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WRITTEN FOR THE COLUMBIAN JOURNAL.

FIRST PRIZE TALE.

MICHAEL ALLSCOTT:

THE SHOT IN TIME.

A STORY OF MARION'S MEN.

BY J. W. ERVIN.

CHAPTER IV.

The day of the rendezvous had come, and though the night was beautiful and bright, a long line of fires extending from the highway by which the camp was bounded on one side towards the swamp, which was its boundary, on the other, gleamed brightly upon as motley a throng as were ever called upon to take up arms in the wars of a Christian king. On the east, scarce one-fourth of a mile distant from the highway, which bounded the camp on the west, frowned a dense mass of sombre cypresses, marking out the position of Black-river swamp; and towards the south, at a much greater distance, a long line of magnificent trees, stretching their branching limbs to heaven, marked out the course of Tarote—a lesser stream that emptied into the swamp.

The spot which the Tories had fixed upon for their gathering was an open field, with only here and there a solitary tree, that long years ago the axe had spared.

Piles of logs had been heaped up, with an intervening space between each heap, of perhaps fifty or sixty yards, and these, constructed in a line from the highway of which we have above spoken to within perhaps one hundred yards of the margin of the swamp, had been fired about twilight.

Near the margin of a dense and bushy thicket, a few score paces to the south of this line, was to be seen another group of fires, where smoking pots sent up a savory steam, telling of the ample feast that prepared hands were preparing for the assembled crowd.

As Tynes stood in the door of his tent and looked down along the extended line of fires, around which were disposed the various groups whom his activity had collected together, he could not repress an exclamation of triumph and delight. Some were seated upon the ground engaged in conversation, some were standing at a respectful distance from the huge fires; many were passing the bottle around in noisy hilarity; others were strolling about singly or in groups, while not a few squatted upon the ground, were engaged in the mysteries of old sledge or poker, using some outspread handkerchief, inverted hat or fallen tree as a table. Horrid oaths and imprecations were heard on every hand—obscene jests and ribald language, such as is only heard when the most abandoned of men are collected together in the purloins of a drunken camp.

After gazing upon his followers for a moment, Tynes turned back into his tent, where were gathered some ten or twelve individuals of a somewhat higher intellectual grade than the rabble without. Among them was our former acquaintance, Harrison, dressed in the full uniform of his rank, with his sword buckled on, and even his chaplain in his habit.

As Tynes re-entered, Harrison rose, and drawing forth his watch, exclaimed with an oath:

"It is high time, colonel, those rascals without had their supper, and so I may as well hang up this rebel Abscott at once."

"As you please, again," returned Tynes; "but after hanging him, I should not much fancy falling into the hands of the rebel Marion."

"Marion, he?" replied Harrison, with an oath. "I have certain information that his force is scattered, and he has fled from the State. No! he will have the game in our own hands, and may play it out as boldly as we please."

All I shall say," observed Tynes, in a tone of indifference, "is that I shall not sleep soundly after this execution. However, take your own course; but remember, I was not your hand-chose of it."

"I have only desired the execution," said Tynes, "to observe Harrison, who in the hope that Dorcas might fall into the hands of his men, by coming to the spot, would be obliged to the man, whom I should be glad to see in the hands of the rebels. I have returned with the news that she had not been seen since yesterday morning, and the family are in great alarm on her account, and unable to account for her unusual and protracted absence."

"Has she departed only yesterday morning?" asked Harrison, with a look of surprise. "I have not heard of her since she was last seen, starting from his seat, while his cold shiver grew a shuddering pallor. 'The devil mischiefs in the world,' Harrison said."

"I saw," Tynes, what an old woman you are becoming," replied Harrison, with a laugh. "You will start at the sight of a shadow next, if you suffer the silly freak of a girl to go to the devil's house."

"I saw the devil in that woman's eye," answered Tynes gravely. "She was yesterday morning, when we refused her petition to spare the life of this rebel, and if my suspicions are not altogether groundless, she will cause us some trouble yet."

"Thou dost take your fan and suspicions," laughed Harrison; "and since she would not catch at the bait I prepared for her, I'll even swing this rebel up between heaven and earth at once, and swear when I meet her again it was all from pure love to her. I have everything in readiness, and he shall have a short shrift of it."

and again his fellows rang out their incessant responses, their answers, each rising more and more distinctly, until they seemed to die away on the farther side. The prisoner started and trembled slightly, while he stood more erect and proudly, and his eye flashed with anxiety and hope. Harrison only observed his nervous start.

