

GOOD TEMPER

There's not a cheaper thing on earth, Nor yet one half so dear; 'Tis worth more than distinguished birth, Or thousands gained a year. It lends the day a new delight, 'Tis Virtue's firmest shield; And adds more beauty to the night Than all the stars can yield.

It maketh Poverty content, To Sorrow whispers peace; It's a gift from Nature sent, For mortals to increase; It meets you with a smile at morn, It lulls you to repose; A flower for peer and peasant born, An everlasting rose.

ROCKRIFF'S VAGABOND.

BY THOMAS P. MONTFORT.

The little mining camp of Rockriff, up in the Rattail Gulch, was never particularly noted for its piety and morals; yet, taking it all in all, it was a fair average Western mining camp of its time. There was, of course, the usual amount of drinking and gambling, and the occasional and semi-occasional shooting scrape. It was typical in other respects; there were men coming and men going every day; men making fortunes and losing them within the same week; a mixture of the good and the bad as they are found everywhere.

Among the characters of Rockriff was old Ike Samson, a tall, raw-boned, leathery featured man of a generally neglected appearance. If he had ever had any pride in his personal looks, he had long since outgrown it. His hair hung well down his back, while his coarse beard had so long run wild as to give his face more the appearance of a hazel bush than the visage of a human being.

Old Ike had been in Rockriff from the first. He was one of the pioneer settlers, and had drifted from somewhere over the range; and from that day he had remained there, not because he had any reason for staying, but because it was easier to stay than it was to move on, and because he had so far had no incentive to move on. Old Ike was a man who never did anything without an incentive, and the only incentive that ever influenced him to move was an urgent notice from his neighbors. He was the vagabond of Rockriff.

It was well along toward the latter part of June when one morning the miners went down toward the lower end of Rattail Gulch to collect the gold dust that had accumulated from the washings of the day before. But what was their surprise and indignation when they arrived at the diggings to find that the sluice boxes had been robbed during the night. Of course this discovery created no little excitement in the camp, and of course every one knew, before a word had been spoken, what would be the fate of the offender if he was ever caught.

In those days and in those places a man might kill another, and if he had a shadow of provocation for the act he would not be molested, but if he went so far as to rob a sluice-box or engage in any theft whatever, he brought down on his head the severest penalty of pioneer justice, and was promptly hung to the nearest tree.

For some time the Rockriff miners were at a loss to conjecture who the offender could be, but finally some one made the discovery that old Ike was absent from camp, and suggested that he might be the criminal.

"That's jes' who it is, boys," said old Brandy Smith, after he had mentally digested the suggestion for a full minute, at the same time energetically munching his quid of tobacco. "It's ole Ike, and nobody else."

"I hain't no shore uv that," Sam Sloan replied, thoughtfully, rapping his grizzly jaw with his finger-nails. "It must a-been Ike and it moutn't."

"Wal, who else is it if it ain't him?" Brandy asked. "Who else could it be? That's what I want ter know."

"Wal, es fer that," Sam replied, "it'd be purty doggone hard ter tell. I know I hain't no jee who it is."

Gulch and Rockriff Camp would never again be graced by his appearance. It was late in the evening, and the men had eaten their suppers and were enjoying a smoke outside the cabins, when from away down the gulch there floated up on the soft breezes the notes of a rude song. "Listen, fellers," old Sam said.

"For a minute they remained perfectly silent, and softly, almost sadly, the breezes wafted up these words: 'Oh, the old, old home I left behind, An' the purty little gal that's waitin' fer me.' 'Doggone my hide, boys,' Brandy exclaimed, 'if I don't b'lieve that's old Ike.'"

"It do sound some like his voice," Sam replied; "but I never heard him sing none afore as long as he's been in this 'ere camp."

"Reckon he'd as well sing while he kin, Sam, fer if he come on up here, which I take he's a-doin', he won't never sing no more afore to-day—leastwise, not in this 'ere world. What ye say, fellers?" "Reckon yer talkin' 'bout right," some one replied, and the others nodded their approval.

