THE SCRANTON TRIBUNE- SATURDAY, OUTOBER 26, 1901.

THE SAFETY OF NUMBERS.

QWENDOLEN OVERTON, IN THE ARGONAUT.

RS. DENNISON had begun life and shifted on his chair and watched, by choosing the wrong man. very unhappy indeed. Then he got up by choosing the wrong man. In the resulting misery, the fact and went to her and put his hand on of having plenty of company her shoulder tentatively. She pushed gave her no consolation. She it off-and he felt that he had been unwise again. So he walked to the had many suitors, both because was the only girl within a radius

half-hundred miles, and because was a very nice and pretty one. only Leslie and Dennison had ever der, now and then.

and a chance, and Dennison had won - no one could quite tell why, Magherself least of all, probably. Leswould have been the better match. is used financially, and looks were in is favor very decidedly.

But Maggle chose Dennison with the sual wisdom of her kind; and baving no particular religious preferences one way or another, went with him to the nearest adobe town and had herself married by a padre, as being the easiest and quickest way out of it. And thereafter for three years Dennison had treated her abominably. He made nothing whatever of beating her; he overworked her; he drank. His conduct was the scandal of the surrounding country. Knowing Maggie's progenitors and her own disposition, the wonder to every one was that she did not shoot Dennison and have done with It. Since nothing of the kind happened, the only possible conclusion was that she loved him. Which she did, If he had neglected her she might perhaps have had recourse to a sixshooter: but it is at least having some notice taken of you to be knocked down and Maggie frequently was.

The treatment told on her good looks after a while, the more especially as they were of the sort that are of youth alone. The plains and hard usage age a woman early. So when Mag-gie was twenty-four she looked ten years older than that.

Then Dennison left her. He found somebody he liked better, one day when he went over to the railroad town seventy-five miles away, and took her away with him. Maggie had no notion where he had gone, else she would probably have followed him. Insignad, she stayed on the ranch and hoped and pined. She carried on the ranch alone, it being one of those plain ranches having no especial Loundaries, up especial fields or crops, and only a scrawny mileh cow or two and a few chickens. There were a couple of hundred head of stock, cattle that roamed the country and were, to all intents, wild, and some broneos of much the same sort. These required no care, so Maggie spent most of ner days sitting on the sill of the back door of the adobe and staring off toward the mountains and thinking about Denni-

The Mexican women who lived with her squatted on the ground-in the shade in summer, in the sun in winter-with a black topalo over her head, smoking cigarettes until the hard soil in her neighborhood was strewed with straw-paper stumps. She had fourteen children. Maggie had none. There had been a baby, but it had

A whitewashed board fence died. upon the top of a knoll that was to be seen from the back door marked where the grave had been before the coyotes had torn it up. Besides the woman and the fourteen children there were two "greaser" vaqueros, whose duties were not burdensome, who ate one Dennis it seemed.

door and stood there, his feet wide apart, considering the glaring flat and looking back at Maggie, over his shoul-She cried for a good half hour, and the whole experience frightened Leslie so much that it was not until nearly sunset that he dared get up to the subject again. He meant to go at it tactfully, this time, but it came at the end of a long, strained pause. "Saywhat about our getting joined in wedlock and all that-anyway?" He held

his breath for fear she would cry again. But she took it quietly this time. "I ain't sure he's dead," she answered. "I am," said Leslie. "But I'll go fetch the fellows that told me about it, and you can find out for yourself." He went out and saddled his bronco. and departed by the way he had come. 'I'll be back," he said.

He had no idea where the fellows were to be found. They had been prospectors, and might be anywhere in Arizona, New Mexico. Colorado or California by now. But though his phrasing might have been less polished, his sentiments were identical with those of Calonne-if it were but impossible, it should be done. It took him four months to do it. But at the end of that time he rode up to the adobe again. There were two men with him, and they went into details that caused Maggie to be convinced.

"All right," she said to Leslie that night. "I'll marry you." It was not enthusiatic, but Leslle made allowances, and took what he could get. So, the next morning, the ranch was

left in charge of the two vaqueros, the Mexican woman, the fourteen children. and five mongrel dogs. And Maggie and Leslie rode off, side by side, with the two men bringing up the rear. The same padre who had made her Mrs. Dennison made her Mrs. Leslie now, and gave her his blessing. She took it stolidly. Then she and her husband took the train for California, to see Dennison's grave.

The head-board to It had the surname in black letters on a plain board ground. Maggie did not like that, so Leslie paid for a new one-white,painted with the Christian names as well. When it was duly put up, they went on their way. The way was toward the Mojave. Leslle had mining interests up there, and, being in the general neighborhood, he took the opportunity of looking them up.

At Mojave they left the train, hired a wagon and proceeded toward the in-terior. All day they drove along a road that wound between soft-rolling hills, pale brown, shrub-flecked. The sun scorched. Near the railway there small cultivated bits, where were green things grew. But they stopped after a while, By afternoon it was desolation.

