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THE BLOW IN THE DARK.

BY DUKE CUYLER.

"That is a wicked looking knife you have there." We were setting in the bar-room of a Texan inn one rainy day a few years ago.

For a few minutes there had been a lull in the conversation, and appearances went to show that each had talked himself out.

"Yes, it is a wicked-looking knife, and I don't doubt but what it has helped do many a dark deed in its day. I know that it once came near taking my life."

"Your life?" exclaimed several, and a murmur of surprise ran round the room. "How did that come about?"

The drover laid down the weapon on an empty seat near him, and proceeded to divest himself of his coat and vest.

"Tell us about it," I said, feeling sure that there was a story connected with it more thrilling than any we had yet heard.

The drover rearranged his garments, and then proceeded to comply with my request. "I have been in possession of that knife for five years," he said.

"As I have told you before today, I have been a drover for many years, and there are times when those of my calling are supposed to have a large sum of money about them. It was owing to this that I came so near meeting my death."

"I had a partner by the name of Moore, and on this occasion we had disposed of our drove, and were returning to the place where we made our temporary home. When some fifty miles from there, it became necessary, on account of some business that we should separate and finish the rest of our journey by separate routes. We did so, and I went on alone."

"Just before nightfall it commenced to rain, coming down in perfect torrents. I was on horseback, and I hurried on as fast as I could; and, just as the night was fairly down, I arrived at an inn, which stood in a lonely place on the edge of a forest, and called for food and lodging for myself and horse."

"I did not much fancy the quarters I was to have. I had stopped there once before when I had gone that way, and had very indifferent accommodations."

"The landlord was an old, one-eyed man, and on his face there was a look which proclaimed him to be a villain. But he had used me very civil that night, and now I had no choice but to try him again."

"I found that he had one other guest, who had arrived before me—a Mexican, young and not bad-looking. I always distrusted the whole race, and I had rather have seen most anything there than him."

"The landlord did the best he could by way of furnishing a supper, and when we had partaken of it, we sat about the fire which he had kindled upon the hearth until something past ten o'clock. Then, after going out and seeing that my horse was comfortable, I told my host that I would go to bed."

"Leaving the Mexican in his seat by the fire, I followed the landlord up into the unfinished loft, where he showed me the same bed I had occupied on my previous stay with him. In the opposite corner there was another, which I supposed the Mexican would occupy when he got ready to retire."

"The landlord left me, and I at once prepared for bed, for I was tired after my day's ride. My pistols I placed beneath my pillow, as was my wont, and then only removing my boots, coat and vest, I sprang into my couch."

"It was some minutes before I went to sleep. I did not want to until the Mexican should retire; but there seemed no prospect of his doing so. I could hear the low voices of himself and the landlord, and I knew not what plots they might be laying against me. They doubtless supposed I had a large sum of money about me, and in this they were right. My wallet, which I had placed beneath my head, was well filled, and had the amount it contained been known to them, I should not have dared to have closed my eyes."

"But they did close, and almost against my will I fell asleep. "How long I had slept I do not know; I was awakened by the slight creaking of a board, and a sense of impending danger. I moved slightly from my position, and in another instant would have sprung up; but before I could do so a hand was laid upon my shoulder, and at the next instant I felt the thrust of a knife driven through my neck."

"At the first intimation of danger, my hand had sought for my pistols. I grasped one, and even as the blade of the knife pinned me down, I pointed it toward the spot where I knew my unseen enemy must stand."

"The knife was withdrawn, and his arm raised to strike another blow. At that instant a light flashed through the loft, showing him to me. On the instant I pulled the trigger, and before the knife could descend again the bullet had entered his breast."

With a deep groan he fell to the floor, and I sprang up, my clothes dyed with blood. At the head of the stairs stood the landlord with a lamp in his hand, and the light showed, as I suspected, that it was the Mexican who lay beside me weltering in his blood."

"At my command the landlord came trembling toward me. I had half a mind to shoot him down, for I believed then, and do now, that he was a party to the attempt upon my life, which had only been frustrated by the blow being given in the dark, and only passing through the flesh and skin making but a slight wound. But he declared that he was innocent, and only came up because he suspected danger to me."

"The Mexican was dead, and I left him lying where he had fallen. As soon as it was light, I left the house and never have entered it since. How he disposed of the dead Mexican I do not know."

He who walks with love in his heart has spurs in his sides. The more you look at that fornica-

Having a Tooth Pulled.

The toothache—that misery to which all mankind are subject—comes upon you stealthily, by degrees, like a north-east rain storm in the month of November.

Generally you get cold in the first place, and your head is sore, and your ears are full of bells, and your jaws are stiff, and your gums begin to swell and make themselves uncomfortably prominent, and you feel as if every tooth in your head had started out an inch or so, and as if it would be a relief to take a hammer and drive them back again.

Pretty soon the toothache sets in as if it meant business. It grows fiercer and fiercer with each succeeding moment, and by the time it has had you in its merciless grip for two days you cannot tell which particular tooth on "that side" aches most. They are all in sympathy, and each one seems trying to outdo the other.

