

The North Carolina Whig.

"Be true to God, to your Country, and to your Duty."

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Poetry.



THINKING OF THE SOLDIERS.

We are sitting around the table,
Just a night or two ago,
In the little cozy parlor,
With the lamp-light burning low,
And the window-blinds half opened,
For the summer air to come,
And the painted curtains moving,
Like a heavy pendulum.

Oh the cushions on the sofa,
And the pictures on the wall,
And the gathering of comforts,
In the old familiar hall,
And the wiggling of the pointer,
Looming only by the door,
And the flitting of the shadows
From the ceiling to the floor.

Oh they wakened in my spirit,
Like the beauties in art,
Such a busy, busy thinking—
Such a dreaminess of heart,
That I sat among the shadows,
With my spirit all astray,
Thinking only—thinking only—
Of the soldiers far away!

Of the tents beneath the moonlight,
Of the stirring nation's sound,
Of the soldier in his blanket,
In his blanket on the ground;
Of his blanket on the ground,
Of the icy water coming,
Of the cold bleak winds that blow,
And the soldier in his blanket,
In his blanket on the snow!

Of the high upon the heater,
And the frost upon the bed,
And the whistling, whistling ever,
And the never, never still;
Of the little leaden falling,
With the sweetest, sweetest sound—
And the soldier—oh! the soldier,
In his blanket on the ground!

Thus I lingered in my dreaming,
In my dreaming far away,
Till the spruce painting
Seemed as vivid as the day;
And the moonlight faded softly,
From the window opened wide,
And the faithful, faithful pointer,
Nodded closer by my side.

And I knew that "neath the starlight
That the chilly tentis may fall
That the soldier will be dreaming,
Dreaming often of us all,
S-I gave my spirit's painting
Just a hearing of a sound—
For the dreaming, dreaming soldier,
In his blanket on the ground!

Miscellaneous.

A CRITICAL MOMENT.

AN INCIDENT IN THE LIFE OF A REVOLUTIONARY PATRIOT.

On the 14th of September, says an historical work which I have just been perusing, the British army advanced, crossed the Brandywine at different points, and attacked the main army of the Americans, who sustained the assault with intrepidity for some time, but at length gave way—General Washington fled to a retreat with his artillery and baggage to Chester, where he halted, within eight miles of the British army, till next morning, when he retreated to Philadelphia.

A little incident which transpired on the night referred to will form the subject of this paper, the first of my Pen and Ink Pictures.

Between Chester and the point where the battle of Brandywine was fought, about equally distant from the camping grounds of both armies, and somewhat out of the track of the main road, there resided in a small, antique farm house a man named Joshua Kenton. Kenton was an earnest patriot and a brave man—one of those who

were ever ready to sacrifice property or life in carrying out the principle which was a part and parcel of their nature.

The battle of Brandywine had been fought—the Americans had retreated to Chester—both armies were encamped for the night, and darkness had settled upon the whole scene.

Kenton had participated in the sanguinary struggle—had fought gallantly almost side by side with Lafayette who there first drew his sword in defense of American freedom—and had returned to his home after the engagement was ended.

Covered with the sweat, and dust, and blood of the battle, the gallant patriot had entered his home, and comforted his anxious wife and daughter—all his family.

"Safe, husband!" cried his wife, joyfully springing into his arms; "thank God!"

"Oh! father, I am so glad to see you again! so glad!" murmured his weeping daughter, as the next moment she too was folded to the patriot's bosom in a fond, paternal embrace.

"And the battle, husband?" inquired Mrs. Kenton, eagerly.

"It was a hard fought field, wife," responded the patriot, and the army is now retreating to Chester, where Washington intends to camp for the night, and where I shall rejoice my countrymen before day light. The cause of liberty has need of every true man in the land, and Joshua Kenton would not stand in the background even to save his neck from the halter—Honor, love of country, patriotism—everything forbids it. But I'm faint and weary," he added; "get me a little something to eat, and let me have a few hours rest to recruit my exhausted energies."

Comfortable food was at once placed before Mr. Kenton, and after he had partaken of some refreshment, he retired to a back room and flung himself on a bed—in a few moments he was fast asleep. His anxious wife and daughter kept watch by his side.

"Must father go away again?" the latter, whose given name was Martha, asked in length inquired.

