

THE BLUE RIDGE BLADE.

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RAIN ON THE ROOF.

Sift falls through the gathering twilight
The rain from the dripping eaves,
And stirs, with a tremulous rustle,
The dead and the dying leaves.
While after, in the midst of the shadows,
I hear the sweet voices of bells,
Come borne on the wind of the autumn,
That fitfully rises and sinks.
They call and they answer each other,
And answer and mingle again,
As the deep and the shrill in an anthem
Make harmony still to their strain;
As the voices of sentimental mingles
In mountainous regions of snow,
Till from the hill-tops a chorus
Plunge down to the valleys below.
The shadows, the first light of even,
The sound of the rain's distant chime,
Come being up, with rain softly dropping
Sweet thoughts of a shadowy love,
The slumberous sense of seclusion,
From storm and intruders aloof,
We feel when we hear in the mid air
The patter of rain on the roof.

The Midnight Cry.

In the early days of a certain Western State a crime was committed which has gained a place among the annals of dark deeds. It was murder; but the circumstances surrounding it are so noteworthy that we shall here transcribe them. They present the most remarkable instance of a young man sealing his lips when his own life was in jeopardy, in order to conceal a petty vice—the most remarkable instance of the kind on record.
One night in March, 1871, a farmer named Buskirk left a town where, during the day, he had disposed of a lot of hogs. He rode a sorrel horse, and carried the proceeds of his sales in heavy leather saddle-bags. The money was mostly in silver coins of the dollar denomination, and the amount, therefore, was quite weighty. Buskirk, a fearless man, did not go armed, but rode unconcernedly from town, a little under the influence of liquor, but not drunk enough to call attention to the fact.
A mile or two beyond the town, he was overtaken by a man on horseback, who expected to reach home about midnight. But when the morning dawned Buskirk was still absent from his farm. His horse stood at the stable door, his saddle-bags were missing, which immediately gave rise to a suspicion of foul play, and search for the farmer was at once instituted.
At a distance of five miles from home the body of Buskirk was found lying by the roadside and not far away lay the saddle-bags, riddled with bullets. The villain, in his haste to get at the money, had cut his way to it, instead of unbuttoning the little dead man of his skull had been crushed as if by a blow from a bludgeon, or some murderous weapon of that sort, and his pockets, like the saddle-bags, had been despoiled of their contents.
The excitement from the moment of the discovery became intense. Zimri Buskirk was one of the most influential farmers of the neighborhood, and a man universally liked. He was not known to possess an enemy, and no one ever dreamed that the murder had been committed for anything but that of subsequent plunder.
Though the country was scoured for the perpetrator of the deed, no traces were discovered; but a clew was suddenly furnished in a startling manner.
The body of the farmer had been discovered not far from a farm-house occupied by a family named Milligen, which consisted of the parents and two children, son and daughter, who had passed their minority. While the excitement still raged, Ellen Milligen came forward and desired to make a statement that she said had tortured her ever since the night of the murder. She said that she had been the possessor of a guilty secret which she could no longer keep; she could not sleep for it, and it was the spectre of her waking hours.
The girl then proceeded to state that she was up at the hour of half-past eleven or thereabout, on the night of the murder, and that she heard a horse coming down the frosty road from the direction of P—. Not regarding the sound of any moment, she was about to re-enter the house, when she heard an oath, followed by a dull thud and a groan. Then she heard a name uttered twice in a tone of mingled agony and supplication.
A moment later the sound of hoofs came again to her ears, and the horse seemed to be galloping toward the Buskirk farm.
The excitement that followed Miss Milligen's narration may be imagined, for you cannot describe it. It was believed that the name she had heard was that of the murderer, which had fallen from the lips of his victim before insensibility or death followed the blow. The young girl hesitated when asked by the magistrate to pronounce the name. She covered her face with her hands, and in all probability would have fallen if she had not been supported by her brother Hiram. She did not like to utter the name that might doom one of the young men of her acquaintance to the gallows, for she could not believe him guilty, yet she had heard Zimri Buskirk call on him to spare his life on that awful night.
Ellen Milligen was pressed to mention the name, and further the ends of justice, in which the whole country was interested, and at last her lips parted.
"God help him and pity me!" she said. "The name I heard was Abner Tenney's."
If a thunderbolt had fallen into the breast of a crowd, astonishment would not have been more complete. Men started at the name, and women uttered cries that added to the confusion.
Standing near the witness was a young man of five and twenty, the only son of a minister who watched over the little flock of believers that worshipped in the church to the outer world. His face was as pale as death, and at the mention of his name he started back with a cry and found the eyes of all fixed upon him.
His name was Abner Tenney.

