Cambria Freeman.

. McPIKE, Editor and Publisher.

"HE IS A FREEMAN WHOM THE TRUTH MAKES FREE, AND ALL ARE SLAVES BESIDE."

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The Saddest Fate.

To touch a broken lute,
To strike a tangled string,
To strive with voices forever mute
The dear old songs to sing—
A sadder lot could any heart befall?
Dear child, never to sing at all.

To sigh for pleasures flown,
To sigh for withered flowers;
To count the blessings we have known,
Love with the vanished hours—
A sadder one could any heart befall?
Dear child, never to have known them all!

To dream of love and rest,
To know the dream has past,
To hear within an aching heart
Only a wild at last—
A sadder fate could any heart befall?
Dear child, never to have loved at all.

PERILOUS COMPACT.

[TWO STORIES THAT GOT MIXED IN THE FREEMAN LAST MONTH.]

say, Captain Jackson, that you received written instructions from owners by the last mail?"

, sir, very particular and specific regarding the cargo wanted for the ship Exporter."

I understand you aright, the best of silk and the finest grade of teas e wanted."

tly, Mr. Failing, but why do you Are you unable to load the ship with ired quality and grade of goods?"

'll see in good time, Jackson. But, have you any objection to my glance you written instructions?"

inly not; and if you are to furnish go, I think it advisable for you to ble understand what is wanted t I am allowed to receive."

keen, gray eyes of Mr. Failing were d keenly upon the weatherbeaten ence of the seaman for a moment, in a soft, insinuating tone, he

you will give me a boat, Jackson, I d my China boy ashore for a case Rheopolis. The weather is warm, champagne will not be disagreea-

e means; but it is a luxury we ces seldom have the opportunity of " replied the captain, with a sigh, ought of his far off wife and two

hampagne was soon sparkling in sses, and the merchant the sailor and his noble ship in a g bumper.

Exporter was a fine clipper engaged ina trade, owned by an opulent omitted their dollars by millions. p was commanded by Captain an experienced shipmaster, but d been compelled to accept the gents of the parsimonious owners Exporter.

n Jackson had been unfortunate, time he applied to the firm for ast he was in debt, with a wife ing looking to him for support. t in a condition to dictate terms, ed to remonstrate feebly at the salary offered for the amount of and responsibility he was expected and look after.

ng plenty of shipmasters for dollars per month," was the cold, reply. "We do not ask you to ac- you come to us; if you demur, will take your place."

with a heavy heart the poor fellow the articles, while the pale, suffer- of his wife rose up before him.

Exporter was lying off Shanghai for the valuable and special cargo had been ordered by mail.

merchant, Mr. Failing, was on and as has already been narrated, ghee comfort in the wide, spacious of the vessel.

after glass of champagne had been the fragrant perfume of choice filled the cabin, and poor Jackson generous vintage mounted to his for a time forgot his troubles.

after lay on the table before Fail- with heels perched on a project- ice of the cabin, smoked in silence, Jackson with a volubility entirely ral to him, poured into the ears ng the entire story of his wrongs.

are not half paid, that is certian, , and there is but little chance to dollar out of the main hatch. To you can do a little something with ocious, ship chandler, etc.; but after at does it amount to? I came out make a fortune, Jackson; honestly and thus far have no reason to com- But you are situated differently. are no opportunities, your life is away, the greater portion of it is suffering the elements at eighty per month—for what? that your may reap hundreds of thousands of from your talents. Is *that* honest, ght or just? No. And how will it You are past the meridian of life, say you are 'astern of the lighter.' shall speak plain, Jackson, too plain , but fill your glass, man it has mpty this half hour. As I said be- very day will bring you nearer to are, and the best years of your life away from your family whom you Even supposing that no accident oc- ecute the wrath of the firm that ost your position, in due course e you will be worn out, feeble and incapacitated by old age from retaining command. What will the merchant with his bags of gold, which you have made for him, care for you then? Will he take into consideration the fact that you have braved dangers and ransacked every clime for the articles of merchandise he required? No, he will never give it a thought, and the old shipmaster, the faithful but worn out servant will totter to the door of the sailor's snug harbor, and *beg* for charity and a roof over his grey head, unless indeed your wife and two girl babies can support you."