"Yes, child," rejoined Mrs. Kenton, briefly and sadly.

"I'm sorry," added Martha, in dejected tones.

"So am I, my child," said her mother; "but your father is the last man living to desert his country's flag."

"Father is good and brave, I know—and it is right that he should fight for his country—but, oh! mother, if he should be killed!"

Mrs. Kenton started painfully.

"Don't speak of it, my child, don't speak of it!" she cried, in agitated tones.

At that moment several loud raps fell quickly upon the front door.

The mother and daughter started from their chairs, and the patriot suddenly leaped from his couch.

The first movement of Mrs. Kenton was to blow out the light, and almost instantaneously with the knock the room was enveloped in deep darkness.

"What is it, wife?" demanded the patriot, hardly yet awake.

"Some one is tapping loudly at the front door," responded his wife, with a shaking voice.

"Indeed! Some of the pickets have found us out I suppose, but whether friends or foes remains to be seen. It is as likely to be one as the other, for we are about as near the latter as the former. It was scarcely prudent to remain here just now, and I must have been crazy not to remember that before."

Again the raps fell upon the door.

"What shall we do, husband?" inquired Mrs. Kenton, anxiously.

"Face them, be they friends or foes!" rejoined the patriot, sternly, at the same moment resolutely taking up his gun. "I treat the soil of my native land—an arrayed in an honest and righteous cause, and have no reason to fear any man on earth; and, as the Lord liveth, I do not!"

"Yes, yes, husband! but will it be prudent—will it be prudent?" demanded his wife anxiously.

Mr. Kenton did not reply, for the words of his wife recalled him to a fuller sense of his danger.

"For my sake, husband—for the sake of our child!" and Mrs. Kenton clasped her hands before her husband—"do not be rash. If these are English soldiers at our door, there may be a number of them, and then a capture, at least would be certain."

"But what other course is left me?" demanded Mr. Kenton, stoutly.

"Hide yourself till they go away!" responded his wife eagerly.

"Where that they may not search?"

"I'll find a place, if you will only consent."

"And if I should consent, what will become of you and Matty?" demanded the patriot.

"The Lord will take care of us, husband, and we will trust in him!" responded his wife, with nervous anxiety.

Mr. Kenton still hesitated. He knew not what to do.

"Besides, husband, you will be near to aid us if any danger threatens!" added the painfully anxious woman. "But for the sake of your family, till then hide yourself."

The patriot gave way, for he could not but acknowledge the justice of his wife's position.

"I'll hide me by your wishes, wife," he said reluctantly, "though it goes against my nature to hide away like a skulking criminal."

"Oh! think not of that, but only think

of what is for the best!" responded Mrs. Kenton, earnestly.

All this conversation had been carried on quickly, only consuming a few minutes time. Meanwhile the person or persons outside had been hammering away at the door in the most impatient manner.

In the back room, or sleeping apartment, there was a large closet, or clothes' press, in which the mother and daughter kept their wearing apparel. The clothes, of course, hung suspended from nails, and by a little arrangement of the articles Mr. Kenton was so well concealed behind them that he would have detected the hiding place without a particular examination. With a swelling bosom the high hearted patriot followed the directions of his anxious wife. To be prepared for any emergency, however, he kept his gun by his side.

At length the door of the closet was closed. Mrs. Kenton and her daughter—the latter following the directions of the former—then directed themselves of a portion of their clothing, so as to make it appear that they had just gotten out of bed.

To accomplish all this the candle had to be lighted, but the glare had been considerably lessened by placing a pan partially over it. The door between the rooms had also been closed, and every precaution taken to prevent discovery.

"But, mother, these may be friends at the door after all!" said the daughter, meekly.

"It may be so, my child," was Mrs. Kenton's reply; "but to such times as these it is well enough to be always prepared for the worst. At this time, especially, with the British so near us, we cannot be too cautious. But now let us see who knocks."

"Rap! rap! rap!" fell upon their ears.

Mrs. Kenton took up the candle, and followed by her daughter, repaired to the front apartment.

"Who knocks?" she demanded, stepping about the centre of the room.

"Open the door and you'll see!" was the coarse and insolent answer.

"It is late for unwelcome females to open their house!" rejoined Mrs. Kenton.

"Upon the door, or will better it down!" was the savage response.

"In a moment, gentlemen."

"Be quick, if you'd care your head!"

