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The Luck of Roaring Camp BRET HARTE

(Gladstone, the preimer of Engiand, is suid to have read this story ten times over during his lifetime. It is considered one of the greatest short stories ever written.)

There was commotion in Roaring Camp. It could not have been a fight, for in 1850 that was not novel enough to have called together the entire settlement. The ditches and claims were not only descried, but Tuttle's grocery" had contributed its mamblers, who, it will be remembered, calmly continued their game the day that French Pete and Kanaka Joe shot each other to death over the bar in the front room. The whole camp was collected before a rude cabin on the cute of a of the clearing. Conwas contected before a rule cash on the outer edge of the clearing. Con-versation was carried on in a low tone, but the name of a woman was fre-quently repeated. It was a name fa-miliar enough in the camp—"Chero-kee Sal."

Perhaps the loss said of her the bet-ter. She was a coarse, and, it is to be feared, a very sinful woman. But at that time she was the only woman in Roaring Camp, and was just then lying in sore extremity, when she most needed the ministration of her own sex. Dissolute, abandoned, and irre-claimable she was yet suffering a sex. Dissolute, abandoned, and irre-claimable, she was yet suffering a martyrdom hard enough to bear even when velled by sympathizing woman-hood, but now terrible in her loneli-ness. The primal curse had come to her in that original isolation which must have made the punishment of the first transgression so dreadful. It was, perhaps, part of the explation of her sin, that, at a moment when she most lacked her sex's intuitive tenher sufferings. Sandy Tipton thought it was "rough on Sal," and, in the mattern the set of the set of the spectators were, I think, touched by the sufferings. Sandy Tipton thought it was "rough on Sal," and, in the mattern latter of the condition for a

that anybody had been introduced at initio. Hence the excitement. "You go in there, Stampy," said 4, prominent clizen known as "Ken-tuck," addressing one of the loungers. "Go in there, and see what you kin do. You've had experience in them

do. Y things. Perhaps there was a fitness in the Perhaps there was a fitness in the selection. Stumpy, in other climes, had been the puntative head of two families: In fact, it was owing to some legal informality in these pro-ceedings that Roaring Camp—a city of refuge—was indebted to his com-pany. The crowd approved the choice, and Stumpy was wise enough to bow to the majority. The door closed on the extempore surgeon and midwife, and Roaring Camp sat down midwife, and Roaring Camp sat down outside, smoked its pipe, and awaited the issue.

and most courageous man was source-ly over five feet in height, with a soft volce and an emberrasse, timid manner. The term "roughs" applied one eye.

culine associates. Yet a few of the spectators were, I think, touched by her sufferings. Sandy Tipton thought it was "rough on Sal." and, in the contemplation of her condition, for a moment rose superior to the fact that he had an ace and two bowers in his sheeve. It will be seen, also, that the situa-tion was novel. Deaths were by no means uncommon in Roaring Camp, but a birth was a new thing. People had been dismissed from camp effec-tively, finally, and with no possibility of return; but this was the first time

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artificial hair no GOINGI GOINGH GONEIII matter how cost-ly, ever has the snap and luster nor can it be made to look as pretty and at-

pretty and at-tractive as natural hair. Most ladies would resent any impu-tation of personal carelesaness and neglect. And yet very many permit their natural hair to become so dull, brittle and lusterless that it looks no better than that bought at the store. Within the supersonal carelesaness are the store. Within the supersonal carelesaness are the store. Within the supersonal carelesaness and the store are store as the store. Within the supersonal carelesaness are the store are store as the store. Multiple store are store as the store are store are store as the store are s

phylactic. On account of its astonishing merit and its delightful and exquisiteodor, Her-

picide finds users

All this is as unfortunate as it is

dagrees the natural levity of Roaring Camp returned. Bets were freely of fouring Camp returned. Bets were freely of fored and taken regarding the result. Three to five that "Sal would get through with it"; even, that the child would survive; side bets as to the sex and complexion of the coming stranger. In the midst of an excited discussion of the section discussion an exclumation canne from those nearest the door, and the camp stopped to listen. Above the swaying and moaning of the pines, the swift rush of the river, and the crackling of the fire, rose a sharp, cucrulous or and the river and the crackling

