

A THRILLING STORY.

How Mr. McSwyny's Friend Concluded a Strange, Romantic Tale.

"Speaking of flash literature reminds me of an incident which occurred some time since in connection with a deceased friend of mine," said Bryan McSwyny yesterday. "The person alluded to was a man of genius. I will not mention his name, because of his family connections. He was engaged in writing a serial story for a well-known weekly paper of the 'Snake-Eyed Bob, the Bully of the Woods' order. The story had run so long that the publishers were getting tired of it, and they wrote to my friend telling him to bring the story to an end in the next installment. He did so in the following unique manner:

"The balloon rose slowly from the foot of the cliff, bumping along the face of the rock as it did so. Angelina, frightened at the prospect of the perilous journey ahead when the balloon was one thousand feet from the ground, jumped recklessly out upon a shelf of rock which projected from the face of the cliff. Frenzied with fear Algernon followed his love at the risk of breaking his neck, and the balloon sailed away and left them in their precarious situation. There the lovers were one thousand feet from the top of the cliff and an equal distance from the bottom. Algernon seated himself beside the lovely maiden and clasped her to his heaving bosom in a passionate embrace. Slowly the sun sank behind the western hills. Its expiring rays lit up the forms of the lovers, oblivious of their awful position. The shadows deepened and night fell like a black pall upon the scene.

"Will you always love me, Algernon?" said Angelina.

"Till death, darling," was the reply.

"THE END."

"Well," continued Bryan, "letters began to arrive at the office of publication asking such fateful questions as these: 'What became of the lovers? Did they dry up and blow away? Did the buzzards feed upon the form of the lovely Angelina? Did they fall off the cliff and smash into pieces at the foot? Did a bowlder roll over the edge of the cliff and crush them? Did the birds of the air bring food to the lovers? Did some one let a rope down from the top of the cliff and pull 'em up? For Heaven's sake, what became of them?'"

"These letters accumulated so fast in the office that the publishers became alarmed and wrote to my friend, asking him to write another installment of the story, which he gladly did, the concluding sentences of the last chapter being as follows:

"The long night passed slowly away with leaden tread. The eastern sky began to flush with the first beams of morning light.

"Are you awake, dearest?" whispered Algernon in Angelina's shell-like ear.

"The white curtains over the beautiful eyes slowly lifted, and the musical voice replied in a faint whisper:

"Yes, darling, but I'm very hungry."

"By the gods," replied Algernon, springing excitedly to his feet, "you shall have food! For see, dearest, the balloon approaches."

"It was indeed as Algernon had said. Outlined against the fleecy clouds, by straining those eyes of heavenly blue, Angelina could see a faint speck about as big as a door-knob. The speck gradually grew larger as the two lovers gazed hungrily upon it, now taking upon it the dimensions of an orange, then swelling out as large as a coconut, until it drew within their sight and assured them that they could not be mistaken; it was indeed their long-lost balloon. Then their fears were excited anew by seeing the balloon sway as it was struck by a current of air. Clasp her hands around Algernon's neck, Angelina exclaimed in agony:

"Oh, darling, the balloon is going away!"

"Wait, love," said Algernon, soothingly; "another blast may strike it."

"It was indeed so, as Algernon had said. A favoring gale from Heaven, it seemed, directed the balloon toward the cliff again, and in a miraculous manner it was wafted against the face of the cliff. As it came nearer and nearer to their resting place Algernon said, in a husky whisper:

"Now, Lena, my heart's love, jump when I jump."

"They jumped and clung like spiders to the netting until Algernon had descended to the car. Then, like the hero he was, Algernon rescued his darling one from her perilous position and laid her upon the floor of the car. She was resuscitated by a drink of life-giving brandy, which Algernon found in a hamper, and an hour later was pleasantly engaged in viewing the diversified landscape, over which the balloon sailed like a swallow in its flight.

