

THE AGITATOR.

Devoted to the Extension of the Area of Freedom and the Spread of Healthy Reform.

WELLSBORO, TIOGA COUNTY, PA., WEDNESDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 28, 1863. NO. 10.

Original Poetry.

A DREAM.

BY MERTA BELGROVE.

I dreamed in the dusky twilight,
A strange and changing dream;
I thought I stood on a mountain's brow,
O'erhanging a glorious stream,
Where the waters danced and eddied,
And the white surge waves grew high,
And I knew by the eagle's fatal scream,
That a night of storm was nigh.

Yet the valleys were green and peaceful,
The waters happy and proud;
But I listened with care to the varied sound,
That came from a gathered crowd;
For methought that amid the clamor,
Rang a wail loud and clear,
And the gleaming folds of a banner bright,
Waved free in the morning air.

I gazed with a speechless wonder,
"Till the swelling crowd came nigh,
And then I read on their banner proud,
"We conquer or we die."
And the martial tread grew louder,
And the starry flags waved high,
And I clasped my hands in a speechless prayer,
As the kindly host swept by.

Then a rustling sound came near me,
Like the whispering of a breeze;
And a voice fell on my listening ear,
In words like unto these,
"Ho! now the conflict rages,
And the hoarse death-shriek of thousands
Comes from the warring throng."

A soft voice said in answer,
"Oh brother must this be!
Can blood alone bring buds of hope,
To Liberty's proud tree?"
And then I saw that the swelling stream
Was red with human gore;
And a death dirge mingled in the breeze,
With the booming cannon's roar.

And the war-steed neighed in terror,
By his hapless owner's side;
And mourning friends with white-limbed
In freedom's cause they died.
And mercy shrieked, as her eyes she hid,
While the broad words flashed on high;
"Oh Freedom! when shall this strife be stayed,
How high the time,—how nigh!"

"Not yet!" was sternly answered,
"For the banner of the free;
Must wave o'er all my rebel sons,
From sea to distant sea.
All ages, sex, and color,
Upon my broad domain
Must be free from the tyrant's haughty grasp,
From the scourge and the clanking chain."

Then the bugles blew still louder,
And the broad stream redder grew;
And I went in grief o'er the millions slain—
I went for the living free.
But now, a clarion note and clear,
Rang plaintive down the vale;
And I caught the tone of Freedom's voice
On the breath of the flying gale:

"Ho! noble sons of Freedom,
Peace now your your guide shall be;
Your sacred Union stands secure,
And man is proudly free.
Hail noble sons of valiant sires,
Oppression's reign is o'er;
Kneel then and bless the God of all,
That Slavery rule no more.

TEXAS, 1863.

Secret Story.

WILD FIRE.

BY S. COMPTON SMITH, M. D.

It is now almost twenty years since occurred the terrible event I am about to narrate; yet every circumstance connected with it, stands out as vividly in memory, as if it happened only yesterday.

I was then journeying with two companions, over a portion of that vast plain, that like a sea, stretches from the marshy shores of the Mexican Gulf, westward to the sterile mountains of New Mexico. We had crossed the Colorado, and were journeying at easy stages toward the Guadalupe, which was our destination. Upon the eastern bank of that stream, the little town of Victoria was then attracting some attention, as a favorable point for new settlers.

While encamped on the Nevada, where we had halted for a few days to recruit our mustangs, and hunt wild turkeys, we were joined by a caravan of four wagons, containing as many families, all bound to the same point as ourselves. This party composed of eighteen persons, made their camp in our vicinity; and also concluded to halt and wait for our company, as it was the season of the year when the Indians were liable to be abroad upon their autumnal hunt, and the stronger the party, the less the danger to be apprehended from an attack by them.

The men of this party soon made our acquaintance. They were from the Sabine country, having their wives and children along, each with a negro man to drive their mule teams. Early in the previous spring they had removed their stock and servants to the Guadalupe, and were now prepared to make their permanent settlement there.

On the third day our trail led through a long stretch of prairie, beyond which no belt of timber could be discerned; only a clear line of horizon opened before us, where the blue of the cloudless southern sky, melted softly into the green tint of the swelling plain; while the fine, waving grass had been exchanged for a tangled growth of coarse reeds and sedges, almost impenetrable to our animals. The trail, and old Indian war path, which had been passed over perhaps for ages, ran straight through this heavy growth, while, in that luxuriant soil, the stiff, wire like reeds almost met, over our heads.

