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Poetry.

Fear Not to Pray.

HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

Be not afraid to pray—to pray is right. Pray, if thou canst, with hope; but ever pray. Though hope be weak, or sick with long delay; Pray in the darkness, if there be no light. Far is the time, remote from human sight. When war and discord on the earth shall cease; Yet every prayer for universal peace Avails the blessed time to expediate. What'er is good to wish, ask that of Heaven. Though it be what thou canst not hope to see; Pray to be perfect, though material leave Forbid the spirit so on earth to be; But if for any wish thou dar'st not pray, Then pray to pray to cast that wish away.

THE TRAGEDY OF THE CLIFF.

We were camped out on a spur of the Rocky Mountains, near the brink of an awful precipice. Sitting in a row on a fallen pine, were Charley Andrews, who was a Yankee, tall and young, myself, and a dark-faced stranger. On a flat rock on the opposite side of the campfire, but in such a position that the smoke did not obscure his view of the company, sat Abraham Lewis, a stout old trapper. We had come together accidentally. I started out from Virginia City alone on a prospecting tour. On the afternoon in question I had encountered Lewis and Andrews, 'parde' of long standing who invited me to camp out with them. While we were making a fire the stranger appeared, and being asked to stay by the trappers, immediately dropped his prospector's kit and began to help about the fire. He was a supple-jointed, black-whiskered man of uncertain age, whom any one who had traveled in the West would take to be a gambler and cut-throat of the worst type. We had now eaten our supper of bear's meat and salmon, and were discussing gold and gulches—all but Abe Lewis, who sat in his pipe in the shade of deep thought. His young 'pard' had whispered that a yarn would soon be forthcoming, and I for one was ready and willing to drop all other topics whenever he deigned to begin. It was an autumn evening, just growing dusky and cool enough to bring out the comfort of a camp-fire. Suddenly, the trapper looked up, took out his pipe, blew forth a big cloud of smoke, and said, as if his hearers were acquainted more or less with the facts of the case: 'George Atwood was a square young chap as ever lived, and that makes it a good deal worse. The man that murdered him is the meanest skunk—'

The trapper paused, and I fancied, his keen blue eyes were fixed on me alone, but he soon withdrew his gaze to the gambler, who returned it with a cool indifference. 'Tell the story, I said impatiently. 'Oh, I'll go on with it full fast enough for ye,' he replied, a little testily, as he eyed me again. 'I'm going to state all the facts first, 'cause there's some here what don't know about it. 'This might imply that I knew something about it, but I knew nothing about it. With a strange light in his eyes, an expression I could not understand, the old hunter kept all the while looking at me or the stranger, or at both as he went on: 'George came to Beaver Ridge dead broke, and I took him under my wing. I helped him stake out a claim adjoining mine. It turned out to be the best one in the place. George worked in the gulch alongside of me all summer, and some days he made as high as twenty dollars. 'In the forepart of September my claim got played out, and I pushed on to Montana. Soon after I left, a gang of sharpers lit down on the Ridge and began to beat the boys out of their gold. That war five in the gang, and they brought keards and dice, and every other blamed contrivance. One on 'em started a bank, another a saloon, and the rest roped in the victims. They soon owned half the dust in Beaver Ridge. But that didn't satisfy 'em. They wanted to clean out every man in town, especially them as hung back and influenced others to keep out of their place. 'George Atwood didn't take no stock in 'em, and wasn't straid to say so. They heard how George had struck it rich, and went for him with their palaver. One of the gang, who called himself Jim Cortland, kept follerin' George up every night, and tryin' to git 'im to gamble with 'em. But he couldn't make it work. George was too smart for 'im at that game, and so he tried another. One morning George was found outside the camp with his throat cut from ear to ear. He took thousands of dollars in gold was gone out of its sheath. They counted noses, and found Jim Cortland had lit out the night before. 'George had a good many friends, and

in a short time a big crowd started after Jim. His former parde' joined in with the rest and swore they'd shoot him on sight for disgracin' 'em. The boys tracked him pretty close for two days, and had just got sight of him when a big band of redskins rushed onto 'em out of a patch of woodland on the right. They got drove back to the Ridge a little faster 'n they left it, and Jim Cortland escaped.

The old hunter paused, but still kept his fierce eyes bent on me and on the gambler. The freight shone in his face, and he looked as though he wanted to tear the murderer from limb to limb. We had remained sitting on the log, I in the middle, the black-whiskered man on my right, the tall Yankee on my left, when the latter rose up and approached the fire. 'Git back thar, Charley,' said Lewis. 'When I talk, I want to face the whole crowd.'

The two parde' exchanged glances. The young man returned to the log; but instead of going to his former place, he sat down at the gambler's right hand. 'A few months after the murder,' continued the trapper, 'I went back to Beaver Ridge to git a bag of gold that I'd left thar, and I found out all about it. The boys described Jim Cortland to me, and I've been huntin' for that man ever since.'