In about half an hour Ike came in sight. They knew he had been drinking when they heard his voice in song away down the gulch, and now as he came staggering up the hill scarcely able to keep on his feet they pronounced him pretty "full."

"How'r'y fellers," he said; "been down ter zhe post havin' er good time. Doggone fine plash down here. Want me ter shing shomethin'?" Doggone fine shinger I am. Listen:

"Oh, the old, old home I left behind, An' the purty little gal that's waitin' fer me." "Reckon she'll keep on er waitin' a good while, old chap," Brandy said. "Yesh, I reckon; but I'm goin' home purty shoon, of nothin' 'd happen."

"That's 'er Goin' ter strike er pay streak an' git my fortune, yer reckon?" "I 'low there won't be much pay in it, but yer goin' to strike a streak an' git whut ye deserve."

"Thanky. Git whut I deserve. Shay, that's what I want. Thanky. I guess I'll retire—I feel sorter tired." Old Ike turned and staggered away to his cabin, humming a tune as he went.

"Got to let 'im sober up afore we stretch 'im," Brandy remarked. "In course," Jerry Rogers replied. "It wouldn't nigh do to hang er feller in that fix. Guess he wouldn't know what he's stretched fer nor nothin' 'bout it. Have to let 'im sober up."

"Yas; an' we'll 'tend to him the fust thing in the mornin'." While they were yet talking they heard the rumble of a vehicle down the road as it rolled and bounded along the rocky course.

"Stage is comin'," Sam remarked. "Wonder if we'll git any letters from home, boys?" one said. "Dunno, I'm shore," Brandy replied. "I hain't heard from my folks fer mor'n a year now."

"Me nother," said Jerry; "but fer that matter I hain't got no folks worth mentionin'. Jest some uncles and aunts and cousins and sich, an' they ain't much to a feller, nohow."

"No, not like a wife an' children," Brandy assented. "I've got a wife and a leetle gal back thar, an' I'm sorter be-ginnin' to want to see 'em. The gal's ther purtiest little thing you ever laid your eyes on, an' was about so high (measuring with his hand) when I left. That's been six years, an' I 'low she's growed up nigh to a woman now."

These remarks touching the past and the old home recalled to each of the men a train of fond memories, and for some time they smoked their pipes in silence, each busy with thoughts of the dear ones in the far East.

Pretty soon the stage came in sight, and halting before the saloon, the driver threw off a little flat mail-pouch and dismounted. The men in the meantime had lounged across, and now stood around the stage.

"I dun—why, yes, I 'low so," Brandy stammered out. "Leastwise he ort to be." "Ah, he will, too, for I know he must be awful good. Mother wouldn't talk about him so much, and cry over his picture and old letters every day, if he wasn't the best man living. He is good, ain't he?"

Brandy stammered, hesitated, and grew red in the face, but made no reply. After a little while the girl repeated her question. "Why, sartainly, o' course," Brandy said.

"And you'll help me find 'im, too?" "Yas, we'll help you. Sam, you stay here with the child, an' the rest of us'll look 'round a little fer Ike."

Sam understood old Brandy's meaning, and nodded assent. The others drew away and walked some distance down the gulch, where they came to a halt.

"Now," says Brandy, "you have all heard the gal's tale, an' ye all know old Ike. What ye got to say to it?" "For a minute no one spoke, then Jerry, stepping forward, said:

"Brandy, you've allus been sorter of a leader here, an' I'd like ter know whut you've got to say, yerself." Brandy stood for a moment silently rapping his jaw with his nails.

"Wal, boys," he said at last, "you all heard me a talkin' up thar 'while ago, 'bout a wife and a gal I've got back East didn't ye?" They nodded their heads.

"Wal, I'll tell ye, boys, s'pose that wife an' that child 'ud git a notion into 'em to come a-huntin' me up over yere, an' s'pose 'bout the time they'd found whar I wuz I'd done somethin' an' the fellers 'ud string me up. It'd be purty doggone hard on the wife an' gal, wouldn't it?"

"Bet it would!" Jerry replied; "an' I'd be in fer lettin' you go if you'd stole er cent o' gold-dust in the mountings." "Them's my sentiments, boys," Brandy said, in conclusion. "Now, whut do the rest of you say?"

