## THE STAGE ROBBERS.

### How a Rocky Mountain Bandit Was Reclaimed.

"Hi, there! G'lang, g'lang! Whoa, Black Hawk! Slow, Jenny, old gal! St-r-r-r-ig-'lang now."

All this noise was made by the Longtown stage coach, as it rattled down a long hill, swaying from side to side in the most threatening and vacillating manner, and nearly running on the heels of the spirited horses who dashed ahead in reckless haste, as the snapper of the driver's whip touched them up.

There were four outside passengers and six inside the coach, two of whom were women. One was a lean, shriveled New England woman who was worn to a thread by work and worry, and who looked troubled. She had been looking for accidents and robbers ever since she left the cars and entered upon a journey by stage coach. At every lunge of the vehicle she would ejaculate: "Mercy me!" and dig her attenuated fingers into the sides of the coach as if to restrain it by main force from toppling over.

"I'm going to spend the winter with my darter Priscilly, near Longtown," she said to her vis-a-vis, "if the stage ain't upsot and everybody killed fust."

The girl opposite smiled in a radiant way. She sparkled and scintillated with good health, good humor, and the jubilant spirit of youth. Her cheeks were reddened with the elixir of life at nineteen; dimples twinkled in cheek and chin. Her eyes shone like stars. Her riotous hair curled defiantly all about her fresh young face and blew in willful tendrils over her pretty ears.

"I don't think there is any danger," she said, reassuringly, to her traveling companion; "the driver is used to the horses, and the horses are used to the road. It is delightful to me. I am so fond of excitement, and my life has been so uneventful. I really am pining for adventure."

"I dessay," retorted the first speaker, the gruesome visaged woman, "them that knows nothin' fear nothin,' my father uster say. I should prefer not to hev my neck broken afore I get to my journey's end. I'd like to know what Priscilly would say?"

"I've heered there was grizzlies round the gulches," observed a traveler who was evidently taking his first trip west.

"B'ars? Real live b'ars?" inquired Priscilly's mother, in a horrified tone. "I knew it! I've felt it in my bones ever since I left hum! Oh, laws-a-marcy! there's one now," and she shrieked and clawed the coach as a huge cinnamon-colored animal bounded round a curve ahead of them.

It wasn't a bear, but a mastiff. They were close to the Two Forks tavern, where they stopped to change horses and leave one of the outside passengers.

Both women left the coach for a bit of a walk, to stretch themselves and get the use of their limbs. Then the supple form of the girl passenger showed to fine advantage in the long, close-fitting ulster, which was belted at the slender waist with a band of alligator skin.

"That's a gal from the states," suggested a young fellow who was standing in the door of the tavern waiting for the coach; "I know it by her gait. Hope she goes to Longtown. We don't see that sort every day. Wonder who is expecting visitors like her?"

"Cawn't say, Ben," drawled the driver; "she's a purty piece of flesh-an'-blood to look at, ain't she? Say! How are the roads to Longtown? Clear?"

"I haven't heard of any trouble. The colonel 'lows there won't be any, but that's when he's sober. He was on a big tear last week. I've made him promise to send for his daughter and turn over a new leaf."

"Don' ye do it, Ben. Let the gal stay where she be. What kind of a place is the kurnel's for a gal that's been decently brung up? He'll drink hisself to death some of these days, and it'll be the best thing for him an' his'n. Ready, Ben? Ye kin jump in or clim' up."

"I believe I'll go as an outside this time, Sim," said the young man, with a rather conscious look.

"Allee right. Git up thar, you lazy bones"—to the horses. "Whoa, now, no foolin'; st-r-rr-g'lang, my beauties!"

The four horses started with a long pull, a strong pull and a pull all together. The travelers were "all aboard"—all except one, and she was out of sight. They rattled down one short hill and up another, when a long stretch of mountain road lay before them, with not a soul in sight. The driver reined in his team.

"The gal is lost," he called down through the front of the coach; "I'll bet she's tooken the road to Minerville."

"Can you go back?" asked the young man, anxiously. Somehow the lonely figure of the young girl walking that strange road into unknown peril, loomed before his eyes like a mirage.

