

IDEAL.

Somehow out in the great wide world My love is waiting for me; And I search through the endless throb of life For the face I at last shall see.

A CLOSE CALL

The firm of which I was the junior partner bought large quantities of wool. I usually made the purchases, and at times was obliged to travel far into the Sierra Nevadas, taking with me several thousand dollars upon each trip.

One day we received a telegram that read: "Secure all the wool you can. It is sure to advance in price."

"That means a hard trip for me," I said, glancing at the yellow slip, "but the sooner I am off the more wool I can get."

The telegram reached us at 5 in the afternoon. At 9 the next morning I was on the road and had nearly \$4,000 in gold coin.

For the first three days I gradually ascended the mountains, and by midday of the fourth had reached the summit. This did not mean a rapid descent upon the opposite slope, but a journey for several days over the ridges rising from this central plateau.

I was desirous of reaching one man, who kept his sheep during the summer upon a high and rugged range some miles from my usual route. I halted for dinner at a small public house lately built to accommodate teamsters engaged in hauling lumber from a new sawmill.

"Yes," was the reply, "but it's a hard place to find," at the same time giving me the directions as nearly as possible. I shook my head as he ended, saying: "I could never find the place in a year's time. Is there no one here acquainted with the route who can go with me?"

He hesitated a moment, and then said: "There's Bill, the half breed; he knows the trail as well as old Rucker himself. I reckon you can get Bill to go." Bill was promptly interviewed. "You pay me \$3, and I take my horse and go," was the brief but satisfactory reply.

The required sum was promised, and he at once prepared to accompany me. The moment dinner was eaten we set off. Instead of being sullen and morose, like most half breeds, my guide was a talkative and intelligent fellow, and gave me much information about the surrounding region.

Upon reaching Rucker's camp we found the owner absent, and it took us an hour or more to find him and the hand of sheep he was herding. He detained us longer to talk about the bears and panthers that annoyed his sheep than the time consumed in bargaining for his wool and making the necessary arrangements for shipping it to us.

I made some evasive reply. During the evening Bill, the half breed, came into the barroom two or three times, and the last time I noticed that he secretly beckoned to me to go out of doors. Waiting till he left the room I managed to follow him without attracting attention.

rob stage and go to prison. Now he come back."

"A stage robber?" I echoed. "Yes," was the answer; "five years ago he rob the stage and sent to prison. Maybe he think no one know him. I remember. I tell you and tell the boss—so you look out for him."

I thanked the fellow and rewarded him in a substantial manner, for the warning was of value to me. On returning to the barroom I now watched the two strangers with considerable attention. There was nothing of the ruffian about either, and I would have thought nothing more about them than any of the teamsters that stopped at the hotel for the night had it not been for the half breed's caution.

As the host lighted me to my room he told me what the Indian had said to him, and warned me to be on my guard. Determined to be on the safe side, I pulled my bed against the door when I retired for the night and securely fastened the only window.

I slept soundly till past midnight, when I was awakened by a movement of the bed. It appeared as though some one was slowly opening the door and causing the bed to move across the floor.

I reached under the pillow, firmly grasped one of my pistols, and awaited developments. Inch by inch I could feel the bed move slowly over the floor. My senses were stimulated by the excitement of the moment, and I could hear the breathing of the would-be robber. The door was now sufficiently open to admit the thief. Thinking to capture him, I sat up in bed waiting for him to approach.

It was too dark to distinguish his form, but I could tell his position from his deep breathing as he slowly and cautiously approached the head of the bed. At that instant I raised my pistol and cried, "Stop, or I will fire!"

Quick as a flash he sprang for the door, and I fired at the same instant. He gave a cry of pain, but continued his flight. I jumped from my bed, rushed to the door and shot again at the retreating figure. The ball evidently missed him, for it did not stop his mad race, and the next moment we heard the swift-galloping of a couple of horses.

The house was in an instant uproar. Men came rushing from their rooms, each one crying aloud as to the cause of the shooting. The explanation was brief, but it took an hour or more to quell the excitement, and I am certain but few slept during the remainder of the night.

It was plain that the two strangers had made their preparations and had their horses near by. Had they been successful in obtaining my gold, they would have disappeared in the night.

When day gave us light, spots of blood were visible upon the hall floor and on the stairs, but a search for some distance along the road revealed nothing of the robbers, so it was evident that my shot had not been a serious one.

Trusting that I had seen the last of my assailants, I mounted my horse after breakfast and pursued my journey. My route lay for some miles through a most picturesque and scenic region. Volcanic rocks rose abruptly from the hillsides, assuming the forms of temples and towers.

Absorbed in detecting these fancied resemblances to the most noted creations of man, I had ridden for a mile or more without seeing or hearing anything to break the silence of my lonely ride when a loud report rang out, my horse plunged violently and a second later fell to the ground, carrying me with him.

"We have him!" shouted a voice that I recognized as belonging to the man who had asked me about the holsters the night before.

I lay upon my side, with my right leg under the animal. The two men, each with a gun in his hand, ran toward me from behind a neighboring rock. My situation was most critical. I was pinned to the earth and unable to move. Luckily my hands were free and I could reach one of the pistols in my holsters. Determined to sell my life as dearly as possible, I jerked the revolver loose, raised myself slightly and fired at the robber nearest to me.

The ball struck him in the hand and caused him to drop the gun. With an oath he sprang back, and the two sought shelter behind a rock.

I was still in imminent danger, for they could make a detour and approach me in such a manner that I should be at their mercy. Their advance and my shot took but a fraction of a moment, so that both were over ere the death struggles of my animal ended. In these he partly raised himself from my leg, and as his body was between me and the two assassins I crawled on my hands and knees to a low rock within a few feet of me. "We will see whether you get that gold or not," I muttered to myself, as I rubbed my leg, bruised from the fall.

