

The Daily Astorian.

(1)

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A TERRIBLE HOUR.

Death Stared Him in the Face.

"I shall never forget my experience in a mountain district of Arkansas," said Capt. Mellvine when the conversation had turned upon adventure. "There are many pleasant occurrences that we forget, but an affair of honor remains with us. The memory of a pleasant dream soon passes away, but the recollection of a nightmare becomes a mental landmark. Some time ago I was instructed by my employers to repair at once to the White Oak mountains, and buy all the cattle that a reasonable sum of money would induce to leave the rugged trails. I boarded a railroad train and was soon rushing towards my destination. Sociability is a prominent feature of my nature, which I suppose is an heirloom left by long experience as a newspaper reporter; and I had not been long on the train until I had formed the acquaintance of several gentlemen, among them a United States deputy marshal who gave me his card, with an evident air of pride in being connected with so prominent an institution as our government. At a small station, a long-haired man, a genuine native of Arkansas, I surmised, boarded the train and took a seat opposite me. I was desirous of hearing him talk in his quaint dialect, and I moved over, addressed him, and handed him my card. He looked at the card significantly, and carefully placed it in an old black pocket-book. He eyed me nervously for a moment and asked: "Whar mou' yer be goin'?" "White Oak mountains," I replied. "I get off at Patsey station." "He looked at me again with an earnestness, and uneasiness of gaze that I could not understand, and said: "I reckon you'll find it rite pleasant up ther. Best lot o' feelers that yer ever seed, an' they ain't afeerd, lemme tell you." "I could not divine why their physical courage should in the least add to the pleasure of my visit, but supposing the remark grew out of his own admiration for men who are not 'afeerd,' and that such information would lighten, in charming anticipation, the fatigues of the journey, I did not seem to 'cotten' to me, as the planters sometimes say in expressing predilection, and he left his seat and stood near the door. I approached him again, feeling more than ever an interest in him, and asked if he had ever been among the White Oak mountains. "Have I got fingers and toes?" he replied. "I can answer assuredly concerning your fingers, and can speculate with chances in my favor in regard to your toes," I said in facetious attempt. "Wall, then, I've been there." "Many cattle in that country?" "Yes, an' yer'll find some of them putty hard to han'le, lemme tell yer." "My friend, I must confess that you puzzle me. I have asked you several very civil questions, expecting civil answers, but you are so evasive that I can get no satisfaction." "You're gone to school, hain't yer?" "Yes." "Talk Latin, I reckon." "My knowledge of Latin is limited." "It's what they call a dead talk, ain't it?" "Yes, it's a dead language." "Then you mou' need it ar'ter awhile." "I don't understand you. Your meaning is as dead to me as the language in question is to the unlettered world." "So much the worst for yer, I reckon, yer air sorter proud o' yer larnin' an' it may be all right to fling out yer book business at every man yer see, but it don't speak o' very sou'n' sense, lemme tell yer. In my country, when a

man gets to spouting like yer've been doin', we put him down as a grinnel an' don't have nothin' more to do with him." "By this time the train was slackening up at a station. The brakeman shouted "Patsey," and in a moment more I was standing on the platform. The next business to be transacted was to hire a horse which I did after considerable trouble. Just as I mounted and started across the rugged country, I saw my long-haired acquaintance on a mule, riding rapidly in the direction I was to take. I called to him but he made no reply. "My first instructions were to first call on a gentleman named Harvey. I learned that he lived about fifteen miles from the station, and when night came on I had considerable trouble in pursuing the right course. Hurrying clouds obscured the moon, and I could only get an occasional glimpse of the narrow and deflecting road. Suddenly my horse stopped and snorted. I urged him but he would not proceed. I dismounted to ascertain the cause of his fright, when I was seized, and despite resistance, bound and gagged. There seemed to be quite a number in the party of captors, for while bound to a horse and hurried along, I heard numerous suppressed voices. We must have traveled several miles over a country rough with ravines and almost precipitous with hill sides. When we stopped I was rudely lifted from the horse and taken inside a log house, built so close to the mountain side that an immense rock formed a side wall of the structure. I was placed upon a bench and my hands were untied. I saw around me ten or twelve rough looking men, heavily armed. They were fierce in action and determined in expression. I had pleaded with them, ere they placed the gag in my mouth, but now they had restored to me the use of articulation, I was mute and almost stupefied. At every turn I saw great copper vessels, and off to the right, where my eyes inadvertently wandered, I saw a rude cornmill and pile of corn. "So you've come out here to take us to the penitentiary, eh?" said a large grizzly-bearded man, stepping in front of me. "No, sir," I replied. "I never heard of you before. I came to this country to buy mountain cattle." "An' I reckon you've found more of 'em than you can buy." "I don't understand you. I don't know why I was brought here. I never harmed any of you, and why you should inflict punishment on me is something I don't understand." "Oh, he's powerful innocent," exclaimed a fellow who looked at me with an expression of blood-thirsty revenge. He don't know what we mean now, because he ain't got his crowd with him." "That's the way he's trying to work it," exclaimed the man who leaned against one of the copper vessels, "but turn him loose an' he'd show us." "Gentlemen, you—" "Gentlemen," repeated a chorus of voices. "Did you hear that. He's gettin' powerful meek." "Young feller," said the grizzly-bearded patriarch, "we're goin' to put a mighty tellin' lesson before your eyes." "We're citizens of this here Amerikin government, and don't want to be pestered in the exercise of our nat'l rights. Our forefathers fit and bled for the 'tablishment of this Yewnited States, an' we think that we've got a right to make whisky when and whar we please." "Now your talkin'; put it to him!" exclaimed the chorus. "You may be a brave man," continued the patriarch, "an' may be discharging your duty, but its our duty to see that you don't. We could have killed you easy enough without puttin' ourselves to the trouble of fetchin' you here, but we wanted to furnish an ex-