"Cawn't do it," drawled Sim; "but if [illegible] for your life I might wait till [illegible] thar and bring her back."

[illegible] a groan from the inside of [illegible] the young man shot out [illegible] and started off on his [illegible]

[illegible] ly say?" asked the [illegible] the woman within. [illegible] re an' b'ars in sight?" [illegible] 's mother.

[illegible] this present minnit, [illegible] d Sim, touching up the [illegible] his whip, then reining [illegible] their haunches as he be[illegible] of his promise to wait.

[illegible] ther provoking to those tired [illegible] ly passengers to see the two [illegible] ng ones come back all in a glow [illegible] laughter and exercise as if they had [illegible] en two children off on a lark. Perhaps it occurred to the young woman herself that it was a little unconventional—she would have said that was why she enjoyed it; but appearances must be preserved, and she took her place demurely by the side of Priscilly's mother and told her apologies in a whisper.

And all that time she felt that she did not half appreciate the escape she had made. What if they had gone on without her? And the night coming on. She felt that she owed sincere gratitude to this stranger who had remembered her.

At nightfall they stopped at a rough board shanty where a supper was awaiting them. It sent out a stream of appetizing odors for hungry people. There were ham and eggs, pork and beans, fried pork with cream gravy, salt-rising bread and good coffee—a meal fit for a king.

They all sat down together—Sim, the driver, with them—and ate as if famished. The young girl sat opposite Ben, so he had a good chance to study her, and as he looked his brows knit and he seemed perplexed. Of whom did she remind him? He had not been able to ask her a single question on that flying trip from the wrong road—she had run as fleet as a deer, laughing at every step over her mistake. Now she was grave, with a devotion to her supper that absorbed all her attention. And there was something familiar in every turn of her head, in her rich, ripe color, in the sparkle and dash of her beauty. Who was she?

They were delayed again, this time by a horse casting a shoe at the last moment. While the hostler was acting as temporary blacksmith, the passengers grouped themselves in or about the coach. Here the young man ventured to ask a question, which he could not have done when they were making that breathless run to the coach.

"Going far?" he asked, indifferently.

"No; I have been traveling by rail for a week, but now I am nearly home. I am going to Longtown."

"Home? Longtown? Why, that is where I live!"

He could not disguise the pleasure that the announcement gave him, nor the complete surprise it was to hear her speak of Longtown as "home."

"Do you live there?" She spoke with eagerness now. "I am glad, for you must know Col. Robert Sheldon."

"Certainly I know him. He has lived there a good many years. Most people know him. Oh, yes, Col. Bob is very well known indeed in all these parts."

"I was sure of it. Then you can tell me something about him. You see I do not know him at all, and"—with a hysterical little laugh—"I am going to visit him."

"Then he must be a relative of yours?" said the young man with a peculiar inflection of voice that was not observed by the girl.

"He is. Yes, indeed, we are quite relatives. I mean we are related, but it is some years since I have seen him, and I do not remember how he looks."

"Oh, he looks well enough—he is very handsome, but you surely cannot be going alone to visit such a man as Col. Bob?"

"Such a man?" her voice was full of indignation, and she turned away without another word and sought the protection of Priscilly's mother, by whose side she was soon seated in the coach.

The young man who had offended her did not enter the coach until it was ready to resume its trip; then he sat down by the door in the most unobtrusive manner, and remained quiet.

It was a magnificent night. The road skirting the foothills of the Rockies was lighted by a full moon. Not a sound was heard except the roll and rumble of the hurrying coach, and the rapid steps of the galloping horses. Some of the passengers were asleep; the grumpy old man snored a duet with Priscilly's mother, whose head reposed on the shoulders of the young girl, who was *not* asleep. The young man at the door of the coach was also awake, and anxious. He had been fumbling at something in his hip pocket. Suddenly there was a sound—the cry of a catamount, perhaps, but it gave the horses a start and they plunged ahead faster than before. "Ben," as the driver had called him—it was his name, too—looked at the girl, then he rose and made his way over the feet of the other passengers to her.

