

THE INEVITABLE.

I like the man who faces what he must,
With step triumphant and with heart of cheer;
Who fights the daily battle without fear;
Sees his hopes fall, yet keeps unfaltering trust
That God is good; that somehow, true and just,
His plans work out for mortals; not a tear
Is shed when fortune, which the world holds dear,
Falls from his grasp—better with love a crust,
Than living in dishonor—envies not
Nor loses faith in man; but does his best,
Nor ever murmurs at his humbler lot;
But, with a smile and words of hope, gives zest
To every toiler; he alone is great
Who by a life heroic conquers fate.

—Sarah K. Bolton, in Kansas City Star.

The Dividends of "Laura Leigh."

AS soon as the mail sack was securely fastened to her back, and she felt her master's weight in the stirrup, Swinging Sarah lost no time in making her departure. She dashed through the outskirts of the town, and mounted the up-trail with that easy swiftness that had given her the euphonious name she bore.

It is not to be presumed, from this daily morning burst of speed on leaving the Ouray postoffice, that Tom Alderson was an unmerciful horseman. Swinging Sarah knew better than that, and on sight of a certain petticoat traversing the mountain road ahead, she had learned to regulate her speed to a most unassuming gait.

Between the surprising intelligence of Alderson's mount and the loitering pace of Prince, the worthy pony which conveyed Miss Nellie McSwain, school-ma'am at Potosi school, to and from her duties each day, there was an encounter every morning which it would be strangely humorous to attribute to that greatly overworked "hand of fate." After she had first accepted her pedagogical duties at Potosi school, Nellie McSwain had found the ride over the rough mountain trail long and monotonous, and at times depressing. She soon discovered that this agreeable feature of the trip was not apparent on the mornings when she chanced to be accompanied by Tom Alderson, bullion guard and mail carrier for the Laura Leigh Mining and Milling Company. Without being distinctly aware of it, this ride together over Sneffels' road, as the trail was called, had gradually become indispensable to them both.

This morning ride was particularly enjoyable, as it was the first day of the fall school term, after two weeks' vacation.

"I'm really glad to see the place again," said Miss McSwain, as she drew up at the stile in front of the yard. The schoolhouse was located conveniently at the junction of Sneffels' road with the trail leading up to the Revenue mines on the right.

"I'm awful glad to see you back, too," was the embarrassed response of Tom Alderson, who was far too sincere to be a graceful lover.

The girl watched him depart, realizing, with the wisdom of a woman, that nothing but the spur of unusual circumstance would ever lead Tom Alderson to speak of love.

"A hen that lays that kind of eggs is a pretty valuable bird!" ejaculated Thaddeus Whipple in his office at the Laura Leigh that afternoon. He was holding up a retort, fresh from the gold room, which the shipping clerk had been hastily preparing for shipment. "Just one more trip this month, Alderson, to get this little nugget safely in the hands of the express company, and the dividends of the Laura Leigh will stay where I put them last month." The latter clause was added with some little show of pride, to which Manager Whipple was no doubt entitled. He had been in charge of the mine from the beginning, and his successful development work had placed it in the front rank of new workings in the San Juan country. He had been a little anxious this month, as the output had been seriously retarded by several mishaps to the milling machinery. By hurried work, however, it seemed likely the month's showing could be brought up to that of the previous month, if the bullion was not delayed in its journey to the mint in Denver.

Alderson had made more than the usual number of trips during the past week, and he could be seen sometimes two or three times a day riding with his Winchester across his knees, and the precious bullion hanging in the bags slung over the horn of his saddle. When shipments were large he sometimes had company, but ordinarily this was thought unnecessary.

"Now don't fall into the canyon, Alderson," the manager called after him as he started out. "At any rate, don't let that bullion go over with you; it gives us just the proper per cent this month!"

The bullion guard laughed carelessly at the good-natured jest of his manager. He was used to Whipple's final injunctions about not losing the "yellow stuff." He had an hour and a half to make the eight miles into Ouray, and felt very easy about arriving in time to catch the passenger train before it left. It had been years since any trouble had occurred on Sneffels' road.

He rode along unconcernedly, musing over his morning ride with Miss McSwain. As he neared the end of the third mile between the mine and the Potosi school, he wondered if she would be working late and if he by any chance would see her. There certainly was a girl's figure at the stile, and a pony favoring Prince tethered at the gateway. Could she be waiting for him? If so it was the first time. He put the thought aside. It was too much to hope for.

As he came into sight, Nellie McSwain, for it was she, rose, and began walking rapidly toward him.

"Mr. Alderson!" she gasped with breathless excitement, "you must turn back. There's something wrong to-night!" She leaned against Swinging Sarah, putting out a hand to catch the bridle rein.

