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THE OREGON SCOUT.

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Local Directory.

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O. F. BELL, W. M.
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EPHRAIM LODGE, No. 18, I. O. O. F.—Regular meetings on Friday evenings of each week at their hall in Union. All brethren in good standing are invited to attend. By order of the lodge.

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Church Directory.

M. E. CHURCH—Divine service every Sunday at 11 a. m. and 7 p. m. Sunday school at 9 p. m. Prayer meeting every Thursday evening at 8:30.

Rev. Anderson, Pastor.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH—Regular church services every Sabbath morning and evening. Prayer meeting each week on Wednesday evening. Sabbath school every Sabbath at 10 a. m.

Rev. H. Vernon Rice, Pastor.

St. John's Episcopal Church—Service every Sunday at 11 o'clock a. m.

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Regular east bound trains leave at 9:30 a. m. West bound trains leave at 4:30 p. m.

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Will practice in Union, Baker, Grant, Umatilla and Morrow Counties, also in the Supreme Court of Oregon, the District, Circuit and Supreme Courts of the United States.

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THE MESSAGE OF LIFE

From the Youth's Companion.

Twenty years ago I was one of many witnesses of a scene that has left upon my memory an impress perhaps deeper than that of any other occurrence of that stirring time. The sequel of the story, which I learned some months afterwards, is narrated here with the principal event; and both together deserve a larger audience than any that has yet heard them, because they touch the heart and arouse those feelings of sympathy which make the whole world kin.

It was in February, 1865. I was a staff officer of a division of the Union Army stationed about Winchester, Virginia; and military operations being then practically over in that region, I had succeeded in getting leave of absence for twenty days. The time was short enough, at best, for one who had been long absent from family and friends, and two days were to be consumed each way in getting to and from my northern home. I lost no time in making the first stage of my journey, which was a brief one, from Winchester to Harper's Ferry, by rail.

I went back to the hotel after an hour's stroll, wrote some letters, read all the newspapers I could find about the place, and shortly after eleven o'clock went out again. This time my ear was greeted with the music of a band, playing a slow march. Several soldiers were walking briskly past, and I inquired of them if there was to be a military funeral.

"No, sir," one of them replied; "not exactly. It is an execution. Two deserters from one of the artillery regiments here are to be shot up on Bolivar Heights. Here they come!"

The solemn strains of the music were heard near at hand, and the cortege moved into the street where we stood, and wound slowly up the hill. First came the band; then Gen. Stevenson, the military commandant of the post, and his staff; then the guard, preceding and following an ambulance, in which were the condemned men. A whole regiment followed, marching by platoons with reversed arms, making in the whole a spectacle than which nothing can be more solemn.

Close behind it came, as it seemed to me, the entire population of Harper's Ferry; a motley crowd of several thousand, embracing soldiers off duty, camp-followers, negroes, and what not. It was a raw, damp day, not a ray of sunlight had yet penetrated the thick clouds, and under foot was a thin coating of snow. Nature seemed in sympathy with the misery of the occasion.

The spot selected for the dreadful scene was rather more than a mile up the Heights, where a high ridge of ground formed a barrier for bullets that might miss their mark. Arrived here, the troops were formed in two large squares of one rank each, one square within the other, with an open space towards the ridge. Two graves had been dug near this ridge, and a coffin was just in rear of each grave. Twenty paces in front was the firing party of six files, under a lieutenant, at ordered arms; the general and his staff sat on their horses near the center.

Outside the outer square, the great crowd of spectators stood in perfect silence. The condemned man had been brought from the ambulance, and each one sat on his coffin, with his open grave before him.

They were very different in their aspect. One, a man of more than forty years, showed hardly a trace of feeling in his rugged face; but the other was a mere lad, of scarcely twenty, who gazed about him with a wild, reckless look, as if he could not yet understand that he was about to endure the terrible punishment of his offense.

The proceedings of the court-martial were read, reciting the charges against these men, their trial, conviction and sentence; and then the order of Gen. Sheridan approving the sentence "to be shot to death with musketry," and directing it to be carried into effect at twelve o'clock noon of this day. The whole scene was passing immediately before my eyes; for a staff-uniform will pass its wearer almost anywhere in the army, and I had passed the guards and entered the inner square.

