

THE PRAIRIE DUEL.

FIFTEEN years ago, when the Great West seemed to be much further west than it does in these days of railroads, that "belt all creation," a remote patch or corner of one of the great prairies was counted by the few hunters and settlers occupying it as a district in itself, and they called it Little Elk Prairie. Among the half-wild characters who had built for themselves hovels of driftwood and brush on this bit of rolling plain was a huge hulking fellow of mixed French Canadian, Indian, and negro blood, whose name was Bendbow Laval. A complete savage in appearance, his clothing, whether in summer or winter, never consisted of more than two garments—a ragged shirt and trousers, the material of which was rendered problematical by age and dirt. The mass of woolly, iron-gray hair by which his head was thatched was crowned by something that had once been a portion of a hat; and his immense stockingless feet were thrust into rude cowskin shoes, with holes cut in them to accommodate certain peculiarities of shape and pedal excrecence. From his huge size and muscular development, Laval was more than a match for any one of the dwellers of Little Elk Prairie, none of whom were "chickens" as regarded physical strength. Entirely devoid of education—for he did not know one letter of the alphabet from another—nevertheless the great coarse fellow had a sort of chivalry about him which might or might not have been derived from his share of French blood. His appreciation of the benefits and etiquette of duelling was intense, and he had more than once killed his antagonist in a fair fight. A much more dangerous man to deal with than Laval was Habakuk Sams, by origin a Yankee, as his name denotes, but a prairie man by predilection and long residence. "Hab," as he was called by the men of the plain, was a thin wiry man of middle age, with a brick-red complexion and very light hair. He was an excellent marksman, and had a reputation for courage, shown in encounters with Indians and bears; but he always preferred mild stratagem to skill or strength for the discomfiture of his foes. He had several disputes with Laval, on the common basis of accusation that each was in the habit of stealing animals from the other's traps. This, in the code of the plains, is an unpardonable offence. Men caught in the act have frequently been killed on the spot, and when the offender was an Indian there are traditions of his having been tortured before being put to death. Whether Hab Sams had ever defrauded Laval by purloining fur creatures from the traps set by the latter never transpired. But that Laval was a fur-thief was established beyond a doubt when he was seen carrying to his hovel, one day, a black wolf, caught in a trap set by Hab, and which the latter had left there purposely to test the honesty of his rival. Hab's first idea was to fire upon the purloiner of his property, and so adjust the matter without any need of further reference or appeal. On further consideration, however, he approached Laval, and, taxing him with the theft, demanded restitution of his property or "reason why." "Take that, then," howled the huge fellow, hurling the wolf with such a force at Hab that it knocked him down and sent him spinning a distance of several feet. In a moment Hab Sams had risen on one knee, and, taking aim at his antagonist, fired, but without effect, owing to the flurry caused by the suddenness of the assault. On proceeding to reload his rifle he remembered that he had no powder; but Laval was in a similar predicament, for all the powder in the place had been expended in a recent hunt, and they were awaiting the arrival of a messenger with some from the nearest trading post. Drawing their knives then, the two approached each other for a deadly conflict, which would have been an unequal one, however, owing to the superior strength of Laval, who was also a proficient in the use of the knife. Knowing how slight his chance was with such an antagonist, Hab Sams paused, and looking fixedly at Laval, said, "If you are a man, and not a cowardly sneak, you will fight it out with me in another way, and give me an equal chance of my life." "What way do you want to settle it, then?" said the other. "I'm as good as you anyhow, and ain't afraid to get square with you any way you please. Name your plan, and I'll go you even on it." "Well, then," rejoined Hab, "here's what we'll do, if you have heart enough to do it, as I have. Let's go to the place where the prairie dogs burrow, away over there. The rattlesnakes that live there are big, and unfailing with their deadly fangs. Let each of us choose a burrow, lie down in front of it, thrust his arm in to the shoulder, and wait to see which of us will die first. You're too white-livered a fellow to fight it out that way with me, eh?" Fearful to back out from this horrible proposition lest his reputation for valor might become tarnished forever, Laval agreed to it, trusting that, if one only keeps still, rattlesnakes are not apt to bite. The matter was arranged as follows: They were to meet next morning, half an hour before sunrise, with one witness, who was to act as umpire for both. The burrows in which they were to place their hands were to be selected by this umpire, who was to see

them properly and impartially placed. There they were to remain until the first ray of the sun beamed above the horizon, a few minutes before which it is the habit of rattlesnakes to crawl forth from their dens. The umpire was to notify them of the rise of the sun, at which moment they were to be free to go their ways, should they have escaped the fangs of the venomous reptiles. The honor of both was then to be considered as fully satisfied, and from this there was to be no appeal. It must have been a terrible time, that quarter of an hour before sunrise, to the victims of the etiquette with which the duello ever has been rendered romantic. Perhaps Hab Sams did not feel it so acutely as his rival, for reasons best known to himself.

