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HOW JOE WEAKENED.

In that great horse shoe bend of the Little Bear Paw Mountain, which catches a great flood of sunshine at noon-day, we had a village. Sixty strong and sturdy men were digging into the base of the black topped mountain in search of silver.

We were not in luck, and though each man was gloomy and discouraged, there was no excuse for murder. We had banded together to share and share alike and if fortune smiled on one all would receive benefits.

One night when the day's toil of fifty-seven men yielded an estimate of only $6, the miners cursed and swore and felt like striking each other. We were short of provisions, new tools were needed, and the men turned in for the night with a determination to strike for some other locality if the next day's work should exhibit like barren results.

At midnight there was a great outcry. It was not an Indian attack, as each miner anticipated when he rushed out, but a horrible murder had been committed, and the murderer captured by one of the sentinels. A miner named Joseph Swain, but hardly known in camp by any other name than "Joe," occupied a tent in company with an old man named Arnold. The two were on good terms, but while Arnold had about $800 in gold, acquired in other speculations, Swain hadn't a dollar outside the common fund. The gold was buried in the earth under the bed on which the two slept, and Swain could not get at it by night without arousing his companion. Had he secured it during the day and made off he would have been overhauled very quickly, and his punishment nothing less than hanging. It could be no more if he added murder, to the robbery, and that night, when we all felt so bitter against luck, and when the men felt so much like striking each other, Joe Swain murdered the man who had done so much for him. He was getting away with the gold when halted, and though he made a sharp fight for liberty he was tied hand and foot within five minutes after the first alarm.

Arnold was dead, stabbed in three or four places, and the gold was found in Joe's belt. There was no show for the murderer. He could not even plead impulse or heat of passion. Indeed he was not the one to avoid consequences. He made a statement to the effect that he had deliberately murdered and robbed the good old man, and added:

'Now, boys, there's no use of a great fuss over this matter. Put a guard over me, and the rest of you go back to your sleep. You'll hang me, of course, and when morning comes I shall have a request to make. I shan't try to get away, and I am not going to play the baby when the last hour comes.'

Joe Swain was known among us as a game man. He had fought Mexicans, trailed Indians and killed three or four white ruffians who had made themselves a terror to certain localities. Armed with his bowie knife he would have been a match for any four of us, and it was owing to his presence more than that of any one else that our village was not troubled with the roughs and gamblers who attach themselves like leeches to other camps.

Murder was a crime that could not be palliated in a mining camp. Had it been anything else the majority of the men would have been in favor of letting Joe jump the diggings and go unpunished. But when they looked in on the white-faced and blood stained corpse of the good old man who had been like a father to all of them, each heart hardened against the murderer, and each man said to the other:

'Joe Swain must hang for this!'

There was no need of a trial. When he was brought out after breakfast, he said:

'Boys, I don't want any fuss over this thing. I killed the old man, and it is your duty to swing me up to a limb. I know what I was up to, and I know I'd have to stretch a rope if I couldn't get away. I don't deserve a kind word and I shan't look for any sympathy. The request that I want to make is that you won't hang me till sunset. I know it is bad to have one of these affairs hanging around the camp all day, but yet it won't make no great difference to you as long as you are working for almost nothing. Now then all in favor of waiting till sunset to hang me say aye!'

'Aye!' shouted every man around him.

'Those opposed will say no!'

Not a voice was heard.

'The ayes have it, and I am to be hung at sundown,' continued Joe. 'I want to write half a dozen letters, sleep for two or three hours and I hope you won't crowd in on me. Select your tree, get your rope ready and when the time comes I'll be on hand.'

If Joe had been a captive in the hands of the Indians and was to be burned at the stake at sundown, every miner would have warned his outfit that Joe would have died game. In this case, where he was to meet a disgraceful death at the hands of the men who had worked and tought beside him for months, most of the miners thought he would take the noose without the quiver of a muscle; but there were two or three who said:

'He is a brave man, but when he takes his last look around he will weaken.'

Before the day was two hours old there was a strange wager between two of our men. It was rifle against rifle that Joe Swain would show a woman's heart before he swung off.

