

# THE COLUMBIAN.

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## A BALLAD.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

O, she was a maiden of laughing eye,  
And she lived in a great garret cold and high,  
And she was a threadbare, whiskered beauty,  
And he lived in a cellar damp and low.

But the rosy boy of the cherub wing  
Hath many a shaft in his slender stung,  
And the youth below and the maid above  
Were touched with the flashing darts of love.

And she would wake from her troubled sleep,  
O'er her tender pillow to weep;  
Or stand like a statue cold and fair,  
And gaze on a lock of his bright red hair.

And he who was so tall and proud,  
With his step so firm and his laugh so loud,  
His beard grew long, his beard grew thin,  
And he pined in solitude o'er his gin.

But one soft night in the month of June,  
As she lay in the light of the cloudless moon,  
A voice came floating soft and clear,  
To the startled maid's listening ear.

Oh! then from her creaking couch she sprung  
And her tender tresses back she flung,  
She looked for a window far below,  
And he stood forth, her whiskered beau.

She did not point with foolish frown,  
But tucked her trunk and hurried down,  
And there was her lover, tall and true,  
In his threadbare coat of brightened blue.

The star that rose in the evening shade  
Looked sadly down on the weeping maid;  
The sun that came in his morning pride  
Shed golden light over a laughing bride.

## THE HEROINE OF THE PLAGUE.

How the great heart of the republic  
throbbed with sympathy when the news,  
with a daily increasing force, went  
through the land, that the yellow fever  
was ravaging the fairest portions of the  
Sunny South! How the people bent to  
catch the moaning of heart-broken moth-  
ers whose little ones had been torn from  
their breasts by the remorseless Herod  
of the plague!

"Help us, brothers and sisters, or we  
perish!" was the pained cry that came up  
from the stricken land.

Who were their brothers and sisters?  
Rather who were we?

From the lakes of chilly Maine to the  
golden shores of the far Pacific—to the  
lakes of the North to the warm  
shores of the Gulf—the men and women  
of every race and creed responded to the  
call, and reaching out their full hands  
they shouted, through their tears:

"Keep heart, brothers and sisters, in  
the yellow harvest of death! Our  
fortunes and our prayers are yours!"

And all gave with that noble readiness  
that made the gifts so soothing to the  
afflicted people; and all prayed as if the  
death angel hovered over their own  
homes.

It was noble for the poor man to give  
of his pittance, generous in the rich man  
to give of his abundance, admirable for  
the busy man to lay aside his work and  
give his best efforts to gathering aid; but  
it was God-like in those who left secure  
and happy homes, and, taking their pre-  
cious lives in their hands, went down to  
nurse the sick and bury the dead—went  
down never to return.

"Who will lead the charge on yonder  
guns?"

If this request were made by a gen-  
eral, in the excitement of battle, a thou-  
sand swords would flash from their scab-  
bards, and a thousand heroic voices  
would shout:

"Who will command the supply ship,  
and take relief to the people dying in the  
South?"

Ten thousand men heard the request,  
and the silence that followed it was  
broken by one man's clarion voice:

"I!"

"And who are you?"

The answer was a name unheard be-  
fore, but fame caught it up, and death  
gave it immortality.

The river down which he sailed will be  
dry, and the land in which he sleeps  
washed into the great deep, before the  
name of Lieutenant Benner passes away,  
or the lesson of his grand heroism cease  
to affect mankind.

But others showed a self-sacrificing  
spirit as sublime, if not so conspicuous—  
priests and ministers, sisters of mercy  
and sisters of humanity, doctors and  
students, and the race that so grandly  
proved, in the gloomy nights of deserted,  
living Memphis, how white a soul a  
black body could contain.

Thank God, the trial is over! Thank  
God, for the broader, deeper love that  
survives it!

And Mary Brent, in her happy home,  
that looked down from the Walnut Hills  
on the spires and domes of busy Cincin-  
nati, read the news from the fever dis-  
tricts with the sympathetic earnestness  
that always precedes action.

The only daughter of a rich, widowed  
mother—the daughter of a man, who in  
gloomier days, had gone down to the  
Southland and fallen, there were every-  
thing earthly to keep her back. But all  
earthly considerations were weak before  
the heaven given impulse that drew her  
down to stricken Memphis.