"Why, what's the matter, Miss McSwain?" Alderson's self-consciousness disappeared at sight of her agitation.

"Jake Andrews just rode down from the Revenue a few minutes ago, and said Black Jack and his gang from the Blue Hills are in this neighborhood to-day. He thinks they are lurking about in the hills between here and Ouray. The telephone wires are cut, and there are no means of communication with town."

Alderson remembered vaguely that the chief accountant had been vainly endeavoring to get central a few minutes before he left the office.

"You know the gang," she continued. "They stop at nothing; they would kill a man for five dollars."

He looked down upon her with quiet regard. "And you waited here to tell me this? It was good of you, Miss McSwain." His words conveyed the reverence he felt. Then he drew himself up in the saddle and laughed, his gray eyes snapping with the zest of adventure.

The girl's form grew tense, and she clung fiercely to the rein. "You sha'n't risk it, Mr. Alderson. The cowards may be waiting down there now to pick you off. You have no right to place that gold in jeopardy!"

The gold! How the words stung him. She was thinking only of it, and she was right. Whipple would not thank him for losing the bullion by a rash move. Yet it must reach Ouray in time for No. 5.

"You don't understand, Miss McSwain; I must get this gold to the station within an hour. It must be there!"

"Yes, but you need not go alone. Leave it with me while you go back for help; Swinging Sarah can move faster without it. I can protect it; nobody will know; it will be safe with me. Go back, for my sake, Tom."

Had he heard aright—was that his first name on her lips? He seemed to see but dimly the clinging figure, as through a mist. Then he reached down and lifted the carefully sacked retort from the saddle-bag.

"What will you do with it? Where will you keep it?" His throat was burning and he could hardly speak.

"Here!" she cried, "my dinner-basket!"

"Good! I've no time to lose. I'm afraid I can't make it, but you shall have your way. Wait here till I come back."

Nellie McSwain stood motionless for a moment as she heard him gallop away. She looked at the white napkin over her dinner-basket, concealing its heavy load.

"What have I done?" Her first feeling was one of fear, and she was white and trembling. "He will never make it, and the gold must be there. Ah!" The idea came to her forcibly, and for a moment unnerved her. Then came that flash; her eyes for a mo-

ment resembled Alderson's, reflecting the fearlessness of the Western spirit. "I'll do it!" The resolution calmed her.

Prince no doubt felt it an injustice to carry such an unusually heavy dinner-basket at such an extraordinary pace. And to think that his faithful service should be so far forgotten that he should be rudely stimulated with a riding-whip! Yet he was merely being urged into a simple trot, and no observer would have accused his charming rider of cruelty to her beast.

She glanced back once or twice. The sun was disappearing rapidly from view behind the treacherous path of the U. S. snow slide, and the canyon was narrowing perceptibly in the gloom. This she knew was due entirely to her imagination, and tried to maintain her courage by glancing ahead toward Mt. Abram, the last peak to release the lingering rays of the sun in the evening. She blessed it for its kindly brilliancy as it stood, a guardian sentinel over the mining camp of Ouray, and was glad it seemed so deceptively close.

Two of the most dangerous places on the trail, the hanging rock and the switchback, were passed safely and without interruption. There was only one more place to be particularly dreaded, the watering trough, now half a mile ahead. She tried to forget the frightful disasters that had occurred at this spot, which had proved the setting for several tragedies every year. She endeavored to shut from her mind the thought that the canyon was deeper there than anywhere else along the road, and that the rocks jutted out as though attempting to push travelers over the edge. Yet try as she would, in that brief half-mile every incident she had heard about the place came back to her with startling clearness.

The day had almost faded as Prince slunk into the narrow passageway leading around the watering trough. They passed safely along for a considerable distance, and her heart gave a bound of joy as the trough came into view. Surely the worst was past and her fears were groundless.

As they reached the trough, however, her worst fears were confirmed. An arm shot out to the bridle rein, and three figures sprang from the shadows. Prince snorted wildly, and it was brute strength that kept him from plunging frantically over the edge.

Two of the fellows, all of whom were masked, stood at the horse's head. The third advanced slowly toward her, and she felt the cold barrel of a revolver touch her cheek. He laid one hand upon the horn of her saddle and leered up at her; the white mask gave his face an unearthly aspect.

"Why, this ain't our man," he growled, sullenly, after a brief inspection. "It ain't a man at all; it's a woman."

"By gad, it's the schoolma'am," said a second voice. "She's purty, ain't she, boys?"

The first speaker interposed. "Let her go, boys; it's dangerous to talk here. She can't get to town in time to interfere with our game."