"Let 'im go! Turn 'im loose!" they all cried. "Then he goes," said Brandy, and the miners broke loose in a wild cheer that echoed and re-echoed through the gulch and far up among the mountains.

"They've found 'im—they've found 'im!" the child cried when she heard it. "I dunno," Sam said, "whether they've found 'im yet, but they will find 'im purty soon. He is here to-day, and he can't be far off. Is your ma much sick?"

"Yas, sir; she's awful sick, and she don't know nothin' that goes on. She just talks all the time about pap, and begs us to fetch him to her."

"Then she didn't send you up here after 'im?" "No, sir; I come myself. I had just enough money to pay my way."

"I reckon you'd like to go back to-night, wouldn't you?" "If I could find pap I would, for I'm afraid mother ain't goin' to live long. Maybe not till mornin'."

"There ain't no stage down to-night, an' it's a long ways to walk." "Oh, I wouldn't mind that, if I only had pap to go with me. Do you reckon they'll find him soon?"

"Yas, I s'pect so." Just then they heard the miners coming back, and the girl waited almost breathlessly for their approach.

THE WATERMELON TRADE.

A THRIVING SUMMER INDUSTRY IN NEW YORK.

How the Business is Carried On—700,000 Melons on a Train—How to Tell Good Melons.

There has been a great change in the product of watermelons in a few years. It has, in fact, progressed with the increase of facilities of travel. Not long ago watermelons came from Norfolk as the remotest point. Year by year the watermelon fields have extended further south, until the whole coast from Savannah to Cape May is in a great degree a watermelon patch, and the season extends over about five months.

Watermelons used to come in sailing vessels, and a small fleet of coasters was employed. Then the steamships got into the business, and the fields got more remote, so that a Georgia melon got to the city in less time than was formerly required to bring a Norfolk melon. But in the evolution of business the railroads came in, and the trade has come largely into their hands for the past two or three years. The freight charges are heavier, but it has been found that the fruit comes to market in better condition.

It would appear on casual thought that the water voyage would bring the melons to market in better condition. But such is not the fact. The melons that get the deck passage are all right, but those that come in the hold, especially if the weather is bad and the hatches are down, are likely to become waterlogged. Besides, the voyage is longer than by rail. On the other hand, the fruit cars of the railroad companies do not hold the melons in so large a bulk and permit the air to get at them. The through fast freight from Georgia comes inside of four days, and the fruit gets here in fine condition.

Good sound melons, not cracked, kept in a shady place, will keep three or four weeks. Many attempts have been made to keep them all winter, but the fruit preservers have not as yet made a success of it. Some proposed to do it by varnishing the outside, so as to exclude the air. George Blank, however, who is a big dealer in watermelons, says that the best way to keep a melon all winter is to bury it in the ground where it will not freeze. No attempt has been made to keep watermelons all the year round as a commercial speculation, except that a few have occasionally been put in cold storage, and once in a while a gardener raises a few in a hot-house for the benefit of those who do not like anything that is got in the normal way.

The scene at the great freight piers is a busy one when a cargo of watermelons comes in. News of the arrival is soon spread among the dealers, and at whatever hour in the day or night it may be, the trucks of the commission merchants or dealers crowd the piers. Of course, the truck that is to carry the last load off gets there first, and the block of vehicles is exasperating.

No attempt is made to handle the melons in bulk or in barrels. They must be passed out from hand to hand, and long lines of men are formed for this purpose. There is always a crowd of youngsters, Italians and negroes at the depots to catch a stray melon that is dropped and broken, and the dismembered parts are soon gobbled and disappear in a gulp, while the sweet juice drips down the faces of the feasters even as the oil down Aaron's beard did flow. The dock diners on melons have not yet learned the art mystery and delight of eating melons with a spoon, whereby the liquid wealth is all preserved to delight the appetite.

Among melon dealers the belief is widespread that the fruit is good for kidney troubles. The effect upon the kidneys is almost as quickly perceptible as that of asparagus, while the fevered tongue the taste is as delicious as that of an orange.