The merchant blew a long cloud of smoke from his lips as he ceased speaking, and eyed Jackson with a very peculiar look as that individual wiped the perspiration from his brow, which had been invoked by the artful picture protrayed by the eloquence of the sharp, shrewd merchant.

"Good God! Mr. Failing, I never looked upon it in that light; but I dare say you are right. But what can I do? The eighty dollars I get keeps my wife from starving."

"Exactly, and no more. Take another glass — that's right. Your good health. The Exporter is insured, isn't she?"

"Yes, to her full value."

"And you are to insure the cargo also."

"Certainly; my owners are always very particular about that."

"Humph! How would you like to pocket fifty thousand dollars, Jackson, and weather on your owners and the poorhouse, eh?"

"What a question to ask a man in *my* position!" and Jackson's head began to spin about as he listened to the artfully-worded sophistry of the tempter.

"We can make a good thing of it, and now is your opportunity. Your owners grind you down, now let them take the consequences, although they will not lose much, but the anticipated profit. I will furnish you the silk and tea, but instead of the best I'll give you the poorest. Don't jump, man; there's no harm done yet. The highest market price will be charged, and you shall have twenty-five thousand dollars to-night, or when you sign the regular articles of agreement as having received the stipulated quality and quantity. The other twenty-five thousand shall be paid when the Exporter goes to the bottom, and you return to Shanghai from the wreck. Not a word, man, but come ashore. We'll talk it all over at my office."

And linking his arm through Jackson's he assisted the shipmaster to leave the cabin and descend the side.

The next day the first lighter load of cargo for the Exporter arrived and both bale and box was rattled rapidly into her capacious hold. In less than two weeks' time the ship was ready for sea, and Jackson, who had spent the greater portion of his time on shore repaired on board.

Not until too late did the entangled seaman awake from the delusive dream into which he had been beguiled by the skillful Failing. The ship was loaded, the first half of the fifty thousand dollars had been paid, and Jackson, by the advice of the merchant, did not bank the amount, but negotiated for the value in diamonds, which he wore around his body.

It was too late to retreat; he had gone too far; and although his conscience troubled him sadly, still he made up his mind to carry out the fraud that had been commenced.

The Exporter sailed down the mighty Yangtse with a fair wind, which freshened as the good ship passed Woo Sung. Everybody on board was in high spirits at the idea of being homeward bound, with the exception of poor Jackson, who paced the deck in moody silence. He had solemnly sworn never to taste champagne again, and had firmly made up his mind not to revisit Shanghai, for he had learned to fear the influence which Failing exercised over him.

He kept to himself, avoided the society of his first mate, and spent most of his time in the seclusion of his cabin, brooding over the terrible secret which he carried in his bosom.

The character of the cargo preyed continually on his mind, and waking or sleeping, he was continually haunted by a nightmare, He grew nervous and impatient; so much so, that both officers and crew wondered at the sudden change that had come over the "old man."

When alone in the dead hour of the night, he would pour over his charts, and strive in vain to fix definitely upon some shoal or reef where he could safely carry out his intentions, and an involuntary curse would escape his lips as he felt the pressure of the belt he wore about his body, or the features of Failing, which would occasionally rise up before him.

Favored by fair weather, the fleet ship rapidly plowed her way down the China sea, and all hands congratulated themselves on a speedy termination of the voyage.

No opportunity had occurred to sacrifice the ship, for Jackson was determined not to hazard the life of any one on board, and, keeping well to the eastward, the high mountainous island of Borneo loomed up blue and picturesque above the horizon.

For two days the Exporter skirted along in sight of the island, and then a furious squall of mist and rain swept over the ship.