"By my right hand," observed that worthy, with an attempt to laugh, "the rebel's nerves begin to tingle a little. A few more such doleful staves as that, and he will become so weak, we will have to carry him bodily to the gallows. Music! music at once, before his legs fall him altogether."

Two drummers and a fife took their places before the prisoner, and struck up the Rognie's March. A few score of rifle-fans, with muskets and bayonets fixed in behind him, and partly dragging and partly pushing their prisoner along, the procession, with Harrison at their head, mounted on his iron grey charger, took their way to the spot selected for the execution.

They entered such a scene as we scarcely confess we are unable to depict. Some fifteen or twenty individuals, mostly negroes, ran along on each side of the procession with lighted torches, and more than two-thirds of those who were assembled at the execution, having been previously informed of what was about to take place, at the first tap of the signal drum hurried away from every quarter of the field, to take part in the procession.

The old field was alive with some three hundred individuals, eagerly hurrying along, jostling, cursing, and pushing each other in their eagerness, to get a position near the prisoner. With yells and fearful oaths, intermingled with cruel jests and heartless laughter, the multitude rushed along the scene of sacrifice.

The spot chosen for the execution, was about two hundred yards to the northeast of the rebel's main in the open field. Harrison had ordered that he should be lying upon a magnificent oak, that stood nearly two hundred yards distant from the margin of the swamp. A rope had already been thrown over one of the branches, and the noose hung to within a few feet of the ground, ready to be fastened around the neck of the prisoner, when the latter had passed upon the ground at the base of the tree, upon which stood a savage looking man, to whom had been assigned the task of drawing him up.

"Oh! how lovely and beautiful sounded the glorious night to the victim laid on the gallows! Brightly shone his eyes upon the multitude, shielding a halo of light upon the beautiful world beneath, where nature held her Sabbath. Never had earth seemed more dear, or the smile of creation more lovely."

The prisoner seemed not to hear or to heed the cheering voices that mocked him in the fearful hour, when the fate of man should have been still, and left him to communion with his Maker. Yet his thoughts seemed not to grasp ordinary things. His bright and watchful eye told that he had longed to die, and his soul was already soaring to the land of the living.

The gaze of the prisoner, as that unfeeling wretch turned to burlesque the noisy and brazen crowd, he offered no resistance when the gallows executioner fastened the fatal noose around his neck, for his pinioned arms deprived him of the power to struggle; but turned in his tracks, and followed with his eye the movements of that ill-favored individual, as he retired and stood with his hands outstretched, and grasping the opposite extremity of the rope, ready at the given signal to launch the prisoner into eternity.

"Colly Michael gazed upon him, with perhaps nearly as much in difference as though measuring the proportions of a brazen ox. He was a tall, bony, square faced and red-whiskered giant, standing some six feet six in his socks, and with the proportions of a Hercules. No doubt he had often taken part in similar scenes, for he stood with a cool, stolid and unflinching countenance, his hairy arms resting upon the rope, some six inches above his head.

where many of their comrades stood with their weapons by their side. The rifles of 'Marion's men,' levelled from the shadows around, were aimed with fatal accuracy upon the revellers around the fires, and had already begun the work of death in this quarter of the field. Unconscious of the hurrying storm, they fell, some in the midst of their drunken orgies with oaths and imprecations on their lips, others where they sat playing at cards, exulting over their success, or in the midst of unfinished games with the uplifted card in their hands.

While the rifles thinned them out by scores, the dragons with gleaming sabres pursued them over the moonlit field and led them down in their tracks as they fled and screamed for mercy. An hour of terrible retribution had fallen upon them, and remorseless was the penalty of their many crimes exacted in this hour of unsuspected security. The earthen was over in a brief space, and the victors were the masters of a field which was covered with the dead and the dying.

Michael had promptly been released by his comrades, whose arrival had been so opportune for him, and so soon as he was freed, he was fortunate enough to secure a horse which came galloping riderless past, and calling to some two of his brother dragoons to follow, he vaulted into the saddle, and putting spurs to his horse made it fly away.