We knew that across this dry "weed prairie" stretched a long and tedious trail upon which would be encountered neither grass nor water. We therefore left camp early,—my two companions and myself, while the wagons and families were to follow soon after. We had proposed to reach a small arroyo (the bed of a dried up stream) in the bottom of which we hoped to find water, and pitch camp, to await the coming of our friends.

This water course was a western branch of Garcia's creek; an Ingraham, one of our company, promised to treat the ladies to a supper of fish, which he said might be found in abundance in the deep water holes that remained at intervals along the bed of the arroyo.

We had been in the saddle about two hours, when on ascending a gradual rise of the prairie, and looking behind, we caught a glimpse of the white wagon tops, as they showed above the reeds; but soon after, from the nature of the ground, we lost sight of them. But knowing all was right, we continued to push along till the middle of the afternoon. By this time we had arrived at the spot where we had determined to encamp, and dismounting, we staked the horses out in the grassy bottom of the creek.

Here, as Ingraham had intimated, we found the water standing in deep holes, which were literally alive with fish. During the dry season, the creek, which at other times is a running stream, had partially dried up leaving the water only in pools, in which had congregated vast numbers of their finny inhabitants, and the green sward encroaching upon the bed of the brook, furnished a rank and welcome pasturage to our animals.

Selecting a spot upon the edge of one of these deep pools, where the low creek bank partially broke off the strong westerly breeze, we kindled a small fire, and prepared for the arrival of the wagons.

In a few moments our camp arrangements were completed and each of us furnished with hook and line attached to a stem of the elastic *helidanthus*, and a few grasshoppers, busied ourselves in the exciting sport of drawing the scaly game from their element, and depositing them struggling and gasping, upon the grassy sward. They were a species of carp or cyprinids.

So absorbingly interested were we in this employment that we had not noted the flight of time, till suddenly aroused by the excited conduct of our mustangs. They had ceased to crop the grass, and with heads stretched into the air, and dilated nostrils, stood snuffing in the breeze, while their eyes were glaring with an expression of excessive alarm. Suddenly they sprang upon their lariats, and straining at them, endeavored to escape, at the same time giving utterance to a peculiar cry, which I instantly recognized as the signal of approaching danger. "It's Indians, or wild mustangs," exclaimed Pearson, as he threw his line from him, and ran to the top of the bank.

I followed him as quickly as I could; but Ingraham, who was nearer to it, reached the higher ground first, and shouted:
"My God! the prairie's on fire!"

Had we been fast bound in the interior of a powder magazine, and seen the igniting brand descending, which was instantly to hurl us into annihilation, we could not have been more horror-struck, than at that appalling cry, the prairie's on fire! And in the direction the wind was blowing there was no possible escape for us, out of that wilderness of combustibles!

"The prairie's on fire!" I repeated, scarcely knowing what I said.
It was so! The sun was near its setting in a dull, blood red sky; and between its heavy disc and the horizon, there rose up a rayless bank of vapory smoke, that extended in a vast curve north and south, as far as the eye could reach, while along the distant line, waves of white flame rolled down toward us, like the breaking of the billows of the sea upon a rocky shore. Here and there along the advancing line, some great tongue of flame would leap upward in jets of fire, as it fed upon some clump of matted vines and flower stocks, more luxuriant than the surrounding herbage. These stood out in sharp relief against the dark background, and gave a more terrific aspect to the scene.

While for an instant, we stood spellbound by the sublime, but frightful spectacle, the westerly breeze brought down upon us the strong pyrametric odor of the burning annuals, and the air became dry and heated like the suffocating breath of the African sirocco. At the same moment, a roaring sound, like that of the ocean lashed by a tropical tornado, reached our ears, and vibrated upon the heated air like the waves of distant thunder.

At this time the line of the advancing fire, must have been seven miles, if not leagues, off; but the strong westerly wind, which was momentarily receiving fresh impetus from the expansion of the heated air, brought its sound with startling distinctness to our ears; and the increasing opacity of the sun now low toward the horizon, made the billows of fire glow with a brilliant light. The conflagration, though still distant, was travelling toward us with the speed of a runaway locomotive, and in a few moments, at the latest, would be upon us.