The doomed man was left to himself all day long. A strong guard placed about his tent, but no one entered it to interrupt the work of his last hours. The corpse of his victim was buried at the foot of the lone tree on which Joe was to swing, and as the six men men carried his body past near his tent the murderer came out and stood with uncovered head to show respect for the dead. He wrote five letters, drew up a brief will, ate a full meal about mid afternoon, and about half an hour before sundown he was ready. Before starting for the tree he said: 'After I am gone you will find my will. The letters in there are to be forwarded as soon as convenient. This is a shabby old suit of clothes to be hung in, but it's all I had, and I couldn't go around borrowing. Have you got the rope and the barrel ready?'

'Yes, everything is all ready,' replied a voice.

'That's right,' said Joe. 'Now, then, form in procession, give me a conspicious place, and we'll march along.'

The man wasn't smiling. His face was pale, his eyes had an anxious look, and it was plain that he realized the grimness of his last hour on earth. The procession was formed, and Joe marched away for the tree as steadily as a solder on parade. His hands and feet were free and as he halted beside the old barrel with the noose dangling above his head he said:

'Boys, tie my hands behind my back, and after you lift me up tie my feet together. If you make a bungle of this you'll get a bad name all through the diggings.'

When Joe stood on the barrel, the noose around his neck the men fell back a little. He looked from man to man with steady eye, looked up at the limb, and then looked over the heads of the men out upon the green prairie. The sinking sun had filled the grass with millions of sparkling jewels. A score of antelopes were trotting along about a mile away; great birds sailing towards the Rockies with lazy wing; the flowers never seamed so thick and beautiful as then.

For a moment we all looked southward, and there was something in the vision that softened every heart.

When we looked up at Joe again we hardly knew him. All the hard lines had melted out of his face, his eyes were full of tears, and there was a sob in his throat, as he turned and whispered:

'Don't blame me, boys—it is my last look on earth! Now, do your duty!'

Not a man moved—not a man could move.

Taking a swift glance over the prairie and another up the mountain side, Joe softly said; 'God forgive me that I was not a better man—'

He fell forward off the barrel, his own executioner, and no man dared look up until the body hung limp and lifeless.

Joe had weakened, and those who had bet on his 'game' lost. Yet, when we talked it over in low voices at the camp fire we agreed that brave Joe's bravest act of a lifetime was shown when the tenderness was allowed to creep into his heart and his eyes to fill with tears—when he proved to us that he had a soul.

Two double cousins married perhaps eighty years ago. They are now dead. They lived in Harris county, Ga, and raised twelve children, all of whom lived to be 60 years old and upward. Alternately a deaf and dumb infant was born, making six of sound body and six afflicted. The six deaf and dumb chils lost their sight at 60 years. Three of the unfortunates are, or were, boys (we don't know how many live or have died) and three girls.

At Deshler, O., a girl ate fifty raw eggs in fifty minutes for a wager of a calico dress.

GHOST OR WHAT.

The Remarkable Experience of a Courageous Woman at a New York Hotel.

In the first place, I do not believe in ghosts at all, and I am not a nervous woman, afraid of my own shadow, and I do not give heed to supernatural things. Therefore I cannot explain what I am about to relate. If any one who may read this can, I shall be glad to hear the explanation.

In the latter part of April, 1872, before sailing for Europe, I made a stay of a few days at the Metropolitan Hotel New York. I was assigned to room 292, on the second floor. I had dined and written a little in the evening. Finally I left off work and sat down by the fire, and as I sat there I noticed particularly the disposition of the furniture in the room and the room itself. As that has the direct bearing on my story I will briefly describe it.

The room was long and narrow, and at end nearest the main had a curtained alcove for a bed. By making this alcove a narrow hall was formed, which opened into the main hall. There were two doors to this little hall, one opening into the outside corridor and the other into my room. There were two small transoms one over each door Directly facing the door was a large French window, opening into the street. A little iron railing passed in front of it outside. The fireplace was by side of the window. Just back of where I sat, on the right side of the room as you entered there were a large wardrobe and a small drab reps lounge. On the left side of the room was a stationery washstand, and next that a bureau. The gas was just over this washstand. A few chairs and a small marble-top table completed the furniture.