A chaplain knelt by the condemned men and prayed fervently, whispered a few words in the ear of each, wrung their hands, and retired. Two soldiers stepped forward with handkerchiefs to bind the eyes of the sufferers, and I heard the officer of the firing-party give the command in a low tone,—"Attention!—shoulder—arms!"

I looked at my watch; it was a minute past twelve. The crowd outside had been so perfectly silent that a flutter and a disturbance running through it at this instant fixed everybody's attention. My heart gave a great jump as I saw a mounted orderly urging his horse through the crowd, and waving a yellow envelope over his head.

The squares opened for him, and he rode in and handed the envelope to the general. Those who were permitted to see the despatch, read the following:

WASHINGTON, D. C., Feb. 23, 1865.

Gen. Job Stevenson, Harper's Ferry.

Deserters reprieved till further orders. Stop the execution. A. LINCOLN.

The order of the two men was so thoroughly resigned himself to his fate, that he seemed unable now to realize that he was saved, and he looked

around him in a dazed, bewildered way.

Not so the other; he seemed for the first time to recover his consciousness. He clasped his hands together, and burst into tears. As there was no military execution after this at Harper's Ferry, I have no doubt that the sentence of both was finally commuted.

Powerfully as my feelings had been stirred by this scene, I still suspected that the despatch had in fact arrived before the cortege left Harper's Ferry, and that all that happened afterward was planned and intended as a terrible lesson to these culprits.

That afternoon I visited Gen. Stevenson at his headquarters, and after introducing myself, and referring to the morning's scene on Bolivar Heights, I ventured frankly to state my suspicions, and ask if they were not well-founded.

"Not at all," he instantly replied. "The men would have been dead had that despatch reached me two minutes later."

"Were you not expecting a reprieve, general?"

"I had some reason to expect it last night; but as it did not come, and as the line was reported down between here and Baltimore this morning, I had given it up. Still, in order to give the fellows every possible chance for their lives, I left a mounted orderly at the telegraph office, with orders to ride at a gallop if a message came from Washington. It is well I did—the precaution saved their lives."

How the despatch came to Harper's Ferry must be told in the words of the man who got it through.

THE TELEGRAPHER'S STORY.

On the morning of the 24th of February, 1865, I was busy at my work in the Baltimore Telegraph Office, sending and receiving messages. At half-past ten o'clock, for I had occasion to mark the hour,—the signal C—A—L, several times repeated, caused me to throw all else aside, and attend to it.

That was the telegraphic cipher of the War Department; and telegraphers, in those days, had instructions to put that service above all others. A message was quickly ticked off from the president to the commanding officer at Harper's Ferry, reprieving two deserters who were to be shot at noon. The message was dated the day before, but had in some way been detained or delayed between the department and the Washington office.

A few words to the Baltimore office, which accompanied the despatch, explained that it had "stuck" at Baltimore, that an officer direct from the president was waiting at the Washington office, anxious to hear that it had reached Harper's Ferry, and that Baltimore must send it on instantly.

Baltimore would have been very glad to comply; but the line to Harper's Ferry had been interrupted since daylight; nothing whatever had passed. So I replied to Washington.

The reply came back before my fingers had left the instrument. "You must get it through. Do it, somehow, for Mr. Lincoln. He is very anxious, has just sent another messenger to us."

I called the office-superintendent to my table, and repeated these despatches to him. He looked at the clock.

"Almost eleven," he said. "I see just one chance—a very slight one. Send it to New York; ask them to get it to Wheeling and then it may get through by Cumberland and Martinsburg. Stick to 'em, and do what you can."

By this time I had become thoroughly aroused in the business, and I set to work with a will. The despatch with the explanation went to New York—and promptly came the reply that it was hopeless; the wires were crowded, and nothing could be done till late in the afternoon, if then.

I responded just as Washington had replied to me. It must be done; it is a case of life and death; do it for Mr. Lincoln's sake, who is very anxious about it. And I added for myself, by way of emphasis—"For God's sake, let's save these poor fellows!"

And I got the New York people thoroughly aroused as I was myself. The answer came back, "Will do what we can."

It was now ten minutes past eleven. In ten minutes more, I heard from New York that the despatch had got as far as Buffalo, and could not go direct to Wheeling; it must go on to Chicago.

