

WHEN SHADOWS FELL.

I did not know nor understand
Until, when twilight shadows fell,
What meant the pressure of her hand.
Nor did I know how sweet the spell
When I, world-weary, racked with pain,
Felt fingers weave above my brain.

Her songs—I dare not dream them
hushed—
But yesterday I heard them sung.
Bleak the path where roses blushed,
And tender morning-glories hung.
I did not know her rainbow world
Until the shadows were unfurled.

I did not know the arching skies
Could be so dreary and defiled—
I did not know her tender eyes
Poured forth such sunlight when they
smiled.

These things—her whims—so sweet to
tell,
All came too late, when shadows fell.

The Robbery on The Valley Pike

It was early on a summer morning, Father and I, with Joel Pierce, the hired man, were in the barn-yard, preparing for the day's work, when old Deacon Hamilton drove up the lane. Deacon Hamilton lived in Clayville, eight miles distant, and was the father of Ben Hamilton, Clayville's only blacksmith.

The deacon stopped at the gate. "Good morning, Mr. Norcross!" he said, addressing my father. "I'm just on my way up to Hocum's mill, and I promised son I'd stop here and give you a message from him. He says if that offer you made him last Thursday still holds good, he'll take the roan colt, and pay spot cash for it. He says he wants it right away, and would like you to send it down this morning. Good day!" Jerking the lines, the deacon drove on.

Joel and I, having oiled all four wheels of the large hay wagon, started toward the barn; but just as I reached the door, father called me back.

"Tom," said he, "Joel and I will more than have our hands full to-day with the extra work, so neither of us can spare time to go down to Clayville. But I need that eighty dollars. Now do you think you could take the colt down to Clayville without breaking your neck, and bring back the eighty dollars without losing it all on the way?"

"Oh, yes, father, yes!" I cried, eagerly. "Let me do it! I can take the colt down as safely as you or Joel could. And you needn't be afraid of my losing the money. I'll look out for that."

After a moment's resitation, father said, "Well, put the saddle and bridle on the colt, and bring it out."

I had never been permitted to ride the colt before, so I hailed this unexpected opportunity with delight.

It was eight miles to Clayville, just the right distance for a pleasant morning's ride. And the walk home was as nothing to me. Then, too, this prospective mission had in it an element of importance—the sum of money with which I was to be entrusted.

In less than four minutes I had saddled and bridled the colt, and had led it down to the gate, where father was awaiting me.

"Now, Tom," said father, after looking the colt over, "you can leave the saddle and bridle at Hamilton's, and we'll get them the next time we drive to town."

He paused for a moment, and then proceeded to give me instructions about the eighty dollars that I was to bring home. I was to put this in father's leather wallet, tie the wallet securely at the top, and place it in the inside pocket of my roundabout.

Ten minutes later I rode the colt out through the barn-yard gate, and down the lane to the pike.

Out on the broad, smooth pike, the colt, with but little urging, started off at an easy, swinging gallop. The air was cool and crisp; the grass at the roadside sparkled with dew, and up in the treetops the birds were singing their sweetest songs.

The clock on the court house was striking eight as I arrived in Clayville and rode down Main street, upon which, a block beyond the court house, is situated the village smithy.

When I rode in through the doorway of the smithy, and slipped down from the saddle, flushed and warm from my ride, Hamilton was fitting a shoe to one of the most magnificent horses that I have ever seen. With the single exception of a white star on its forehead, the horse was entirely black, its glossy coat resembling the finest black satin. It continually tossed its head, arching its pretty neck, and fluttering its thick black mane; and I could not but notice how plain and ugly our poor roan colt looked in comparison.

Hamilton looked up and nodded as I entered, but immediately gave his attention to the black horse.

"How would you like to trade, bub?"

said a voice behind me. Turning, I discovered a man whom I had not noticed before, seated upon a nail-keg near the door.

"Is that your horse?" I inquired, as, having made the colt's bridle fast to a post, I seated myself upon another overturned keg near the stranger.

"Yes," he replied, smiling, "that is my horse."

The stranger seemed a very pleasant man in his manner, and not unpleasant in appearance. He was about fifty years of age, or perhaps a year or two older; he was short and stout, and had a round face, which was smooth-shaven and very red. And his eyes, very little and very round, twinkled merrily, like two little green beads.

"Have you come far this morning?" he asked.

I replied that I had come from my home, eight miles up the pike.

"You've brought your horse down to be shod, have you?" was his next query.

"No, sir," I said, "he doesn't need to be shod. I have brought him down to sell. Mr. Hamilton is going to buy him."

During the next few minutes the stranger sat silent, blinking at the back of the shop, where his horse was occupying Hamilton's attention. Then suddenly turning, he said, "Are you in a hurry?"