"God have mercy upon our poor friends with the wagons," we involuntarily exclaimed, as in a group we stood gazing for an instant at this terrible vision. But there was not a moment to lose. Pearson and myself were aroused to our own immediate danger, by the voice of Ingraham:
"Cut loose your horses," he shouted, as he leaped down the bank, and drawing his knife severed the strained lariats, where it was tied about the neck of his own mustang,—
"cut loose your horses, boys—they're no use to us now, and may be the poor brutes, may yet save themselves in some of the water holes along the creek bottom."

Scarcely were the words out of his mouth when our three mustangs, snorting and foaming with fright, were flying headlong down the bed of the arroyo. We could hear them dashing and plunging through the water pools, in their mad race to escape the terrible element threatening to devour them.

"Now into the water with your saddles and traps!" again shouted Ingraham, who was the most collected individual among us, as he gathered up the first of those articles he could lay his hands on, and pitched them into the nearest water-hole.

We followed his example, and were about to toss our blankets after them, when we again heard his voice—
"No, no, not them. Now boys, do as I do, and with your knives work for dear life."

While giving vent to these words, the brave Texan had thrown himself on the ground under the western bank of the creek where it was somewhat shelving, and working with his

hands, assisted by the broad blade of his knife was engaged in excavating an opening into the yielding soil.

Instantly divining his object, Pearson and myself each selected a favorable spot, one above Ingraham, and the other below, and worked away as men have seldom worked before. It was as the Texan had said "for dear life," and in almost as brief a time as it takes to relate we had dug away so much of the light and sandy soil, as to make openings sufficiently large to receive our bodies in a cramped position.

These thus hastily completed, Ingraham led the way to where we had thrown our blankets, and having completely saturated it, started back to his artificial cavern. We repeated his motions and in another moment the dripping blankets were suspended as screens in front of the excavations.

By this time the fire had approached to within a few hundred feet of us, and the crackling of the dry stems as they exploded from the expansion of the steam within their burning joints, created a confusion of sounds like the continuous rattle of musketry, that made our voices unheard by each other; and the heated wind, loaded with corrosive smoke and gases, threatened instant suffocation. This was the moment for us to take the shelter of our excavations; and throwing ourselves into them, we drew the dripping blankets over their mouths, and waited the passage of this fearful flood of fire.

Soon that sea of flame was dashing its singing billows over us. We could hear the fierce sounds, and the lapping of fiery tongues over our heads, and felt the earth heating and baking above us, and around us. But fortunately there was no moisture in the porous soil, or we might have been suffocated with the steam, while the moistened blankets, not only kept the heat from penetrating in front, but cooled and fitted the air within for our lungs.

I know not how long we were thus obliged to remain in our little ovens, it could not have been many minutes, however, for, long as it seemed, the wild fire ran swiftly over the plain. The dry and combustible materials that fed the flames were soon consumed; and amidst the black soot and ashes that now covered the land as far as the vision could stretch to the westward; while still to the eastward that sea of fire was rolling and tossing its mad waves with restless fury.

During all these fearful moments, when acting under the impulse of that wonderful instinct, self preservation, none of had for a moment forgotten our poor fellow travellers with the wagons. But among the misgivings that came into our minds on that account, we hoped that they had discovered the smoke of the burning prairie long before we had observed it, and had time to fly on the back track, beyond the extreme edge of the weeds, where in the grassy plain, they could have recourse to the ordinary modes of escaping from the fire, familiar to every Texan.

As we emerged from our sheltering caverns, and by degrees accustomed our lungs to fiery atmosphere, we watched the fire as it swept eastward, each offering up an unspoken prayer for the safety of those with the wagons. Had they kept along the trail after we had lost sight of them in the morning, they should have arrived at the creek by the time we first perceived the smoke of the burning prairie. But their non-arrival led us to hope that they had ere this escaped beyond the reach of danger.

In the rear of us, the fire subsided almost as rapidly as it kindled; but for a long time the air remained almost suffocating; while the breeze kept the light cinders and ashes in continual motion; and in a few minutes our clothes and faces were as sooty and begrimed as the surrounding plain.