ample to a fellow that turned traitor. We want to hang you right afore his eyes an' then hang him." "A groan arrested my attention, and looking around, I saw a young man bound hand and foot, stretched upon the floor." "That young chap," continued the grizzly leader, "went down to Little Rock some time ago an' we've foun' out by your raid, turned traitor on us. If it hadn't been for him you wouldn't now be so close to whar the real work of eternal punishment begins. Hold the young feller up an' let the sinners look at each other." "Gentlemen, I never saw the young fellow before, I declare. There must be a mistake here. What do you think my business is anyhow? For God's sake do not act until you know what you are doing! Heaven knows I did not come here to harm anyone." "That talk mou' amount to a great deal afore a judge an' jury, but afore us it only amounts to what it's worth." "What am I charged with? Give me a chance to defend myself." "It wasn't expected that you wanted a chance. A man that is so bold as to come right out as you have done oughter know that if he's tuck that ain't no chance for him. Fetch the rope Josiah!" "The young man addressed immediately appeared with the rope. I begged and prayed, but they slipped a noose over my neck and throwing the rope over something above tightened it. "Before you murder me," I gasped, "tell me what I have done?" "You are a deputy United States marshal on the hunt of distillers," replied the grizzly-beard. "I am not. I am a cattle buyer. No one can prove that I am a deputy marshal." "I reckon I kin," replied a voice and before me stood the long-haired man I had met on the train. "I did not tell you that I was a deputy marshal!" "No, but yer give me yer ticket," and he produced a card bearing the name and address of J. M. Pettey, United States Deputy Marshal. "Then I realized how the mistake had occurred. The deputy marshal had given me his card; when I introduced myself to the long-haired man, I had without noticing it, given it to him. I made an elaborate explanation, and in proof told them to search my pockets, where they would find several cards bearing different names, but would find at least fifty bearing one name, which was my own. They did so, and took the rope from my neck, and also liberated the young man who they thought had turned informer. "I was soon liberated and allowed to mount my horse. The grizzly man gave me instructions in regard to the road to Harvey's and bade me good night in a spirit of friendship. When I had gone about fifty yards some one called to me to stop. I did not know whether to fly or obey, but knowing that the distillers could, by their knowledge of the country, soon head me off, I stopped. Pretty soon old grizzly appeared. "Here," he said, handing me a bottle. "Take this moonshine along with you. It's the best, an' along towards the turn of the night you'll find it mighty strengthin'. Don't say anything about our pleasant meetin' for you mou' be sorry for it. Good bye." "The report recently gained Journalistic circulation that Rev. Dr. Talmage of Brooklyn, N. Y., had spoken in a derogatory manner of St. Jacobs Oil. A personal interview with the Doctor, by a St. Jacobs Oil representative brought out this expression: "I never spoke a word against that substance, nor ever heard anything but good of it." "For lame Back, Side or Chest use Shiloh's Porous Plaster, Price 25 cents. For sale by W. E. Deament.



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