ly. 'But you'd better be quick, for you ain't got long to do it in.' Then turning to Bell, who drew instinctively away—'never mind him. He'll never do any more mischief.'

'No, *that* he won't my purty gal, you may depend,' now chimed in old Ramrod, who had been fidgeting impatiently for some time, anxious to speak to her, but unwilling to interrupt her first meeting with her lover. 'If that 'ere varmint ever gets finger on you again while old Ramrod's about, you may scalp my old head—that's all. Now give us your hand.'

The girl regarded him with much surprise.—'What, uncle, are you here, too?' she said, advancing to meet him. 'How glad I am to see you all. How strange it is, too, that we should all meet together in such a place—you, and Ben, and fa——' She paused abruptly, and her face grew suddenly pale, her breath came quickly, and she looked eagerly about her on all sides. 'My father! where is he?' she cried. 'Is he dead? Oh! how could I forget him so long!' She wrung her hands for grief.

'That's a fact,' said Ramrod, slapping his hand upon his hip, as if recollecting himself, and then strode off hastily towards the scene of the late conflict.

'What! is the old man here too?' exclaimed Ben. 'I never thought of that—though I might have, anyhow.' And he, too, turned to follow after the other.

The battle-field presented a singular aspect, indicative of a hard-fought contest and a dearly-bought victory. Twenty-three of the Indians lay dead or mortally wounded—many of them having fallen at the first fire of the teamsters. One of their renegade white allies also lay stretched upon the grass, with a pistol-ball in his forehead, and a deep cut on the neck. Of the teamsters' party, seven were killed, and all more or less hurt. Their horses, with the exception of those hitched to the wagons, had been let loose upon the prairie, and were afterwards picked up by the retreating Indians. The women, all but two of whom were half-breed squaws—wives of the teamsters—had escaped injury, the objects of the assailants being to take them prisoners. These two were the wife and daughter of farmer May. To take care of the wounded was now the trapper's first attention. Striding hastily over the ground, Ramrod sought out the body of farmer May, his brother. The old man still breathed, laboring hardly under the weight of a huge dead savage that lay across his breast, and prevented him rising, weak and exhausted as he was from loss of blood. He was pierced with arrows and knife-wounds, and clots of blood stained his forehead, where the Indian's scalping-knife had but half finished its work.—Hastily removing the corpse of the Indian, Ramrod raised the farmer's head into his lap, and carefully wiped the blood from his forehead.—The old man opened his eyes, and a smile of recognition played upon his lips, as he essayed to speak.

'Easy, my brother, the worst is done. You was a minute too late. Take care of the girl for my sake. It is all Blencoe's work.'

He spoke with great difficulty, and Ramrod saw that the sands of his life had well nigh run out. He would have called the daughter, but she was already by his side—she and Ben. They were just in time to receive the old man's blessing, and then he died.

The bodies of the whites were all decently interred on the river bank, and their grave marked with a pile of stones. When these simple ceremonies were completed, the horses were hitched up, and the party, silently and in sadness, continued their way over the prairie, leaving the dead bodies of the Indians to be devoured by the wolves, which ever follow on the trail of the hunter or emigrant. Having accomplished a mile, they halted the wagons and prepared for luncheon; for all were greatly in need of refreshment, after the toil and excitement of the morning. But Ben and Ramrod had another duty to perform—a duty which they owed to the dead and living—those who had fallen by the assassin's hand, and those who had escaped his vengeance; and an exultant twinkle of fiendish delight was visible in their eyes, as they set to work to make preparations for carrying out their plans.

First they lifted the bound body of Bully Blink-eye down from the wagon wherein he had been placed, and laid him carefully on the grass. They next selected the strongest raw-hide lariat they had, and a picket-pin, and laid them beside him. Then, when all was ready for the start, they retained their own horses, and bade the rest of the party go on, without them, which they did, all but two or three of their comrades, who insisted upon remaining behind. As the wagons rumbled slowly away, Bell looked uneasily behind her; but Ben hastened to tell her not to feel anxious, as he would overtake them before they had gone a half mile farther.