The black, lowering clouds appeared to envelop the mast-heads, and the zigzag sheets of vivid lightning darted through the heavens, only excelled in fury by the appalling peals of thunder which crashed unceasingly above them. The sea, lashed to fury, was enveloped in a feathery foam, and flew over the ship in blinding showers.

Groaning and creaking in every timber, the ship bowed before the gale, and, as all hands had been called to shorten sail, or cut away the tattered remnants of what had been blown away, Captain Jackson himself took the wheel, that the helmsman might lend a hand in aiding his struggling shipmates.

No human being can ever conceive the feelings which raged in the unfortunate shipmaster's breast that memorable night.

The roaring of the waves, the rush of the pelting rain, the howl of the gale as it swept through the cordage of the ship, and the beating of the surf on the beach and reefs in the distance, mingled with the clear word of command of the mates, and the cheery cry of the nimble sailors aloft as they roared out, "hand out to leeward!" or "light over to windward!"

The last man had laid down from aloft, the men were clustering aft to "splice the main brace," when a sudden grumble and grating ran through the ship. A shock, a bump—followed by a second shock, which threw the men off their feet violently, and then the good ship Exporter struck heavily on a coral reef, and was forced high up on the dangerous shoal.

With a succession of crashes the tall, wavering masts went over the side, the affrighted cries of the men, the shouts of the officers, and the terrible ominous grinding on the ship's keel rang out on the midnight air.

But the calm, steady voice of the captain was heard above all, calling on them to obey his orders, and Jackson's coolness had the desired effect.

Watching for the next vivid flash, Jackson scanned the scene and saw that it was comparatively easy to reach the main land by the coral reef.

Carefully and cautiously the men were directed to scramble for the land, and Jackson was the last man to leave the doomed ship. A sharp cry of anguish escaped from him as he leaped over the rail, but it was swallowed up in the force of the gale, which now set in with redoubled fury.

All night long it raged, and as daylight dawned the furious waves were running high, while the breakers roared like so many angry and hungry wolves.

Not a vestige of ship or cargo remained save a few remnants of shattered spars, and singular enough the medicine chest was found comparatively uninjured. By some means it had escaped the undertow, and was half buried in the sand, a sad relic of the once noble ship.

Jackson had performed his difficult task well, not a breath of suspicion could attach itself to him, and all hands endeavored to speak a word of comfort to their pale, dejected superior.

But other matters soon engrossed the attention of both officers and men. With the first rays of the morning sun which pierced the dispersing storm clouds, a numerous and well armed body of natives suddenly made their appearance, and with loud and menacing cries rushed upon the defenseless, shipwrecked seamen.

By the advice of the captain, no attempt was made to resist the half-naked, swarthy natives, who bore the entire ship's company in their midst to their reigning prince, who was attired in more than barbaric splendor.

A Malay stepped forward to act as interpreter, having served on board a country wallat as seaman, where he had learned a smattering of the English language. He informed Capt. Jackson that the ship had struck a reef making out from Sarawak, on the island of Borneo, and that they were now the prisoners and slaves of the prince bearing the name of the town.

In a low, confidential tone, he added that he wished them no harm, but advised them to strain every effort to escape, as the rajah was a bloodthirsty fellow, who delighted in putting his prisoners to death by the most cruel tortures that could be devised. The Malay added that the potentate was greatly depressed at present on account of the severe illness of the young princess, his favorite daughter; and as all the ja-ju men on the island had failed to relieve her, their heads had paid the forfeit. She was hourly growing worse, and the father was almost frantic at the thought of losing his idol.

Captain Jackson listened in deep silence, and a ray of hope darted across his really fine features as he reflected for a moment. In his many leisure hours at sea he had made the science of medicine a study—so much so that he felt perfectly confident to grapple with any ordinary disease.

The men were standing between the well-armed natives, who were only awaiting the well-known signal of their ruler to dash their brains out or reserve them for a worse fate. But the dusky potentate had relapsed into a reverie, and had apparently forgotten the presence of the white men.