"To go, my darling, is to die. You  
are all that is left me, Mary!" sobbed  
Mrs. Brent when her daughter had an-  
nounced her purpose.

"The God of the widow and the father-  
less will protect you and me. To neg-  
lect what I feel is duty now would shad-  
ow and make wretched a century of life,"  
said Mary pushing back her mother's  
gray hair, and kissing the dear, smooth  
brow.

And so Mary Brent's sense of duty  
prevailed over maternal love, and she  
went to Memphis.

She went alone; but the rudest men  
hearing of her mission raised their hats  
and cheered her; and lips to which pray-  
er was a stranger, invoked on the beau-  
tiful, heroic girl the blessings of  
Heaven.

"You are unaccustomed to fatigue,  
Miss Brent, and could not bear the hor-  
rors with which we have grown so fa-

miliar," said the doctor to whom she re-  
ported. "Return, my child, or it may be  
too late."

"I came to work and cannot turn back.  
I came under no blind impulse. Show  
me the suffering; tell me what to do, and  
let me go to work," replied Mary.

The weary doctors drew fresh courage  
from her enthusiasm, and the news of  
her coming reached the fevered suffer-  
ers like a cool breeze from Northern  
hills.

She went out on her mission of mercy;  
and dying men turned on their cots to  
bless her, and mothers, with the death-  
damp on their brows, consigned to her  
care the little ones so soon to be orphans.

"Captain Parker, who came from Mo-  
bile to help us, is taken down. Can Miss  
Brent take charge of the case?" asked  
one of the doctors, after Mary had been  
working without rest for ten days.

"Certainly, doctor! I have a good  
corps of nurses organized. Give me the  
captain's address," said Mary.

Wherever the fever seized its victim  
there they lay. Houses became common  
property; the rich often dying in hovels  
and tents, and the poor in splendid man-  
sions.

Captain Parker was stricken down in  
an old frame house, not far from the de-  
pot. The other occupants had died or  
convalesced and he was alone.

Mary Brent found him on a mattress,  
in the corner of the room, a few wooden  
chairs being the only furniture.

He was a fine-looking man of thirty,  
with a face that must have beamed with  
noble generosity before the fever flushed  
and distorted it, and the dark eyes that  
still retained their intelligent expres-  
sion, despite the fatal lustre that lit  
them up.

He was evidently surprised to see a  
beautiful girl entering the wretched  
apartment; and the low, musical voice  
in which she addressed him, with her  
soft, cool palm resting on his forehead,  
banishing for the moment his feeling of  
torture and his keen appreciation of the  
danger to which she was exposed.

"You should not be here, Miss Brent  
—there are others who should face the  
danger," said the captain.

"There are none whose lives are not as  
precious to them as mine is to me. Keep  
good heart, dear captain. You are young  
and strong, and shall have good nurs-  
ing," she said with forced cheerfulness.

She brought in a bed and other furni-  
ture, got such supplies of food and medi-  
cine as were needed, and transformed  
the room as if a fairy's wand had touched  
it.

There are human birds of prey who  
fatten on the afflictions of their race—  
robbers on the battle-field at night, and  
ghouls that plunder the dead where  
plague and famine rule. Memphis, with  
all its heroisms, was not without them;  
ferocious creatures, whose habitations no  
one could tell, who prowled out at night  
and kept in the shadows, while they  
searched and plundered, and disappeared  
no one could tell how or where.

One night, when Captain Parker lay  
unconscious, his eyes closed and his  
breath fluttering in the uncertain scale  
of life and death, Mary, who was sitting  
beside him, with her back to the door,  
heard a heavy step on the creaking  
stairs.

She turned her head, and seeing noth-  
ing, she placed her fingers again on the  
captain's wrist and watched his face.

On a table between her and the door  
lay the captain's gold watch, and some  
articles of jewelry of her own that she  
had taken off.

The door opened noiselessly, and a  
huge form, with a slouched hat and a  
bearded face, came in. In one hand he  
carried a knife, and the other was ex-  
tended to seize the booty on which his red  
eyes were fastened.

Another step and it would be in his  
possession; but before that step could  
be taken, Mary Brent again looked back  
at the door.

At first she did not credit her eyes;  
and when she did realize the horrid  
presence, she felt a dread such as had  
never before possessed her.