When the troop first broke from their cover, scarcely waiting to ascertain the extent of the danger, Harrison, trembling for safety, had turned his horse's head across the field, hoping to escape by a timely and precipitate flight. Mounted upon an iron grey charger of uncommon beauty and strength, he confidently expected to make good his retreat unimpeded, or at least to distance any one who might be tempted to pursue. But a horse man who rode at the head of the troop of Marion, favored by the moon light brightness of the night, had already marked him in pursuit. The soldier in a suit of black velvet from head to foot, and riding a horse as black as ebony, yet with a single ostrich feather of snowy whiteness waving from his black cap, he indeed presented an ominous appearance, as he gracefully sat upon his stout charger, with his hands upon his hips, and his eyes fixed in pursuit. Not a shadow of emotion, anger, or joy disturbed the calm gravity of his handsome features. His dark, full, bold and lightning-eye turned neither to the right nor left, to regard the surrounding darkness, who were ever following him with a swift and unerring eye, but was fixed unflinchingly and steadily upon his inferior foe.

Harrison's head began to tingle, and he felt himself secure from pursuit. Harrison turned in his saddle, and as he looked upon the man who rode in the lead, he felt a chill run down his spine, when he saw the bold and daring Conyers, whom he had wronged beyond forgiveness. Behind him, scarcely the distance of a hundred yards, followed his executive foe, and before him lay a fence with a double ditch, which must be leaped fearfully, and at a killing pace. The structure followed in his steps, and he dared not hesitate. Pressing his gallant horse to the utmost he cleared it at a bound, and with a snort of triumph, he rode on, and wheeling round, with his sabre uplifted, stood ready to confront his advancing adversary, and he hid him down before he could recover himself from his perilous and difficult leap.

"Conyers saved a glance the design of his enemy, and though he might have avoided it, he did not draw his pistol from his holter, and shooting him dead as he stood, yet preferred to encounter him in a manly better calculated to satisfy those stern and vindictive feelings that had been stirred up by injuries too great to be forgiven. Therefore, finding that his enemy awaited him, he tightened his rein and permitted his horse to approach to the difficult leap with slow and measured strides. Fixing his eye firmly upon Harrison, and sinking low in his saddle, he leaped his charger gaily with the spur, and the leap was gallantly made. With the point of his sword low and extended beyond the head of his horse, he received the fiery aimed blow of Harrison, and skilfully parried it with an upward stroke. It required the quick eye of the eagle and the lightning nerve of the lion to accomplish so difficult a feat as warding off the sword stroke of a well-versed adversary in a flying leap, but it was, as destined, done, and the sword of Harrison glided harmlessly above his head. Before his dismounted and astonished adversary could prepare to repeat a blow, Conyers had wheeled upon him, and was raising a storm of blows about his head. In vain the terrified boy put forth his utmost skill and strength, and taxed his powers to their full limit; he was soon convinced that he lay at the mercy of Conyers, who probed the contest only to lengthen out his agony. Feeling that he was powerless in the hand of his adversary, whose sword seemed a living part of the arm that wielded it, he uttered an agonizing cry for mercy, which was only answered by a descending blow that had opened his way from the horse, and freed the weapon from his grasp. With an oath of desperation, and a cry of pain, he again turned his horse's head, and driving the spurs deep into the flank at every stride, he vainly sought to escape; but like a bird of prey that hung for his blood, the gleaming sword of Conyers flashed above his head, now rising to give the fatal blow, and now lowering as chance favored him, until he increased the space between them. Again as Conyers, with uplifted

sword, gained a position side by side with him, so that their knees smote in the fearful race, with a wild yell of despair, Harrison turned on him a piteous look and screamed for mercy.

"Justice, oh God, not vengeance," burst from the lips of the partisan, and his descending sword glittered in the moonbeams, and fell like a thunderbolt upon the skull of the Tory!

When Michael and his companions reached the spot, they found Conyers gazing sadly upon the corpse of his foe. "It is all over now, Mike," said he in a tone of sadness to his young lieutenant. "I never sought an enemy more eagerly, or slow one more reluctantly. I trifled with and spared him as long as revenge rankled in my heart, and when that was gone I slew him. I feel that my days are now nearly numbered. One more blow in the service of my country, and my heart throbs no I shall be even as he, save the inglorious cause in which he fell. But let us return speedily, for the night may not yet be over."

The party having secured the horse of the fallen Tory, then returned to the camp. The battle, if such it could be called, had already ceased, and when they reached the spot, they found that Marion had already posted his sentinels, and taken every precaution for his security, during the night. The sumptuous feast prepared by the Tories was eaten by untried and unexpecting guests. The wearied and famished soldiers of Marion felt the abundant cheer with well whetted appetites, and kept up the toast to a late hour of the night. The deliverance of Michael, and the events of the night's surprise formed the chief topics of conversation among them. Michael's friends every where gathered around him with rapt and hearty congratulations.