"Algernon and Algernon the balloon rose until a band of Indians who were watching it saw it gradually fade away against the empyrean blue of the sky until it dwindled down to the size of an apple, then faded away until only a speck like the head of a pin remained, and then was lost in the shadowy realms of space.

"THE END."

"Well, what did the publishers say this time?"

"Oh," replied Bryan with a smile, "they simply discharged my friend, hat's all."—Chicago Mail.

THE COLONEL'S STORY.

How He Made the Acquaintance of a Texas Tarantula.

"I'm a-telling you," said the Colonel, as he removed his broad-brimmed hat to push his fingers through his hair—"I'm a-telling you that the tarantula of Texas is no slouch. He is just about the wickedest, ugliest, dog-goned critter that was ever set up on crooked legs, and the man who says he isn't afraid of 'em is a liar from East to West, and I know it! While their pizen is no worse than a rattlesnake's, the idea of being keeled over by such a horrid-looking critter half kills you to start with."

"Were you ever bitten, Colonel?"

"Never, but I got it worse than being bitten. Dog-gone my buttons, but when I think of it I lose a foot in length and get a mouth as dry as last year's cotton!"

"What was it?"

"Well, one night last summer I camped down after a hard day's ride and slept the sleep of the just. When I opened my eyes in the morning I was lying on the broad of my back, head well up on the saddle and the blanket pulled up to my chin. Right on my breast was one of the biggest, ugliest tarantulas ever produced. He was evidently waiting for me to wake up, for as soon as I opened my eyes he took a walk."

"Walked away, eh?"

"No, sir! He walked upwards and began to caress my chin. Then he took a saunter up my cheek and inspected my hat, stopping every now and then as if he had found a good place to sting. In two minutes I was sweating like a horse after a ten mile gallop, and I was even too scared to pray. I know I tried to, and I'll be hanged if I didn't get off a paragraph of the Texas stock law in place of the Lord's prayer."

"And the tarantula finally left?"

"Yes, sorter, finally. It was along about ten o'clock, I believe. Meanwhile he was promenading up and down and enjoying the sunshine and sizing me up. I kept my eyes shut most of the time, but I could trace his movements by the sense of feeling. About nine o'clock a second spider put in an appearance and begged the honor of knifing me, but my old friend objected and they had a lively set-to on my stomach. The new comer was knocked out in the third round and went off for repairs."

"And you didn't spring up and dash the tarantula aside?"

"Did you ever spring out of the way of a bullet, young man? I couldn't have gathered myself before he'd have popped it to me full figures. No, sir. I just laid thar' and waited for him to get tired and go. He finally went, but I couldn't say how far, and I hadn't moved a finger when a couple of cowboys rode up. Then I jumped clear of the blanket and told my story, but they wouldn't believe it."

"They wouldn't?"

"No, sir; but while I was shooting one of them the other lifted my blanket, and that blamed tarantula, who was hidden away, stung his hand and he died in an hour. Had to have an inquest and bury both of 'em at my own expense, and I lost five days' time."—Detroit Free Press.

—A chimney in Middlesborough, England, was lately taken down brick by brick from the top downward. A long chute, one-half an inch longer and wider than a brick in its cross-sectional dimensions, was first erected within the flue. It was air-tight and rose from an air-tight box placed at the bottom of the chimney. The bricks were dropped one by one through this chute, and were cushioned by the air so that none were broken or injured. From time to time the box was opened and the bricks that had accumulated were removed.

—As a possible theory of the origin of the Mississippi, it is suggested that its erosion was accomplished by means of a mighty cataract which began far down the river near its original mouth, and by gradual retrocession dug out the valley-like gorge which is so marked a feature in the upper part of its course, and left the high bluff walls on either hand. This view makes St. Anthony's Falls the ever-decreasing and receding remnants of the once most stupendous cataract the world ever saw, having a perpendicular descent of perhaps 600 feet. The time required to cut the entire channel is placed at 400,000 years.

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