ALLEEN ARDON.

THE ORIGINAL WORDS FOR THE AIR "ROSIN ADAIR."

When like the early rose
Beauty in childhood glows
Alleen Ardon,
When, like a diadem,
Reds thine around the stem,
Which is the fairest gem?
Alleen Ardon.

Is it the laughing eye?
Alleen Ardon,
Is it the timid sigh?
Alleen Ardon,
Is it the tender tone,
Soft as the strings of harp's moan?
No; it is Truth alone,
Alleen Ardon.

I know a valley fair,
Alleen Ardon,
I know a cottage there,
Alleen Ardon.
Far in that valley's shade,
I know a gentle maid,
Flower of the heard glade,
Alleen Ardon.

Who in the song so sweet?
Alleen Ardon,
Who in the dance so fleet?
Alleen Ardon.
Dear are her charms to me,
Dearer her laughter free,
Dearest her constancy,
Alleen Ardon.

Youth must with time decay,
Alleen Ardon,
Beauty must fade away,
Alleen Ardon,
Castles are sacked in war,
Gold is a mere lure,
Truth is a fixed star.
Alleen Ardon.

THE OUTCASTS OF POKER FLAT.

[From the Overland Monthly.]

As Mr. John Oakhurst, gambler, stepped into the main street of Poker Flat, on the morning of the twenty-third of November, 1850, he was conscious of a change in its moral atmosphere from the previous evening. Two or three men, conversing earnestly together, ceased as he approached, and exchanged significant glances. There was a Sabbath lull in the air, which, in a settlement unused to Sabbaths, was ominous. Mr. Oakhurst's calm, handsome face betrayed small concern of these indications. Whether he was conscious of any predisposing cause was another question. "I reckon they're after somebody," he reflected, "like it's me." He returned to his pocket the handkerchief with which he had been wiping away the red dust of Poker Flat from his neat boots, and quietly disclosed his mind of any further conjecture.

In point of fact, Poker Flat was "after somebody." It had lately suffered the loss of several thousand dollars, two valuable horses, and a prominent citizen. It was experiencing a spasm of virtuous reaction, quite as lawless and ungovernable as any of the acts that had provoked it. A secret committee had determined to rid the town of all improper persons. This was done summarily in regard to two men who were then hanging from the boughs of a sycamore in the gulch, and temporarily in the banishment of certain other objectionable characters. I regret to say that some of these were ladies. It is but due to the sex, however, to state that their impropriety was professional, and it was only in such established instances as could affect Poker Flat ventured to sit in judgment.

A body of armed men accompanied the deported wickedness of Poker Flat to the outskirts of the settlement. Besides Mr. Oakhurst, who was known to have "some money in his pocket" and for whose intimidation the armed escort was intended, the expatriated party consisted of a young woman familiarly known as "The Duchess," another, who had gained the infelicious title of "Mother Shipton," and "Uncle Billy," a suspected sluicerobber and confirmed drunkard. The cavalcade proceeded in gloomy commentary from the spectators, nor was any word uttered by the escort. Only when the gulch which marked the utermost limit of Poker Flat was reached, the leader spoke briefly and to the point. The exiles were forbidden to return on the peril of their lives.

The road to Sandy Bar—a camp that not having yet experienced the regenerating influences of Poker Flat, consequently seemed to offer some inducement to the emigrant—lay over a steep mountain range. It was distant a day's severe journey. In that advanced season the party soon passed out of the region of temperate regions of the foothills into the grim, dry, cold, bracing air of the Sierras. The trail was narrow and difficult. At noon the Duchess, rolling out of her saddle upon the ground, declared her intention of going no further, and the party halted.

The spot was singularly wild and impressive. A wooded amphitheatre, surrounded on three sides by precipitous cliffs of naked granite, sloped gently toward the east in another precipice that overlooked the valley. It was undoubtedly the most advantageous camp, had anything been advisable. But Mr. Oakhurst knew that scarcely half the journey to Sandy Bar was accomplished, and the party were not equipped or provisioned for delay. This he pointed out to his companions curtly, with a philosophic commentary on the folly of "throwing up their hand before the game was ended." But they were furnished with liquor, which in this emergency stood them in place of food, fuel, rest and prescience. In spite of his remonstrances, it was not long before they were more or less under its influence. Uncle Billy parted rapidly from a bellicose state into one of stupor, the Duchess became maudlin, and Mother Shipton normed. Mr. Oakhurst alone remained erect, leaning against a rock, calmly sirviling them.

Mr. Oakhurst did not drink. It interfered with a profession which required coolness, impassiveness and presence of mind, and, in his own language, he "couldn't afford it." As he gazed at his recumbent companions, the loneliness begotten of his parish-trade, his habits of life, his very face, for the first time seriously oppressed him. He bestirred himself in dusting his black clothes, washing his hands and face, and other acts which seemed of his studiously neat habits, and for a moment forgot his companions. The thought of describing his weaker and more pliable companions never perhaps occurred to him. He was too shrewd to feel the fact that excitement, which singularly enough was most conducive to that end, was equanimity for which he was notorious. He looked at the gloomy walls that rose a thousand feet above the circling pines around him; at the sky, ominously clouded; at the valley below, already deepening into shadow. And doing, perhaps, unconsciously, what he could to delay the inevitable moment when he should be left alone with his companions, he busied himself in collecting fuel.