It was now about four o'clock, and the October sun was rapidly lengthening the shadows on the prairie. The tawny stragglers, which here and there dotted the plain, would soon usher in the lonely night with a run in one chorus, and the wassailers of the midnight hour revel in barbarous saturnalia. Already the fleecy clouds that hung above the western horizon began to grow rubescent, ominous of the coming twilight. This is the usual time for camping; for the hunter must make his preparations for the night, and the animals need time to graze as well as sleep. Old Ramrod bore this well in mind, as he and his companions industriously busied themselves with their helpless victim before them. First they turned Blencoe's arms behind his back, and wound the raw-hide lariat tightly around his wrists, tying it with many knots, so as to make it doubly secure. His clothes were then removed, except his hunting-coat, and the cords that confined his lower limbs were severed, which left him free in all respects, save in the use of his arms. Having completed these preliminaries, the trapper rubbed his hands with satisfaction. Then, presently, he took the picket-pin, and drove it deep into the ground, so firmly, that no single man could draw it out, and fastened the lariat securely to its head.

'Thar; that'll do, now, I reckon,' he said, and grinned savagely. Then turning to Blencoe, 'Come, hoss, get up! It's nigh on to feeding-time, and I guess as how we'll picket yer hyar for the night. The grass hain't none of the best; but you'll find better pickin' afore mornin' may be, that is, if——'

'Good heavens! you don't mean leaving me here alone, to be eaten up by wolves!' cried the terrified villain, now fully comprehending the intentions of his persecutors.

'Well, you'll make as good wolf-meat as anything else, I reckon,' coolly replied the trapper, 'though may be the critters 'ud despise sucking the marrer-bones of sich as you. In that case, you can hail us in the morning, for our camp ain't far off—not more'n a mile or so. Come, boys, let's put out, for the wagons are nigh out o' eye-shot.'

'No, no! for God's sake don't leave me here,' cried the doomed man, as the others turned to depart. 'Shoot me; knife me; or anything else; only don't leave me here in this way, I beg you.'

But the trappers paid no further heed to him. Mounting their horses, they drove rapidly away, despite the shouts and cries of their victim, which grew less and less distinct as they cantered over the prairie, until at length they were lost to hearing altogether. Joining their comrades, they made camp for the night. Supper was prepared by the women, and in due season fully discussed by the whole party; after which the passing hours were occupied in listening to, and recounting the events of the past few days; how farmer May had set out from Missouri, in company with others, to find new homes on the confines of the Far West; how Bill Blencoe had pressed his company upon them at the outset, and importuned Bell May to be his wife; how he was refused with scorn, and departed with renewed threats of vengeance; and how, at last, when they were already a fortnight out from the settlement, he had come down upon them at the head of his villainous crew—already famous for their high-handed outrages on the plains—and attempted to massacre their party, and take possession of their goods. All this was told, and heard in common. And other things were said, intended only for private ears. Other memories were recalled from the almost forgotten past, mutual explanations followed, dark mysteries were solved, forgiveness freely granted, and pledges of abiding affection solemnly interchanged, as Ben Morton and Bell May sat out the small hours of the night, in that old, white-tilted Conestogoe wagon, which chance or destiny drawn off a little apart from the rest.

The upshot of all this was, that on the next morning, when the teamsters had the horses all hitched up, ready to put out, they took the back trail for the settlements, at the given word from Ben; and their hearts grew light and joyous, despite their late bereavements, as the wagons rumbled rapidly over the prairie on they way home. The two lovers rode side by side, happy as they could be, at this unexpected turn of fortune's wheel—and together they have travelled many a mile since. Old Ramrod, too, gladly accompanied them, for he had not put foot within the States for three long years.

The fate of Bill Blencoe—the bully, the duellist, and the bandit—remains yet undescribed.

