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A BOY'S DEFENCE.

The scene w[illegible] Sacramento street, in front of a well-known hotel. It was twenty-two years ago, and San Francisco was in her infancy.

Quite a crowd had gathered on the street, and the centre of attraction was a big fellow, who stood with a newspaper in his hand, raving and cursing.

"What's the matter, Wolf?" asked a newcomer, who was evidently familiar with the irate man.

"Matter?" returned Wolf, for that was his name, "matter enough, an' rough enough it'll be for some folks. Them young whelps that prints this paper has gone an' published something 'bout me. O, I'll fix em! They'd better never had been born! They'd better go an' kill themselves afer ten minutes; it'll be an easier death fur 'em."

Wolf was a noted desperado, who, it was said had killed more than twenty men, and but a few knew him who did not fear him. He was at that time chief of a gang of loafers and gamblers that were nearly always to be found lounging around in the vicinity alluded to, and disturbing the whole neighborhood daily with riotous conduct. It there was any law in those days it was seldom executed against such characters, and in the full consciousness that they were feared they did pretty much as they pleased.

The newspaper which had given deadly offence to Wolf was a little weekly Journal, and its office was in the second story of a building on the same street with the hotel I have mentioned, and only a few rods distant. It was published by young men—or, I might say, boys, for they were only eighteen and twenty years old, respectively—named Darrell and Kaynes. The paper and its youthful proprietors were already well known in the city of San Francisco.

The article which excited the wrath of the ruffian Wolf was a bold denunciation of himself and his crowd for their lawless, conduct, and particularly mentioned him by name characterizing him as a "blustering bully." It was the work of young Darrell, a fearless boy hailing from one of the Western States. Before leaving his home in the Mississippi Valley, he had acquired a fair education, so that he could at least edit a newspaper in those early days; and he possessed besides, that courage and daring which may be natural in the first place, and which are more thoroughly developed by the exposure to dangers and hardships. Young Kaynes was quite a different kind of person in point of courage, being of an unusually timorous nature.

To return to the scene on Sacramento street. Working himself up into his worst mood—and his best was bad enough, heaven knows—Wolf tore the paper to atoms and started for the publication office. He was followed by a curious rabble, most of whom were elated with the prospect of a murder, though there were some present who would have remonstrated with the evil-hearted man, had they dared.

"Jest you watch," said Wolf, as he reached the door, "if ye want to see their bloody carcasses tumble out o' the window! It won't be long I don't spend much time on such fellers."

It was the intention of the cruel-hearted man actually to cut the throats of the two boyish journalists and throw their bodies out of the window, for the gratification of the crowd and the further exaltation of his already fearful name. So, the mob on the street awaited the issue with feverish expectation, as Wolf, flourishing his knife and revolver, entered the rude frame building and rushed up stairs.

All unconscious of their danger, the two young editors were busily engaged pursuing their usual work in their primitive office, If they had heard the noise without they had paid no attention to it supposing it was merely a street row such as they were accustomed to hear every day. Darrell was sitting at a rude table writing, and Kaynes was sitting at the counter arranging some papers for the mail.

They heard the clatter of heavy boots on the stairs, but supposed it was some rough miner coming up to subscribe for the paper, or perhaps to see a lawyer who occupied a couple of rooms on the same floor; for the building was only a two-story one, and the second floor was occupied exclusively by them and an attorney—their rooms being separated from his by a narrow hallway that was reached by the flight of stairs alluded to.

'Ah-ha! I've got ye, my young imps!' exclaimed the desperado, bursting in.

Kaynes recognized him and turned pale. Being at the counter which faced the door and extended across the room, he was naturally the first mark for Wolf's vengeance.

'Ye young devils!' he hissed scowling like a madman. 'Ye'll never write nor print nothin' more 'bout me!' Here he flourished his knife and revolver above his head. 'I've got a sure thing on both of ye! Saying this he looked about him, with a careful scrutiny, to see that there was no means of escape for the quiet youth at the table, who, of course, would not dare to jump over the counter and try to pass him, but would cower down with fright in a corner and take his turn at being killed; then he reached across the counter and seized Kaynes by the hair, which was unfortunately very long.

Coiling the terrified young man's locks around the great coarse fingers of the left hand, Wolf laid his revolver upon the counter, without the slightest apprehension that his youthful adversary would snatch it up and use it on him, as he might have done had he possessed the nerve, then flourished his big gleaming knife deliberately, with pure devilishness prolonging Kaynes' terror and pain.