At about 11 o'clock I went to bed, after having carefully locked the two doors and lowered the gas. I went to sleep immediately, after my usual habit and slept, I do not know how long. I woke up with a start and a cold feeling of terror. I sat straight up in bed. My room was brilliantly lighted and I saw that the manuscript, &c., had been drawn over to the side of the lounge, while the easy chair in which I had been sitting had been placed opposite the lounge. Two men were seated there playing cards.

I just sat and looked at them, not knowing what to do or say. They had evidently mistaken the room, I thought and yet, to save my life, I could not have spoken or moved. I noticed that the man on the sofa was slender and apparently in delicate health. He had red hair and a read beard all over his face. He was dressed in gray clothes. I noticed that his left hand near the wrist, looked as it it had been hurt. His face was marked with extreme sensibility and he had small features.

The other man was, physically, his opposite. He was large, of fine physique, very dark complexion, with very thick, short black hair, and a long drooping black moustache. His eyebrows were very heavy, and had short thick hairs that stood straight out, making them look like two great black caterpillars. His cheeks and chin seemed to have been newly shaved, yet the beard showed through the skin with a faint bluish tinge. He had a little three cornered scar near the right corner of of his mouth. He was dressed in black, and wore an emerald pin.

Those who know me best know that fear is not one of my components, yet I must confess that I telt a sensation very like it. They were playing euchre, and soon there arose a dispute. I heard no words, yet from their angry looks and gestures I saw that they were quarreling. Suddenly the darker man drew a long knife and plunged it into the left breast of the man on the sofa. He quivered a little and then lay still. The other stood looking at him for a moment, then took the dead man's right hand and clasped it around the handle of the knife, bracing the elbow against the table; then coolly gathered up the cards and, putting them in his pocket, took up a black hat and went out.

I turned to look at the dead man; he, too, had disappeared, and the room was dark.

I tried to think I had had the nightmare, hid my head under the bedclothes, and at last went to sleep again.

On rising [illegible] morning I found the marble table standing by the lounge, the armchair beside it, and all my papers on the bureau by the window. This made a great impression on me for a time, but a multiplicity of occupations during the day and visits from some friends obliberated all remembrance of it. Yet when I went to bed that night, it was only to be awakened by the same horror, to see the same tragedy enacted, and to find the table misplaced in the morning as before.

The third night I took the table over by the window, placed all the articles upon it that it would hold, and left the gas turned on full; but it was the same. I was again the unwilling witness of the tragic scene.

The fourth night I began to really dread the vision, or whatever it was, and called the chambermaid. Her first name, I remember, was Katie. I asked her to stay with me that night, but she said it was not permitted. I then told her I wanted her to pile all the chairs she could make stand on the table and washstand, so that they could not be removed without some force. It was all the same. The chairs were on the floor in their places in the morning, and the table by the lounge.

I really felt frightened now, and sent word down to the office to Mr. Adams, the clerk. He came up. I asked him if any murder had ever been committed in the room. He declared most unequivocally that there had not. He said that the only tragedy of any kind, that ever had happened in the hotel was the suicide of a sick man who had come there from the South, and killed himself, as they supposed, in a fit of despondency. He could not remember how the man looked. There were so many coming and going that he could not remember people. I told him he must give me another room, which he did that afternoon.

As Katie, the chambermaid, helped me to change apartments, she looked as if she understood something. I asked her if she had ever heard anything regarding that room, and she told me that she never had but once during the two years that she had been there. There had been an invalid lady there with her husband, and the lady declared she saw terrible things, and could not be persuaded to remain in the room at night, although her husband had seen nothing whatever.

As for me, there is not money enough in New York to hire me to sleep in that room again. I somehow feel as if I was going to meet that visionary assassin in the flesh, though I cannot account for the impression any more than I can for the strange but strictly true story I have related.—*N. Y. Sun.*

COURTING UNDER DIFFICULTIES.

[Bruswick, Mo., Times.]

They were courting under difficulties. It was in a room through which the members of the family were continually passing to and fro.

"Dear Alice," he said, "I cannot longer labor under this sus—"

[The old man appears.]

"—pension of banks is due to the unwise policy—"

[Old gent passes on.]

"I was going to say, my dear girl, that I hope you will promise to be mine, and name an early day for the bonds—"

(Old woman happens in.)