Inquiries from Washington were repeated every five minutes, and I sent what had reached me.

Half-past eleven, the despatch was at Chicago, and they were working their best to get it to Wheeling.

Something was the matter; the Wheeling office did not answer.

The next five minutes passed without a word; then—huzza!—New York says the despatch has reached Wheeling, and the operator there says he can get it through to Harper's Ferry in time.

At this point the news stopped. New York could learn nothing further for me, after several efforts, and I could only send to Washington that I hoped it was all right, but could not be sure.

Later in the day the line was working again to Harper's Ferry, and then I learned that the despatch had reached the office there at ten minutes before twelve, and that it was brought to the place of execution just in time.

JAMES FRANKLIN FITTS.

ANGIE'S DEBUT.

"You may not see me again in an age, Brother Emory. I have arranged for a European trip for the summer," Mrs. Alice Lyle remarked as she daintily sipped her tea at the neat little table in the breezy dining room.

Mrs. Lyle was making one of her brief and invariable bi-monthly visits to the pretty country house of her only brother, even though he was a simple farmer and she the gayest of the gay city belles.

"Well, for my part I never could make out what folks can find so uncommonly comforting in going to Europe," said Brother Emory's wife—a plump and tidy matron whose supreme idea of the comforting was a jaunt to the busy market place just when her excellent dairy products commanded the most gratifying prices.

"You mean, Sister Huldah, that you consider my tastes deplorably extravagant and worldly," Mrs. Lyle observed with a little laugh of unfeigned amiability.

"Mother means she would be better pleased if you were not going," Brother Emory hastened to say. "She will be mightily lonesome not having your sisterly visits, Alice."

"And, oh, Aunt Alice, did you not promise I should have a long visit to you this spring?" piped an innocently reproachful voice from the back stoop, where a tall girl was sitting, her pink gingham sunbonnet pushed back from a handsome brown head, her lap full of golden brown russets which she had just brought from the unexhausted winter store of the capacious cellar.

"Angie will be mighty disappointed, I am afraid," said Brother Emory; "the child has been thinking and talking of nothing but that visit ever since you promised her high six months ago."

"Ah, but I intend to take her home with me to-morrow," Mrs. Lyle smiled, as she sipped her tea and daintily nibbled a creamy, honeyed biscuit.

"Do you really and truly, Aunt Alice? Oh, I am so glad!" exclaimed the girl, springing excitedly to her feet, her brown eyes big and brilliant with delight, her apples falling unheeded from her calico apron and rolling like a shower of footballs down the wooden steps.

"Well, for my part, I can't make out why anybody need be so powerfully jubilant just about a week or so in the city," Sister Huldah said with the conscious acerbity which was characteristic of the somewhat unpolished but wholly estimable lady. "Not as your Aunt Alice is always considerate enough, and more than enough, in everything. I am not supposing she can help anything which may happen disappointing to you. But just the same, in her fine city house you will meet with a plenty of people too grand to notice a girl as used to nothing but churning and scrubbing and wearing gingham gowns."

"I intend to buy some pretty dresses for Angie, if you do not mind," Aunt Alice announced pleasantly, but she did not add that she had chosen for the visit a season when Angie would not be likely to meet her more fastidious and exclusive guests.

There was one, however, with whom Angie anticipated a certain and glad meeting—one of whom she ventured not mention, neither comment nor question, although his image haunted her girlish fancies. She knew Guy Arnold was often a guest in the fine city mansion which was the home of the wealthy and widowed Aunt Alice. She knew she would meet him there, and how surprised and how happy he would be to behold her once again she meditated.

She could not understand what strangely sad thing had come between her and the elegant young gentleman who had seemed so fond of her only one short season ago, when he was summing over yonder somewhere among the cool, green hills. Only one short season ago, while the last late blossoms were fading and falling in the pretty country garden, he had lingered there beside her—his every glance had seemed to proclaim the love he did not utter, his every allusion had seemed an assurance of his constancy. And then he had whispered the tenderest of farewells, and so left her, to await messages which had failed her, and to wonder a weary half year at a silence she had deemed no less grievous to him than inexplicable to herself.