Of course, you have tried scores of remedies. Hot drops, and cayenne, and Pain Killer, and salt and alum, and catnip poultices, and camphor, and laudanum, and oil of cloves, and any number of the standard remedies but all of no avail.

By this time your nerves are "all on edge," and the slightest unaccustomed noise is agony. But nobody seems to think anything about that. The doors are slammed, it seems to you, as they were never slammed before, and the dust-pan is being continually knocked down, and the poker is constantly obeying a well-known law of gravitation and tumbling into the grate, and the housemaid rattles the crockery and sings snatches of revival melodies in a way that makes you wish you lived in an absolute monarchy, and that you were the absolute monarch, so that you could order your chief executioner to bring you that annoying female's head on a pike.

If you venture to suggest to any person the propriety of making less noise about the house he will laugh at you and advise you not to be nervous and have the hysterics over the toothache. Nothing but the toothache! Nothing but the toothache!

After about a week's intermittent agony the dreadful truth is forced home to you. That tooth must be extracted. There is nothing more to be done. You feel weak in the knees and the cold perspiration bedews your forehead at the thought.

Every one you meet pretends to sympathize with you, and he will tell you in detail just how it was with him on a similar occasion, and end with the cheerful suggestion that cold iron is the thing for it. And he will supplement this suggestion with the information that it will probably nearly take you head off, but it will be only for a minute.

After fighting numerous conflicts with yourself you tie your feet up in a handkerchief and start for Dr. Pullhard's.

Before you have got halfway there your tooth ceases to ache, but your temper is up, and you resolve to set it out literally.

Dr. Pullhard is not in, but he will return soon, the attendant informs you, and he shows you into the operating-room to await the doctor's coming.

You can amuse yourself by looking at the marble slabs under the window where the instruments of the doctor's profession are ranged in tidy rows, interspersed at intervals by upper sets of teeth on gold plate, and under sets on vulcanite, and single teeth on pivots and teeth drawn from the jaws of some wretched human victim, which, being "hard cases," the doctor has thought worthy of preservation for future reference.

There is generally a very yellow skull, set with very yellow teeth, on one of the shelves, and if it is any satisfaction to you in your present state of mind, you can look at the formation of the jaws and study their articulations, and repeat for your edification the well-worn truism, "We are fearfully and wonderfully made."

ble array of instruments, the more it seems as if they were laughing at you, and making a mock of your misery; and you feel like challenging that ginger-haired attendant for daring to whisper "Where's Rosanna Gone," as he puts the bottles of ether and chloroform in order, and arranges the spittoons, of which there are a half-score more to his liking.

By-and-by Dr. Pullhard arrives, brisk and smiling. He is glad to see you, and says it is a fine morning, and asks what he can do for you in a very animated tone of voice, and he washes his hands, and slips into a dirty dressing-gown, and fingers among those desecrated instruments, and politely invites you to take a seat in a green cushioned chair of torture.

When once he has got you there, he lets down the back of the chair and your head drops back, and he sticks his fingers, which taste of scented soap, between your lips, and he puts his head so that his breath strongly flavored with cardamom seeds puffs into your face, and ask you if it is a cuspid or a molar.

He goes over your teeth in two minutes. He sticks a probe here and there, and tells you that four of your teeth need filling; two more are on the point of ulceration, and he says there is a dreadful accumulation of tartar, and mentions the fact that Pullhard's Pre-eminent Tooth Paste will remove all discolorations and parasitical formations in ten days, or the money will be refunded.

Then he fixes on the tooth—tells you to open your mouth wider—seizes your head under his arm—flourishes his forceps before your shrinking eyes, and, in vain, you struggle and choke, it is in vain.

One desperate wretch—the top of your head seem lifting off—a thousand comets dance before your vision—there is a noise in your ears like the thunder of the surf on a lee shore, and then the doctor triumphantly holds aloft the bleeding cause of all your agony, and announces in the tones of a victor the welcome truth: "It's out!"

And you rise from your seat feeling faint at the stomach, and flumber in the back, and if a load of hay had been driven through the enormous cavity which you have always thought was a very delicate and well-formed mouth; but your heart is light, and you feel, if possible, about ten times happier than a boy with his first pair of pantaloons.

He Might Have Been.

Yesterday morning, as a well-dressed citizen was crossing the City Hall grounds, a thick-set and very determined woman called on him to stop. He halted, and as she hurried up she asked: "Do you keep a little store on Sixth avenue?"

"No, ma'am, I don't, nor a big store either."

"Don't you lie to me!" she wheezed, blocking his way.

"Lie to you! Why, don't you know who I am?"

"I think I do. I think you are the reprobate who sold my son John a little, dried up old corset without any lace holes in the back, making him believe that it was one of those new-fashioned bustles!"

"Madam, I am not in the corset business—great Heavens! no!" exclaimed the man.

"You are the same man he described—short, blue eyes, faded whiskers, and large ears! Don't think to deceive me! Don't think that because I'm an old woman I can't make a terrible example of you!"

"You are simply mistaken, ma'am," he said, waving his hand and starting off.

"There's the guilt—that proves it!" she shouted, making after him.