"—should never be paid in gold alone."

[Exit old girl.]

"Name the happy day when I may call you my own, for I cannot believe that you will think it pre—"

[Old man slides in again.]

"—sumption cannot be so soon accomplished."

[The intruders retires.]

"I say, I can't believe you are entirely indifferent to me, but will soon grant me the privilege of calling you wi—"

(Old lady on deck.)

"—fe given the financial question much study."

(Old lady slides off.)

"If you love me, just nod your head. You and, O, one sweet kiss to seal it—one sweet kiss—oh, hell!—"

[Prospective father-in-law.]

"according to emminent divines is a myth, a superstition."

[They were again left alone.]

The old folks conclude that Alice is safe enough in the company of a young man who can talk nothing but finance and theology, and so relax their vigilance.

The mother-in-law has been attacked in the New Jersey courts, where a man has had the courage to sue her for a thirteen hundred dollar board bill. It was contracted during one of the short visits to see how Maria was getting along.

Gleanings.

"Dying in poverty," says a modern moralist, "is nothing; it is living in poverty that comes so hard on a fellow."

An Iowa woman put starch into her husband's beer, thinking it was arsenic, and was surprised because it didn't stiffen him.

When the telephone comes into general use there will be considerable more pleasure and safety in telling a man he lies, than is obtained under the present constrained and inconvenient system.

In the window of a shop in an obscure part of London is this announcement: "Goods removed, messages taken, carpets beaten, and poetry composed on any subject."

Jones moodily remarks that he always keeps his word. To which Smith sarcastically replies: "Of course you keep your word, because no one else will take it."

A German farmer disputed his tax bill. He said: "I pays the State tax, the county tax, and the school tax; by, by tam! I pays no total tax. I's got no total, and never had any."

Two little girls were comparing progress in catechism study. "I have got to original sin," said one. "How far have you got?" "Oh, I have got beyond redemption," said the other.

The Washington *Chronicle* says the Old North State never sent to Washington a fairer maiden, possessed of more winning manners, than Miss Mary Merrimon, daughter of Senator Merrimon.

A man in Illinois committed suicide by drowning, lately, in six inches of water He couldn't have done it alone, but his wife, with that self sacrificing devotion and helpfulness so characteristic of the sex, sat on his head.

A rural editor has lost faith in the luck of horse shoes. He nailed one over his door recently, and that morning there came by mail three duns and seven "stops," and a man called with a revolver to ask "who wrote that article?"

A picture of human agony—A bashful young man who climbs out of the upper berth in a sleeping car, at what he supposes to be midnight, to get a drink of water, and when he steps down in the aisle is horrified to see that it is about nine o'clock A. M. and everybody in the car is up and looking at him pleasantly.

At a wedding recently, when the clergyman asked the lady, "Wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband?" she with a modesty which lent her beauty an additional grace, replied: "If you please."

You can teach a boy that if he plays the three and and four domino on a three leaving the six exposed to the other end, it counts ten, in about ten minutes; but it will take him all day at school to learn that four units and six units make ten units.

"What's the use of this sacrifice of life this bloody butchery of Turk and Russian?" said a Philadelphia Quaker to a Cincinnati hog merchant. "I don't know," replied the latter mournfully, "pork isn't riz any, that I can see."

'What is a veranda?' is now being discussed by foreign architects. A veranda, gentlemen, is a place where, with the right kind of companion, you'll find the moon shines brighter and the hours fly swifter than in any other spot on the earth's surface. Try it once.

An individual suffering from dyspepsia calls at a physician's house during his consultation hour. The practitioner examines him and declares: "I see how it is; you need a great deal of exercise, but perhaps your business does not leave you time. What is your occupation?" "I have been a letter-carrier for twenty-five years."

Thomas Dunn, of Pittsburg, was arrested for simply attempting to cut his wife's throat because "she wouldn't patch his pants." A man in this enlightened nineteenth century cannot be expected to go around with unpatched pants. But there may have been some extenuating circumstances in the case of the Pittsburg woman. Her husband's trousers may have been black, and she had no blue or red stuff in the house with which to patch 'em.—*Norristown Herald.*