Angie could not understand what singular and melancholy thing had come between them, but now she would meet him once again, and he would be so gratified, and so eager to explain the distressing contingency which had kept him from her such a weary time! Very possibly the era of churning and gingham gowns, was nearly ended for her! Very possibly before the freshly budded garden blossoms would be again faded and fallen, her elegant lover would have taken her away to some splendid abode where would be only sweet indolence and dazzling attire!

"I have a presentiment I shall not return here," she said, mysteriously and rather loftily, to a stalwart young fellow, who had approached her as she stood in the ruby sunlight beneath the luxuriant lilacs which shaded the garden gate.

"Maybe your aunt wants you to travel with her? she wants you for a maid, maybe?" the young man said with anxious inquiry, and with a sudden pallor perceptible behind the bronzed tan of his rugged features.

"A maid!" she echoed with ineffable scorn. "Please do not be so simple, Silvester Alan; you only make yours li disagreeable! You ought to know even churning and scrubbing are better than being a lady's maid; although if I go to Europe I may require the services of that sort of person myself," she added with an accession of the lofty and mysterious.

"I may be simple enough, Angeline Emory, and I may make myself disagreeable," her companion retorted moodily, "but all the same I can see an unvarnished fact which is as plain as the steeple on the church over yonder. And the fact is, you have got a stock of new notions, second hand which I do not hold as valuable nor beautifying. You never grumbled about the dairy chores before, you never flung a taunt or sneer at honest work, until you met Guy Arnold, strutting about with his diamonds and fancy cane and his sugary twaddle about Heaven knows what."

"You mean to accuse the gentleman of talking nonsense, I presume," said Angie, attempting a little air of gracious tolerance which she had observed her polite young aunt Alice assumed toward her less polished mother. "But you quite misjudge him, but you are always unjust and harsh and rude, Vess Allen," she concluded with an amusingly abrupt assumption of the grandiloquent and superior.

"Am I unjust because I object to your partiality for him?" she demanded, half angrily and half despondently. "You have allowed me to care for you, Angie, and you have allowed me to believe you cared for me, and I hold you had no right to listen to what has turned your heart against them as loves you and their homely ways. Maybe with all your lofty pretensions you have not a lowly guess judging by yourself, that rude farmer folks have feelings, and human feelings, whether grand or humble, must naturally be harsh when cut and harried by the folly of one we have calculated was truer and kinder."

The girl blushed and pouted, perhaps she looked the least bit penitent too; but before she could utter a syllable of protest or pacification, he had turned away, and was striding swiftly down the shadowy road.

And in another day, Angie had gone with her gay young aunt to the city. "I am to have a little informal reception to-night," Mrs. Lyle told her niece that evening, "and of course I shall like to have you in the drawing-room with me, if you are not too tired," said the lady, looking somehow as if she hoped the girl were very tired indeed.

"Ah, a party is always like rest to me, if I do not go down your friends might think me dreadfully queer and uncivil," Angie said innocently.

"Well, come down if you prefer," her aunt said with an uneasy smile. "And if you wish you can wear one of my dresses—we are exactly the same height and size, you know, and you may choose whatever pleases you most."

Mrs. Lyle was more indulgent than judicious perhaps; but that she did not realize until her inexperienced niece was arrayed for the occasion.

Angie had selected a pomegranate velvet—a showy affair with an exceedingly low corsage, infinitesimal straps for sleeves, and an immense court train, which was very imposing no doubt, but which failed somehow to enhance her rustic graces.

"My dear child," her Aunt Alice gasped, in horror, "you look precisely like a peony—a monstrous peony, upside down, with a great, loose petal dangling behind."

"Why, I thought," Angie began, and then stopped, her eyes full of mortified tears, her reddened and callous hands fumbling with the gorgeous train which tripped her unskilled feet at every step.

"Dear child, what you thought does not matter now," her aunt said, ruefully. "You have no time for a change of toilette; Mr. Arnold is here, and I have asked him to amuse you while I receive my guests."

The girl could feel the hot blood seething to her already hot face, she could feel her bare shoulders and arms were an unmistakably vivid peony crimson just then. She had a confusing presentiment that her elegant lover might deem her dress decidedly more ridiculous than charming.

"Mr. Arnold," she stammered, nervously.