'Now pray, you young un!' he hissed. 'You've got a couple o' seconds or so left—just while I'm clippin' yer ears off. I'll take them off first, clean and smooth, then I'll cut your throat and throw your carcass out o' the winder. D'ye hear that?'

Such was Wolf's reliance on the terror his name everywhere inspired that he never dreamed of resistance. He simply intended to butcher the two young men, and such a thing as an obstacle to his will was not to be thought of. Had Darrell possessed no more nerve than Kaynes there can be no doubt but that they would both have been murdered then and there in exact accordance with Wolf's programme.

'Time!' he said, grinding his teeth in an ecstacy of rage and drawing Kayne's white face closer to his own repulsive countenance. 'They're a waitin' to see yer carcass drop down into the street.' Here he flourished his knife and selected his mark 'Right ear first. Watch how clean an' smooth I'll take it off. I won't even touch a hair.'

Kaynes bawled for mercy. "O—O—non't!' the poor fellow shrieked, trembling with terror. O, don't, Mr. Wolf! I didn't write that, on my soul!' and he whined like a schoolboy.

'None of yer lyin'!' said Wolf fiercely. 'Yer both wrote it, darn ye! an' both of ye'll pay for it!' Here he executed decided circles with his flashing knife, having apparently prolonged the torture as much as he desired. 'Here goes; look out as I count three!' The knife was ready to descend 'One—two—'

He stopped and started. He had not observed the movements of Darrell during the last few seconds, and just as he was on the point of clipping off Kaynes' ear in the polished manner he had descanted upon, he found the muzzle of a rifle thrust into his face.

It was a loaded rifle which, luckily, a friend of Darrell's had left in his keeping that very morning while he went out to make some purchases. It had stood in a corner of the room near his table, and Darrell had seized it, cocked and leveled it with such dexterity that he had Wolf covered before his movements were observed and he stood motionless as a statue—his cool eye glancing over the sights, and a steady finger on the trigger.

'You great bully!' he said; 'drop that knife instantly. Mind, I came from a country where they shoot squirrels only through the eye, I can hit any hair of your big head that you will mention at a hundred yards. Drop that knife!'

The ruffian was fairly paralysed. He relaxed his grip on poor Kaynes, who sank fainting on the floor, and his murderous knife fell upon the counter. So unexpected was this bold attitude of Darrell that Wolf was more startled than he would have been if a dozen of the roughest men in California had assailed him.

There stood the boyish editor, motionless as the wall, and the muzzle of the rifle did not move the breadth of a hair. Darrell held the desderado's life in his hands.

'You cowardly bully!' he repeated, contemptuously. 'Don't dare to move; I can send a bullet through your eyeball without touching the white. Don't move the eighth of an inch, or I'll do it and throw your filthy carcass out the window!'

Wolf glanced at his revolver lying upon the counter, within two feet of his eye, but did not venture to reach for it.

'Dare to touch that revolver—so much as look at it again,' said Darrell, 'and I'll make a red picture on the wall there behind you. You are a blustering, bragging knave! you are a coward at heart—a despicable cur! You came up here to murder two boys because you thought it a nice, easy task, and now you are pale and trembling with fear. I would kill you in your tracks, but I don't want your dirty blood on my hands. Go, now. Turn instantly. Leave your knife and revolver where they are. I'll keep them. Go down to your friends and tell them a boy whipped you—disarmed you and kicked you dowh stairs! Do as I tell you instantly. If you hesitate you will never see the sun set.

'Wolf, trembling from head to foot glanced once more at his revolver, but did not dare to raise his hand His face was pale and his lips were dry.

'Do you hear me?' demanded Darrell, sternly.

'Yes, yes; don't shoot!' replied Wolf, turning about as commanded. He was thoroughly cowed.

'Do not turn your ugly face this way again,' said Darrell, 'or you will pay for it with your life. Move.'

Meekly obeying the imperative orders of the youth, Wolf moved slowly out of the room into the narrow corridor.

'Be careful; don't let that gun go off,' Wolf stammered, as he reached the head of the stairs.

At this moment the clamors of the impatient crowd arose with terrible distinctness, and one shrill voice was heard to say:

'Hurry up, Wolf. Why don't you throw them fellers out?'