The rock behind which I had sought shelter extended several rods, rising in places ten or twelve feet above the ground. I climbed up a few feet, and through a narrow crevice examined the situation.

I saw the glimmer of a gun barrel behind a low rock, and was thus enabled to locate at least one of my enemies. Stooping down, I ran to the further end of the ledge, hoping to get a shot at him. I was disappointed, for he was still hidden from sight. I saw that by crawling up the hill a short distance I could gain the protection of a second rock. This I instantly did, yet every moment fearing they would make a dash for the gold, which was still upon my horse.

They evidently did not realize that I had moved from the rock near the dead animal and were afraid to venture. Reaching the second ledge I found to my annoyance that I could not yet see the hidden robbers, but by pulling myself along behind a fallen tree I was at last within sight of them. They were crouching on the ground behind a low ledge, each peering around the end of it, intently watching the spot where they had seen me disappear. Though it seemed an age, it had really only been a couple of minutes since their first shot

was fired at me, and they were evidently waiting till they could tell whether I was injured or not.

I now raised my pistol, took careful aim and fired. The ball struck the man who was holding the gun, killing him instantly. The other with a cry of rage seized the rifle and fired three shots at me in quick succession.

The bullets whistled near me, and one of them struck the log behind which I lay. This was so small that I dared not raise my head to get a return shot. I therefore turned around, still keeping flat on the ground, and crawled back some distance.

The tree in falling had struck an old log upon the ground and broken in two. Where the two crossed each other was a space under the broken tree through which I could see my adversary.

I rapidly cleared the earth away until I could get a shot at him. He had run up some rods nearer, and now stood partially behind a small rock, intently watching the point where he had last seen me. Just as I reached the pistol beneath the log he moved quickly, but I fired, and knocked the gun from his hands.

I instantly sprang up, crying, "Another move and I will kill you!"

He turned and attempted to gain the protection of the nearest ledge. As he whirled around I fired again and he fell. I rushed upon him, but he was on his feet at once and caught the rifle. I fired once more, breaking his wounded arm and causing him to let fall the gun. I exclaimed, "Stop, before I kill you!"

Instead of complying he answered fiercely, "I will cut your heart out," and sprang toward me with a bowie knife in his right hand. By this time he was within reach, and made a savage thrust at me with the knife.

I sprang aside in time to avoid the blow, and once more pulled the trigger. No shot replied—the pistol was empty!

My only chance was at close quarters, and catching my revolver by the muzzle I struck him a blow on the head, at the same time receiving a slight cut in the shoulder. He fell at my feet, and before he could move I sprang upon him, kicked the knife from his hand, and caught up the rifle he had dropped in the fight.

He cried, "Hold! I give up; don't murder me."

"Lie still, then," I said, "and don't move."

I now ran to my dead animal, pulled the holsters from the saddle, pushed the empty revolver into them, and took out the loaded one. Then I said, "Get up, now."

He was a pitiable looking object, and weak from the loss of blood. He had been twice wounded—once in the hand and again in the arm—while my blow on his head had cut an ugly gash from which the blood trickled down over his face. I took my handkerchief and made a bandage for his arm, and by twisting it tightly with a stick managed to stop the blood.

I now bade the fellow go ahead, and, taking my holsters in one hand and the loaded pistol in the other, I obliged him to walk in front of me back to the inn where we had stopped the night before.

Of the excitement there caused by our appearance I need not speak. The nearest justice of the peace was sent for, a coroner's jury impaneled, and the statement of myself and the wounded robber taken down. I was exonerated from all blame, the body of the man I killed was buried, and in the course of a few weeks his wounded companion was sentenced to a long term in prison.—S. S. Boynton in Overland.

Toy Mice Distasteful to Canines.

Among the novelties offered for sale by the horde of fakirs who infest the downtown thoroughfares is an innocent looking "educated mouse." One of these imitation rodents has brought the keenest pangs of sorrow to a Staten Island household. A well known member of the Acorn Athletic club purchased one of the artificial mice the other day and introduced it into his family. The creature was made of plaster of Paris, with rubber ears and tail, and was painted an ideal mouse color. After nearly driving his employer's typewriter into hysterics, the young athlete proceeded to have some fun with Box, his valuable bull pup.

Box was asleep at the fireside, and the mouse was deftly placed on his back. Whether the dog was under the impression that a real mouse had the temerity to show such familiarity, or whether he felt the claws in his back, is unknown, but to the consternation of the happy fireside gathering the mouse disappeared within Box's capacious jaws with a single gulp. That night an emetic was administered, which had the effect of bringing forth the rubber tail only, and Box was a very much disgusted dog.—New York Telegram.

American Quinine.

Adolph Sutro is trying the experiment of raising cinchona trees at his grounds above the Cliff house. It is from the bark of about a dozen varieties of this tree that quinine is extracted, and if they will thrive in this climate the trees will become very valuable.

Moreover, the cinchona is a very showy tree and highly ornamental, some of them growing to a height of eighty feet. The enormous medicinal consumption of the bark of the cinchona has caused the tree to be extensively cultivated in India and Java. It grows in high altitudes in New Grenada, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia, where there is a great deal of moisture. It has been tried with success in Australia, near the seacoast, and Mr. Sutro thinks some of the varieties will grow here, where there is a moisture in the atmosphere all the year round.—San Francisco Examiner.

Queer Things.

A Virginia negro threatened to kill a man who had been his friend. He borrowed a gun, hid it under a log and waited for an opportunity. Meanwhile the other found the gun, and in carrying it home he fell down and it was discharged and blew the top of his head off.—Detroit Free Press.

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