The guards stirred impatiently, while their dark eyes shot forth glances which boded no good to the trembling men whom they had in their power.

Nerved on by desperation, and a prey to the most terrible apprehensions at the awful predicament and danger the ship's company were in through his instrumentality, Jackson whispered a few words in the ear of the Malay, who ventured to approach his royal master.

Jackson had bethought him of the fortunate discovery of the medicine chest, and determined to assume the risk of asserting his power to save the princess' life, which he accordingly did, and the Malay quickly conveyed the intelligence to the despondent father.

In an instant the high-born native was on his feet. His eyes glistened with an unnatural lustre; his deep, sonorous voice echoed through the room, while the jewels flashed and scintillated on his clothing as he gesticulated wildly.

The Malay translated the will of his chieftain, and Jackson was informed that he should have an opportunity to try his skill—that, if successful, he would be loaded with wealth such as he never dreamed of — that his comrades should share in his good fortune, and liberty as well as jewels should be the share of the white strangers. But, on the other hand, after exciting false hopes and making an assertion he could not make good, if the princess should die, then death with the most exquisite torments would be the portion of all.

It was not without a nervous chill that the shipmaster listened to the alternative, and although his face was pale, still he never faltered in his step as he followed a guide to the presence of the princess.

He could scarcely repress his embarrassment as he bent over the slight form of the princess, who was little more than a child in years, and stature. She was reclining in a silken hammock, partially covered by a slight gauze covering. She moved her head from side to side, moaning with pain, and quietly submitted to Jackson as he examined her pulse, tongue, etc.

He soon discovered that her trouble was nothing more serious than a slow fever, which the contents of the medicine chest would easily alleviate, and he breathed a silent but fervent prayer of gratitude for the means of escape offered to his comrades and himself.

The precious collection of drugs was soon under his watchful care, the proper remedies given, and for the first time for many days the princess sank into an easy and refreshing slumber that night.

Jackson watched by her hammock, while the stern old chief occupied a pile of cushions close beside him.

The recovery of the patient was rapid, thanks to a good constitution; and captain Jackson in the course of ten days had the satisfaction of seeing her sitting up laughing and talking with her overjoyed father.

The safety of the shipwrecked crew was assured, the rajah more than kept his word, heaping gems and gold dust upon them all.

To Jackson he made the most munificent offers, pressing upon him the office of chief ja-ju of the island. But the shipmaster wisely declined the office in cautious language, and at parting his belt received an addition that more than exceeded his wildest ideas of wealth.

The entire party were conveyed to Singapore, where Jackson bade adieu to his old comrades, taking the first mail steamer that left.

Reaching Liverpool, he soon arrived at his destination, and was warmly welcomed by his wife and little ones, to whom he related his strange adventures.

Without loss of time he called on the owners of the Exporter, who had meanwhile, secured their full insurance of vessel and cargo—coolly informing Jackson that he need never expect to command one of their ships again; for which rebuff he cared but little.

Removing to a small out growing Western town, he became identified with its prosperity, and to-day is one of its wealthiest and most influential citizens.

He has conscientiously striven to repair the error into which he was drawn, but never thinks of Shanghai and the tea trade without a visible shudder.

STRONG DRINK.

I have heard the wail of children crying for bread, and their mother had none to give them. I have seen the babe pulling the breasts as dry as if the starved mother had been dead. I have known a father turn a stepdaughter into the street at night, bidding the sobbing girl who bloomed into womanhood, seek her living there as others did. I have bent over the foul pallet of a dying lad, to hear him whisper, and his father and mother, who were sitting half drunk by the fireside, had pulled the blankets off his body to sell them for drink. I have seen the children blanched like plants in a cellar—for weeks they never breathed a mouthful of fresh air for want of rags to cover their nakedness; and they lived in continual terror of a drunken father or mother coming home to beat them. I do not recollect ever seeing a mother in these wretched dwellings handling her infant, or of hearing the little ones crow or laugh. These are some of drink's doings; but nobody can know the misery suffered amid these scenes of wretchedness, woe, want and sin.