There was a short silence, during which the trapper never once removed his eyes from his three companions. 'And you mean to wipe out that man?' said the gambler, coolly. 'You'll find out I do, stranger.' 'How do you know it was Jim that murdered the young man? There's no proof. Many an innocent man has been hung on strong circumstantial evidence,' said the gambler. 'And many a guilty man has been shot,' rejoined Lewis, doggedly. 'I'm going to shoot the man that walked over George Atwood, and pitch his body down over this bluff. 'What could the old trapper mean? Was the murderer even then lurking in the vicinity? or was the dark stranger Jim Cortland? 'If this was the case, the action of the trapper's young pard, in seating himself at the gambler's right hand, might be a part of a preconcerted plan to wipe out the murderer. Not being a fighting man myself, I naturally began to look for some place of refuge. None offered unless I went down the steep descent of rocks, near at hand, and that looked like a dangerous feat. But the gambler did not appear to understand the significant words and dark looks of Abe Lewis any better than I did. 'What is this Jim Cortland?' he inquired. 'You see that strip of pine,' said Lewis, without moving his eyes from us three, but with one hand pointing across the canyon rumbling at the foot of the precipice, two thousand feet below to where the shadows were darkening over a long stretch of pines. 'Well, Jim Cortland come up the river, this afternoon, on the outside of them woods. I come up on the inside. 'Here I met the steady gaze of the trapper, and I was struck by a sudden fear. I had come up the river, along the edge of the pine forest. Could he suspect me of being the murderer? But on a second thought I felt easier. The other stranger might have come up where I did, and I could easily prove an alibi at the time of the murder by my friends in Virginia City. All this passed rapidly in my mind while the gambler was saying: 'Are you sure you've spotted the right man? You never saw him. All you've got to go by is the description given by the Beaver Ridge men? 'I know the man I'm after,' asserted Lewis. 'He's about your size, closely watching the gambler, who never changed a muscle as he gazed into the fire. 'Under the circumstances, I kin describe him pretty close. He's got black hair, black beard, and square shoulders. His nose is a little lumpy, and his nose peaked. He's a tough-looking cuss, but he won't kill another man, unless he gits over me. I'm on his trail and one of the other of 'em'll have to kick the bucket. 'I answered this loose description and so did the gambler but there was no other points of resemblance between us. 'If you are certain as to the man,' said the stranger with a cool glance at Lewis, 'let's all go for him. How far ahead is he now, do you think? Come, old man, give us a hand in the game. 'I'll do that stranger. But the murderer ain't ahead of this crowd—not much he ain't.'

'Oh, then you've passed him—you are on the lay for him?' said the gambler, looking wistfully down the rugged, darkening slope which we had ascended. 'He ain't blind neither,' said Abe Lewis.

'What! Then it must be this galoot!' And the gambler seized my shoulder with one hand, while the other rested on his revolver, and his eyes were fixed, not on me but on Abe Lewis. Before I could make a move the old trapper cleared me of the charge. 'No, sir,' vociferated Lewis, at the same instant drawing his revolver. Jim Cortland whipped out his weapon and both men fired.

The gambler's revolver flashed first, but the ball sped harmlessly over the head of the trapper. Young Andrews had knocked up the villain's arm at the right moment. The shot fired by Lewis took effect in the murderer's brain, and he fell backward over the log, dead. The trapper immediately approached the body of his victim, and lifting it up as if it were a mere child, he bore it to the brink of the precipice and hurled it down over the loose rocks.

Several big stones accompanied it in its downward course, and it was soon swallowed up in the gloom that was deepening over the canyon. 'I couldn't bury him to better advantage among these rocks.' 'If he comes to life, he can't climb out of the hole,' said Abe Lewis, coolly resuming his pipe before the fire.

But the chances of any spark of life remaining in the body of the murderer of poor George Atwood after the well-directed shot from old Abe's revolver, had reached his mark, was very small indeed, and so, without further thought on the subject, we wrapped ourselves in our blankets, and turned in for the night. We were roused from our slumber early next morning by Abe, who had prepared our morning meal, after partaking of which, as our paths lay in different directions—I being on my way to join my old 'pardner' in the mountains, and Abe and his young Yankee friend being engaged in their regular business of trapping, we parted company. Thus, for long years of patient search, had Abe Lewis avenged the murder of his old partner George Atwood; and with a consciousness that he had done his duty by his dead friend, we separated as we took one last look over the yawning precipices where I had that day been an eye-witness to 'The Tragedy of the Cliff.'

A Dog's Vengeance.