The second man reached out a hand. "I'm powerful hungry, miss, and that dinner-basket looks good to me." Both men released the bridle rein as he spoke.

Nellie McSwain felt her heart throb wildly, and then it almost seemed to fail her. For a moment it seemed she would faint.

"I'll give you a sandwich; it's all I have left in the basket." Her voice was a mere whisper. She reached in under the napkin and her hand came out holding something bright and shining.

"This sandwich is buttered with powder and lead!" she shrieked, "and I'll give you all a bite of it if you don't look out!"

Poor Prince has never understood the cruel blow he received from the schoolma'am's riding-whip at that moment, though she has tried to explain it to him time and again. He responded nobly, however, and then began a wild flight over the winding trail, during which the schoolma'am was conscious of nothing save the reverberations in her mind of the discordant laugh that followed from the ruffians behind.

It was a wild figure that rode up to the little station, where the trainmen were giving the air brakes on No. 5 a final test before its departure. She gasped out her story to the open-mouthed station agent, and almost dropped the heavy basket on his foot in her anxiety to perform her self-appointed duty to the end. She breathed easily only when she had seen the gold safely deposited in the hands of the express messenger.

Nellie McSwain was not the only rider who dashed down the Sneffels' road unmindful of all danger that night. When Tom Alderson returned to the schoolhouse, accompanied by several sturdy miners, armed to the teeth, and ready for any affray, he found the place deserted, and both the girl and the bullion gone. One of the men said afterward that Alderson was "plumb locoed," and agreed that he was hard to follow in his mad chase over the trail.

They reached the watering trough in perhaps a shorter period than the trip had ever been made before, and the party burst upon the three crouching scoundrels in a manner that was entirely unprecedented in the history of their carefully planned misdeeds. They were entirely disarmed, figuratively and literally, without so much as an interchange of shots, and the men roped them together, preparatory to a march on foot down the hill to Ouray.

Alderson personally engaged the attention of one of the luckless villains, inquiring almost incoherently about "the girl." He coupled his inquiries with so generous a use of his fists that the poor devil was rendered quite incapable of performing the function of speech for a time. He finally managed to state that she had passed them without interruption—it was well for him that he lied—and had no doubt reached the town safely.

On the outskirts of the mining camp Alderson, who had dashed on ahead, met a party of horsemen who had been quickly mustered together to go up the trail and see what they could do toward "fixing things" for Black Jack and his gang. Alderson told them in a few words that the wretches were in safe hands, and made further inquiries, in a somewhat restrained manner this time, as to the whereabouts of the schoolmistress. He learned that she had ridden over somewhere in the neighborhood of Box Canyon to await further news.

The information was accompanied by significant grimaces and ill-concealed smiles, which the early moon, now visible, revealed with undesirable clearness. "There'll be something doin' when them two meet," was the comment of "Dad" Austin, stage driver, as Alderson moved away.

The sudden neighing of a horse, which he recognized immediately, and which was quickly answered by Swinging Sarah, came from the mouth of the canyon. The girl sat quietly on her horse as though waiting. Alderson was first to break the awkward silence.

"I'm glad you are safe," he said, huskily. She felt the intensity behind his words.

"Thank you—" her voice went off into a whisper, and he could not be certain she had called him "Tom."

"I found this at the watering trough," He held out a silver case-knife. "I—I didn't know but it would be all I would ever see again that belonged to you. I was afraid—"

The girl stopped him with a subdued Laura Leigh," said Alderson, laying a I was going to feed to Black Jack and his unpleasant companions." Then she told him the story of her ride, and how she had delivered the bullion in time for No. 5.

"You saved the dividends of the Laura Leigh," said Alderson, laying a hand gently on Prince's mane.

They sat without speaking for a moment or two. The horses moved closely together, and Alderson was trembling with the nearness of this brave girl who he now knew was everything to him. Over on the trail they could hear the lusty voices of the miners and townsmen, gleefully bringing the culprits to town.

"I thought for a moment that you might have gone over the side of the canyon, Miss—Miss—" His voice failed.

"Would you have cared—Tom?" She was looking at him with the one look a lover always knows, and he gazed at her long and earnestly.

"Would I have cared? Nellie!" He reached over in the saddle and drew her to him.

Tom Alderson has been described as ungraceful in the art of love-making, and as Swinging Sarah and Prince rubbed noses in the moonlight, it is probable they accomplished fully as much in the matter of a caress as did their riders in the awkwardness of that first kiss.—San Francisco Argonaut.

A Dual Dentist.

Her wisdom tooth bothered her and she went to Dr. X., whose office is in an upper West Side cross street, says a New York paper. His charge was most reasonable.