"Mr. Guy Arnold," continued Aunt Alice, who had never surmised that romance and ambition of the girlish heart, which was plunging and quaking so tumultuously within the oppressive pomegranate bodice. "He says he thinks he may have seen you; he spent several weeks somewhere near your place last summer, I believe."

"He says he thinks he may have seen me," poor Angie repeated mentally to the struggling heart, which suddenly seemed to fall like a stony, icy clog within her bosom. He can speak like that after all his professions and promises!"

And then she became suddenly mindful that Guy Arnold had actually professed and promised nothing. Though his every tone and glance had avowed love, the word itself had never been spoken, though he had sentimentalized over their beautiful affinity of soul, he had never asked her to share with him the smiles and tears of wedded life;

he had pledged no constancy and required none.

The splendid mirage was dissolving before her sight; the enchanting castle was vanishing in the troubled air; but as yet her mortification was not complete.

She silently followed her aunt into the drawing-room, but the elegant Mr. Arnold had become invisible, and poor Angie was relegated to a corner sofa and left to amuse herself.

As she sat there half hidden by some bushy potted exotic, two persons paused near her.

"Who is she—the odd, red creature who entered a moment ago?" some lady was inquiring in cautiously subdued tones. "The spectacle was really exhilarating—she really wears a magnificent Parisian dress which dear Alice Lyle had made for a State dinner, or some equally august occasion, and she could not manage the train at all. She is unglowed, she has the hands of a plough boy, and her manner is something extraordinary."

It was all too deliciously unique! Who can she be, Guy?"

"She is a niece from the country," Guy Arnold explained with a fleeting grimace and an expressive shrug. "My dear Alice asked me to amuse her, but I evaded the honor; the extraordinary young person would have been the amuser, I fear, and I should have been guilty of some decidedly ungalant birth. After our marriage I shall certainly persuade my Alice to suppress her grotesque, rustic niece, I assure you."

Behind the bushy exotic poor Angie arose slowly to her feet. She was no longer red as a peony; but white as death. "She would have been the amuser!" she had always been that to Guy Arnold—that and nothing more—he had amused himself with her for the sport of a summer day, and that was all. And he was to marry Aunt Alice—whose dainty shoes he was not worthy to unlace!

The girl took a step forward, but she was sickened and faint with the mortification and humiliation of it all; her strengthless feet tripped again in the unaccustomed train, and the next instant she fell headlong and helpless.

But she had not fainted quite; she was conscious that the startled Aunt Alice knelt pityingly beside her, and she was conscious that she hurled some scathing truths fiercely upon the elegant Guy Arnold. And then she begged to be taken home; her drawing-room debut had not been so auspicious as she cared to remain longer.

The scrubbing and the churning, and the gingham gowns would never again be distasteful to Angie; greater evils than these there were, she began to realize. Never again would she covet the splendors of wealth; greater bliss was there in the content of the humble, faithful love. And never again would honest, blunt Vess Alan seem simple and disagreeable, or rude and harsh to her.

"But he will never take me back to his heart again," she sighed, as she lagged down the shadowy road toward the pretty farmhouse.

However, at that instant he had espied her from afar off, and he was speeding to meet her, all his rugged features softened with joyous surprise.

"What has sent you back so soon?" he demanded in his straightforward and unpolished fashion. "Maybe, Angeline Emory, you are sorry you went away as you did, and vexed with me about nothing as you were?"

"I am sorry," she admitted with such meek simplicity that his great tender heart was sorely disturbed lest he had somehow grieved and wronged her.

But as she pleadingly uplifted her tearful, brown eyes, his honest countenance brightened, and then

"He clasped her like a lover, and he cheered her soul with love."

And so hand in hand, they entered the farm-house together, and before the budding flowers had faded in the pretty, country garden, she had become his wife.

"And Angie has done a mightily sensible thing, too," Brother Emory always maintained.

"Well, for my part, I could never make out why some folks have so much doubting and delaying after they know their own minds," Sister Huldah commented with her familiar acerbity.

Mrs. Alice Lyle did not become a bride. The little drawing-room episode had been a revelation to her, and she declined an alliance with the elegant Guy Arnold, and relinquished the European trip which had been arranged as her bridal tour.

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