The camp rose to its feet as one man! It was proposed to explode a barrel of gunpowder, but, in consid-eration of the situation of the moth-er, better counsels provailed, and only the issue. The assemblage numbered about a hundred men. One or two of these some were criminal, and all were reckless. Physically, they exhibited no indication of their past fives and character. The greatest scamp had a Raphael face, with a profusion of blond hair; Oakhursi, a gamöler, had the meiancholy air and intellectual abstraction of a Hamlet; the coolest and most courageous man was scarce-by once the face in height, with a soft "Can be live now," was asked of Stumpy. The answer was doubtful, "The only other being of Cherokee Sal's sex and maternal condition in the settlement was an ass. There was manner. The term "roughs" applied to them was a distinction rather than a definition. Perhaps in the minor details of fingers, toes, ears, etc., the camp may have been deficient, but these slight omissions did not detract from their aggregate force. The strongest man had but three fingers on his right hand; the best shot but one e?e.

When these details were completed, which exhausted another hour, the door was opened, and the anxious door was opened, and the anxious crowd of men who had already form-ed themselves into a queue, emisered in single file. Beside the low bunk or shelf, on which the figure of the mother was starkly outlined below the blankets stood a pine table. On this table a candle-box was placed, and within it, swathed in staring red flan-nel, lay the last arrival at Roaring Camp. Beside the candle-box was Camp. Beside the candie-box was placed a hat. Its use was soon indi-cated. "Gentlemen," said Stumpy, cated. "Gentlemen," said Stumpy, with a singular mixture of authority and ex officio complacency—"Gentle-men will please pass in at the front door, round the table, and out at the back door. Them as wishes to con-tribute anything toward the orphan will find a hat handy." The first man entered with his hat on; he uncover-ed, however, as he looked about him, and so unconsciously, set an example and so, unconsciously, set an example to the next. In such communities good and had actions are catching. good and bad actions are catching. As the procession filed in, comments were audible—criticisms addressed, perhaps, rather to Stumpy. in the character of showman—"Is that him?" "mighty small specimen"; "hasn't mor'n got the color"; "ain't bigger nor a derringer." The contri-Lutions were as characteristic: A si-ver tobacco box; a doubloon; a navy revolver, silevr mounted, a goid specirevolver, silevr mounted, a gold speci-men; a very beautifully embioidered laivs handkerchief (frug Oakhuret, the gambler); a diamond breastpin, a diamond ring (suggested by the pin, with the remark from the giver that om of he "saw that pin and went two dia-monds better"); a slung shot; a Bible (contributer not despecial); a golden spur; a silver teaspeon (the initials, spur: a silver teaspoon (the initials, I regret to say, were not the giver's): a pair of surgeon's shears; a lancet; a Bank of England note for five pounds, and about \$200 in loose go:1 and silver coin. During these pro-ceedings Stumpy maintained a silerce as impassive as the dead on his left, a gravity as insertiable as that of the newly born on his right. Only one incident occurred to break the mo-notony of the curious procession. As Kentuck bent over the candle-box half curiously, the child turned, and half curiously, the child turned, and in a spasm of pain, caucht at his groping finger, and held it fast for a moment. Kentuck looked fooligh and embarrassed. Something like a blush fried to assert itself in his weather-beaten check. "The d-d little cuss!" be said, as he extricated his finger, with, perhaps, more tenderness and with, care than he might have been deemed capable of showing. He held that linger a little apart from its fellows as he went out, and examined it curiously. The examination provoked the same orginal remark in regard to the child. In fact, he seemed to enjoy repeating it. "He rastled with my finger," he remarked to Tipton, hold-ing up the member, "the d-d little child. It was 4 o'clock before the camp sought repose. A light burnt in the cabin where the watchers sat, for cabin where the watchers sat, for stumpy did not go to bed that night. Nor did Kentuck. He drank quite freely, and rolated with great gusto his experience, invarially ending with his characteristic condemnation of the newcomer. It seemed to relieve him newconter. It seemed to refleve nim of any unjust implication of senti-ment, and Kentuck had the weakness of the nobler sex. When everybody else had gone to bed, he walked down to the river, and whistled reflectingly. Then he walked up the guich, past the action still whistling with demonthe cabin, still whistling with demon-strative unconcern. At a large red-wood tree he paused and retraced his steps, and again passed the cabin. Halfway down to the river's bank he again paused, and then returned and again paused, and then returned and knocked at the door. It was opened by Stumpy. "How goes it?" said Kentuck, looking past Stumpy toward the candle-box. "All screne," replied Stumpy. "Anything up?" "Nothing." There was a pause and embarrasing one—Stumpy still holding the door. Then Kentuck had resource to his