On my replying that I was in a hurry, being needed at home, he told Hamilton to attend to me and let his own horse wait. I considered this very kind and thanked him.

Hamilton thrust a half-finished horseshoe back among the glowing embers, worked the bellows several times, and then came over to where the colt was tied. He untied it, and led it once or twice round the shop, carefully watching its every movement, and then tied it again.

"I know the critter well enough," he said. "Now, sonny, did your pa say whether I was to give you the money for the colt?"

"Yes, sir," I replied. "He said you were to give me the eighty dollars, and he gave me this to put it in." I showed him the wallet.

Hamilton reached into his pocket, under his big leather apron, and brought out seven ten dollar bills, and



ON AND ON WE GALLOPED.

two five dollar bills, which he had smoothed out and carefully counted into my hands. After I had stowed them safely in the wallet, he handed me a rolled piece of paper and a pencil, saying, "Give me a receipt, please." And I saw him wink across my shoulder at the stranger, who was probably an interested spectator.

I had never written a receipt, but I had an idea of how it should be done; so, ignoring Hamilton's wink, I held the paper up against the wall and scrawled upon it with the pencil:

Mr. Hamilton gave me eighty dollars for the roan colt. Yours truly,

Thomas Norcross.

I have since learned that etiquette does not require the use of the words "yours truly" in signing a receipt; also, that a flourish under one's signature adds nothing to its value. But I was young then, and I wanted to be polite.

After an affectionate farewell to the colt, I told Hamilton to keep the saddle and bridle until we drove to town the next time; and then, nodding to him and the stranger, and with one last look at the latter's beautiful horse, I departed.

In less than ten minutes I had left Clayville behind me, and was walking homeward along the dusty pike.

At first I grumbled considerably to myself at the unkind fate that compelled me, on so warm a day, to wear a roundabout; but by the exercise of my ever-ready philosophy, I consoled myself with thinking how much worse it would have been had I been compelled to wear shoes and stockings. This cheered me to some extent, so I skipped along very merrily, stopping every few rods to assure myself that the wallet was still safe in my pocket.

I was about half-way home when I heard behind me, far down the pike, the sound of a galloping horse.

For a while I paid no attention to this; but finally, when it had almost overtaken me, I turned, and discovered my friend, the stranger. I halted in order to have another look at the black horse when it should pass.

The stranger galloped past, and as he did so, nodded pleasantly; but just as I was about to resume my way, he suddenly wheeled round in front of me

and stopped. I supposed that his reason for stopping was to invite me to ride. But I was sadly mistaken.

"Bub," he said, still smiling, "give me that money! Quick!"

For a moment I was dumb with astonishment; then recovering my speech, I blurted out, "W-w-what?"

"I say, give me that money! And be quick about it!" The stranger leaped to the ground, and leading his horse, advanced toward me threateningly.

That the man was a robber, and that he was in earnest, I had now no doubt. My first thought was to run; but how could I, fleet-footed as I was, hope to outrun that magnificent black horse? The next moment a brighter thought struck me. To my left, across the road, were fields of wheat; and to the right, beginning at the roadside, not more than three feet distant, was a dense forest. I thought very rapidly.

The stranger, now advancing a few steps, repeated his demand: "Give me that money!" And his little green, beadlike eyes twinkled most unpleasantly.

Taking the wallet from my pocket, I held it out toward him. "Here it is," I said, bitterly.

He stepped forward to take it when, with a quick, outward jerk of my hand, I flung the wallet far back among the trees at the roadside.

"You little scamp!" said the robber, the smile now gone from his face. "Why did you do that?"

"I don't know," I replied, astonished at my own audacity, "unless it was because I wanted to."

He led his horse to the edge of the wood, and tried to tie the bridle round one of the trees. But the girth of the tree was too great, as, indeed was that of every tree in sight. He glanced about in a vain search for something to which he might hitch his horse. But although he was unsuccessful in this, he had gained one point; he had placed himself and his horse between me and the thicket in which I had flung the wallet.

Bub, he said, suddenly turning, his features again lighted by that pleasantest of smiles, "let's be reasonable!"

I made no reply, but waited to hear what he had to say.

"Now," he continued, "I can't trust you to go into the woods to look for the purse, because if you found it you wouldn't come back. And I can't go myself, because there is no place here to tie my horse. But I'll tell you what I will do. If you will hold the horse for me, and not let it go, nor attempt to play any tricks on me, I'll go and find the purse, and divide the money with you. You know it will be much better to go home with forty dollars than with nothing."

This seemed very reasonable, because for the moment I saw before me no choice except that between losing all the money and losing only half.

I preferred losing only half. So I stepped over to where the robber stood.

"All right," I said, grasping the bridle. "I'll hold the horse."

