

pursue a more gentlemanly calling, for my sake. I am sure of one thing, though," she added, with rising color, "whatever it was, it was honest and honorable; for he would not do anything dishonorable."

This conversation took place while Miss Murray was eating the dainty meal which Mrs. Burt had prepared for her.

The wind was still blowing strongly from the north, and there were occasional gusts that brought snow and a sort of frozen rain, that rattled fiercely on the windows. Miss Murray decided to stay over another day. She found the Burts pleasant, companionable people, and spent the evening reading aloud and playing social games.

Next morning the sun rose brightly, and it was as calm and peaceful as though the wind had never raged like a devouring fiend. Miss Murray decided to continue her journey that night. She walked about the ranch in company with Mrs. Burt in the afternoon, and went across the toll bridge to get a view of a towering cliff at the head of the bridge. She greatly admired the picturesque views on every hand, and in conversation with Mr. Burt, on her return, exclaimed—

"That cliff at the head of the bridge is charming! It is so picturesque! But I should think it would require careful driving to make that turn safely; one might easily drive straight on off the high bank, into the river."

"Yes, indeed; and only last summer a dreadful accident did happen there."

"Ah!" exclaimed Miss Murray in a tone of interest. "Tell me about it, please."

"Well," began Mr. Burt, clearing his throat, "it was one very dark, cloudy night last July—latter part, I think—and the stage came up at midnight, just as it did the night you came. The driver changed horses, and the fresh ones were very wild. They started before the driver got hold of the lines, and I suppose he never got them. The horses set off on a dead run, and, as you said could be easily done, they plunged off the bank into the river, instead of turning onto the bridge. The horses got loose some way, and were saved. The stage was turned up on its tongue end, and—"

"The passengers?" asked Miss Murray, breathlessly.

"There were none, for a wonder. There had been a coach full every night for a long time, until that night, and—"

"The driver?" intermitted the eager listener.

"I was coming to that. He was never seen alive, but his body was discovered two months later, down the river, and he was buried there."

"How sad!" exclaimed the girl, sympathetically.

"Where did his friends live? Were they informed of his death?"

"No, I think not," replied Mr. Burt. "No one knew where his home and friends were. He was a bright cheery fellow, and very smart, and although he was a favorite, he was very reserved about himself. He never seemed like the rest; he was always a gentleman; never drank, gambled, or used tobacco. He was handsome, too; he had the most beautiful hazel eyes I ever saw in a man's head. He—"

"What was his name?" demanded Miss Murray.

"Well now, I declare! Let me see—we always called the drivers by their first names. His was—oh, yes! he was always called 'Gentleman Ben.'"

"But his last name?" breathlessly asked the girl.

"His last name—" repeated Mr. Burt, "I have heard it—it was—why, bless my soul!" he added suddenly, with an apprehensive glance at the agitated girl, "it was—" he stopped as if choked, and loosened his necktie.

"Was it Murray?" demanded the girl, standing up and clutching his sleeve.

Mr. Burt could not speak. He bowed his head in affirmation, and sprang up to catch the fainting form that fell at his side.

"Nell! Nell!" he called, in desperation, and Mrs. Burt came hurrying in with both hands full of dishes. She hastily set them on the table and ran to her husband's side.

"What is it?" she asked.

"Oh, like a great idiot, I told her about the stage accident and Ben's death, and—"

"He was her brother," supplemented Mrs. Burt, as she helped lay the unconscious girl on the lounge.

"Just so," muttered Mr. Burt, with a groan.

"Get some water, quick!" commanded his wife.

Presently Miss Murray revived, and at first seemed unable to recollect where she was; but a glance at Mr. Burt recalled his story, and, covering her face with her hands, she sobbed out—

"My Bennie!"

Mr. and Mrs. Burt could not restrain their own tears, and for a time they obeyed the bible injunction most literally, and wept with her. But Miss Murray, by a great effort, calmed herself sufficiently to ask questions, and draw from Mr. Burt all he knew of her brother.

It was not much. He had never had but one conversation with him. He knew the young man was not intending to drive the stage long, that he was saving money for some purpose, and that he was an educated man. Mr. Burt had shrewdly guessed that he would enter some profession in Helena or Butte.

"It is strange," he remarked, "that I never thought of Ben's last name when you spoke of your