Oh! how rapidly, to him, did that declining sun drop down the western sky! The softly-tinted clouds grew gorgeous, and blazed with molten fire, and flared upon him with a painful effulgence. Brighter they grew—bright to their full intensity; and then their glory gradually faded into a heavy, sombre red, which spanned the whole horizon, while in the centre hung the sun, like a molten ball of fire; and he gazed at it steadily, with wild, staring eyes, as it hung there, suspended for a moment, before its lapse from sight summoned his executioners to their work. Then, when its last faint ray had vanished, and twilight came rushing from the east, spreading its gossamer veil over the plain, he shuddered, and a chill crept through his veins, as he heard the dismal howl of a distant wolf. Then another took up the mournful cadence from a point still more remote; and as the twilight deepened, the signal call was answered from many throats at intervals—some near, and some far. Often before, he had heard those voices in the silent watches of the night, and heeded them not; but now he trembled. If he could not free himself, he knew that death was certain, and his guilty soul recoiled at the dread issue.

Once more he tried with all his might to part the rope that held him. He placed his feet upon it, and pulled with all his strength, but the strong raw-hide would not yield a particle. It only cut still deeper into his bleeding wrists. Then turning, he would the rope around his body, until he had wound himself up close to the picket-pin, and strove to draw it out of the ground; but it remained firm as ever. Now, frantic with fear and rage, he dashed to its full length with all his force; but he tried in vain. He stamped, and raved, and swore, and tugged violently at the cruel rope; he chewed it with savage desperation, and dashed himself upon the ground, until his body reeked with perspiration. But no relief came—only the wolves! He could see the glare of light of Ben's far off camp-fire, and this only aggravated his woes. The wolves had scented him now, and were holding hideous revels at no great distance. They howled and whined, and their feet pattered on the turf, as they trotted stealthily around him, running hither and thither, and afraid to approach one whom they had been taught to fear. But their frightened victim stood rigid as a statue, and only gnashed his teeth, as his eyes rapidly followed them in all their twistings and turnings. The creatures seemed puzzled. The adventure was new to them. But they only howled the louder—and each yell brought fresh accessions to their ranks. Presently, a little coyote, bolder than the rest, brushed past him, snuffing as it went, and the bully started at the contact of a creature he would yesterday have scorned to waste a bullet on. Then another came, and another. The magic circle that had seemed to keep his person sacred until now, grew rapidly less; and among the hundred dusky shadows near him, he could distinguish the larger forms of the dreaded grey wolf. A half dozen of these now moved out from the rest, and approached him stealthily on all sides, and he knew that his doom was sealed. His heart leaped to his throat, his jaws grew dry, and lurid flames flashed through his eyes. And now they made a dash at him, simultaneously. With a single yell of mortal agony, he sprang to the full length of the rope, as if he would leap them all at a single bound; but before it was fairly taut, they had fastened their fangs upon him, and tasted his blood. Before the sound of his last death-yell had fairly died away upon the air, the whole pack were snarling and snapping and fighting over his bones!

When Ben and Ramrod passed that way the next morning, the picket-pin and a well-gnawed skull were all the traces that remained of the last night's tragedy.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.—Somebody has, under the above caption, thrown together some striking facts in the history of our country and of the world.

A hundred years ago, a [illegible] German monarch reined over these United States—then colonies of Great Britain—and on the whole earth, with the exception of Switzerland, there was not a single republic of any pretensions. A hundred years ago the French flag floated over Quebec, Pittsburgh and New Orleans. A hundred years ago the old French monarchy existed—the bastile reared its accursed towers, and Louis the XVth dallied with infamous wantons, squandered his subjects' money, and blasphemed in his own person the name of man. Fifty years ago railroads, locomotives, and magnetic telegraphs were practically unknown. Fifty years ago there were scarcely five millions of people in the United States, and Ohio was almost as much a wilderness as Oregon is now. Fifty years ago Washington had just died, Jefferson was still living, and Clay, Webster and Calhoun were men as yet unknown to fame.

The world would be more happy if persons gave up more to an interchange of friendship—But money engrosses all our thoughts; and we scarce enjoy a social hour, because we think it unjustly stolen from the main business of life.

A good newspaper is like a valuable and accomplished friend, whose appearance on one's threshold gladdens the mind, with the promise of pleasant and profitable [illegible]

Italian proverbs of [illegible] point. Take the following as [illegible] of beauty are the [illegible]

Honors come by diligence and economy.