"Where'll we put up tonight?" Maggie asked-the first time there had been a word in two hours or more. There was a house ahead, he told her. He had inquired as to that. It was thirty-five miles from the railway-more or less-and it belonged to

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jerked beef and frijoles, and helped They came to it in due time, but Dennis himself was not around just Maggie wait for Dennison to come then. His wife explained that he had buck.

But though she sat day after day with her fading eyes looking toward the mountains beyond which was the railway and from which came the road, no Dennison appeared. Other people came by at long intervals. Twice Leslie had ridden up. There had been a year's space between the visits. And at the second one Maggie had seemed no nearer consolation or common sense than at the first. Then he had let eighteen months elapse.

When he came down the road this time he saw Maggie, from afar off, sitting on the doorsill with her chin in her hands, the Mexican woman hugging a narrow strip of shade, for it was near noon, and some chickens and children variously disposed. He dismounted with a clanking of spurs and led his bronco to the water-trough.

Maggie rose without haste and went over to him. She might have seen him uve minutes before from any sign of surprise or pleasure she made. Hers was the apathy of the woman of the frontier rancho, to whom life is as her outlook upon the world-dead, fruitless and dry. She took him into the house when the pony was turned over to a vaquero. Had he heard news of Denuicon, she wanted to know. Leslie looked serious, so serious that she leaned forward with her yellow hands clasped hard. What was it, she asked. Dennison was dead. It was that he had come to tell her. He had just returned from the other side of the Colorado, and had had news of her husband there, quite by chance.

"Tell me," said Maggie, "tell me the whole thing. I want to know." Leslie told her, tipping back in his chair with his hands clasped behind his fine head, and his buckskinned legs crossed with a swing.

"Well," he started, "it was this way, you see. He lit out with a womans bad esg from over Central way." (Central City was the Jailway town.) "They went into California, and they set to keeping a rest'rant at Meyer's mine. He got tired of her by and by and he vamoosed the rancho there, too. and went down near to Los Angeles. He got into a scrap there-and the other fellow was a better shot, I guess. That's all."

"Who told you?" asked Maggie, "Two fellows that was on the coro-

ner's jury," he answered her, "What did he fight for?" "Woman," he told her, curtly. "She

was the other man's wife."

Maggie's face was so near the color of the alkali sand outside that it could not turn pale. And the only expression of which her eyes hade ver been capable was a dull hopelessness. there would have been no guessing how the news affected her except that her fingers strained until the joints of them were livid. "Where's he plantcd?" she asked.

He told her the nameof the town. 'If you'll marry me now. I'd take you to the window of the room when to see his grave."

Maggie began to ery then. Even peared at it, ready to jump back, she when Dennison had departed she had motioned to him to open it. He did Maggle began to cry then. Even not shed a tear. So it was all the so, "Put worse now, Wears held back for four "hobody's years from ever, heat-dried, come pain-H this fully.

Leslie thought for a while that she 163 112 was going to des. And that would be the stahis fault. It occurred to him that he can a built for had perhaps been abrupt. He had didn't once or send word. They said never seen a woman cry, because too men had not entered much into his scheme of things. For a while he sat ried Leslie and he took me to see your

gone to drive in a heifer and her calf. She took charge of them herself, in the meanwhile. She was a pretty little thing, tragically young, consider-ing the hardships and the loneliness of her life. Her eyes were innocent and big, and her countenance was of a sweetly insipid cast, with a skin still of peaches and cream. She was glad to see Maggie. Probably she would have been glad to see any one, for the sake of human speech. However that was, she gave Maggie attentions of a kind she had never thought of.

And Maggie was feminine at heart. though she had little enough chance to realize it. The gentle coddling of the litle thing melted her. Within half an hour she had learned to like herperhaps even more than that-to have some affection for her. They were hand in hand, on the edge of a bunk. talking, when Dennis came in. Dennis was merely Dennison with a last syllable the less and a beard the more. Maggie knew him at once. And he knew her. His jaw fell.

"This is my husband," said the girl, grave. We had a new board put on The tone of adoration and possession t. 100." made Maggie sick—but only for a short vindow sill and spoke at leisure. 'Now," she said, "you see here. I got instant. She stood up and put out her nand. Dennis hesitated; then he came married on the straight. ""here can't anybody bother me nor him. But it forward and took it. His terror was ain't that way with you. You didn't. making him quake.

"Pleased to meet you-Mr. Dennis." said Maggie, with stress on the name, vant to talk. But I won't." and looking him straight in the eyes. His own fell. "Sure!" he agreed, lamentably. He tried to smile, "I got to go to the corral," he said. wer his face.

"But I won't, she repeated, "so long as you treat that little thing in there Leslie was there. Maggie thought of that and of what might possibly foisquare. She's a lot 'oo good for you, but she don't know it, poor little fool. You might have had the decency to low. "My husband's out there-Mr. Leslie's out there; you'll find him." she take an older one, anyway. She-she cares about you." Her voice caught. called. It was a warning-with intent to save bloodshed. He might take it but she went on: "And you aln't go-

or not, as he choose. He took it. Instead of to the coring to break her heart if I can stop it ral, he went to his room and locked I'm on to you and Leslie is, too. And himself in and examined his revolver. we mean to keep on to you. We'll know what you are doing, and you against an emergency.