The robber, with the parting injunction, "Now remember what I said!" plunged into the thicket.

Looking up the pike now, I saw at a glance the explanation of his hasty terms; for there, not more than a quarter of a mile distant, came a farm wagon drawn by two gray horses. Evidently having seen this only a moment before, and believing that he had but a few brief minutes, in which to consummate his robbery, he had resorted to this daring scheme in sheer desperation.

For a minute or two I could hear the man thrashing around in the tangled brush; and then, apparently surmising that the wallet had fallen at a point some distance back, he pushed farther into the forest and I could hear him no longer.

The farm wagon was rumbling along toward me at a snail's pace. I knew that it would be useless for me to cry for help while the farmer was at that distance; for even if I could make my voice heard, the robber in his wrath might do me bodily injury—perhaps kill me—and escape before the farmer could possibly arrive. So I stood there, my hands trembling, and prayed in an incoherent way that the robber might be delayed until the farmer was near enough to render me some assistance.

Nearer and nearer the wagon came. I could almost distinguish the features of the farmer's face, and could hear quite plainly his cries of "Ged dep!" and "G'lang!"

For one brief moment I indulged in the illusions of hope, and then my heart sank within me deeper than ever as I saw the team turn into a by-road and disappear.

In a second I had determined upon a wild dash. With difficulty getting my left foot into the stirrup, I swung myself across the saddle. Hardly had I seated myself when the horse started off. And the next minutes we were galloping madly up the pike.

Suddenly I heard far behind me a loud cry; and glancing hastily over my shoulder, I saw the robber come running out of the woods, wildly waving his arms and shaking his fist at us.

I said no attention to him; nor did

the horse heed his late master's vociferous "whoas."

On we galloped. I did not sing now. I have a faint recollection of passing several men and boys during that ride, one or two of whom, I believe, called after me. But who they were or what they said to me, I do not know.

On and on we galloped. We passed the old blasted oak at the corner of Watson's corn-field, and ascended the slight rise in the pike known as Bender's Knoll. And then my heart gave a great bound as I saw, through a gap in the hills before me, the end of our big red barn, and a little farther off, the brown, unpainted roof of the farmhouse.

A few moments later I rode in through the barn-yard gate; and, after tying the horse to the fence, I hastened over into the fields to convey to father and Joel my momentous news. Again and again I asked myself: "What will father say?"

Once or twice I was on the point of rushing back to the house to tell my story to mother; for I knew that she would comfort me, and if necessary, intercede on my behalf. But I was near to the place where father and Joel were working; and a voice within me seemed to whisper, "Don't be a coward, Tom Norcross!" So I hurried on.

"Well, Tom," said father, as I came up, "did you bring the money with you?"

"I started home with it, pa," I said, "but, pa, I—I—I—was—I was—robbed!"

"What?" said father, straightening himself with a jerk.

"So!" said Joel, incredulously. "I want to know!"

"Tom, do you mean to say that you were robbed on your way up from Clayville?" said father.

For reply I told my story from beginning to end. "Now, pa, it wasn't my fault, was it?" I asked.

"No, Tom," said father. "I don't think it was your fault; but—let's go and take a look at that horse."

I ran ahead of father and Joel, and by the time they reached the barn-yard gate I had led the horse down to meet them.

Father carefully looked the horse over, searched in vain for spavin or ringbone, and forced its mouth open to examine its teeth.

"Here, Joel," he said, "lead him up and down once or twice."

Joel led the horse up and down the yard several times, while father, standing at a little distance, eyed it critically.

Finally father turned to me.

"Tom," said he, "this horse is worth a great deal more than eighty dollars. It is very doubtful if the scamp who robbed you actually owns the animal. If he does, he will never come to claim it. But it is probable that it belongs to some one else, and if that is so we must seek the owner."

We sought the owner in vain. We advertised the horse five successive weeks in the Exeter County Sentinel, and tacked up a notice in the Clayville postoffice. But we received no reply. The robber himself was never again seen in this part of the country.

One day several weeks later, while passing the scene of the robbery, I was impelled by curiosity to explore the ground among the trees at the roadside. I did so; and to my astonishment I found, lodged in the uncovered roots of a large oak, father's wallet. The robber had not found it!

There certainly was a robbery on the Valley Pike; but who was robbed, and by whom was the robbery committed? Many years have passed since then, and I am no longer a boy of 15. But to this day my conscience is decidedly uneasy on the subject of the robbery on the Valley Pike.—Youth's Companion.

The Invention of Armor.

The idea of the invention of armor for the protection of the body from weapons came from the ancients, who, noticing the natural armor of various kinds of animals, particularly the armadillo, imitated it.