To a Northern traveler, accustomed to the fresh, open face of the new comer, Mr. Oakhurst recognized Tom Simson, otherwise known as "The Innocent" of Sandy Bar. He had met him some months before over a "little game," and, loser with perfect equanimity, was the entire fortune—amounting to some forty dollars—of that guileless youth. After the game was finished, Mr. Oakhurst drew the youthful speculator behind the door, and thus addressed him: "Tommy, you're a good fellow, and you can't gamble worth a cent. Don't try it over again." He then handed him the money back, pushed him gently from the room, and so made a devoted slave of Tom Simson.

There was a remembrance of this in his boyish and enthusiastic greeting of Mr. Oakhurst. He had started, he said, to go to Poker Flat to seek his fortune. "Alone?" No, not exactly alone; in fact—a slight blush at the recollection of Piney Woods. Didn't Mr. Oakhurst remember Piney? She had met us walk on the table at the Temperance Hall. They had been engaged a long time, but old Jake Woods had objected, and so they had run away, and were going to Poker Flat to be married, and here they were. And they were married, and how lucky it was that he had found a place to camp and company. All this The Innocent delivered rapidly, while Piney—a stout, comely damsel of fifteen—emerged from behind the pine tree, where she had been blushing unseen, and rode to the side of her lover.

Mr. Oakhurst seldom troubled himself with sentiment. Still less with propriety. But he had a vague idea that the situation was not felicitous. He retained, however, his presence of mind sufficiently to kick Uncle Billy, who was about to say something, and Uncle Billy was sober enough to recognize in Mr. Oakhurst's kick a superior power that would not bear trifling. He then endeavored to dissuade Tom Simson from the proposed further, but in vain. He even pointed out the fact that there was no provision nor means of making a camp. But, unlucky, "The Innocent" had a objection to spending the party that he was provided with an axe mule loaded with provisions, and by the discovery of a rude attempt at a log-house near the trail. "Piney can stay with Mrs. Oakhurst," said The Innocent, pointing to the Duchess, "and I can shift for myself."

As the shadows crept, slowly up the mountain, a slight breeze rocked the tops of the pine trees, and moaned through their long and gloomy aisles. The primeval forest, grand and covered with pine boughs, was set apart for the ladies. As the lovers parted, they unaffectedly exchanged a parting kiss, so honest and sincere that it might have been heard above the swaying pines. The final farewells and the malevolent Mother Shipton were probably too stunned to remark upon this last evidence of simplicity, and so turned with but a word to the but. The fire was replenished, the men lay down before the door, and in a few minutes were asleep.

Mr. Oakhurst was a light sleeper. Toward morning he awoke, benumbed and cold. As he stirred the dying fire, the wind, which was now blowing sinisterly through its branches, seemed to shake the blood to leave it—now!

He started to his feet with the intention of awakening the sleepers, for there was no time to lose. But turning to where Uncle Billy had been lying, he found him gone. A suspicion leaped to his brain and a curse to his lips. He ran to the spot where the mules had been tethered; they were no longer there. The tracks were already rapidly disappearing in the snow.

The momentary excitement brought Mr. Oakhurst back to the fire with his usual calm. He did not waken the sleepers. The innocent slumbered peacefully, with a smile on his good-humored, freckled face; the virgin Piney slept beside her frailer sisters as securely as though attended by her parents. Uncle Billy, Mr. Oakhurst, drawing his blanket over his shoulders, stroked his mustachios and waited for the dawn. It came slowly in a whirling mist of snow flakes, that dazzled and confused the eye. What could be seen of the landscape appeared magically changed. He looked over the valley, and summed up the present and future in two words—"Snowed in!"

A careful inventory of the provisions, which, fortunately for the party, had been stored within the hut, and so escaped the felonious fingers of Uncle Billy, disclosed the fact that with care and prudence they might last ten days longer. "That is," said Mr. Oakhurst, *aside* once to The Innocent, "if you're willing to board us. If you ain't—and perhaps you'd better not—you can use Uncle Billy gets back with provisions." For some occult reason, Mr. Oakhurst could not, for himself or disciples, invite Uncle Billy's society, and so offered the hypothesis that he had wandered from the camp and accidentally stampeded the animals. He dropped a warning to the Duchess and Mother Shipton, who, of course knew the facts of the associate's detection. "They'll find out the truth about us *all* when they find out any thing," he added significantly, "and there is no good frightening them now."