"My situation was rather a desperate one, boys," said Michael, as a crowd of his comrades gathered around him; "but I kept in heart, when I heard Randall's voice from the swamp. His shouting does the owl but little credit; it could impose upon none but a raw British recruit or a drunken Tory."

"A good reason why Randall acted the owl so badly," said one, "the lost his old blanket at the camp on Pee Dee, and had a bad cold ever since."

"Well, Mike," said an old weather-beaten rifleman, "I'll tell you all about that. Marion knew he wouldn't have a minute to spare, and so some ten miles before we struck into the swamp, he put off a dozen of the boys, under the lead of an old swamp snaker, who was to ride under whip and spur, and station them along the last crossing on the swamp, again the time the general came up, and they were to signal along from one place to another by lighting, and they led us from one to the other, until we came out on this side the swamp. We got knocked off before we reached the swamp, and we lost an hour; but Marion led the way across the swamp on old Ball four o'clock, and he was so afraid we'd get here too late, that he led us across a good part of the swamp over express knees, and all at a gallop. Right Jack Ruggles, who knows the swamp well, was among the first that got over, and he's had you under his rifle since sun set, and Jack's rifle throws a true ball, you know."

"And that was Jack's rifle then, I suppose," asked Michael, "that tumbled over my hangman so opportunely?"

"Oh, no," answered a dozen, "Capt. Conyers said he trust no other eye but his own to draw a bead when your life was at stake, and so he did the business."

"It was a shot in time," replied Michael, with much emotion.

"Lieutenant Allcott," said an officer, stepping up and tapping him on the shoulder, "you are wanted at the general's tent."

"True," said Michael, starting up, "I have not yet paid my respects to Marion. Lead on, however, and I will follow."

Marion had already taken possession of the well furnished tent, so lately occupied by the leader of the Tories, who with many of the misguided men whom he had seduced from the path of duty, were sleeping the long sleep of death on the field of battle.

Conyers and some two or three of his most confidential officers were in the tent with Marion, and they all rose upon the entrance of Michael, and greeted him with a warmth and cordiality which showed the deep interest he had excited among them; foremost among them in expressing congratulations was Marion himself. When the first words of welcome were over, Marion, who seldom descended to a jest, turned, with a quiet smile upon his countenance, to Michael, and said: "I am sorry, lieutenant, to find so brave and gallant a soldier as yourself deficient in gratitude."

"Deficient in gratitude, general," exclaimed he, "surely, general, you estimate my character better than to accuse me of that. I have but a few minutes since returned from following after my friend and captain, and had intended to call upon you, and thank you for the so generous care of one of the humblest of your soldiers, so soon as I believed you at leisure to accept of my thanks."

"You mistake me, lieutenant," said Marion, gravely. "You have not yet inquired how I became aware of your dangerous situation. You surely should reward the messenger who brought me such timely information."

"Most gladly will I do so, sir," replied Michael, "to the extent of my ability."

Gold is Oregon.—Considerable excitement has been created in California—particularly in San Francisco—by the report of the discovery of gold at Port Orford, Oregon, in such quantities that the miners were realizing no less than fifty dollars per day. Parties had already organized in San Francisco to start for the new diggings. If it should turn out that gold exists in any considerable quantities in Oregon, California will be greatly benefited by the withdrawal of the numbers of persons who now wander about there in search of employment, and who, in consequence of the desperate state of their circumstances, it is said, are ready to commit any atrocity. The conviction of the existence of gold in large quantities on the Cascade Range is becoming more and more strengthened by every arrival. A rich lead mine has also been discovered near St. Helen's.

A SINGULAR DEATH.

BALTIMORE, Aug. 12.—On Wednesday last the barque Ann Elizabeth, Capt. Smith, belonging to Boston, but bound for a West India port, drew out into the stream, preparatory to sailing. With him he had a boy about thirteen years of age, whom he had brought from the eastward, and to whom he appeared much attached. The name of the boy, we have been unable to learn. Just about the time of sailing the boy came to the captain, and with an uncomplaining, but with a singular manner asked him to allow him to place his arm on his neck. The singularity of the request caused some little hesitation; a hand was however laid upon his shoulder, and in a moment after the poor lad sunk in the arms of the captain, and was a corpse. No inquest was held on the body, and the cause of death is therefore unknown. The vessel sailed in a brief period afterwards, the captain having obtained a coffin, perhaps with the design of taking the body to the relatives.