"Are you afraid?" he asked, in a low tone.

Before she could answer the coach was surrounded by masked men, armed to the teeth.

"Halt!"

"Hands up! If any man pulls a gun, he will be shot."

"Hand out your valuables!"

The conflict was short and decisive. One man stood outside and gave the orders, the others robbed the passengers, without violence, but at the muzzle of a revolver. The only man who showed fight received a bullet through the shoulder. It was Ben, who attempted to defend the two women with his revolver.

"Let them take my money and my jewels!" cried the young girl, with superb scorn, "but when my father hears of it he will bring them to punishment, you may be assured!"

"Who is he, miss?" asked one of the outlaws, with mock modesty.

"He is Col. Robert Sheldon, of Longtown," answered the girl, proudly.

"Oh, my God!" exclaimed Ben as he sunk with a bullet in his shoulder and lay in a heap in the straw flooring of the coach.

There was a hurried consultation outside, and then one of the masked men reentered the coach.

"It was all a joke," he said, in a disguised voice, "and if that hot-headed young fool had kept still there wouldn't have been any harm done. Take your money and valuables, but as you value your lives keep your hands up. Go ahead; drive off with you."

He fired his pistol in the air by way of expediting their departure, then, as the horses galloped away, he disappeared with his comrades in the opposite direction.

The coach went into Longtown on one wheel, the horses lathered with foam. The two women alighted, pale as ghosts. Ben was carried into the Longtown hotel on an improvised stretcher.

"Not a bit of danger," said the local medic an hour or two later. He was talking to the pretty girl of the stage coach.

"He'll be out again in a month. You can go in and see him if you wish, miss."

"What is his name?" she asked, hurriedly.

"Ben Holcombe," answered the doctor; "he's one of our most promising young men. I'd like to string up the wretches who shot him!"

The young woman entered the parlor softly, and saw by the dull flame of a flaring oil lamp the young man bolstered up on the sofa. Her beautiful eyes filled with tears.

"It is very strange," she said, "but I cannot find my father. There is something wrong! What is it?"

"Did he expect you?" asked Ben, faintly.

"No. I came to take him by surprise. I wrote that I was sending him a present. It is six years since I have seen him. He is all I have in the world."

"Your father will be here in the morning; he is out on his ranch, no doubt, and—I have sent for him."

"Have you? Oh, how kind you have been to me! What should I have done without your help? I do hope you are not seriously injured. Was it not strange that those wretches should have given up their booty?"

"Not under the circumstances. You see they have rules among themselves, and when you—oh, what am I saying? I am getting light headed," and he turned deadly pale.

"And no wonder. I will say good night, though it must be almost good morning. I hope you will be able to send my father to me, and that you will rest well."

Ben Holcombe did not rest at all, for the emissaries whom he had sent out for Col. Bob brought him in—drunk, ugly and half-crazed with excitement. What took place in the two hours of angry talk between the men no one knew, but the next morning found Ben Holcombe delirious in a high fever, and Col. Bob, clothed and in his right mind, conversing affectionately with his daughter, but looking everywhere except into her clear, reproving eyes. But she never suspected. "Wasn't it a surprise, papa, dear," she kept repeating as she playfully pulled his whiskers, and half smothered him with kisses.

"I—should—say—it—was," gasped the colonel, with a deep suspiration.

"And we'll have a lovely winter together, you and I?"

"And Ben—"

"Oh, I forgot. I suppose as he saved me from those dreadful bandits, we must include him. Papa, what an influence you must have, when just to know that I was your daughter made them give back my diamonds—the grand diamonds you sent me. I only cared for them for that. You must be a very great and good man!"

"God helping me, I will be," he answered, with the first reverent feeling he had known for years.

That all happened a year ago. The other day Sim, the driver of the Longtown stage coach, brought an immense box with him, which he left at the Longtown hotel.

"It's for Kurnel Bob's daughter," he said, as he deposited it in the house.

"What's in it?" asked the landlord.

"I reckon I ain't opened it," answered Sam, "but I heard them say there was a *cruso* in it. I reckon it's come from the states."