Tom Simson not only put all his worldly store at the disposal of Mr. Oakhurst, but seemed to enjoy the prospect of their enforced seclusion. "We'll have a good time," he said, "playing euchre and cribbage for the long winter evenings and storms." But when the young man and Mr. Oakhurst's calm intercepted the others. The Innocent, with the aid of pine boughs, extemporized a church for the roofless cabin, and the Duchess directed the disposition of the remainder of the boughs with a taste and tact that opened the blue eyes of that provincial maiden to their fullest extent. "I reckon now you're used to fixin' things at Poker Flat," said Piney. The Duchess turned away sharply to conceal something that reddened her cheeks through its professional tint, and Mother Shipton repeated Piney's remark to herself. But neither Mr. Oakhurst returned from a weary search for the trail, he heard the sound of happy laughter echoed from the rocks. He stopped in some alarm, and his thoughts first naturally reverted to the whisky—which he had prudently *cached*. "And yet it don't seem how sound like whisky," said the gambler. It was not until he caught sight of the blazing fire through the still blinding storm, and the group around it, that he settled to the conviction that it was "square fun."

Whether Mr. Oakhurst had *cached* his cards with the whisky as something debarred the free access of the community, I cannot say. It was certain that, in Mother Shipton's words, he "didn't say cards once" during that evening. Happy the time was beguiled by an accordeon, produced somewhere mysteriously by Tom Simson, from his pack. Notwithstanding some difficulties attending the manipulation of this instrument, Piney Woods managed to pluck several resistant melodies from its keys, to an accompaniment by The Innocent on a pair of bone castanets. But the crowning glory of the evening was reached in a rude camp-meeting hymn, which the lovers, joining hands, sang with great earnestness and intonation. I fear that a certain defiant tone and Covenanter's swing to its chorus, rather than any devotional quality, caused it to speedily infect the others, who at last joined in the refrain:

"I'm proud to live in the service of the Lord,
And I'm bound to die in His army."

The night crept on, the storm raged and whirled above the miserable group, and the flames of their altar leaped heavenward, as if in token of the vow.

At midnight the storm abated, the rolling clouds parted, and the stars glittered like slaves the sleeping camp. Mr. Oakhurst, who—as professional habits had enabled him to live on the smallest possible amount of sleep, in dividing the watch with Tom Simson, somehow managed to take upon himself the greater part of that duty. He evinced himself to The Innocent, by saying that he had "often done it a week without sleep." "Doing what?" asked Tom. "Poker!" replied Oakhurst, *entirely* unconscious that he gave a scrack of luck—nigger luck—he don't get tired. The luck gives in first. Luck," continued the gambler, reflectively, "is a mighty queer thing. All you know about it for certain is that it's bound to change. And it's finding out when it's going to change that makes you. We've had a streak of bad luck since we left Poker Flat—you come along and slap you get into it, too. If you can hold your cards right along you're all right. For," added the gambler, with cheerful irrelevance.

"I'm bound to live in the service of the Lord, And I'm bound to die in His army."

When night crept up again through the gorges, the ready notes of the accordeon rose and fell in pitiful spasms and long-drawn cures by the flickering camp-fire. But music failed to fill entirely the aching void left by insufficient food, and a new diversion was proposed by Piney—story-telling. Neither Mr. Oakhurst nor his female companions cared to relate their personal experiences, this pian would have failed, too, but for The Innocent. Some months before he had stumbled upon, and read through, a stray copy of Mr. Pope's ingenious translation of the Iliad. He now proceeded to narrate the principal incidents of that poem—having thoroughly mastered the argument and fairly forgotten the words—in the current vernacular of Sandy Bar. And so for the rest of that night the Homeric princes and princesses again walked the earth. Troilus and wily Greek wrestled in the winds, and the great pines in the canon seemed to bow to the majestic wrath of the son of Peleus. Mr. Oakhurst listened with quiet satisfaction. Most especially was he interested in the fate of "Ash-heels," as The Innocent persisted in denominating the "swift-footed Achilles."

So with song and story and music and the accordeon, a week passed over the heads of the Poker Flat exiles. The sun again forsook them, and again from laden skies the snow-flakes were sifted over the land. Day by day closer and closer drew the snowy circle, until at last they looked from their prison over drifted walls of dazzling white, that towered above the pine tops their heads. It became more and more difficult to replenish their fire. The snow, first melted where it fell, soon gave way to the axe, then to the spade, then, now half-hidden in the drifts. And yet no one complained. The lovers turned from the dreary prospect and looked into each other's eyes, and were happy. Mr. Oakhurst settled himself to cards, to take losing game before him. The Duchess, more cheerful than she had been, assumed the care of Piney. Only Mother Shipton—once the strongest of the party—seemed to sicken and fade. At midnight on the twenty-sixth day she called Oakhurst to her side. "I'm going," she said, in a voice of querulous weakness, "but don't say anything about it. Don't wakeen the kids. Take the bundle from under my head and open it." Mr. Oakhurst did so. It contained Mother Shipton's ration for the last week, untouched. "Give 'em to the child," she said, pointing to the sleeping Piney. "You've starved yourself," said the gambler. "That's what they call it," was the woman querulously, as she laid down again, and turning her face to the wall, passed quietly away.

The accordeon and the bones were put aside that day, and Homer was forgotten. When the body of Mother Shipton had been committed to the snow, Mr. Oakhurst took The Innocent aside, and showed him a spotted deuce