From the National Intelligencer.

UPS AND DOWNS.

The sojourners of our city hotels are familiar with the modest tone in which the words "New York Herald," "Tribune," "Times," "Baltimore Sun," "Intelligencer," "Union," &c. fall upon their ears from a respectable elderly gentleman in the newspaper line. At break of day you may find him at the rail road depot, with his bundle of these "maps of busy life;" at breakfast time he is at the hotel ready to exchange his commodities for the ready cash; and again as midnight draws near, you will still find him pursuing the even tenor of his way, pressing his sales. We have observed him for many years going regularly through this routine. Many wonder if he ever sleeps. If "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty," he is entitled to the largest that may be had. A curiosity is often manifested to know his history. Some say that he has by dint of such untiring industry and perseverance laid up something handsome for a "rainy day."

One morning last week, as the Hon. Lewis D. Campbell, of Ohio, was passing from the breakfast room at the "National" with his morning mail, this veteran news vendor met him at the foot of the flight of steps near the office. His eye caught the title "Cincinnati Gazette" to a paper in Mr. C.'s hand, and with a peculiar expression, he remarked:

"Ah, the old Cincinnati Gazette!"

"Mr. Campbell halted, observing, 'You have it not in your package?'"

"No; but I took it once,"

"Mr. Campbell, 'When?'"

"In 1828, when Charles Hammond was editor, and I was in the firm of Carrington & Wells, wholesale merchants, Main-st., Cincinnati!"

"Mr. Campbell—" I recollect the firm, for I was then a printer's devil in the Gazette office, and faithfully through wintry storms carried the paper to you. We are living monuments of the 'ups and downs' of life!"

Here a stranger expression passed over the countenance of Wells, and Mr. C., fearing that he might awaken unpleasant reminiscences in connection with his change of fortune, left, with a "God give you success; your energy deserves it!"

How illustrative of the changes of fate fortune! The carrier boy of the news of that day to the wholesale merchant is now a member of the American Congress, and the wholesale merchant now carries the newspapers to him.

A Short Match.—The Springfield (Massachusetts) Republican relates the following: "A few days ago a buxom Irish woman, fat and portly, arrived in this city by one of the Boston trains, in hot pursuit of a truant lover. Having ascertained his whereabouts, a warrant was procured for his arrest for breach of marriage promise, alleging damages in the sum of \$100. Duly armed with this massive Officer Walker made his acquaintance, giving him a choice of alternatives—marriage or damages. The former was assented to, and under pretence of arranging his toilet for the nuptial ceremony, he was followed almost immediately by the officer, who was just in time to see the promised bridegroom, through an open window, spanning an opposition field at a 2 to 10 zait. Quietly taking possession of the fugitive's forgotten wardrobe, which was found to contain nearly \$150 in hard cash, more than enough to satisfy the warrant and heal the broken-hearted, the knight of the 'star' was content to wait the issue. Twenty-four hours brought back the unwilling bridegroom, who, unable to recover his money without giving himself in exchange, finally yielded obedience to his fate. The marriage was soon perfected, and the groom, apparently resigned and contented, left in the next train for Boston, accompanied by his bride, whose extravagant gings betokened an overjoyed heart at her successful pursuit of a husband under difficulties."

The salaries in the Departments at Washington, with the mileage and per diem of members amounts to \$1,845,636. \$1,300,000 are set down for the pay, mileage and other contingent expenses of the two Houses—or \$4,000 per member—besides eighty thousand dollars for printing for part of the last session; and over two hundred thousand dollars more for books voted and distributed to members of Congress. There are thousands more for reporting the debates in the Washington papers. The judicial expenses of the Government run well on to a million of dollars.

Made a Slight Mistake.—It would seem from the following that Sir Charles Napier has made a slight mistake: "Admiral Napier writes home to the British government that attacking Cronstadt or Swaborg would be certain destruction. Admiral Shad says: 'After two days' inspection from the lighthouse, and full views of the forts and ships, the former are too substantial for the fire of ships to make any impression. They are large masses of granite. With respect to an attack on the ships where they are, it is not to be entertained."

IOWA ELECTION. Dispatches state that the whig anti-Nebraska and temperance ticket has swept the State.