to the inquiry concerning his whereabouts on the night of the crime.
"I admit that I was not at home, but where I was I will not tell!"
This answer was twisted, as it could easily be by the excited community, into broad strands of guilt, and the young man was remanded to the magistrate for a regular trial at the next term of court.
There were a few who believed that he might be innocent. When it became generally known that he had been a suitor for Eva Buskirk's hand without the sanction of her father, revenge was added to the motive of the murder. Ellen Milligen's word was believed; she was a girl of violent passions, but her tenacity in this case was not dragged into question. She acknowledged that she loved Abner Tenney—hence her reluctance to testify; and after the preliminary examination, she said that she regretted having revealed the secret.
But it was out now, and the young man, lying in the county jail, reiterated his innocence, but still he refused to make known his whereabouts and occupation, on that night.
It was strange that Ellen Milligen's testimony should remain uncorroborated in its essential particulars; but there were several parties who had seen the accused near the scene of the crime at that late hour of the night.
He did not deny this, but persistently refused to explain his presence there.
His father visited him, and begged him to unburden himself; but to him he invariably returned the same reply:
"Were I to tell you, you would feel as badly as though I had committed the murder."
The young man was visited by many acquaintances, to whom he would not reveal his secret, and it at last became more than half suspected that he had accomplices who had concealed the money, not one dollar of which had, as yet, been found.
Ellen Milligen continued to reaffirm her statement. She was confident that she had heard Buskirk call on Abner Tenney in tones that left no doubt in her mind that he addressed his murderer. As the time for the trial approached, she lost her reluctance and openly declared that she knew that the accused had committed the crime.
Her brother, not having been at home on the night of the murder, was not summoned as a witness. It was known that he, too, had visited the Buskirk homestead as a suitor for Eva's hand, but that of late he had turned his attention to another lady, to whom he was paying his devoirs.
The excitement consequent upon the farmer's violent death and Abner Tenney's arrest did not for one moment abate during his sojourn in jail. To a young man who visited him he said:
"Spare me, John. You know where I was that night; you know what I was doing. If I escape this time I will be a better man. The murderer of my honor would send my father to the grave as quickly as the lightning strikes a tree."
"They will hang you if you do not tell all," was the reply. "Let us swear to the truth. Do not let Eva believe that you killed her father."
The last word she drove Abner Tenney to the wall of his cell with a groan. It seemed to unnerve him.
"She will never believe it!" he cried a moment afterward. "In her eyes I will ever remain guilty of her father's murder, even though they hang me for the crime."
The young man's visitor left, and joining two other men of his age in the corridor of the jail.
"What does he say now?" was asked with eagerness.
"He is still obdurate, and declares that we must not expose him."
"Can we save him without the exposure?"
"We must! We shall!"
The trio were youths of respectable parents, but considered fast young men. They had of late been Abner Tenney's companions, much to the regret of the few persons who had noticed the familiarity.
"Look here," said one, addressing his companions, "I hold myself in part responsible for Abner's present situation. We led him into the habits that have fastened themselves upon us. We must save him!"
The spokesman of the dissolute party was a young student of medicine, and it was not long afterward that a learned medical gentleman of Cincinnati came to the county. The body of Zimri Buskirk was examined and examined.
John French stood by and watched the professor.
"Well!" he said at last.
"You say that she swore to hearing Mr. Buskirk cry out after the thud of two blows?"
"So she swore."
"The first blow must have produced instant death. It drove pieces of skull into the brain. A stab in the heart could not prove more instantly fatal than the initial blow."
"That is your opinion?"
"I will swear to it."
The young man was satisfied, and the body, minus the head, was returned to the grave.
"If he will not sacrifice his honor to save his neck, I will save it for him, and his father need not know the truth."
These words passed from John French's lips as he passed from the house with the professor.
From that day the young student and his two friends were not idle. They made many trips from the county, and compared notes on their return.
The trial came at last, and the accused pleaded "not guilty," in a firm voice.
Ellen Milligen repeated her testimony so damaging to the defense, and adhered to it through a rigorous cross-questioning to which she was subjected. She had heard the cries after the blow. She was positive of this.
The other evidence offered by the State was merely circumstantial. The defense introduced the professor, who explained the nature of the wounds, and swore that the first blow had produced instant death. This produced a sensation in court. It staggered Ellen Milligen's testimony, until that hour believed invulnerable. The blows that now followed from the defense were hard and telling ones.
No alibi was attempted. The accused had forbidden such a plan, on the ground that it would reveal the secret that he was guarding so closely; but the defense became aggressive. It proved that Hiram Milligen, Ellen's brother, was not where he said he was on the night of the murder. As the young man was not under arrest, the court forbade the introduction of such tes-