"Not a whisper or I will kill you!"  
said the man, striding toward her with  
uplifted knife, and seizing the articles  
from the table as he approached her.

"Wretch!" she cried, her courage and  
self-possession coming back. "Leave  
those things where you found them and  
get back, or I will shout for help."

"Shout as loud as you please, my  
beauty! It will be your death-knell and  
his!" said the man, coming nearer, and  
nodding his head at the unconscious  
captain.

"Man, have you no soul, that you  
would do this thing?" she asked, her  
eyes fastened upon his.

"Soul! Wa-al, don't know whether I  
have or not, and I don't care," he  
laughed.

Then he began backing towards the  
door. He would certainly have backed  
out, but the doctor at that moment  
appeared in the same opening and taken  
in the situation.

The doctor was a stalwart man, armed  
with a heavy cane, and this cane he  
brought down with such crushing force  
on the ghoulish head that he fell in a  
collapsed heap.

The thieves were taken from the man,  
and he was sent to jail, where he after-  
wards died of the plague.

It would take long to tell of how Mary  
nursed the captain to life, and how she,  
worn out with watching, was stricken  
down.

Captain Parker became a nurse again,  
and Mary Brent was snatched from the  
jaws of death.

This story will become a tradition to  
the people of Memphis, and, in telling it,  
they will always close, to the delight  
of young and old, by saying:

"Miss Brent is now Mrs. Captain  
Parker and the widow Brent gained a  
son when certain she had lost a daugh-  
ter."

## A Prompt Father.

Several years ago there appeared in  
the London Punch the following bit of  
wit: "Advice to a Young Man about to  
be Married—Don't." It is said that the  
author, Douglas Jerrold, received £5 for  
his ten words of advice, or half a pound  
a word.

Costly as it may seem, and we believe  
it the highest price ever paid for ten  
words, the advice would, if heeded, be  
cheap to many a youth of both sexes,  
even if paid for out of their own  
pockets. It is but uttering a common-  
place to say that not all marriages are  
made in heaven, or that many who marry  
in haste repent at leisure. Yet these  
truths seem to have lost their sense,  
through neglect to heed them. But the  
increasing business of divorce courts  
emphasizes them.

Foolish young women, when cautioned  
to think long and well, talk lachry-  
mously about putting impediments "to  
the marriage of true minds." They  
would show better sense and much more  
principle should they refuse to marry,  
even on the eve of the wedding, the man  
whom they then learn is unfit to call a  
pure woman "my wife." There can be  
no "marriage of true minds," when the  
grave of a woman's happiness yawns be-  
side the altar.

"Father, I don't love —, and I know  
he is not the man for me to marry," said  
a daughter, a day or two before her wed-  
ding.

"It is too late now, my daughter.  
Matters have gone too far; the wedding  
must take place." His decision cost him  
a life-long regret.

A gentleman in Washington was made  
of sterner stuff, and had, withal, better  
sense. The announcement of the mar-  
riage had been made. The cards were  
out, and the wedding was expected to be  
one of the "events" of Washington so-  
ciety. One week before the day, the  
father, learning that the young man,  
though well connected, was an unworthy  
and disreputable character, published a  
card announcing that "in consequence  
of recent disclosures" the nuptials would  
not take place.

A daughter's happiness should out-  
weigh all the suggestions of false pride  
and social timidity. Better was it for  
his daughter to be stared at as a nine-  
day's wonder than to stare for life at the  
skelton in the house.—Youth's Com-  
panion.

## Bill Nye's Forest.

Some years ago we had a large sum of  
money that we were not using, and as it  
lay idly in our coffers, we decided to  
purchase a small building site in north-  
east Laramie, improve it and sell it at a  
large profit. Being considerably struck  
with the primeval beauty and solemn  
magnificence of the evergreen, we de-  
cided at first to secure some spruces, and  
make that corner a kind of spruce-gum  
orchard, which would naturally be the  
guy and admiration of the West. Act-  
ing upon this impulse, we purchased a  
load of this vegetable, setting out the  
trees on two sides of the plantation,  
and digging an irrigation ditch two hun-  
dred and sixty-four feet long, by which  
to water them. For two weeks the ir-  
rigation ditch failed to connect with the  
trees through the agency of a me-  
chanical arrangement known as the  
patent pile.