But Maggie went out to the stable She found her husband rubbing down the stock. "Say," she said, standing peside him with her hands on her hips, "say-he ain't Dennis at all. He's Dennison. He's my husband."

It was Leslie's turn to have his jaw drop, "Did you know it?" she demanded. He faced her. "I did not, Mag.

wouldn't have played you any such dirty trick." "All right," she said. She knew the

truth when she heard it. "It's done and there ain't any sense making the girl pay for it. Let on he's Dennis as long as we're here." Leslie nodded and went on with the

rubbing down. Maggie returned to the house. Mrs. Dennis was getting supper in that one of the three rooms of the shack which

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served for kitchen and dising room. with Dennis again. Leslie was with her this time. He lent a moral sup-port, which very little would have Maggie ascertained that. \ . Act. nis was, and tapped on it. He co-

sufficed to make physical. "Don't you forget what I told you." she advised, dispassionately. run," she advised; urt you." He put wife-she's got me address-and she's promised to let me know if ever she's the mast at mis reach. uble of any kind. So you'd better she sat I thought you to get her hao it. And,

Two is we ld Leslie and " she jerked her thumb ther shoulder, "he'll keep and d for you to at 1. she a a well-secled eye on you for the rest of your nature life. And well make it interesting for you if you don't walk thir years, and you Spanish. Sabe?'

seled, and walked away.

Dennis was moved to gratitude. His

so did his hand when he held it out. She leaned her arm on the She looked at it, and her lips curled very nearly haughtily. Then she lifted her eyes with one withering glaner and turned on her heel.

voice shook when he thanked her, and

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They drove off toward the suurise between the eternal, rolling hills You'll be in all kinds of a mess if I Presently Leslie turned to her. "Do you care about that bad egg still?" he He knew the value of her word so asked. She did not reply. His face was not as red as it was usually. "Do you?" he asked again. She shut her well that an expression of relief came lips and looked hard at the white road ahead.

An Awkward Predicament.

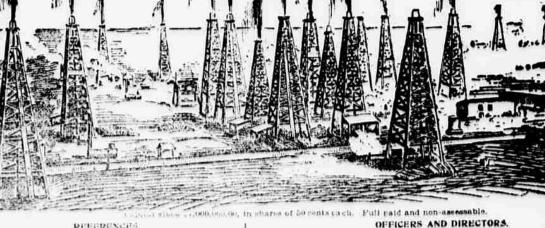
When the fall and muscular Senator Heitief entered the executive chamber this morning received a cordial and what he described a "genuine western welcome" from th presider "Do you remember when you and I wave whole senate?" inclured the president, grasped the hand of the senator. If div-that behind this question was an interest von't get away from us again. We'll be on your trail from now till your the story. When President McKinley stea the senate chamber to the cast from of th last round-up. So, if you want to teep out of jail, you make things easy itol on that bleak, damp day last March the oath of his exaited office for the scroni-the whole senate filed out behind him. man who is now president had just triam eath as vice president and was presiding for her-a darn sight easier than you did for me. Sabe?" She withdrew her arm from the sill. "That's all-but don't you forget any of it," she coun-

the senate. In the excitement attending 11 parture of President McKinley to senate thought to move the adjournment of the The evening was not a pleasant one for any but Mrs. Dennis. It was not Maggie's fault, however. She helped to a specialing officer of the bady Mr. Roser velt could not desert his post, nor sould be on his own initiative, declare the senate ad journed. For fully an hour he sat in lonely staid upon the senate restrum. Not another bund get the supper, and made as much conversation as she could. She smiled upon the just and the unjust alike being was in the great chamber, even the galler ies being empty. Just about the time the unpu-She heard without the quiver of a lash the detailed story of Dennis' courtship cedented situation had ceased to be humorous from his wife. Dennis heard it, too the new vice president. Senator Heitfeld stru-into the deserted chamber to get ble rain coand did not enjoy it much more. She helped with the breakfast the next which he had left in the Democratic clock room Taking in the situation at a glance, the senator morning, too, and then, just before the wagon was ready, she had speech with grave face but suppressed laughter, said:

"Mr. President." "Mr. President." The Vice President." Mr. Heitfeld-I more that the senate do now adjourn until 19 o'clock, noon, temorrow.

The vice president (looking vastly relieved) The senator from Idaho moves that the sena new adjourn until 12 o'clock, usen, tomester we that the second "Your Is there objection? The chair hears none, and i senate stands adjourned until the hour named. The vice president combasized this with mighty thump of his gavel, and, hastily descend-ing from the rostrum, thanked the sometor from Idaho for his action.

"I want to thank you again for that," said "I want to thank you again for that," said President Roosevelt today as he greeted Senator Heitfeld. "If it hadn't been that you forgot your rainceat and had to return for it there is no telling how long I would have had to preside over an empty senate."-New York Tribune



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