timony, when John French arose, and exclaimed:
"Do not accuse him of the murder of Zimri Buskirk; my affidavit is in the room; the Sheriff holds it at this moment. Look at the man! Guilt is written on his face. He is trying to leave the house. Catch him!"
The confusion that now ensued was intense. Ellen Milligen, with a loud shriek, fell forward on the floor, where she was upon her brother.
Pistol in hand, the young man was clearing a path to the door. No one dared to lay hands on him, for he threatened to shoot the first one who touched him, and thus he reached the door leading to the street.
On the threshold he paused and faced the excited occupants of the court room.
"You will never put me in Abner Tenney's place!" he cried. "If I did kill Zimri Buskirk, you shall not prove and hang me!"
The next moment there was a loud report, and a human body, after swaying for an instant, fell heavily upon the floor.
Hiram Milligen had taken his own life! This tragic occurrence, as might be supposed, put an end to Abner Tenney's trial. It established his innocence in the eyes of all, and the guilty was beyond the punishment of an earthly tribunal.
Upon her recovery, Ellen Milligen unfolded one of the darkest plots on record. She confessed that her testimony was a tissue of falsehoods; that she knew that her brother had killed the farmer for the purpose of getting his money, and accused young Tenney, in order to prevent him from winning Eva Buskirk. Ellen, piqued at Tenney's refusal to desert her, had entered into the plot with revengeful spirit. But the game had failed.
Of course the minister's son was released, and Ellen Milligen left the country between two days. She died several years later in a den of infamy in the South.
Abner Tenney, who had been arrested several months after the murder, and became one of the solid men of the county. I believe he is still living, but his father, the minister, is dead; and the secret which he guarded so zealously at one time is no longer one.

It was simply this: Despite the holy influences under which he had grown, he had departed from the paths of rectitude, and became a gambler, along with John French and his companions. On the night of the murder of Mr. Buskirk, the quartette of youth returned to confess for the sake of his father, who had been ruined by his wild life. But John French had saved the young man whom he had led into vice, and kept him from the gallows. Tenney's secret was told by him after he had made a man of himself; but it puzzles many people who know it not to this day.

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NEWS IN BRIEF.