A landlady, in Jersey City, lately bought a piano at auction for four dollars and sixty three cents. "It is for the benefit of my boarders," she remarked.

THE LONE CABIN.

A WILD RIDE FOR LIFE.

I had ridden hard and fast, and was astonished to find myself coming into a straggling settlement. On the course which I should have taken there was nothing of the sort. Somewhere I had crossed the right trail and taken the wrong one. Almost any traveler in the border sections would have been glad to thus stumble upon a place for food and refreshment. Not so with myself. In the breast pocket of my coat I carried five thousand four hundred and ninety odd dollars, United States money. I had received this amount from Maj. Gen. T. M. Lacey, and it was to be carried through to Fort L———, and placed in the hands of Col. Asa F. Southard, to defray necessary army expenses.

"Get through at your best gait, Carnes," said the Major, "the money is long since overdue, and Southard's rather irascible temper must have been tried to the utmost. You know how the soldiers get to growling if uncle is at all delinquent in paying up. Ride in a careless manner, but be careful. I don't think that any one dreams of the arrival of this money—save, of course, the mail agent and the clerk who delivered me the packages."

I was directed over an unfamiliar section, hence my losing of the right route. I considered it my safest plan, so long as I had blundered upon the verge of the settlement, to boldly enter and rest as an ordinary traveler would do. Should I push hurriedly on, I might, by that very act, excite suspicion.

There were only two men in the barroom when I entered—the landlord and the hostler. Under his familiar cordiality the landlord furtively eyed me in a manner that made me wish that I was done with my job, but I reassured myself with the thought that it was the cansciousness of the responsibility reposing upon me. Before I had finished my supper two more travelers rode up, called out for the hostler, and ordered drinks, or rather one of them came in with the orders, and the other threw himself down on a bench outside and began loading a huge pipe. Strolling carelessly about the room, I managed to glance out of the window. My heart leaped into my throat, for in the man outside I recognized—from a description of him—Bill Wolf, one of the most desperate characters that ever figured in the annals of border ruffianism. There was the huge red moustache, the thick, hairy throat, and the shoulders hunched up around his head, suggesting the shape of a mammoth clam—and the voice with a deep down intonation like the plop, plop, plop of the water hurriedly leaving a jug. If the description of the notorious renegade is inclegant, it has the merit of truthfulness, and must, therefore, be excused.

I went through with my supper in form, but whatever appetite I might have felt on my entrance into the inn, had vanished with my discovery. After a time the other fellow came in, having been out, he said, to look after the animals, and they also ordered supper. Now was my time to leave, which I did in a careless manner, passing some commonplace remarks with the two men as I crossed the dim, smoky bar-room. As they seemed to take no notice of me whatever, I felt my spirits rise with hopes that I should make a safe transit. It was quite duskish outside, but the hostler was flitting about the stables with his lantern, which emitted but a little more effulgent light than a white beam would have done, but he graciously brought out my steed at the order, and mounting, I thankfully trotted away. The moon—a little passed full—would make her debut in something more than an hour after sunset, and I pushed along at a smart trot so as to get well out upon the plains and into the right trail before that time. The animal went along at an assuring gait, and I was feeling infinitely relieved at my providential escape from contact with the desperate characters whom I had left at the settlement, when my acute, trained, ever alert ears detected the sound of swift riding. In which direction? From behind me, as the mildly floating breeze blow from that quarter. The face of the prairie in this section was a little rolling, but not so as to afford and shelter, and not a shrub or bush dotted the expanse for miles.

I drew up my horse one moment to listen. No chance travelers ever rode like that. It meant *pursuit*.

