

# A Tragedy of the Plains

How Retribution Was Meted Out To an Indian Murderer

**A** TERRIBLE story of savage superstition, murder and retribution has just come to light among the Mojave Indians along the Colorado river, in Arizona. Love and jealousy were the inciting forces of the tragedy.

The story had its beginning at Hesperia, Cal., and its sequel in the Granite Wash mountains, Arizona. Hesperia is a small settlement on the line of the Santa Fe railroad in the San Bernardino mountains.

In the Hesperia camp was a big Indian named George Bruce. How he came by the name no one seems to know. Bruce took to wife an Indian girl known as Anita. Anita had a sister, Maria Victoria, who came to live with the newly wedded couple. In the course of time Anita became violently jealous of her husband's attentions to Maria Victoria. She set about for means to put her out of the way. She told Bruce that Maria Victoria was a witch and that if she were not put out of the way death and misfortune would come to the entire camp and to himself in particular.

For a long time, it has since been learned, Bruce resisted the insidious and murderous advice of his wife. Anita was persistent, however, and did not neglect to charge every ill that befell an inhabitant of the little camp to the witchery of Maria Victoria. Bruce gave way finally before the persistence of his wife and agreed to put an end to Maria Victoria in the manner of dealing with witches—namely, by strangling her.

Anita played upon the superstitions fear not alone of her husband, but of the entire camp, and convinced them all that Maria Victoria, her sister, was a witch. One day in April last the Indians assembled at a chosen spot far up in the San Bernardino mountains, the condemned but unsuspecting girl among them. A circle was formed and a sort of preliminary ceremonial carried out. Maria Victoria was then brought into the center of the circle and promptly condemned by two Indians sitting as judges in the case. Bruce was selected as the executioner. He stepped forward with a rope and placed the noose around the girl's neck. Slowly he drew the coil about her throat and deliberately choked her to death. Her struggles are described as terrible, but not an Indian among all the spectators raised hand or voice in protest against the murder.

News of the savage execution reached the white men of Hesperia, and the coroner at San Bernardino, thirty miles away, was notified. His investigation developed the particulars already related. Bruce, who had made no effort to escape, was promptly arrested. In charge of a constable he was taken to the railroad station at Hesperia. While awaiting the arrival of the train Bruce slipped out of the station room and escaped into the darkness.

This was in the latter part of last May. The sequel to the story has just reached Los Angeles.

When Bruce escaped across the Colorado river into Yuma county, he plunged into the mountains and joined a camp of Mojave Indians in the Granite Wash range. These Indians knew

turn cast an evil spell upon the springs and caused them to dry up. A council was held, and it was quickly decided to get rid of the hoodoo. The men of the camp assembled at the California Indians had done for the trial of Maria Victoria. A circle was formed, and the ceremony of trial and condemnation was carried out much after the manner of the one that preceded Maria Victoria's execution. Bruce was brought forward and a rope placed around his neck, as he had placed one around the neck of his victim. But here the similarity of the execution ended.

An Indian mounted upon a pony rode within the circle and tied the other end of the rope around the pomel of his saddle. Slowly he rode out of camp and into a wide patch of sand, cactuses and sagebrush. Bruce trotting along behind him. Suddenly the rider wheeled about, put spurs to his pony and jerked the doomed man off his feet. Lashing the pony into a furious pace, Bruce was dragged back and forth through the cactus patch and finally hauled into camp over the rock strewn trail. Here the squaws set upon the now lifeless body and with long switches cut the shapeless remains of the victim to pieces.

## How a Maine Mill Came to Be Haunted

Such distinction as possessing a haunted mill carries with it belongs to the village of Hollis, Me. The mill in question had lain idle for many years, when a stranger named John Livingstone leased it, according to the chron-



THE MILLER STRUCK AT THE FIGURE.

icles of the occult. It stood in the midst of a heavily wooded piece of timber beside a small stream which furnished access to his room through the intervening door. Waiting till I heard her snore, I stealthily gathered up my clothes and, crawling to the door, unlocked it and went out. Just as I did so the night watchman came along and, seeing me stealing out of a room un-derneath, took me in charge. However, I succeeded in getting him to let me prove the story I told him, and after dressing I went downstairs with him. The room I had slept in was found to be next to Mr. Brown's, and, calling for the police, we made the raid.

The woman told a very straight story, which of course convinced no one, and she was ordered to dress and come along, but before we left the hotel the proprietor was called up and identified her as one of the most respectable patrons of the house. Then the bills were examined and found to be no more than necessary for her traveling expenses. The result was that she was permitted to go back to bed after receiving a humble apology, and I was taken to the station and locked up.