Exasperated beyond measure, he was on the point of turning back, at the risk of his life; for after all his bragadocio how could he meet those below disarmed and chased out of the building by one of the puny boys he had intended so terribly to chastise? But Darrell was after him, and with one vigorous kick sent him heels over head down the wooden stairs, with a thundering clatter, and rolling over the doorsill, the defeated bully actually tumbled out upon the street before he could recover his equilibrium.

"Hello! How's this? What's up?" asked a dozen voices at once as the dreaded man reappeared in this undignified shape, without having sent any corpses out the window.

"Why, I simply kicked him down the stairs that's what's the matter," said the bovish voice of Darrell at the head of the stairs; "and if he comes up here again I won't let him off so easy. Don't be afraid of him, for I took his weapons away from him."

Wolf struggled to his feet, rubbing his head, and presenting such a ludicrous appearence that he was greeted with jeers and bursts of laughter. So completely had he tumbled from his lofty eminence in the eyes of those who had either admired or feared a bold murderer, that they who an hour ago would have dreaded to offend him by word or look, now regarded him with the utmost contempt laughed at and derided him.

"Ha, ha, ha!" resounded on all sides. "Licked by a boy! Bah! Kicked down stairs by a child! Where's your knife? Where's them corpses? Ha, ha, ha!' You ought to be egged out of town! Three groans for Wolf!' and they were given with a will.

"Three cheers for the little boy that licked him!" was responded to by loud and enthusiastic cheers.

Never before had the rough crowd seen a man with an established reputation like Mr. Wolfe, thus suddenly fall to such a depth of degradation. All his name, fame, prestige, melted away like a mist, and he was no longer feared—no longer respected by the low thieves and cutthroats around him—only despised by the meanest creatures he had oftentimes bullied as though they had been hounds.

How little, how pusillanimious he looked as he slunk away toward Montgomery street! Those who had known him for the past year or so, and regarded him as a giant, now fancied that he stood bare five feet six in his boots. The dread that surrounded his name cleared away like vapor.

Such was Wolfs mortification, when he came fully to realize what a pitable figure he had cut he left San Francisco and was never again seen in her streets any more. The fatality that had thus far shielded him in his murderous designs now suddenly deserted him. He was destined never to commit another murder; but was shot dead at Sacramento within three weeks after the events narrated.

I do not know what has become of Kaynes, or whether he is still alive; but I know that Darrell the brave boy whose courage and coolness saved them both, is to-day a gentleman of position residing in a flourishing city of Nevada.

FEMPORA MUTANTUR.—Three score and ten is not a very green old age if, as astronomers assert, the period of time in which this earth will be inhabited is as a minute to eternity of its actual existence. And yet some people really forget that they were ever young. There she stood, the apple of their eye, trembling with suppressed weeps. Their frowns deepened as the mother wiped her glasses preparatory to reading a letter found in the girl's pocket. It began, "Angel of existence." "What!" howled the male parent. "You don't mean to say it begins like that! Oh! that a child of mine should correspond with—But pray proceed, my dear." "Hem! existence spelled with 'a,' too!" proceeded the *mater*, "Why, the lunatic can't spell!" chipped in the old man. "It is impossible for me to describe the joy with which your presence has filled me." "Then why does he attempt it, ass! But pray, don't let me interrupt you. Go on, go on; let joy be unconfined." "I have spent the whole night in thinking of you"—(that's picturesque any way)—"and in bitterly deriding the obstinate, besotted old whelp who will not consent to our union." "Oh, let me get at him. Whelp! Is thy servant a toad that he should be thus spoken of?" "But ah odorus, my dear," interrupted his other half. "Yes, yes, one moment; I was about to observe that the hand that could pen such words would not hesitate to scalp his most cherished relative." "Theodorus, I did n't see this over the leaf." "Eh! let me see, hum—this 'Yours, with all the love of my heart—Theodorus, May 10, 1835,' Way, bless my eyes, it's one of my letters!" (Sensation.) "Yes, papa," chimed in the "Olive Branch," "I found it in the closet yesterday, only you wouldn't let me speak!" "You may go to the park, my child. Hem! we've made a nice mess of it." "Yes, love. Next time we will look at the date first."—*Burlington Hawkeye.*

DESPONDENCY.