Still eastward rushed that roaring sea of fire, impelled by the wind-storm its own heat had created; onward still that broad extended line, as when it had swept down upon us. The horizon on three sides bounded a black and herbless waste, on which no living being or plant existed, while upon the fourth the vision was obstructed by the blinding flames, and the ascending smoke and vapors, mingling with the shadows of night now creeping over the frightful scene.

While we thus stood gazing upon this sublime yet terrible sight, there suddenly broke upon our ears, above the roaring of the wind and fire, above the crackling and explosions of the burning reeds, a wild and prolonged scream of agonized terror, a fearful sound, the like of which I pray God I may never hear again, that seemed to come right out from the midst of the flame and smoke of the burning weeds and in the direction of the trail we had recently come over.

"It is the wagons!" we simultaneously exclaimed, "God of Heaven, have mercy on those defenceless ones, those women and little ones!" was the next emotion that found vent from our lips.

This was the most intensely painful moment of my life, as I know it was with my companions. But it was a moment, too, that called for action, all hopeless though it was; we could not consult our own safety, with that agonized cry ringing in our ears; and once we had started our blankets with water, and hastily enveloped ourselves in them, we started over the still smouldering plain, in the direction of the sound.

The old hard-bitten trail led before us unscorched, but the surrounding atmosphere was still heated to such a degree as almost to stop our breathing. But with our blankets pressed closely over our mouths, we sped along: it was a race for life, the lives of some of those helpless creatures in whose company we were happy and thoughtless of danger, but a few brief hours before. Ah! what an awful sight met our eyes! There lay the charred and still burning wagons and their freight; and among their ruins, and scattered along the ground, the bodies of men, women and children were lying, parched and baked and blackened by the passing billows of flame they could not escape. The corpses were, of course, entire. Some were found locked in the embrace of each other. Others appeared to have fallen while still essaying their escape, or in vain attempting to pro-

tect the children from the effects of the scorching heat. But they had evidently died of suffocation from the smoke and vapors, before the fire had reached them.

It was a sight which neither of us will be likely to forget, to our dying hour. The four negro men and two of the white men were still alive, but unconscious; and before one of us could return from the arroyo with water, they, too, had ceased to live.

They were now all dead; of that party of twenty souls, not one survived that fatal hour. The mules were missing; and the secret of the detention of the party was now apparent. The leading wagon in passing a gully had broken down, and the men had remained to repair it, till too late to escape the conflagration.

We returned to the arroyo, where after spending a melancholy and sleepless night, we once more sought the scene of fearful but brief suffering, and collecting the remains of our late friends, deposited them as best we could in one grave; their last home being the spot where they had fallen.

LETTER FROM KENTUCKY.

BOWLING GREEN, KY., Oct. 20, 1863.

FAIKND COM: I firmly believe that the masses of Kentucky as a State are inclined to be loyal. Evidently much depends upon the success of the Federal arms. A defeat has a very perceptibly unhealthy effect upon the loyalty of the people as we hear it expressed in this section of the State. Should the present expedition of Rosecrans result disastrously to the Federal, and other events transpire at all favorable to the success of the rebellion; this part of the State I am confident would make their election with the South. Let things wear their present aspect however, and Kentucky is safe for the Union. Owing to this unstable position of public opinion—this "halting between two opinions," it is difficult to designate its true "status." Ever since the last Presidential campaign, opinion has been flapping like a fish out of water, changing sides and turning "summersaults" and it seems, has not yet found its element.

I was here in the breaking out of the rebellion. When it was announced that South Carolina had seceded, the universal and only desire was that with the lash of the Government she might be whipped back into the harness. But time passed, secession was discussed, secession documents fresh from the presses of Charleston, circulated freely. The people hesitated; soon the Message of President Buchanan was sent forth, dictating no doubt by arch traitors, or by Buchanan under duress, declaring the inability and illegality of the Government to interfere. The Government itself, shrank back and to sustain itself, could be expected that the people would? Emboldened by this last guarantee, by the President, of their proceeding the enemies of the Government seizing the favorable opportunity, when the public mind was undecided, thrust with fearful rapidity secession upon the people. Conventions, sometimes small and meager, but numerous, were held. Secession flags hoisted and in many instances defended by armed men, resolutions loud and bold were passed, and ere the morning recovered, Tennessee had seceded and Southern Kentucky was clamorous to do so.