Words cannot describe the horror of that night in a cell. A drunken prisoner was brought in fighting, a woman screaming. While these people were making night hideous without my cell the rats were scurrying about within. Fortunately I had not been imprisoned till 2 o'clock in the morning, so the night was short, and when brought up for examination in the morning I found no difficulty in proving my identity as a prominent real estate man and was discharged with a warning from the justice to stick to my own trade and let detective work alone.

The next day a newspaper gave the case of Mr. Edward A. Mills, arrested for putting up a job to rob a prominent lady of a neighboring city, and berated the justice for accepting his "gamy story." Of course the item was seen by many of my acquaintances, with great detriment to my reputation and my business, while my intimate friends have since bounded me with their jeers as to my episode in the detective business.

It was afterward learned that the former owner of the mill had been swindled out of his property a short time before his death, and it was popularly believed that he revisited the scene of his earthly activity at night and took delight in tormenting the leasee.

## THE MAN WHO HAS MY NAME

[Original.]  
I am a real estate agent. In the city in which I live is a man of the same name. My name is Edward Arthur Mills. The other fellow's name is Edward Allen Mills. He is a disreputable character, always getting into trouble, and, as we are both known as E. A. Mills, I, being the better known, usually get the credit for his misdeeds. His father many years ago was prominent and was presented with a silver service. The son pawned it, and it was soon reported that my father's testimonial was to be seen in the window of a pawnshop. This alone cost me hosts of friends. The only business Mr. Edward Allen Mills followed was that of detective, at which he was very expert. Being dishonest himself, he knew how to track dishonesty.

One afternoon a messenger came into my office with a note for E. A. Mills, which I opened. It read:  
Call at once at the Bingley hotel.

P. Y. BROWN.  
I knew the man to be a large real estate operator in a neighboring city and hoped for an important order. Going to the hotel, I found Mr. Brown, who, upon learning that I was Mr. Mills, told me that during the preceding night his room had been entered and he had been robbed of \$5,000 in bills which he had with him to make a tender for a piece of property he claimed to have purchased, the owner asserting that it had not been sold.

Mr. Brown was a steady talker who would permit of no interruption and insisted on giving me all the facts before I could get in a word. By that time I concluded to let him remain for a while in ignorance of my true vocation, trusting that his mistake might turn out to be of some advantage to me. It was near 6 o'clock when I called, and he invited me to go down to dinner with him, when he would have plenty of time to give me the facts. It was plain to me that I was supposed to be Mills the detective instead of Mills the real estate dealer. I resolved to take advantage of the mistake to get some satisfaction for the damage done me by Mr. Mills' unenviable reputation by eating a good dinner meant for him.

Mr. Brown was an epicure and set before me a feast with plenty of wine. The consequence was that before we had finished I had drunk my share of two bottles of champagne. Wine makes me stupid and sleepy, and I asked my host's permission to go up to his room and lie down. He told me to do so and said he would be up presently himself. He gave me his key, which I inserted in the door, but found that it had not been locked. I went in, felt my way in the dark to one of two beds in the room and, being somewhat "absentminded," took off my clothes and went to bed.

Suddenly I was awakened by some one in the room. I expected to see Mr. Brown light the gas, but instead it was lighted by a woman. Her back being turned to me, I had time to slip out of and under the bed. From my hiding place I saw the woman take out a large bundle of bills, count them and place them under her pillow. Then she went to a door leading to an adjoining room, turned the knob stealthily and listened. Finally she turned out the gas and got into the other bed, which, fortunately for me, was farthest from the door.

It was plain to me that I had got into the wrong room, which, I suspected, was the one next to Mr. Brown's. If so, this woman was the thief and had obtained access to his room through the intervening door. Waiting till I heard her snore, I stealthily gathered up my clothes and, crawling to the door, unlocked it and went out. Just as I did so the night watchman came along and, seeing me stealing out of a room underneath, took me in charge. However, I succeeded in getting him to let me prove the story I told him, and after dressing I went downstairs with him. The room I had slept in was found to be next to Mr. Brown's, and, calling for the police, we made the raid.

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PHILIP TOWNE ANDERSON.

## A REAL HEROINE

[Original.]  
If the heroine of a story could be transformed into a real person, her life would have in it an important element of happiness. Such cases, vice versa, have occurred—that is, a woman who has shown herself heroic has lived to an old age in the enjoyment of her honors.

During the American Revolution a small palisade fort erected on the site of the present city of Wheeling was the center of a small settlement. The dwelling of Colonel Ebenezer Lane stood about 200 feet from the palisade, and in it were kept many of the supplies of the fort. One morning—it was Sept. 1, 1777—a man rode up to the place, threw himself from his horse and excitedly announced that one Simon Girty, with a large number of savages, was advancing to its capture. This man Girty was descended from the lowest order of people, his father having been an outlaw and his mother a disgrace to her sex. Simon had inherited the worst proclivities of both. Captured by the Indians when a boy, he had become one of them, and their savage practices were as natural to him as if he had been born an Indian. Such was the man who was advancing at the head of several hundred red men to murder the men, women and children within the palisade. The place was made ready for defense, and Colonel Lane's house, occupying a favorable position for resistance, was made a part of the inclosure to be defended. There were but a dozen men to protect the women and children who were huddled together in the palisade, expecting the worst possible fate.