A few days later, one of her molars ached. She was told that Dr. Q. was the best dental surgeon in the street. Dr. Q.'s office is in the same block as Dr. X.'s, but handsomer in its appointments. It was in an elevator apartment house. Dr. X. contented himself with a modest ground floor flat.

Dr. Q. was out, but would be back in half an hour. She waited.

"At your service, madam," said a familiar voice, and, looking up, she saw Dr. X. standing in the open door.

"Are you Dr. Q. or Dr. X.?" she asked.

"Dr. Q., madam," he replied.

When he had finished she went over to Dr. X.'s office, resolved to fathom the mystery. He also was out, but again she waited, and in a few minutes in walked Dr. Q.

"Madam," he explained, "I have two offices. In one I cater to the higher class of patronage. In the other, as you know, I do work cheaply."



Conductor—I got your fare before, sir. Passenger—I know. This nickel is for the company.—Judge.

"I'm getting old." "Having rheumatism?" "Worse than that. I'm having reminiscences."—Cincinnati Tribune.

"So she has started on a life journey into matrimony, has she?" "Well, I guess it is only an excursion trip."—Brooklyn Life.

Tomdix—What reason have you for thinking you have hay fever? Hojax—Because every time I meet a grass widow I sneeze.

Bursley—He claims to be related to you, and says he can prove it. Floydy—The man's a fool. Bursley—That may be a mere coincidence.—Smart Set.

Wife—Good gracious! Do you hear that sound from the kitchen? More dishes broken, I'll warrant! Husband—Never mind, dear, it has stopped the cook's singing.

Affected Youth (to man ringing fog bell at ferry landing)—Aw—my man, why is this bell ringing? Man—Can't you see, you idiot, it's because I'm pullin' the rope?

Mrs. Haggard—Do you know, myself and my daughter are often mistaken for sisters. Mrs. Gay—Ah, the dear girl must be studying too hard, don't you think?—Puck.

Jimmy—Ma, did y' buy Georgie a birthday present? Ma—Yes, Jimmy—Ma, what did y' buy t' pacify me 'cause 'tain't my birthday?—Cincinnati Commercial-Tribune.

Dingdong—Did you try that cigar I gave you yesterday? Biffbang—Yes, but it didn't deserve a trial. Dingdong—Why, what do you mean? Biffbang—It should have been lynched.

Mrs. Kenway—You used to say that I was the apple of your eye. Mr. Kenway—Well, what of it? Mrs. Kenway—Nothing, except that you don't seem to care as much for fruit as you once did.

George—Ethel, dear, I'm going to interview your father to-night. Ethel—All right, George. And if anything happens I'll come to the hospital twice a day until you are able to be out again.—Chicago News.

"I punish you, Browning, because I love you. But you are too young to understand what a mother's love is." "Is it two soles with but a single thought; two hands that beat as one?"—Life.

Mistress (who is going out for the day)—And, Mary, you may invite a friend to come in to tea, if you like. Mary—Please, 'm, I haven't got any friends. I only know young women!—Punch.

Harold (anticipating things)—I wasn't at school yesterday, Miss Bangs. His Teacher (severely)—No; you were not. Harold (decisively)—Miss Bangs, I've got to turn over a new leaf or get into trouble.

Hettie—Now that you have broken your engagement with Fred, shall you return to him the diamond ring he gave you? Minna—Certainly not, Hettie; it would be a constant reminder of the happiness he had missed.

Willie—My mamma gave me a nickel for being good. Tommy—Huh, my mother never gives me anything. Have to be good anyhow! Willie—Well, my mamma doesn't want me to be good for nothing.—Washington Life.

Customer (to chemist's assistant)—In a business like this I presume you have gained some practical experience of therapeutics? Chemist's Assistant—Indeed, yes, sir. I had 'em when I was ten years old. Broke out all over me.

A Chance to Get Even.—"I wish," said the expressman to the lawyer, "that you would send in your bill for legal advice." "I am waiting," replied the lawyer, "until I get your bill for my May moving. I'd rather have the last chance."—Ex.

Actress (angrily)—Did you write that criticism which said my impersonation of "The Abandoned Wife" was a miserable failure? Critic—Ye-e-e; you see, you looked so irresistibly beautiful that it was impossible to fancy that any man could abandon you!

First Stockholder—I don't see why people should be allowed to carry packages on the elevated roads. Second Stockholder—Why shouldn't they? First Stockholder—Well, if it were not for the packages we could crowd a few more people into each car.—Town and Country.

If you get in the habit of saying good things of people, you will be surprised at how many more you can think of.

We do not read poetry in books, getting all we want on printed cards handed us by applicants for charity.