The first gleam of dawn now reddened upon the horizon, and at a word from the umpire Hab Sams sprang to his feet, expressing by a loud hoop his satisfaction at having come safely out of the terrible ordeal. Not so with his rival, who lay where the umpire had placed him, motionless as a log. On examination, it was found that he was laying in a death-like swoon, from which he was recovered by the free use of whiskey. Sheer fright had got the better of the man's brute courage, and brought him to the brink of death. Hab Sams, as already hinted, had reasons of his own for preserving his equanimity of mind throughout the fearful ordeal. A little after sunset the previous evening, when the rattlesnakes had retired for the night, he took the precaution of stuffing a number of the dens in that part of the prairie agreed on for the rendezvous with a sort of weed that is most noxious to snakes, rendering them torpid for many hours, and unable to crawl or strike. This is how Yankee ingenuity triumphed over brute strength, and Bendbow was ever afterwards obliged to knock under to Sams for personal courage.

Under False Colors.

BY JUDGE CLARK.

"MY POCKET book's gone!" exclaimed an excited passenger, who had stepped up to the bar to liquor, and suddenly found himself without the means to liquidate.

"Mine, too!" chorused a dozen of us, simultaneously clapping our hands on our personal sub-treasuries and finding them vacant.

There was a commotion on board the good steamer *Swiftsure*, one of the best then navigating the Mississippi. A ruffal set we were on whom thus unexpectedly dawned the fact of present insolvency.

My own case was peculiarly hard. The money I had lost was my all. I had just drawn it from a bank to pay for a home I had bargained for, and to which I was expecting soon to conduct my long intended bride. Poor Kate—I could hardly, in justice, ask her to wait longer.

"It is evident that we have pickpockets on board," observed a grave-looking gentleman, who had already found time to talk himself into a leader among us.

It was pretty evident.

"They may have gone ashore with the booty," suggested another—"we have already made several stoppages."

"True," replied the grave gentleman; "still, it is proper that a general search be instituted. It will at least serve to clear of suspicion those present."

"Very right," was the general voice.

"And as mover of the proposal," the gentleman continued, "I first offer for scrutiny my own person and effects."

For form's sake the offer was accepted. Of course no discoveries were made in that quarter. Beyond a decent supply of clothing, a few religious books, and a moderate sum of money, nothing was found on the gentleman's person or among his effects.

"At least they have left me my little pittance," he remarked, returning it to his pocket. "I presume they hardly thought it worth the risk to venture on robbing a clergyman."

Had we known the gentleman's calling sooner—we were inexcusable not to have surmised it—we certainly should have insisted on his exemption from the test he had just undergone.

One after another was put through the ordeal with equally fruitless results, till it came the turn of a slipshod little man, who had hung back to the last and whom nobody seemed to have noticed till now.

"Step forward, sir, and submit like the rest," said the clergyman.

The little man obeyed. As he approached, a singular change came over the minister's countenance. It grew a trifle pale. But the feeling whatever it was, was evanescent.

"Do your duty, gentlemen," he said, in his usual tone of authority.

Those appointed to conduct the search proceeded with it. This time results were not so barren. Every one of the missing wallets was found in the little man's possession! He didn't even flush at his detection. It was hard to tell whether the clergyman looked more surprised or pained.

"What shall be done with him" was the general query.

"It's a pity the laws are so laxly administered hereabouts," remarked the minister.

"That's true," said another, "there's no use turning him over to the law; he would be out of its clutch in a week."

"Let's deal with him ourselves, I say," spoke up a burly looking planter from the bayous.

"My function forbids that I should actively counsel violence," said the clerical gentleman, with just a touch of snivel in his tone.

"Never you mind, Dominic," interrupted the planter; "we'll take the responsibility."

"It is greatly to be regretted," the minister went on, "that such necessities should ever exist, but, it must be confessed, they sometimes do exist."

This time the snivel was more preceptible.

"Sound doctrine old boss!" again put in the planter. "Jest leave the practice to us."

A rope was procured, at one end of which a noose was improvised, the other being made fast to one of the stanchions, and the culprit was given ten minutes to prepare.

"Have you no remonstrance to make against this?" asked the little man of the minister.

"Ask your own conscience," replied the latter, "what remonstrance I can make."

"There is but one crime deserving of death," said the little man, with calm distinctness, "and that is wilful murder."

Again the minister's face paled.