All these trees died of pinkeye but  
one.

We then sent East and purchased one  
hundred seedlings of the Norway spruce  
variety, and fringed the ditch with them,  
protecting them from the hot sun by  
means of wide shingles placed on the  
south side. These trees staggered along  
through the summer, and when winter  
set in were pale and emaciated, but  
cheerful and hopeful for the future. The  
winter was an unusually severe one, and  
toward spring a large, lonely owl, known  
throughout the West as Dr. Graham, in  
an unguarded moment got over into the  
inclosure, and ate the entire forest.

We had almost decided at that time to  
abandon timber culture in Wyoming,  
but when vernal spring opened we de-  
cided to get some choice trees from the  
adjacent mountains, and make one grand  
effort. One pleasant day we con-  
sidered to make a picnic excursion into  
the Black Hills with a small party of  
friends, and while others packed the  
large lunch-baskets, we put into the  
bouche a spade and some other bur-  
lar's tools. The picnic was not a finan-  
cial or social success. Picnics very  
rarely are.

A bottle of glycerine, that had been  
brought by one of the young ladies to  
protect her hands from the rigorous cli-  
mate, got broken, and worked itself into  
the sponge cake, and a pint of camphor  
got mixed up with the pie. A rain-  
storm came up also, and created a lunch  
basket full of chaos, which we poured  
out under a tree.

While the rest of the party gathered  
wood violets and a rare exogenous plant  
unknown to them as poison oak, we  
skirmished around and gathered small  
spruce trees.

It was a glorious day for all. The sun  
came out just long enough to peel the  
noses of the party, and then went under  
a cloud followed by a cold rain and hail.  
All that had been brought along to eat  
was spoiled, except some candy with  
mottos on the side. When you have  
been riding all day in the vigorous air  
of the mountains, and have to fill up  
yourself with a drink of warm water and  
a lozenge on which is printed "I can  
never be thin," it tends to hush the  
vigorous laughter of the giddy throng  
and make people get acquainted with  
each other in a way that is not pleasant.

The mountain picnic has broken up  
more engagements and shattered more  
loving hearts than grim-visaged war and  
the angry parent combined.

There are two prolific causes of crime  
in this country. One is rum, and the  
other is the picnic.

But we deflect from the original line  
of thought.

Our trees were brought home, and  
planted in the same old hole where we  
had been in the habit of killing ever-  
greens.

By this time unemployed men had  
learned to look to us for steady  
work. One man wanted us to hire him  
at a salary to replace trees, and haul  
away the deceased.

The new forest thrived during the sum-  
mer until August, when we were called  
away from the town to put up a political  
job for the good of the country. We  
were absent two weeks, and while away  
a neighbor, who was erecting a croquet  
lawn, composed of wild buffalo grass and  
a velvet sweep of red sand, turned the  
humid contents of our ditch into his  
luxuriant gravel patch, where he was  
trying to promote the guileless game of  
croquet.

On our return, the sombre green of  
our little wilderness had changed to the  
big Michigan fire.

People sometimes ask us this season  
why we do not go into the tree busi-  
ness with our old enthusiasm, but we answer  
them rudely and harshly, for who can  
chat gaily of that which tears out his  
heart and grinds it into the grave of  
buried hopes?—Boomerang.

## Jesse James' Mother.

An exchange says that "the James  
boys and ugly doves." This may be  
regarded as authentic. The James  
boys were not only morose, but they  
were at times irritable. Jesse James  
at different times killed over fifty men.

This shows that he must have been  
soured by some great sorrow. No man  
is so healthy, and full of animal spirits  
as one who has lost a child. Jesse James  
was a man who would not let a cross  
and taciturnity. There should have  
been a post mortem examination of Mr.  
James to determine what the matter was  
with him. We were in favor of a post  
mortem examination of Mr. James twelve  
years ago, but there seemed to be a feel-  
ing against the part of the  
authorities about holding it. No one  
seemed to doubt the propriety of such a  
movement, but there was a kind of vague  
hesitation by the proper officials on ac-  
count of his mother. There has been a  
vast amount of thoughtfulness manifested  
by the Missouri people on behalf of  
Jesse's mother.

For nearly twenty years  
after the death of her son, she was a  
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