In early times before metal was used in armor making the warriors used rough hides to several thicknesses, and the first armor ever worn was made from slices taken from the hoofs of horses and fastened together with pegs. Fish scales and the scales of large snakes were also gathered and fastened together until they formed a thick layer and were used as armor.

The armor of the Middle Ages was a continuation of the ancient kind, made in the form of scales of iron or steel. Certain kinds of mail used in early times in England were copied from the shells of crabs and lobsters.

Quickly Supplied.

There have been many strange things in English history. One of the most curious was recently mentioned by a little schoolgirl.

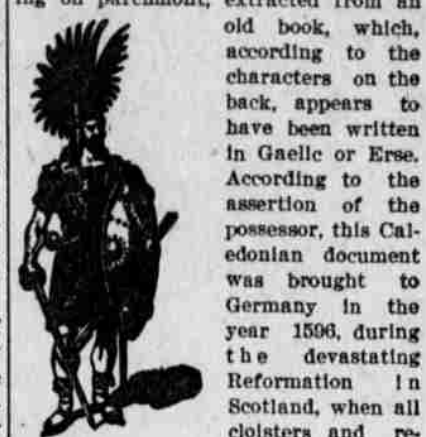
"The hydra," said this much-informed young person, "was married to Henry the Eighth. When he cut her head off, another one sprang right up."

If you are not a pugilist, or a soldier, about all a reputation as a fighter will get you is trouble.

Marvelous, Quaint and Curious.

Ancient Scottish Chieftain.

Here is a Scottish costume of the eighth or ninth century, after a drawing on parchment, extracted from an old book, which, according to the characters on the back, appears to have been written in Gaelic or Erse.



SCOTTISH CHIEF.

According to the assertion of the possessor, this Caledonian document was brought to Germany in the year 1596, during the devastating Reformation in Scotland, when all cloisters and religious endowments were destroyed, and a perfect victory obtained over the episcopacy, so that many persons took refuge with their treasures, on the Continent, where the Scottish monks possessed many religious houses; some being at Nuremberg. The figure represents a Highland chief, whose dress is picturesque and extremely beautiful. The Scottish tunic or blouse, checkered or striped in light and dark green, with violet interlined, and bordered with violet stripes, is covered with a steel breastplate, accompanied by a back-piece, judging from the iron brassards—positively a bequest of the Romans, by whom the Scots were once subjugated; this, indeed, is also attested by the offensive weapon the javelin; the sword, however, must be excepted, for it is national and like that of the present time. The strong shield may also have descended from the Romans, as well as the helmet, which is decorated with an eagle's wing; these, together with the hunting-horn, give to the figure a very imposing appearance. The national plaid is wanting, this was borne by attendants or squires. We are involuntarily reminded of the heroes of Fingal and Ossian, and we might almost think that this figure belonged to the time of the Scottish king, Kenneth the Second, grandson of King Achalas, and the sister of the Pictish king, Hang.

First of "Twenty Questions."

Secretary Root is one of the hardest men in Washington to get news from when he is not ready to talk, says the Brooklyn Eagle. No amount of quizzing can draw from him information which he thinks the public should not have. During the uncertainty regarding the succession to Ambassador Durand he was constantly besieged for news on this point.

One day he cautiously admitted that the British government had asked if a certain Englishman would be acceptable to the American government as successor to Sir Henry.

"Can't you tell us his name?" asked the reporters.

"No," replied Mr. Root. "The British foreign office wants nothing said about it at present."

"Can't you at least tell us whether he is now in the British diplomatic service?"

"No," said Secretary Root, gravely. "But I will tell you this. I will tell you, if you wish, whether he belongs to the animal, the vegetable or the mineral kingdom."

The Earliest Telegraphs.

The telegraph is only a natural evolution. Long before Morse was born, the American Indians telegraphed messages by means of the smoke from a fire, which was caused to rise at certain intervals by means of flapping a blanket.

The natives of Central Africa likewise have a telegraph system of their own design. This consists of a number of large drums which are beaten with a heavy stick, and can be heard for surprisingly long distances. These drum signals are also used by the Bakubas, and in New Guinea. The inhabitants thump away at their code of messages on these drums, and the natives often spend hours in conversing with neighboring tribes through the drum signals.

Coat and Vest for Him.

A man accompanied by his wife visited a merchant tailor to order a suit of clothes. The couple differed as to the material and manner of making, and the wife lost her temper. "Oh, well," she said, turning away, "please yourself; I suppose you are the one who will wear the clothes." "Well," observed the husband, meekly, "I don't suppose you'd want to wear the coat and waistcoat."—Philadelphia Inquirer.

When a woman begins talking about a Kindred Soul, it means trouble is in sight for her, and that she likes the looks of it.

Many a man takes a better half in a half-hearted manner.