the camp's regeneration. Stumpy advanced nothing. Perhaps he felt a certain delicacy in interfer-ing with the selection of a possible successor in office. But when questioned, he averred stoutly that he and "Jinny"-the mammal before alluded to-could manage to rear the child. to—could manage to rear the child. There was something original, inde-pendent, and hereic about the plan that pleased the camp. Stumpy was retained. Certain articles were sent for to Sacramento. "Mind," said the treasurer, as he pressed a bag of gold dust into the expressman's hand, "the best lint can be sot—lace you kept scrupulously clean and white-washed. Then it was boarded, cloth-ed, and papered. The rosswood cradle -packed eighty miles by mule-had, in Stumpy's way of putting W, "sorter killed the rest of the furniture." So the rehabilitation of the cabin became "the best that can be got-lace, you know, and filigree-work and frills-d-m the cost!" a necessity. The men who were in Strange to say, the child thrived. the habit of lounging in at Stumpy's o see "how The Luck got on seemod to appreciate the change, and, in selfdefense, the rival establishment of "Tuttle's grocery" bestirred .'self, bal defe imported a carpet and mirrors. The reflections of the latter on the appear-ance of Roaring Camp tended to produce stricter habits of personal cleanliness Again, Stumpy imposed a kind of quarantine upon those who aspired to the honor and privilege of holding "The Luck." It was a cruel mortification to Kentuck-who, in the carelessness of a large nature and tho habits of frontier life, had begun '> regard all gurments as a second cuti-ole, which, like a snake's, only the necessity of giving him a name became aparent. He had generally southed this privilege from certain been known as "the kid, "Stumpy's thereafter appeared regularly every ovcal powers), and even by Kentuck's afternoon in a clean were moral and social sanitary laws neglected. "Tommy," who was sup-posed to spend his whole existence in a persistent attempt to repose, must not be disturbed by noise. The shout-ing and yelling which had gained the camp its infelicitous title were not permitted within hearing distance of Stumpy's. The men conversed in whispers, or smoked with Indian gravity. Profanity was tacitly given up in these sacred precincts, and through up in out the camp a popular form of expletive, known as "D-n the luck: and "Curse the luck!" was abandoned as having a new personal bearing. Vocal music was not interdicted, being supposed to have a soothing, tranquillizing quanty, and one song, sung by "Man-o'-War Jack," an English saflor, from her majestey's Australian colonies, was quite popular as a lullaby. It was a lugubrious recital of the exploits of "the Arethusa, Seven-ty-four," in a muffled minor, ending with a prolonged dying fall at the The next day Cherokee Sal had such the greatest facetousness. The exploits of "the Arethusa, Several of to promise the greatest facetousness. This ingenious satirist had spent two burden of each verse, "On b-o-o-ard days in proparing a burlesque of the church services, with pointed local al-to see Jack holding The Luck, rocking to adopt it was peculiar rocking of Jack or the length of his song-it contained ninety stan-zas, and was continued with conscientious deliberation to the bitter end-the lullaby generally had the desired effect. At such times the men would lie at full length under the trees, in the soft summer twilight, smoking their pipes and drinking in the melodious utterances. An indistinct idea that this was pastoral nappiness perthat this was pastoral happiness per-valed the comp. "This 'ere kind o' think," said the Cockney Simmons, meditatively reclining on his eluow, "Is 'evingly." It reminded him of Concernich suggestion met with flerce and unani-mous opposition. It was evident that no plan which entailed parting from heir new acquisition would for a mo-ment be entertained. "Besides," said Tom Ryder, "them featows at Red Dog would swap it, and ring in some-body else on us." A disbelief in the homesty of other camps prevailed at Roaring Camp as in other places. The introduction of a female nurse in the camp also met with objection. It was argued that no decent woman could be prevailed to accept Roaring Camp as her home, and the speaker refarely in the camp. The form of christening was perhaps even more fudicrous than the ratirist had con-ceived; but, strangely enough, nobody saw it and nobody hughed. "Tom-that there were beauty and signif-enve" was christened as seriously as he cance in these triffes, which they had

power.