"Time's up!" admonished the planter, "now you just mount the guard there, and when you're shovled over the side, whether you're hanged or drowned 'll depend on the stren'th o' the rope."

"Can I offer you any spiritual consolation, my sinful friend?" said the minister, with a snivel which was now very distinct.

"You hypocritical villain!" thundered the little man with sudden vehemence.

"In your situation, such language to a clergyman is little short of blasphemy," returned the other.

"You a clergyman!" exclaimed the little man. "If you ever entered a church in your life it was to rob it."

"My character, I trust, is not to be assailed by the slanders of one found with stolen property on him," was the dignified answer.

"This has gone far enough," said the little man. "Gentlemen, I'm Tom Hanley, the detective. I hold a warrant for this man's arrest for murder and robbery. It was he who picked your pocket, for he is an adept in that as well as other crimes. I saw him in the act. The accomplice to whom he passed the stolen property I took aside unobserved, before he left the boat at the last landing, and by a little moral suasion, induced him to disgorge privately, taking good care he should afterward have no chance to communicate with his principal. Two of my men followed him ashore, and ere now he is as hard fast as this one will soon be."

The detective pulled off his wig and false whiskers, when the familiar face of Tom Hanley was recognized by at least a score of those present.

At a given signal, half a dozen stalwart assistants, whom we had, until now taken for simple passengers, came forward, and in a trice the desperate thief and murderer was taken in custody, and manacled. He was taken ashore at the next landing, and in due time had justice.

The Oldest Timber in the World

Probably the oldest timber in the world which has been subjected to the use of man is that which is found in the ancient temples of Egypt. It is found in connection with stone-work which is known to be at least four thousand years old. This wood, and the only wood used in the construction of the temple, is in the form of ties, holding the end of one stone to another in its upper surface. When two blocks were laid in place, then it appears that an excavation about an inch deep was made in each block, into which an hour-glass shaped tie was driven. It is, therefore, very difficult to force any stone from its position. The ties appear to have been the tamarisk, or shittim wood, of which the ark was constructed, a sacred tree in ancient Egypt, and now very rarely found in the valley of the Nile. Those dovetailed ties are just as sound now as on the day of their insertion. Although fuel is extremely scarce in that country, these bits of wood are not large enough to make it an object with Arabs to heave off layer after layer of heavy stone for so small a prize. Had they been of bronze, half the old temples would have been destroyed years ago, so precious would they have been for various purposes.

In all Buddhist temples is a tall and broad-leaved lily, which stands directly on the front of the altar. Its idea is as beautiful as its workmanship; it represents that just as the pure white flowers may grow out of the mire and filth, and blossom into loveliness, so may the heart of man raise itself above the wickedness and corruption of the world unto a state of spotless purity.

The terror of being thought poor has been the ruin of thousands.

SUNDAY READING.

Overcoming Temptation.

ONE night at a late hour, Dr. Bentley, well-known among the clergy of olden time, was disturbed at his studies by a rattling sound among some wood which, was sawed and split for his study fire, and had been left by the teamster the afternoon previous; too late to be properly housed. He rose, went cautiously to the window, and saw a woman filling her apron with wood, which she hastily carried away. He resumed his seat and recommenced his study. Shortly after, the same noise occurred, and on looking out a second time he saw a similar operation, the woman filling her apron to its utmost capacity. When she had gone he returned to his book with a tender pity in his heart for a destitution which sought relief in this lonely, dreary, not to say sinful manner. By-and-by he was startled by a crash of falling wood, and hurrying to the window, beheld the poor woman casting the very dust of the wood from her apron. He remained motionless, his gentle heart filled with commiseration.

She swiftly departed and soon returned heavily laden with wood, which she threw on the pile as if it were indeed "the accursed thing." The doctor's compassion and curiosity were now intensely excited. He followed her retreating figure till he discovered her residence, and thus ascertained who she was. What she was, was no mystery to him. The last hour had plainly shown him her virtue's lofty height.

He called early the next morning on Mr. B., the wood-dealer, and directed him to send a half cord of his best wood, sawed and split, to Mrs. —, but by no means to let her know from whom it came, which was readily promised. Mr. B.'s teamster, who happened to be within earshot, though out of sight, was not so bound and when he tipped the wood into the poor widow's yard, replied to her eager inquiry who sent it, by relating the conversation he had overheard.

The conscience-stricken woman, feeling that her sin and her repentance in the lonely darkness of the midnight hour were known and understood by another heart besides her own, hastened without delay to the house of the benevolent man to express her gratitude and her sorrow, and with deep humility and bitterness told him the temptation to which her extreme poverty had reduced her of breaking the eighth commandment.