He saw her on his trail and he skipped into the Hall and disappeared from sight before she entered. She entered all the rooms on the first floor in her search, and when she realized that he had evaded her she unrolled the corset, slammed it against the wall, and remarked to the laughing crowd: "Gentlemen, you may laugh and tinkle and grin, but the pirate who swindled my innocent boy has got a panther on his trail, and he'd better look out for claws!"

How to go to sleep.

Butterwick had a fit of sleeplessness one night lately, and after vainly trying to lose himself in slumber he happened to remember that he once read in an almanac that a man could put himself to sleep by imagining that he saw a flock of sheep jumping over a fence and by counting them as they jumped. He determined to try the experiment, and closing his eyes he fancied the sheep jumping, and began to count. He had reached his one hundred and fortieth sheep, and was beginning to doze off, when Mrs. Butterwick suddenly said: "Joseph! 'O! what?"

"I believe that yellow hen of ours wants to set."

"O don't bother me with such truck as that now! Shut up and go to sleep!"

Then Butterwick started his sheep again, and commenced to count. He got up to one hundred and twenty, and was feeling as if he would drop off any moment, when, just as his one hundred and twenty-first sheep was about to take that fence, one of the twins began to cry.

"Blame that child," he shouted at Mrs. Butterwick; "why don't you tend to it and put it to sleep. Hush up, you little brat or I'll spank you!"

When Mrs. Butterwick had quieted it, Butterwick, although a little nervous and excited, concluded to try it again. Turning on the imaginary mutton, he began. Only sixty-four sheep had slid over the fence, when Butterwick's mother-in-law knocked at the door and asked if he was awake. When she learned that he was, she said she believed he had forgotten to close the back shutters, and she thought she heard burglars in the yard.

Then Butterwick arose in wrath and went down to see about it. He ascertained that the shutters were closed as usual, and as he returned to bed, he resolved that either that woman would leave the house for good in the morning or else he would. However, he thought he might as well give the almanac plan another trial, and setting the sheep in motion he began to count. This time he reached two hundred and forty, and would probably have got to sleep before the three hundredth sheep jumped, had not Mix's new dog in the next yard suddenly become homesick, and begun to express his feeling in a series of prolonged and exasperating howls. Butterwick was mad. Dropping the sheep he leaped from bed and began to bombard Mix's new dog with boots, scap cups, and every loose object he could lay his hands on. He hit the animal at last with a plaster, bust of Daniel Webster, and induced the dog to retreat to the stable to think about home in silence.

It seemed almost ridiculous to resume those sheep again, but he determined to give the almanac man one more chance, so as they began to jump the fence he began to count, and after seeing the eighty-second sheep safely over, he was gliding gently into the land of dreams when Mrs. Butterwick rolled out of bed and fell on the floor with such violence that she waked both the twins and started them crying while Butterwick's mother-in-law came down stairs, four steps at a time, to ask if they felt that earthquake.

The situation was too awful for words. Butterwick regarded it for a minute with speechless indignation, and then seizing a pillow he went over to the sofa in the back sitting room and lay down on the lounge. He fell asleep in ten minutes without the assistance of the almanac, but he dreamed all night that he was being buffeted around the equator by a Cretaceous ram and he woke in the morning with a terrific headache and a conviction that sheep are good enough for wool and chops but not worth a cent as a narcotic.

The superiority of man to nature is continually illustrated in literature and in life. Nature needs an immense quantity of quills to make a goose with; but man can make a goose of himself in ten minutes with one quill.

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FRANKLIN COUNTY:

In the Superior Court. Tom Brame Plaintiff Complain Against Milly Brame Def't. Divorce. It appearing to the satisfaction of the Court that Milly Brame the Defendant above named, cannot after due diligence be found within the State of North Carolina; It is therefore, ordered, that publication of the summons in this cause, be made in the Franklin Courier, a newspaper published in the town of Louisburg, once a week for six weeks successively, commanding the defendant Milly Brame to appear before the Judge of the Superior Court at a Court to be held for the County of Franklin at the Court House in Louisburg on the 4th Monday after the 2nd Monday in August 1876; then and there to answer the complaint, a copy of which will be filed in the office of the Clerk of said Court within the three first days of said term, and let the said defendant take notice that unless she appears and answers said complaint at said term, the Plaintiff will apply to the Court for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

Given under my hand and the seal of said Court the 23d day of June A. D. 1876. W. K. DAVIS, Clerk Superior Court. Franklin Co., N. C.

S. A. Stevens & Co.

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Notice.

At a meeting of the Board of County Commissioners of Franklin County on the 23rd day of April 1876. The following resolutions were adopted: 1st. That the Sheriff shall not receive in the settlement of taxes, nor shall the County Treasurer pay any County Order issued before the 1st day of April 1876. 2nd. All persons holding orders issued before that date must present the same to the Clerk of this Board on or before the 1st day of August 1876, and a record thereof may be made and parties holding such orders, who refuse to so present them are hereby notified that the Statute of limitation will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. P. B. HAWKINS, Chairman, J. H. TUCKER, Clerk.