I gave my steed a galling lash, and she broke into a convulsive gait, hove her body up with one or two plunges, stumbled, going down from her knees to her nose, and pitched me literally heels over head. For an instant I was paralyzed with astonishment, the next I seized the bit to fetch up the fallen animal, which had in the meantime undergone a strange metamorphosis. She had lost her white face on or in the grass, and, passing my hand between her eyes, I found the hair was wet. In an instant I was examining the white teges; my horse had been peculiarly marked with white legs and face, and I found these sticky with whitewash. What then? Simply, my trappings had been transfered to another animal gotten up to exactly represent mine in the evenig. This discovery brought an appalling interpretation of the on-coming horsemen. I gave the horse the whip as soon as his unstable legs were well under him, and sent him a scouring on ahead while I ran off to the right, making for a little hollow, dry ravine. Here, to my profound astonishment, I discovered a lone cabin, or hut, about the dimensions of an ordinary country log house, and, impulsively dashing up to this, I gave a rapid succession of knocks. A shrinking, pale and cowering woman opened it.

"What is it?" was her first question, noticing my breathless haste.

Had I stopped for a moment's reflection upon the strangely isolated position of the cabin, I should not have passed in by her with the explanation:

"Is there any chance to hide here—my horse has thrown me, and I believe a party of desperadoes are close up with me."

I noticed that the moon was coming up dry and red in the east, when she mechanically closed the door behind me before I had finished my explanation.

"No, no; there is no place," she gasped, her quick ear now catching the sound of the coming horsemen. "This is all the room there is—and there is neither cellar no attic."

"But this?" I exclaimed, rushing for a dark object in the corner.

"It's a coffin," was her quick response; "but there's no other chance—they are turning up to the door—get in."

I had barely time to place myself in this receptacle for the dead, when a hoarse voice—one that I knew by the description which I had of it—called out:

"Here you, Dick,"

The woman threw her apron over her head and opened the door.

"Where's Dick."

"He hasn't come back yet," returned the woman.

"Oh, he arn't—Jen, hev yer hurd a horse go by to-night?"

"Yes, only a little while ago—a small man?"

"Yes—driving like the devil."

"I guess," she said, then paused, "you can hear the horse now," feigning to listen.

But Bill Wolf must have been of a suspicious nature. I heard him leap from his horse and strike with a jarring plunk upon the sod. A smouldering fire was burning on the stone hearth. I could imagine Bill's attitude—he had a hand on each door casing, his brutal head was thrust inside the room; he was peering about the apartment.

"What in h— is that?" he questioned; and my heart stood still, for I knew he spoke of my retreat.

"It's Stauffer's coffin. Dick is going to carry it over to-night."

"Stuff!" ejaculated the desperado, "as he made his bed, so let him lay—buzzards are the sextons for the likes o' him."

The woman sort a groaned, and then I heard Wolf go up and joggle the rain barrel at the corner of the cabin, and finally go away with the remark:

"He ain't far off; he couldn't stick to that blind critter when he began to hurry."

"What shall I do? What shall I do?" gasped the woman; "they will be back in twenty minutes, for I believe that your horse is in sight, not more than three quarters of a mile off, and my husband is liable to come at any moment."

"But with him inside the house we might—"

"With him!" she emphasized it in despairing tones—"he's Bill Wolf's brother."

I was out of the coffin in a trice, then, you may well believe.

"It is death for you any way," she moaned, "for I heard the rattle of Dick's axles already."

"Stay, there's the rain barrel," said I, in desperation, "they've tried that once, they may not again."

And before you would be able to speak a sentence, the water was dashed out of the cask and stealing down into the arid soil, and I was in the barrel, and the woman dropping a tub half filled with water in at the top as a cover.

She had barely time to enter the house, the door of which, fortunately, opened on the side away from the moon, when a rattling vehicle drew up at the door and I heard a hoarse voice raving and swearing at the woman for something done, or undone, and then from the bung-hole, the plug having been dislodged in the upsetting of the cask, I saw the furious return of the three renegades.

There was a good deal of loud talking, and explanations, and oaths, and stirring up of hot nectar and rough remarks about the cistern in the corner; but both Dick and the woman seemed sore about that matter, and the man peremptorily refused to join that hunt because of the coffin.