Mrs. Kenton's hand was upon the bar when her eye first caught.

"These are British, mother!"

"Yes!"

"God help us!"

"Amen!"

"Must we let them in, mother?"

"You see, my child, we must!"

"Upon the door there!" was shouted from the outside, accompanied by a succession of heavy raps.

Mrs. Kenton took down the bar, and the next moment the room was swarming with English soldiers.

"You'd better kept us waiting all night!" wrathfully cried the officer in command—a sergeant—to Mrs. Kenton.

"We were a bed, and did not hear you," responded Mrs. Kenton, mildly.

"You're a liar!" shouted back the sergeant, "and if you tell me any more such tales, I'll knock you down."

The brute drew back his muscular arm.

"Oh! for God's sake, don't hurt my mother!" suddenly cried Matty, springing forward, and beseechingly clasping her hands before the sergeant.

The young girl was pretty—yes, she was more than that—she was really beautiful, and of an age—about eighteen—to be particularly interesting. The sergeant was a coarse, sensual, brutal person, and as a natural consequence, the sight of Matty's pretty face inflamed his worst passions. In a moment he forgot Mrs. Kenton and his anger—another feeling now swayed his beastly heart.

His followers rested on their guns and gazed at the scene in silence.

"Well, I'll not hurt her a bit, my pretties one, providing you're kind!" he said with a leer. "Come, give me a kiss!" he added, stretching out his hands.

The young girl shrank back, trembling from head to foot. The sergeant advanced.

"Come a kiss, beauty!"

He made a sudden bound, and caught the young girl in his arms. Martha gave a loud scream, and struggled to release herself. The sergeant laughed, and pressed his sensual lips to her ruby cheeks.

Quick as a flash the result had been made, and the kisses ravished from the fair girl. Almost instantaneously, however, the loud report of a musket reverberated through the house. The sergeant uttered a wild cry of pain, tossed his arms in the air, and fell dead.

The wildest excitement followed, and every eye was turned to the direction from which the shot had come.

In the door way, between the front and back room, stood Mr. Kenton, with his gun uplifted in an attitude of defiance. His eyes were flashing lightning glances, and his bosom was swelling with the deepest passion.

"Wife, daughter, this way—quick!" he cried, amidst a breath.

Mrs. Kenton and Martha sprang for the door, and safely passed through into the back apartment.

The movement aroused the English soldiers, and with loud curses, they dashed after them.

Boldly Mr. Kenton crossed his lawn.

"Back, villains!" he cried, in agonizing tones. "I'll batter the brains out of the first man who attempts to pass this door!"

The Englishmen hesitated a moment, and then cried out, as he dashed at Mr. Kenton.

"Down with the bloody rebel! show him no quarter!"

Never another word did the Englishman utter, for the next moment the unflinching patriot knocked out six brains with the butt end of his gun.

Madly enraged, the soldiers rushed forward in a body.

"England and King George!" vociferated loudly.

"America and Liberty!" shouted back Mr. Kenton, and his voice rang out clear and distinct above every other sound.

The British crowded on him closely, and he showed blows upon them with the butt end of his gun. Down, down, went the assaulters one after another.

In a hand to hand conflict with the powerful, resolute patriot, the Englishmen did not see much chance of making anything, and so drew off for the purpose of trying something more effectual.

"Shoot the cursed rebel! shoot him!" was the general cry.

At that moment the sound of two voices arose from the back apartment, and the words that were uttered were—

"Oh! Lord, preserve my husband!"

"Oh! God, save my father!"

The Englishmen loaded their pieces, and cried—

"England and King George!"

"America and Liberty!" responded the patriot, with undaunted firmness.

"AMERICA AND LIBERTY!" The shout came from the outside of the house, and the next moment a squad of American soldiers dashed into the room.

Recklessly at the sight, the Englishmen lowered their pieces.

"Don't you, you are just in time to save me and my wife!" cried Mr. Kenton, with a glow of joy. "These bold fellows would have murdered us in cold blood, if they'd dared so woe. Charge upon the villains!"

The contest was brief but bloody. The Englishman fought well, as they usually did, but they were no match for the experienced Americans. In that moment Kenton him if was equal to any half dozen men.

A few minutes fighting satisfied the English soldiers, and what were left of them pleaded for quarters. Long before morning they were in close confinement in the American lines.