The most perilous hour of a person's life is when he is tempted to despond. The man who looses his courage looses all; there is no more hope of him than of a dead man; but it matters not how poor he may be, how much pushed by circumstances, how much deserted by friends, how much lost to the world; if he only keeps his courage, holds up his head, works on with his hands and with unconquerable will determines to be and to do what becomes a man, all will be well It is nothing outside of him that kills, but what is within, that makes or unmakes.

Genl. Robert Toombs, of Ga., will go to Europe soon and will protract his visit long enough to see the Paris Exhibition. In conversation with a friend, a few days ago while announcing his intention, said: "It will be the third Paris Exposition that I will have attended. I attended the exposition of 1855 as a Senator, I attended the exposition of 1867 as a refugee, and I am going to this one as a gentleman!"

CORBIN'S DEFENCE.—Mr. D. T. Corbin, ex United States District Attorney for South Carolina, and a claimant for the seat in the United States Senate from that State awarded to Gen. Butler, makes a singular explanation of the charge that has been preferred against him of having bribed his way into an election by the Chamberlain Legislature. Mr. Corbin makes the admission that, inasmuch as the courts had forbidden the State Treasury to pay the members of that Legislature, he advanced the necessary sum, which has never been repaid.

PREACHERS' MARRYING.—The Methodist Bishop of Texas has been addressing his conference on the subject of young ministers marrying in a very pleasant practical strain. Young preachers with clean shirt-fronts and fingernails were, he said, above par, but should remain single till they had finished their studies. "If a young minister," said the Bishop, 'marries a beautiful young lady he must love her, and, loving her, he must talk to her, and, talking to her, he must spend time he ought to give to his studies." Then the worthy old man went on to say that he determined when he went into conference is youth not to marry until he should finish his course of study. There were as fine looking and charming young ladies on his first circuit as the United States afforded. But he armed his breast against all the glances and smiles of the fair young damsels. When in the providence of God it became neccessary for him to select a companion, he was competant to select the proper person; and when he lost that dear one by death and it became necessary that he select one to take her place and be mother to the pledges of love she had left him he found one good, true and peerless. Young preachers whose beards are not fully grown could not always select the right one to be a travelling preacher's wife, He knew a man who married while a local preacher, and when afterwards he joined the conference it was discovered that he possessed considerable genius, but that his wife was an uncultivated woman who did not know how to dress herself, so that when he was appointed to an important city station his wife wore brogan shoes and the ladies formed a committee and went and dressed her, to her husband's unutterable and abiding shame.—*World.*

A MERRY HEART.

I'd rather be poor and merry than inherit the wealth of the Indies with a discontented spirit. A merry heart, a cheerful spirit, from which laughter wells up as naturally as bubble the springs of Saratoga, are worth all the money bags, stocks and mortgages of the city. The man who laughs is doctor, with a diploma endorsed by the school of Nature; his face does more good in a sick room than a pound of powders or a gallon of bitter draughts. If things go right he laughs, because he is pleased, if they go wrong, he laughs, because it is cheaper and better than crying. People are always glad to see him, their hands instinctively go half way to meet his grasp, while they turn instinctively from the clammy touch of the dyspeptic, who speaks on the groaning key. He laughs you out of your faults, while you never dream of being offended with him; it seems as if sunshine came into the room with him, and you never know what a pleasant word you are living in until he point out the sunny streaks on its pathway. Who can help loving the whole souled, genial laughter? Not the buffoon, nor the man who classes noise with mirth—but the cheery, contented man of sense and mind! A good humored laugh is the key to all breasts. The truth is that people like to be laughed at in a genial sort of a way. If you are making yourselves ridiculous, you want to be told of it in a pleasant manner, not sneered at. And it is astonishing how frankly the laughing population can talk without treading on the sensitive toes of their neighbors. Why will the people put on long faces, when it is so much easier and more comfortable to laugh? Tears come to us unsought and unbidden. The wisest art in life is to cultivate smiles, and to find the flowers were others shrink away for fear of thorns.

A warning for the girls comes from Bradford county, Pa: "William Roberts, 22 years old, asked a young woman whom he had been courting to marry him. She laughed and said she intended to marry another, naming a rival whom Roberts especially disliked. Roberts at once went home and hanged himself. When the girl heard of her lover's suicide, she exclaimed, "Oh, I intended to marry Billy, I was only teasing him," and then swooned away."

"You politicians, are queer people!" said an old business man to an impecunious partisan.

"Why so?" asked the politician.

"Why, because you trouble yourselves more about the payment of the debts of the State than you do about your own!"