An American boy, on one of her voyages, had on board a splendid specimen of the Newfoundland breed, named Napoleon, and his magnificent size and proportions, his intelligent head, broad white chest, white feet, and white tipped tail, the rest of his body being black, made him as beautiful as his peerless namesake, who, no doubt, would have been proud to possess him. He was owned by a seaman named Lancaster, who was naturally enough extremely fond of him. The captain, however, was not partial to animals of any kind, and had an unaccountable and especial dislike for dogs, so much so, indeed, as if all his ancestors had died of hydrophobia, and he dreaded to be bitten like his unfortunate predecessors. This dislike he one day manifested in a most shocking manner, for Napoleon had several times entered his room, and by wagging his great banner of a tail knocked Lancer and ink off his desk, on the next occasion the captain seized a knife and cut the poor animal's tail off. The dog's yell brought his master to the spot, and seeing the calamity and the author of it, without a moment's hesitation he felled the captain, to the cabin floor with a sledgehammer blow, which had it hit the temple, would forever have prevented the captain from cutting off any more dogs' tails. The result was that Lancaster was put in irons, from which, however, he was soon released. The captain partly repented his cruel deed on learning that Napoleon had once saved his owner's life.

The white shark, all my nautical friends are well aware, is one of the very largest of sharks. It averages more than twenty feet, and I have seen one twenty-seven and a half feet in length. It is generally considered to be the fiercest and most formidable of all sharks. But a few days elapsed after the catastrophe to poor Napoleon before he became the hero of a most thrilling occurrence, the very thought of which has often thrilled me with horror. During the interval the noble beast was not at all backward in exhibiting his wrath at the captain by low growls when he approached. In yells did his master, fearful for the life of his dog, essay to check these signs of his anger. The captain, however, made the allowance he should,

and offered no further harm to him. One morning, as the captain was standing on the bowsprit, he lost his footing and fell overboard, the brig then running about ten knots.

'Man overboard!' the captain yelled, and all rushed to get out the boat as they saw the swimmer striking out for the brig, which was at once rounded to; and as they left especially apprehensive on account of the white sharks in those waters, they regarded his situation with the most painful solicitude. By the time the boat touched water their worst fears were realized, for at some distance beyond the swimmer they beheld a white shark advancing upon him.

'Hurry, hurry, men! or we shall be too late!' shouted the mate, 'What's that?' he exclaimed. The splash which caused this inquiry was occasioned by the plunge of Napoleon into the sea, the noble animal having been watching the cause of the trouble from the bow of the vessel. He had noticed the captain's fall and the shout, and for a few moments had vented his feelings in deep growls, as if conscious of the peril of his late enemy, and gratified at it. His growls, however, were soon changed into those whines of sympathy which so often show the attachment of dog to man, when the latter is in danger. As last he plunged into the water, rapidly making his way to the now nearly exhausted captain, who, aware of his double danger, and but a passable swimmer, made fainter and fainter strokes, while his adversary closed rapidly upon him.

'Pull boys, for dear life!' shouted the mate, as the boat now followed the dog, whose huge limbs propelled him gallantly to the scene of danger. Slowly the fatigued swimmer made his way, while ever and anon his head sank in the waves, and behind him the back of the voracious animal told what fearful progress he was making, while Lancaster, in the bow of the boat, stood with a knife in his upraised hand, watching alternately the captain and his pursuer, and the faithful animal who had saved his own life.

'What a swimmer!' exclaimed the mate, who marked the speed of the splendid animal. 'The shark will have one or both if we don't do our best.' The scene was of short duration. Before the boat could overtake the dog the enormous shark was within three boat-length of the captain, and had suddenly ignited over on his back, preparatory to girding on the sinking man and receiving him in his vast jaws, which now displayed their rows of long fangs. The 'vill' strike of the captain's anvil noticed that the crisis had come. But now Napoleon inspired with increased strength, had also arrived, and with a fearful howl leaped upon the gleaming belly of the shark and buried his teeth in the monster's flesh, while the boat swiftly neared them.

'Saved! it were half as smart as that dog!' cried the mate, as all saw the voracious monster thundered in the sea, and, smarting with pain, turned over again, the dog retaining his hold and becoming submerged in the water. At this juncture the boat arrived, and Lancaster, his knife in his teeth, plunged into the water where the captain had also now sunk from view. But a few moments elapsed before the dog rose to the surface, and soon after Lancaster rose with the insensible form of the captain. 'Pull them in and give me the oar!' cried the mate, 'for that fellow is preparing for another lanch.' His orders were obeyed, and the second onset of the marine monster was foiled by the mate's splashing water in his eyes, as he came again and but a few minutes too late to snap off the captain's legs, while he was drawn into the boat.

Rolling a second time, the shark passed the boat, plunged and was seen no more, but left a track of blood on the surface of the water, a token of the severity of his wounds from Napoleon. The boat was now pulling toward the brig, and not many hours elapsed before the captain was on deck again, feeble from his efforts, but able to appreciate the services of our canine hero, and most bitterly to lament his cruel act, which had mutilated him forever. 'I would give my right arm,' exclaimed the captain as he patted the Newfoundland who stood by his side, 'if I could only repair the injury I have done to that noble fellow. Lancaster, you are now avenged, and so is he, and a most Christian vengeance it is, though my humanity will be a source of grief to me as long as I live.'

'Put pebbles different sizes into a box shake them up, and the large ones will be at the bottom. Not so with strawberries.'

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