It is of the utmost importance that melons should be kept free from cracks. Very soon after a melon is cracked it begins to get sour. There are various ways of telling a good watermelon. Some people say they can, by pressing the sides together, hear in a good, sound, ripe melon a peculiar sound of crispness like that of celery. George Blank gives these directions:

"Lay the melon on its back, belly up. You can tell the belly, because it is white, or of lighter color than the rest of the melon. Scratch the skin of the belly with your finger nail. If the skin is tender and the melon is yet firm to the pressure of the finger, so that you can with difficulty pierce it with your nail, it is probably a good melon."

The watermelon market has for many years centered on the North River side, where the Southern steamers and sailing boats come in. A fruit train sometimes brings seventy cars of watermelons, with about 1000 tons to a car, or 70,000 melons on a train. This is equivalent to a good ship load. The ordinary train carries thirty or forty cars of watermelons. The freight is from \$70 to \$100 a car, which affords a handsome profit to the railroads. In many cases the melon is taken directly from the field to the car, and is not moved again before final delivery. It is of the utmost importance that the fruit should be carefully handled to get it to market in good condition to keep.

New York is really a great centre of distribution for watermelons. Most of the great watering places are supplied from here, and they require the very choicest fruit and pay the highest price. New England is supplied from here. Watermelons are sent from here to the Bermudas and the West Indies. It is this wide field that has brought the railroads into the business where the element of time is so great a factor. The verdict of the trade is that the railroad watermelons "stand up" much better than the steamer melons that have not had the good luck of a deck passage.

There is a great number of grades of melons. As a rule, the big melons command the largest prices. They are not necessarily the best, but it is principally size that counts, other things being equal. It often happens, therefore, that the smallest melons go for very low prices, while

the material may be as good as the highest-priced melon. It is chiefly these small melons that get into the licensed vendors' wagons and are peddled in the tenement districts. There is little trade among even very poor people in bad melons, chiefly because there is an unflinching factory detective that is a more effective protector than the most vigilant health inspector.

The watermelon business now absorbs a great deal of capital. Shrewd buyers go about the country and purchase miles of melon patches. The aggregate result is that there are more people working at melon growing, the buyers get a better article at a cheaper price, and the melons come to market from a wider field and cheaper and better than ever. Thus far steam transportation has been the principal factor of the change. Who can tell what will be done to the melon business when electricity comes in and does its share.—New York Sun.

SELECT SIFTINGS.

The walls of Jerusalem were built 445 B. C.

Savannah, Ga., has a flock of red headed geese.

Near Hogan, Montana, is a large deposit of petrified clams.

A Kansas editor says 60,000 cars will be required to haul the wheat crop of his state.

The elephant is being killed off so fast that twelve more years will see the last one wiped out.

A well in the South from which a strong breeze rushed for years has suddenly taken to spouting water.

Gibraltar was taken by the English July 24, 1704, and ceded to England by treaty of Utrecht April 11, 1713.

A Mussulman woman in India died recently at the age of 150 years. She was blind, deaf, dumb and almost inanimate.

A Philadelphia wholesale druggist pays \$2 a gallon for sandalwood wine, which is made from the plant growing wild on so many farms.

A large and mysterious fissure in the earth in Princess George County, Va., is exciting alarm. People are unable to account for the phenomenon.

It is a curious fact that no complete edition of Shakespeare's works has ever been printed and published in any of the many dialects of Hindoostan.

In the course of seventy-five years, from 1785 to 1857, the kingdom of Naples lost at least 111,000 of the effects of earthquakes or more than 1500 per year.

William the Conqueror was wounded in battle by his son Robert, who had joined the French King Philip I., 1078. The scene of the battle was Gerberoi, Normandy.

In a St. Louis hospital a man had a dream which covered 10,000 miles of travel and six months' time, yet he was only a minute and a half covering the whole business.

A Hindoo has reduced laziness to a fine art. He says: "It is better to walk than to run, better to stand than to walk, better to sit than to stand, and better to lie down than to sit."

A prize offered to stenographers for the largest number of words written on a postal card has been won by Sylvanus Jones, of Richmond, Va., who wrote upon a card 36,764 words.