"Well, you're going our way a piece," said Wolf, "likely enough you'll have the fun of seeing us wing the turkey."

The conversation was distressingly personal, made acutely so by Dick asking:

"Is there water enough out there, Jen, to drink my horse?"

"I'll see," she returned, moving slowly over the door-still, and then, leaping to the cask, she lifted out the tub, and tipped my prison over a little so that I could spring out. I was behind the cask when Dick came to the door and chirruped his beast up to the tub to drink.

"I'll go with you as far as the forks," he said, as two of them came out with the coffin and slid it into the body of the wagon. They then stepped back, probably to call the others.

At that moment a wild and desperate plan entered my brain, but feeling for my knife, I found that it was missing, along with the belt to which it was attached. In the sudden jostle which the falling steed had given me, the girdle had been snapped and lost without my knowledge. The horses of the three renegades—my own, which had been retained by the hostler at the inn, among them—were hitched on the farther side of the door, where the moonlight, striking by the end of the cabin, rested fully upon them. It was suicide to attempt seizing one of them; but as the woman, with some purpose in her mind, sang out to the men to come back and get the last dipper-full of liquor which she had mixed, I seized the only alternative. I sprang lightly into the wagon, lifted the coffin lid, and again crawled into the long narrow prison.

There was no choice. The flood of moonlight had swept so far toward my hiding place that only a part of my body was concealed by the barrel, and I knew that discovery was inevitable, for the man's horse stood in such a position that in order to recover the reins he must have trodden upon me, and there was no earthly thing, as far as the eye could reach over the plain, behind which a man could hide. Ah, but what if he should read just his freight? Can you think how my heart pumped away at the thought? You wonder what my plan could be? I had none, other than the hope of having only one man to deal with if he went on his way as he calculated. The three ruffians were mounted, and all were about to start, when the woman ran out with some sort of a blanket, and muttered something about covering the coffin. The man yelled out to her to mind her own business and let the thing alone.

She retreated with the cloth, but she had accomplished her purpose. In its folds she had concealed a bowie-knife; under its cover she had raised the lid and dropped the weapon inside, it giving me a cut as it fell upon me; but in the momentary noise and confusion I had got the weapon in my hand, and with its point raised the heavy lid of the rough box the fraction of an inch, so that breathing was easy if my position was cramped.

The three horsemen spread out, remarking to each other: "Beat up the game now speedily, before, by any miracle, he gets into the wooden belt by Buford's Springs."

They continued to halloa at each other for some time; their liberal potations surmounting their discretion.

"Dick," they called back, as they were driving off, "a cool twelve hundred apiece; throw out your old shell and join the hunt."

The driver mumbled something, but the whisky had thickened his speech so that it was unintelligible to me.

If he did attempt to move the coffin I was lost.

They kept within hailing distance for the length of some three or four miles, Dick smashing the heavy wagon along at a stunning gait; and I expected every moment that my shell would be jostled out.

By and by there was a shout off to the right of a "tally ho" as if the huntsman had sighted the quarry. Nothing but an unwarrantable amount of liquor could have influenced them to conduct themselves as they did, for no sooner had they called out from the right than Dick came to a sudden halt, leaped from the seat, and ran off toward those who were hallooing.

For one instant my heart stopped beating at the thought of the next hazard which I was about to run. The next moment I sprang from the coffin to the ground. A few lightning-like strokes, and I had severed the traces and the holdbacks of the harness.

The whole scene is vividly pictured in my mind. The moon-lighted prairie, the little ravine towards which the renegades were dashing, the wagon standing in the trail—then the rattling of the falling thills reached the ears of the party, and with a wild shout they turned toward me. I was on the horse's back, but boldly defined by the moonlight. There was the sharp report of two rifles. I felt a sting in my foot, another in my shoulder, but the horse was unharmed, and the race for life began.

There was a disheartening disadvantage for me, for I had no saddle, but I was riding for my life, and I held my steed between my knees, and took the broad trail with the fury of a tornado. But the issue would rest mostly with the horse. I knew nothing of those that were pursuing me, excepting my own white-faced mare. She could run like an antelope and out-wind a hurricane.