—Simon Gould and wife, of Montpelier, Vt., are 98 and 95 years old respectively, and have been married 78 years.
—Dr. Gerhard Kohles, the young explorer in Africa, who it was feared was lost, has been heard from in perfect health.
—The quantity of logs and sawed timber lying along the upper waters of the Delaware is said to be the largest since the winter of 1873.
—Representative Newberry, of Michigan, is said to be the wealthiest man in Congress. He had an income last year of \$250,000.
—Mr. Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain), who is now in Paris, will re-leave for Hartford, Conn., on the 15th inst.
—There are over 47,000 Sunday-schools in the United States, with an aggregate attendance of 3,000,000 children.
—Mr. W. W. Corcoran will purchase from Mr. F. Webster the portraits of Daniel Webster and Lord Ashburton, which were saved from the Marshfield fire.
—The Germans, Italians, and French are preparing for extensive exhibits at the Mexican Exhibition of 1880, with a view of intercepting the growing trade between the United States and Mexico.
—Peas and beans contain nearly double the flesh-forming matters that are found in wheat, corn, oats or barley, but far less starchy and heat-giving matters, or fat.
—Cream is composed of 2.7 per cent. flesh-forming matter, 28.7 per cent. fatty matter, 2.8 per cent. lactic matter, and 65.8 per cent. water.
—The Annual business meeting of the American Bible Society was held in New York on May 8. The sixty-third anniversary was held in the evening.
—In 1856 the translation of the Bible into the Russian language was begun. It was finished in 1877, and last year the first edition of 24,000 copies was exhausted.
—The Empress of Austria has expended \$100,000 on the house and stables of Lord Langford's Summerhill, near Dublin, Ireland, which she has leased for next year.
—In twenty years the United States has increased 133,000,000 bushels in its production of wheat; while the value of its agricultural products has nearly upon farms has increased \$183,000,000, and its live stock \$1,081,000,000.
—In McDuffie, Ga., there was dug up a few days ago a sweet potato, which when small had grown through a Texas Legislature, physicians not permanently settled in the State, each upon farms has increased \$183,000,000, and its live stock \$1,081,000,000.
—Mary Paul, a granddaughter of the famous painter, John Paul Jones, lately died in Scotland at the age of seventy-nine. Her ancestor's name was really John Paul—when he entered the privateering business he added the "Jones."
—The Union Pacific Railroad sold during the first four months of this year 108,118 acres of land at an average of 93 cents per acre. The Kansas Pacific, 127,212 acres at an average of \$3.38, and the Denver Pacific, 18,600 acres at an average of \$4.37 per acre.
—The receipts of flour at Chicago during the year 1878 amounted to 3,120,000 barrels. This is unprecedented in its history. The same may be said of wheat and corn. Of the former 3,000,000 bushels were received, and of the latter 63,000,000.
—Illinois has 800,000 milch cows.
—To properly care for them and their products requires the labor of 40,000 men and 6,000 horses; while they demand for their subsistence the use of over 3,000,000 acres of land. Their total money value is placed at \$124,000,000.
—In 1809 Boston contained only 753 acres of solid land. To-day it covers 20,160 acres. The population then was 23,000; now it is 669,000, and 625,000 people live within a circle of twelve miles from the City Hall. The total valuation has increased from \$15,000,000 to \$60,000,000.
—Queen Victoria travels in a railway carriage which cost \$30,000. A correspondent of The Chicago Times says that its windows are shaded with green silk curtains, trimmed with costly plaited lace; its upholstery is covered with cream-colored silk, embroidered with the royal arms and monogram. In purple and gold, and a carpet, which cost over \$500, covers the floor.
—The number of children in San Francisco between the ages of five and seventeen is 25,000. There are 40,000 negroes and four Indians. "The number under five years, of all classes, is 80,288, of whom 1305 are Mongolians. Of the white children of school age, who have not attended any school during the past year, there are 18,417. The returns do not mention any Mongolian children as having attended any school.
—John C. Hamilton, a St. Louis book-smith, is said to have the keys of the old French Bastille. When the mob tore the Bastille, the governor, to pieces, one of the revolutionists, Lechastel by name, secured the keys. They were kept in the Lechastel family until 1852, when Antoine Lechastel emigrated to this country. Hamilton secured them from Lechastel, the latter being in need of money. There are five keys in the bunch. The largest one is rusty, though the marks of the armor plating can be seen. The smallest, eight inches long, is made of fine steel.
—At a meeting of the Trustees of the New York and Brooklyn Bridge held in New York, President Murphy stated that the total cash expenditures up to August 1, 1878, were \$9,718,722.91, and the total amount of expenditures and charges given way to becomes irremediable. It is on this fact that the bank chiefly stands. If a visitor loses, he leaves the table and their end of him. If he gains, he always returns and plays till he has lost everything.
—The Prince Imperial has reached Zululand and taken the field with the relief column.