The party came up, and Girty demanded the surrender of the fort, which was of course refused. Then commenced a fire from besieged and besiegers which was kept up till night, when it ceased. At midnight the negro cook Sam, seeing a flicker of light through a crevice in the palisade, looked for the cause and saw an Indian outside attempting to fire the palisade. Sam shot the man dead and averted the danger.

The next morning the attack was renewed with a hollow log bound with chains for a cannon, but the log burst at the first discharge and killed several of the besiegers. Enraged at the failure, Girty attempted to carry the fort by storm, but the rifles within were true, and he lost many men without accomplishing his object.

It was now discovered that the supply of powder in the fort was about exhausted. There was a keg in the Lane house, but to procure it some one must go nearly 200 feet and return with it exposed to the fire of the Indians. The commander called for a volunteer to make the attempt, an attempt that would almost surely result in death. Every man in the fort volunteered.

Among the women was a delicate girl, Elizabeth Lane—she was nicknamed Patty—who had recently returned from school in Philadelphia. From the refining influences of a school in what was then the first city in the land she had been transported to a wilderness and now was confronted with savage warfare. There is but one position in which we can imagine such a girl under such circumstances, and that is pale and trembling, eagerly scrutinizing the expressions of those defending her to learn if there is any hope. Patty Lane was the very counterpart of this. She stepped forward as a volunteer, a volunteer to run a gauntlet of bullets that would bring almost certain death. Not only did she volunteer, but pleaded to be allowed to go, arguing that the men were all needed for the defense of the lives of the women and children; that not a man's life should be risked in this way, but the life of a woman, who was not fit for harder service. If she were killed, she would not be missed.

It was not only the offer that was surprising, but the Spartan arguments by which it was supported. The men all knew that they were true. Reluctantly the commander gave his consent. Patty, kneeling for a moment in prayer, arose and, saluting forth, with the fleetness of a fawn cleared the space between the fort and the house before the savages noticed her or had recovered from their surprise. Not a shot was fired at her. Placing the powder in a tablecloth and tying it about her waist, she started on her return trip.

This return was a very different matter from the going. The savages had been warned and were on the alert. Besides, the bundle she carried was sure evidence that she was transporting some article contraband of war. Patty ran as rapidly as she could impeded by her burden. Scarcely had she started when a bullet sang by her, then another and another. It was like shooting a bird on the wing. The few seconds during which she was exposed to fire were terribly long to those who were watching her from the fort. There was every chance that she would not make the goal. Half, three-quarters, seven-eighths of the distance was covered, yet she ran. Was she struck and ready to fall the moment she arrived, or was she still unscathed? There was no time to answer, for with the fleetness of a bird she covered the last dozen yards and landed her precious burden behind the palisades.

Then it was discovered that not a bullet had touched her.

Armed with the ammunition she brought, the whites fought on till succor arrived, and the lives of all were saved.

Patty Lane passed a lifetime as a heroine. She lived to be a very old woman in her home on the banks of the Ohio river near the place where she had shown the mettle there was in her and adored by all who knew her.

## Showing Age.

Some people begin to show age before the meridian of life is reached, or they have lived out half their days. They are prematurely gray, haggard and sickly, and seldom free from an ache or pain of some description.

Cold feet, chilly sensations, stiffness in muscles and joints, weak stomach and poor digestion, lack of energy, and drowsiness, nervousness, etc., show that old age has been reached ahead of time. Bad blood and weak circulation more often produce these miserable feelings and signs of decay than anything else. An inherited taint or poison of some description is at work in the system, causing stagnation and a general unhealthy condition of the blood; and this, and not the weight of years, is dragging you down to an untimely old age and making life a protracted torture.

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## NOTICE.

Notice is hereby given to all persons concerned that an application will be made by the Board of Commissioners of Lenoir county, N. C., at the expiration of thirty days from the publication of this notice in The Kinston Free Press to the General Assembly of North Carolina, at its present session, to enact a special act permitting and empowering the said Board of Commissioners to levy a special tax on all property and polls taxable under the law within the county of Lenoir, N. C., for the purpose of repairing the court house and jail, to repair public bridges of the county, to build a public bridge across Neuse river below Kinston and to purchase lands for the purpose of locating a poor house and building a poor house.

January 6th, 1903.  
DR. HENRY TULL,  
Chairman.  
W. D. SUGGS,  
Clerk of Board.

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