Mr. Kenton looked up his house, and taking his wife and daughter along with him, repaired to Chester. Subsequently, Mrs. Kenton and Martha returned to their home. The gallant patriot, however, went with the army, and on Monday a hard fought field did good service beneath the waving folds of "Our Country's Flag."

THE SURPRISE'S SURPRISE.

A TALE OF THE MEXICAN WAR.

BY BIG B.

Reader, let me introduce you to a campfire on the Texas frontier when the war between our own beloved country and Mexico was raging with the barbarity on the part of our opponents, and frenzied fury on the part of the American soldiery which characterized that successful campaign.

It was when the sun had clothed the western sky with a golden light, that a company of Rangers belonging to the American army had halted on the bank of a beautiful stream, that ran through a piece of wood that skirted the vast prairie. Their horses were immediately started out to graze, and every appearance indicated that this ground would be the resting place of the fifty three tired men of whom the party was composed for the night. Immediately after they had halted, the captain of this brave little band quietly approached an individual who was busily engaged in broiling a piece of beef over a small fire he had kindled, and softly whispered in his ear, "Swallow that quick, Titter, and come down to the stream to get some water," and departed in the direction indicated.

Titter was a celebrated scout, and could move with the ease and noiseless facility of a cat, and well knew by the confidential tone of his commander, that he had something important to communicate. Having slipped off a piece of beef, which was by the time nicely cooked, Titter lost no time in proceeding in the direction pointed out, taking with him his cup to avoid suspicion. He found the captain basking his hands and feet, and taking a position very near him, commenced the same operation. The smoke was soon broken, by the captain's saying:

"Titter, did you notice the Mexican that joined us a few miles back?"

"I reckon I did, Cap'n, and I've been wanting to touch your ear about him; for it looks mighty strange to see a better traveler alone in the woods, when betwixt Guerrillas and Chicaneros one don't know how soon he will lose his top-knot to a party of Mexicans—that is, if they have got about twice the number of men that we have."

"Cap'n you're about right, I'm a thinkin', so now what's the word?"

"My plan is, and I had nearly matured it before you came down, and I have now determined upon it, for you to follow him when he leaves camp, which, if my conjectures right, he will soon do under some pretext or other, if he has not already gone, and see if he don't have something more than traveling on hand, before he has gone ten miles. Follow him twenty miles, at least, if occasion requires and I leave it to your judgment how much farther. So now gather some wood for a blind upon our business, and we'll go back to the camp."

"Ain't we right, Cap'n?" exclaimed Titter, as they neared the camp. "There goes the blasted taller hide camp now," and he pointed to the Mexican above mentioned, as he was seen riding off over the green rolling prairie exactly opposite the direction from whence the Rangers had arrived.

"You had better take my horse, as he is stronger and can bear more fatigue than yours," remarked the Captain, as Titter was preparing to start.

"That may be, Cap'n, but your horse don't know my sign like old Witcher."

"Do as you think best, but be careful, and don't fail to find out that fellow's business, especially if it concerns us."

"When you hear of my fallin', Cap'n, you may make a present of my scalp-lock to the first Comanche you meet who is able to take it."

Titter knew that he was safe there, for his name was so wide spread, that no two Indians could be found who would attack him in a fair field.

"I am not afraid but you will do all that human power can accomplish in such a case, so be off now," replied the captain.

The scout is now on the trail of the abiding Mexican, and reader, if you have no objection we will follow the trail to imagination with him. He has not travelled more than three miles, before we see him enter a valley which leads directly back towards the camp, and so low is the land that a person riding therein would be entirely concealed from the view of any one only a few hundred yards distant.

This was followed until he had passed the camp, and five miles farther he enters the same route that was traversed by the Rangers two hours ago. It was now night, but that made little or no difference with Titter, for his horse was too well trained to the business to allow the trail to be lost, and he only dismounted occasionally to make sure that he was right. Four miles farther back he suddenly enters a deep ravine or ravine, and two miles down that ravine he suddenly halted and muttered to himself:

"Well, if it hadn't been for that fellow's bright lance shinin' ahead of me, I don't know if the Comanches would've been fooled as to gettin' my top-knot by them tarnal grassers. Now Witcher, stand still an hour or so, and I'll be mighty apt to find out what that chap rode so far round and came down here for."