mechanical masterpiece.

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would have been under a Christian roof, and cried and was comforted in a. orthodox fashion. And so the work of regeneration bezza in Roaring Camp. Aimost im-perceptibly a change came over the settlement. The cabin assigned to "Tommy Luck"—or "The Luck," as he was more frequently called—first showed signs of improvement. It was kept scrupulously clean and white-

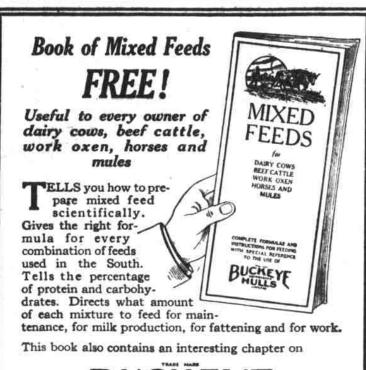
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hillsides, tearing down giant trees a scattering its drift and debris along the plain. Red Dog had been twice under water, and Roaring Camp had been torewarned. "Water put the gold into them guiches." said Stumpy. "It's been here once and will be here again!" And that night the North Fork suddenly leaped over its banks, and swept up the triangular walley of and swept up the triangular valley of

a dan a dan a dan a da

"would do for Tommy." Surrounded by playthings such as never child out of fairyland had before, it is to be hoped that Tommy was content. He appeared to be securely happy albeit there was an infantine gravity about him, a contemplative light in his round gray eyes that sometimes work-ried Stumpy. He was always tract-able and quiet, and it is recorded that once. having crept beyond his "oor-Higher up the gulch they found the body of its unlucky owner; but the pride, the hope, the joy, the Luck, of Roaring Camp had disappeared, They were returning with sad hearts, when a shout from the bank recauld them. It was a relief boat from down the It was a relief boat from down the siver. They had picked up, they said, a man and an infant, nearly exhaust-ed, about two miles below. Did any-body know them, and did they belong here? It needed but a glance to show them Kentuck lying there, cruelly crushed and bruised, but still holding the Luck of Roaring Camp in his arms. As they bent over the strangely as-sorted pair, they saw that the child was cold and pulseless. "He is dead," said one. Kentuck opened his eyes. "Dead?" he repeated feebly. "Yes, my man, and you are dying, too." A smille ht the eyes of the expiring Ken-tuck- "Dying," he repeated, "he's a taking me with 'him—tell the boys I've got the Luck with me now"; and the strong man, clinging to the frail babe as a drowning man is said to cling to a straw, drifted away into the shadowy river that flows forever to the unknown sta.

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Then Kentuck had recourse to his finger, which he held up to Stumpy. "Rastled with it—the d—d little cuss." he said, and retired. The next day Cherokee Sal had such rude sepulture as Roaring Camp afforded After her hody had been fant. A resolution to adopt it was unanimous and enthusinstic. But an animated discussion in regard to the manner and feasibility of providing deposited liefore a mock altar. Stumfor its wants at once sprung up. It was remarkable that the argument partook of none of those fierce peranalities with which discussions were in a second the second seco

the child to like bog a distance of forty nilles where female attention could be procurred. But the unlucky suggestion met with fleres and unani-mous opposition. It was evident that to plan which entailed parting from their new accountition would for a mon-