"Sir," she said, "though my house was dark and cold, though my heart was wrung with anguish at the sight of my poor shivering little one, I could not keep it! I could not keep it! My conscience would not let me!"

"Say no more, my dear madam," said the good man, "I saw it all—I saw you conquer the devil in two fair fights."

The Life of Man.

How graphically the varied aspects of the leaf picture the various seasons of a man's life. The tenderness of its budding and blooming in spring, when that rich golden green glints on it that comes only once a year, represents the bright beauty and innocence of youth, when every sunrise brings its fresh, glad hopes, and every night its holy, trustful calm. The dark greenness and rush of the summer leaf portray the strength and self-reliance of manhood; while its fading hues on the trees, and its rustling heaps on the ground typify the decay and feebleness of old age and that strange mysterious passing away which is the doom of every mortal. The autumn leaf is gorgeous in color, but it lacks the balmy scent and dewy freshness of hopeful spring. Life is rich and bright in its meridian splendor; deep are the hues of maturity, and noble is the beauty of success; but who would not give it for the tender sweetness and promise of life's morning hour? Happy they who keep the child's heart warm and soft over the sad experiences of old age, whose life declines as these last November days go out with the rich tints of autumn and the blue skies of June.

Stick to It.

Nine persons out of ten ignore the golden secret of content; they are constantly striving after something different from that they enjoy.

We do not deprecate enterprise, but it is a habit of constant change that we protest against—the habit of shifting from one pursuit to another.

There are thousands of almost penniless and disappointed men, picking up a precarious living at the very extremity of life, because they have, in the course of their existence, tried a hundred different things, and abandoned all in turn, simply because they did not succeed at once.

To few men is it given to do more than two things well. There is scarcely any pursuit that if followed out with a single-minded purpose, will not yield a rich return.

Select some useful occupation, stick to it, and success must crown your efforts at last. Choose it now—make no delay.—Don't waste your time and your strength, and opportunities, by always meaning to do something—do it! Only weakness comes of indecision.

Never Known to Fail!

THOMPSON'S
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FOR THE
PERMANENT CURE OF CHILLS AND FEVER, DUMB AGUE, OR ANY FORM OF INTERMITTENT FEVER!

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THERE are no diseases so debilitating in their effects upon the constitution as the above, and none more difficult to cure by the usual modes of practice. The Fever and Ague Powders will effect a cure in cases of the longest standing, as well as prove a preventive in the forming stages of disease. Being purely Vegetable, they act with certainty on the disease, totally eradicating it from the system, and preventing a return at any future period. Why waste your money and health in trying every medicine you hear of, when Thompson's Fever and Ague Powders have never failed to cure the Chills in any case.

REASONS WHY THEY ONLY SHOULD BE USED.

Their Reputation is Established.—Thousands of testimonials have been received, showing that these Powders have performed miracles in curing cases of long standing, many of them considered hopeless.

There is no Risk in Taking Them.—They contain nothing injurious, and, therefore, cause none of those lingering diseases so often the result of the many nostrums of the day. Physicians recommend them as far superior to Quinine, or any other known remedy, for they leave the system in a healthy state, and the patient beyond the probability of a relapse.

BEWARE OF COUNTERFEITS.—The genuine are put up in square tin boxes, with "Thompson's Fever and Ague Powders" stamped on the lid, and the signature of "Thompson & Crawford," on the wrapper.—No others can possibly be genuine.

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New Pension Law.

UNDER an act of Congress approved March 3, 1873, widows of officers who were killed, or died of disease contracted in the service, are now entitled to \$2.00 per month for each of their children.

The guardian of a minor child of a soldier who heretofore only received \$5.00 per month pension is now entitled to \$10. per month.

Soldiers who receive invalid pensions can now have their pensions increased to any sum or rate between \$5. and \$15. per month.

Fathers and mothers who lost sons in the service upon whom they were dependent for support, can also obtain pensions.

The undersigned, having had over 10 years experience in the claim agency business, will attend promptly to claims under the above act.
Call on or address
LEWIS POTTER,
Attorney for Claimants,
New Bloomfield,
Perry Co., Pa.

7 204.

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April 3, 1871. If

J. M. GIRVIN.

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We will pay strict attention to the sale of all kinds of country produce, and remit the amount promptly. 5 34y

ADMINISTRATOR'S NOTICE.—Notice is hereby given, that Letters of Administration on the estate of William Adair, late of Loyalville, Tyrone township, Perry county, Pa., deceased, have been granted to the subscribers residing in Madison township.

All persons indebted to said estate are requested to make immediate payment, and those having claims will present them duly authenticated for settlement to
ANDREW ADAIR,
ROBERT A. CLARK,
Administrators.

September 16, 1873—64