When the colonel's daughter heard that her "cruso" had arrived she laughed heartily; so did her father, the colonel; so did Ben Holcombe.

"What air you goin' to give her fur a weddin' present, Ben?" asked Sim the next day. Sim had a pair of little red mittens in his pocket that his old mother had knit out of the finest Saxony yarn to be had for love or money. They were for her. "What you goin' to give her?" he repeated.

"Myself," answered Ben, humbly, "and I hope love will sanctify the gift."

"Lord!" said Sim, with a comical grin, "what'll Priscilly say?"—Mrs. M. L. Rayne, in Detroit Free Press.

## NAMED FROM A SAINT.

### Origin of the Term Bridewell as Applied to Houses of Correction.

Bridewell is a word now commonly used to designate a city prison or house of correction. The origin of the term is very curious. As is generally known, St. Bridget is the patroness of Ireland, sharing honors with St. Patrick. She lived in the sixth century and had her first cell or home where the city of Kildare now stands. For some unexplained reason St. Bridget was unusually popular in Scotland and England, though she was best known there by the abbreviated name of St. Bride. Many houses of worship were in the olden time dedicated to her memory, and among them was St. Bride's church in Fleet street, London. Near, adjoining this church was an old well also dedicated to the saint and commonly called Bride's well. A palace which was built near the well took the name of Bridewell. This was presented by Edward VI. to the city of London as a workhouse for the poor and a house of correction, and gradually its name became associated in the public mind with all houses used for a similar purpose. It seems strange that a criminal institution should owe its appellation to a saint representing all that is pure and innocent, but such is the case here if the opinion of antiquarians is to be accepted. The 1st of February is St. Bridget's day.

### Can You Pronounce These Correctly?

The following is a list of all the words which have recently been mispronounced in the course of an extended contest at various school-teachers' conventions throughout the country. In one instance not less than 1,400 school-teachers failed in properly pronouncing the following words. It is a test, by the way, which very few men of wide study and great precision of speech could withstand:

Gladiolus, grimace, grimy, gyve, halibut, haunt, homage, laundry, leisure, naively, swarthy, slough, sough, spinach, condolence, cassimere, cognomen, predilection, shough, senile, rapine, conjure, construe, contumely, clique, maritime, recess, resume, sacrifice, vizor, swaths, brooch, exile, irrefragable, garrulity and squalor.—N. Y. Truth.


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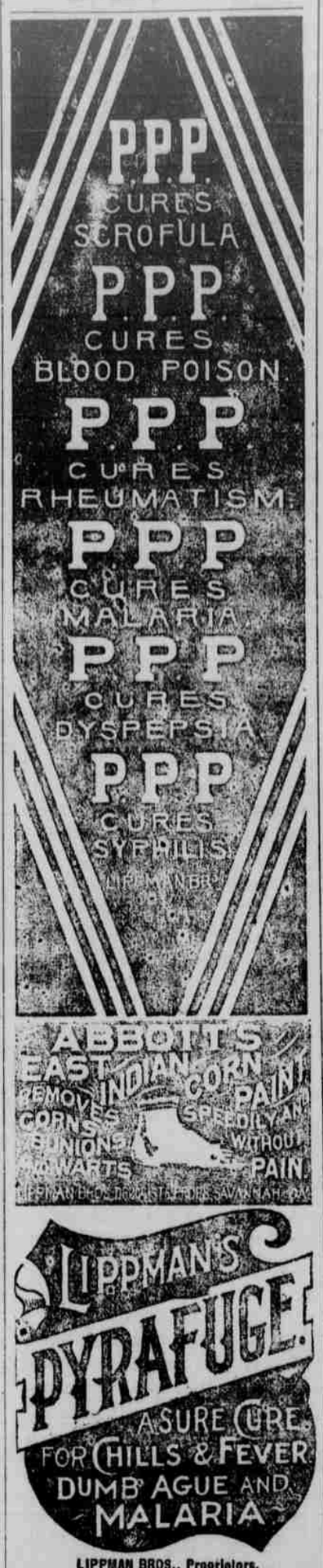


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