Camp as her home, and the speaker urged that "they didn't want any more of the other kind." This un-kind allusion to the defunct mother. harsh as it may seem, was the first anasm of propriety-the unst avon-

naps ti invigorating c the mountain camp was compensation for material deficiencies. Nature took the founding to her broader breast. In that rare atmosphere of the Sterra foothlis-that air pungent with balsamic odor, that ethereal cordial at once bracing and exhibit ating-he may have found food and nourishment, or a subtle chemistry that transmuted asses' milk to lime and phosphorus. Stumpy inclined to the belief that it was the latter and good nursing. "Me and that ass," he would say, "has been rather and mother to bird! Deep" men", he would add him! Don't you," he would add, apostrophizing the helpless bundle before him, "never go back on us."

endearing diminutive of "the d-d lit-tle cuss." But these were felt to be tle cuss." vague and unsatisfactory, and were at last dismissed under another in-fluence. Gamblers and adventurers are generally superstitious, and Oakhurst one day declared that the baby had brought "the luck' to Roaring Camp. It was certain that of late Camp. It was certain that of late they had been successful. "Luck" was the name agreed upon, with the pre-fix of Tommy for greater convenience. No allusion was made to the mother, and the father was unknown. "It's better," said the philosophical Oak-hurst, "to take a fresh deal all round. Call him Luck, and start him fair." A day was accordingly set apart for the christening. What was meant by this ceremony the reader may impaine who has already math-No allusion was made to the mother, may imagine, who has already gath-ered some idea of the reckless irreverence of Roaring Camp. The mas-ter of ceremonies was one "Boston," a noted wag, and the occasion seemed stepp ind before the expectant it ain't my style to spoil " said the little man, stout-the gaces around him, "but lv, eving it strikes it strikes me that this thing ain't ex-actly on the squar. It's playing it pretty low down on thei yer baby to ring in fun on him that he ain't going to understand. And of there's going and. And ef there's going godfathers round. I'd like

once, having crept beyond his 'oor ral"—a hedge of tessalated pine-boughs, which surrounded his bed— he dropped over the bank on his head in the soft earth, and remained with his mottled legs in the air in that po-sition for at least five minutes with unflinching gravity. He was extri-cated without a murmur. I hesitate to record the many other instances of his segacity, which rest, unfor-tunately, upon the statements of pre-judiced friends. Some of them were not without a tinge of superstition. "I crep' up the bank just now," said Kentuck one day, in a breathless state of excitement, "and dern my skin if he wasn't a talking to a jay-bird as was a sittin' on his lap. There they was, just as free and sociable as anything you please, a jawin' at each oth-er just like two cherry-bums." How-belt, whether creeping over the pineboughs or lying laxily on his back blinking at the leaves above him, to him the birds sang, the squirreds chattered, and the flowers bloomed. Na. ture was his nurse and playfellow. For him she would let slip between the leaves golden shafts of sunlight that fell just within his group; she w send wandering breezes to visit with the balm of bay and resi would and resinous gums; to him the tall red-woods nodded familiarly and sleepily, the bumble bees buzzed, and the rooks cawed a slumbrous accompaniment. Such was the golden summer oaring Camp. They were "fl g Camp. They were "flush-and the Luck was with them Roaring times' The claims had yielded enormously The camp was jealous of its privi-leges and looked suspiciously on strangers. No encouragement WB given to immigration, and, to make their seclusion more perfect, the land on either side of the mountain wal that surrounded the camp they duly This, and a reputation pre-empted. for singular proficiency with the re-volver, kept the reserve of Roaring Camp inviolate. The expressman-their only connecting nk with the wonderful stories of the camp. He would say, "They've a street up there

in 'Roaring that would lay over any street in Red Dog. They've got v and flowers round their houses, They've got vines they wash themselves twice a day But they're mighty rough on strang-ers, and they worship an Ingin baby."

With the prosperity of the camp came a desire for further improvement. It was proposed to build : hotel in the following spring, and to invite one or two decent families to reside there for the sake of "The Luck"-who might perhaps profit by female companionship. The sacrifice uck". that this concession to the sex these men, who were flercely skeptical in regard to its general virtue and usefulness, can only be accounted for by their affection for Tommy A few still held out. But the resolve, could not be carried into effect for three months, and the minority meekly yielded in the hope that something might turn up to prevent it. And it did.

The winter of 1851 will long be re-

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