On and on my steed, desperately spurred with the point of my knife, bore ahead, actually causing me to gasp for breath; and not two hundred yards in the rear rode my would-be murderers.

On the rolling prairie now, and my animal took the declivities with a plunge, and the elevations with a sure, fierce stride—across the brawling ford—but crack came another rifle echo, and again a stream of fire seemed to strike my shoulder. They were closing in—closing up. I could now make out only two horsemen following me. One of them had discharged his rifle at me, the other I knew was held in rest for them to come just a few yards nearer.

A momentary dizziness lopped me over upon my horse's neck. The ruffians yelled triumphantly behind, but a distant echo brought me up, and giving my poor beast a stinging blow, I emitted the wild, long, fierce yell of the border rangers, and sped on again; but my horse had that peculiar squirm now and then in his gait that told me he was faltering.

Again that echo reached me, swelling out on the rising wind—it was the shrill squeal of the fife and the rum-diddle-um, did-e-um dum-dum, dum of infantry returning from some expedition to Fort L———. Again I sent out that long, wild border yell, and I knew by the quicker breathing of the fife, and the rapid pulsing of the drum, that the soldiers had broken into the "double quick" in heed of my cry.

A parting shot fired at random, and the two desperadoes turned; but one of them, at least, I was not done with. I called my horse with a peculiar whistle; I repeated and repeated it, and then I heard him crashing again in pursuit, while his driver shouted and lashed him, and tried to pull him round the other way. For a brief time the desperado wrestled with the animal, lashed, goaded, and roared at her, but my incessant, jerky whistle-call kept her mind and head toward me. He only gave up the fruitless struggle and leaped from her back when a squad of infantry dashed over a hillowy swell of prairie, and rushed down toward us at that steady, measured run which is so effective in contrast with a disorderly gait.

"It's well, boys," I exclaimed, as they came up with me—for I knew his voice. I had no need to tell them that there was a price set on his head, as it has been clearly proved that he had stirred up the savages to commit more than one massacre of the settlers; and a dozen of them, uttering a yell of fury, started in pursuit, while the others, noticing my swaying about on the animal which I rode, began to think that I had found something serious in my race for life. In fact, the plain was rising and falling and shuffling about so that it took a great amount of nerve and equipoise to sit as I ought. They got me into Fort Laramie, however, with uncle's promissory notes all safe in my vest pocket; while my boot full of blood, and the galling flesh wounds in my shoulder, accounted for the odd maneuverings of the plain while I was on horseback.

After a brief but desperate conflict Bill Wolf was brought in, and passed over to the proper officers "to have and to hold," until there should be meted out to him the measure he had given others.

A LATELY appointed postmaster of a Massachusetts town went to Boston the other day to "qualify" and have his bond for $800 approved. The bond was all right and the regular question was put to the P. M.: "How much are you worth, sir?" "Wal," he replied, "I don't tell how much I'm worth. Bradstreet sets me at $10,000. I guess you'd better put it down at that figger" "How much do the assessors set you at?" "Wal, the assessors don't set me at so high a figger; but (in a confidential whisper) 'tween you'n' me I'm one of the assessors."

THE MODERN GEORGE WASHINGTON.—George Washington couldn't tell a lie, and that's what ails the average Vicksburg boy. The other day, when one of them accidentally broke a pane of glass in a store-window, it was touching to see him walk bravely into the store and up to the merchant, and say: "Mr. Blank, I broke a pane of glass in the window there, and you can charge it to the old man's account. Put it down as a pound of saleratus, and he'll never know the difference."

SHE used to meet him at the gate with a kiss, and a smile like morning light, but now she comes to the door in a dingy calico wrapper, and shoes down at the heels, shades her eyes with her hand, looks earnestly to make sure it's him, as he walks up to the house tired and care-worn, inquires with a voice that seems to need oiling, "Did you bring that mackerel?"