Mrs. Phillips, of West Fallowfield, Penn., has found a remedy for gapes in chickens. She splits the windpipe lengthwise with scissors, and with a horse hair lifts the worm that causes the ailment.

Queen Victoria is said to own the costliest china in the world. The china in the Windsor and Buckingham palaces is worth more than a million of dollars. The Sevres dessert set is valued at \$500,000.

Fresh roses are sent to five of the London hospitals every morning by a society of little girls, not one of whom is more than twelve years old. The funds to procure the flowers are realized by work of self-sacrifice.

A citizen of North East, Penn., made actual measurement and found that his corn grew between four or five inches in twenty-four hours. He drove stakes in the ground, stretched up the longest leaf, and marked the stake. The next morning showed the growth stated.

The huge organ for the town hall, Sydney, New South Wales, has been completed in London. Its most remarkable feature is a sixty-four foot stop. The lowest note of the stop, expressed in organ builders' language as "CCCCC," is two octaves below the lowest C on the pianoforte, and, as it gives only eight vibrations in a second, it cannot be perceived as a note at all. Its effect lies wholly in the extraordinary richness and power of its upper harmonies, by which it re-enforces notes given by the higher pipes.

The Cashier Was Not Mesmerized Too. An Augusta, Me., bank cashier recently told me about a queer experience.

There came into his bank a seedy man with a wild look in his eyes, who said: "I guess I'll take that money." "What money?" "There's \$500,000 to my credit here, ain't there?"

The cashier thought he was talking with an escaped inmate of the institution across the river.

"I guess you've made a mistake," said he.

Then the visitor's eyes began to roll strangely; he rubbed them with his hand, and a sheepish expression came over his face.

"What—what's the matter?" he asked.

A moment later it came out that the man had been mesmerized, had been made to believe that he was rich, and had recovered himself in the bank.

He was as poor as poverty, but had all the sensations of being a millionaire for about five minutes.—Leviator (Me.) Journal.

School Teacher's Experiences.

School teachers have many funny experiences in the mountain districts of Tennessee and Kentucky. One teacher relates that one of his pupils was taken out of school because he endeavored to persuade him that the earth was round. His father would not have him taught such nonsense, and was so certain that the earth was flat that he challenged the teacher to a public debate. It lasted a week before crowded houses, and the jury disagreed. The man admitted that there were too many hills and mountains for the earth to be exactly flat, and finally went so far as to say that the earth "might be round this 'ere way" east and west) "cause the people might fall off; but it is not round that 'ere way" (meaning north and south). What confusing reasoning he had in his head the teacher could not divine, but it convinced at least half the audience.

The noble and the pure are fond of the home of their childhood and of those who sat with them round their old fireplace. The man is to be distrusted who loves not his brother; and the woman who loves not her sister is, except in rare peculiar instances, a woman who is not herself beloved.

The Snowden Mountain, the loftiest in Wales, has been sold for £5,750.

It Don't Pay To use uncertain means when suffering from diseases of the liver, blood or lungs, such as biliousness, or "liver complaint," skin diseases, scrofulous sores or swellings, or from lung scrofula (commonly known as consumption of the lungs) when Dr. Feroz's Golden Medical Discovery is guaranteed to cure all these affections, if taken in time, or money paid for it will be promptly refunded.

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There are about 25,000 locomotives in the United States.

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The limbs of many Millin County (Penn.) trees are dying from locust stings.

Forced to Leave Home. Over 60 people were forced to leave their homes yesterday to call for a free trial package of Lane's Family Medicine. If your blood is bad, your liver and kidneys out of order, if you are constipated and have headache and an unsightly complexion, don't fail to call on any druggist to-day for a free sample of this grand remedy. The ladies praise it. Everyone likes it. Large-size package 50 cents.

The Michigan wool crop this year is estimated at 11,300,000 pounds.

"Penny wise and pound foolish" are those who think it economy to use cheap soda and resin soaps, instead of the good old Dobbin's Electric Soap for sale by all grocers since 1854. Try it once. Be sure, buy genuine.

CALIFORNIA sent 2,500,000 pounds of honey to Europe last year.

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