So saying, he dismounted, and leading his horse back a hundred or two yards, dropped the bridle upon the ground, and then took a circuitous route around the side of the ravine to gain a more covered position. He soon came in sight of the camp of a party of Mexican lanceros, and could easily see that some movement of importance on their part was about to take place—Proceeding father round until he had gained the opposite side of their camp, where the horses belonging to them were staked, he ascertained the number of men by counting the horses, and was in the act of returning when he saw men approaching. They were directly between him and his horse, so that it was impossible for him to escape without being seen. And now what made it doubly worse, a horse had got loose in some way, and was strutting directly towards the spot where he stood. The horse had now got opposite him and was nipping the leaves from the bush behind which he was concealed, when its owner approached, as he came around to the horse's head to bridle him. Titter drew his keen, heavy bow-knife and taking deliberate aim, (for the man's back was turned) he severed his head from his shoulders, and the poor fellow sank to the ground without a groan. Titter then hurried his horse away, for he well knew that if he left him there it would be discovered, so he ran along for a considerable distance as if trying to catch him, the darkness of the night preventing the enemy from seeing what he had done. As soon as he was out of sight and hearing of the Mexicans, who were all busily employed in bridling and saddling their steeds, he caught his horse, and again using his bow-knife, laid him dead upon the grass. Regarding his own horse, he hurriedly leaped into the saddle and was off in the direction of his own camp. He had proceeded scarcely half a mile before he heard the foot-behind. Putting spurs to his horse, he gained the camp, a distance of eleven miles, in less than an hour.

"Well, Cap'n, give your orders in a hurry, for they'll be here a heap quicker than some of 'em will get away," cried Titter as he entered the camp. "There's just a hundred and eleven of 'em—two apiece and five over and one o' 'em is stayin' back yonder at their camp a huntin' for his head."

The captain called his men around him and gave the following order:

"Every man get his blanket and saddle, and put it where he intended sleeping to night, lay his coat over it to make the pile

resemble a sleeping human as near as possible and return again in five minutes."

"Before the time had elapsed when the captain had given them to execute his command, all had returned and were awaiting further orders. He then stated what was expected, and the order to "inspect arms," was a useless one with this company, for they always held themselves ready to fight or fight without a moment's warning and it was scarcely determined which they preferred, as it is a well established fact, that after following this life a few years, fighting becomes almost a second nature with them. The men were then marched out and posted around behind the camp, behind trees, and the order was given them for none to fire until the Mexicans had discharged their pieces and re-bed upon what they would suppose to be the sleeping foe. The Rangers had been stationed but a few moments, when, notwithstanding the great care taken by the enemy to maintain silence and secrecy, they were heard moving cautiously towards what they intended should be another scene of the marvellous barbarity. They approached within sixty-five yards and firing at the objects around the camp fire, charged with fearful shouts. A moment after, the voice of the captain was heard above the yells of the Mexicans, giving the command.

"Now boys, let 'em have your lead!"

Then from every tree around the surprised and bewildered for seemed to dart forth one or more of those living messengers of death. They attempted to escape, but on every side they were met by the deadly revolvers with which the Rangers were armed. The work of death was completed almost simultaneously with the beginning; in fact, so instantaneous was their defeat, that only twenty-three had a chance to surrender. The spy who had left us and guided the enemy to our camp, was among the number captured, and he was immediately hung. The only loss experienced by the Rangers, was the destruction of a few of their cartridges, which were among the bundles of clothing spread out to dry before the hearth.

THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY.—An anecdote is related by Mr. Hale, of New Hampshire, to the effect:

A couple came to join them in wedlock. I consented to perform the ceremony, and said to the man:

"Do you take this woman to be your wedded wife?"

"Certainly," he replied.

"Do you take this man to be your lawful husband?"

"Yes, I do."

"Then you are man and wife—that's all!"

Both looked with great astonishment, and the lady asked:

"Is that all?"

"Well," she remarked, "such a mighty affair after all!"

At a camp meeting a number of friends continued standing on the benches notwithstanding frequent calls of the minister to sit down. A reverend old gentleman, noted for his good humor, wit, and good sense, said:

"I think if those ladies stand on the benches any longer they will get into their shoes. They may want it down."

The old lady said she would sit down. There was a lady minister standing there, and she said to the old gentleman:

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