But a counter excitement came from the North and rolled back the wave of secession ere Kentucky was quite inundated. The call to arms after the attack on Fort Sumter staggered these mad-cap as little, for they had been led to believe that "coercion" would not be attempted. At this time there was no stability in the people. A man would be found one day in favor of sustaining the Union, and the next for secession, owing entirely to the tenor of despatches in the meantime received. Everybody knows how unstable, as a State, Kentucky has been ever since. Now seeking safety in "armed neutrality," now courting the favor of the new Government, and now clamorous and eloquent for the Union. The success or failure of the Union arms all the while being the index to their notions. In three State elections, however, Kentucky has given promising Union majorities. But we must remember that she has been all the customary engineering, assisted by the patronage of the Government to secure them. As an instance, from Bowling Green have been commissioned eight Colonels, six Captains, several Lieutenants, and one Foreign Minister has been chosen; to say nothing of the numberless and important contracts let. But "nary a private" has Bowling Green furnished; showing that the Union can have friends in Kentucky, so far as it can bestow shoulder-straps and official position; also showing the way in a great measure Kentucky has been kept for the Union.

Before the defeat of Rosecrans an observer would have pronounced Kentucky for the Union, unmistakably. Since the defeat, this section seems more like the heart of Secessia. Sympathizers are on every corner with joyful faces; the whole population seems to catch their spirits. Grapevine rules triumphant, and news that Rosecrans's army is totally lost, that France has intervened, and other stories as absurd and rapid circulation, and even "bets" are offered that Tennessee will be reclaimed to the South in three weeks. The intelligent men are not expected to believe all the floating Grapevine, yet it shows the sentiment of those who circulate this kind of news.

The return to Bowling Green last week of one of the members of the Rebel Provisional Government of Kentucky, is a deadener to sympathizers. Judge Burnam, Treasurer of the new Government and former citizen of Bowling Green, destitute, care-worn, and subjugated, has returned, and thrown himself upon the clemency of the despised Lincoln Government. He ranks in the Laws, both State and Government, as a traitor of the deepest dye. Intelligent men say, clemency in the authorities alone, will, or can save him. He has returned among his former friends who have suffered much through him, been jeopardized in "life and limb" many of them; among such injured friends and with such chances for "swinging" he has chosen, cast his lot, rather than with his friends. What a conclusive refutation of the assertions daily heard here, that the Lincoln Government is imbecile, despotic, tyrannical, and what glorious things does it

Rates of Advertising.

Advertisements will be charged \$1 per square of 10 lines, one by three insertions, and 25 cents for every subsequent insertion. Advertisements of less than 10 lines considered as a square. The published rates will be charged for Quarterly, Half-Yearly and Yearly advertisements:

	3 MONTHS.	6 MONTHS.	12 MONTHS.
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8 do.	8.00	15.00	25.00
9 do.	8.50	16.00	26.50
10 do.	9.00	17.00	28.00

Advertisements not having the number of insertions desired marked upon them, will be published until ordered out and charged accordingly. Posters, Handbills, Bill-Heads, Letter-Heads, and all kinds of Jobbing done in country establishments, executed neat and promptly. Justices, Constables, and other BLANKS, constantly on hand.

foreshadow in the result of this war! Ought not every true loyal heart to beat with joy, when the arch-traitors to our Government, the instigators of this bloody and unnatural war, begin to return, subjugated, repentant and on their knees, throwing themselves upon the mercy of the glorious Government they have injured, and seeking the earliest opportunity to become reconciled before the day of fearful reckoning, which they begin to feel is near at hand?

He does not demand a repeal of the Constitution and Emancipation policies before he can come into the Union again. He does not demand that negro property be guaranteed him before he can come under the old flag. No, his language is, or the language of his actions is, take my property, take the appraised negro, the cause of all our trouble and grant me the privilege of living out my days under the old Government and in the Union. And this is the language of all Tennesseeans recently disenfranchised by the glorious march of Rosecrans. I have talked with many. The contest with the cause of all our trouble and grant me the privilege of living out my days under the old Government and in the Union. And this is the language of all Tennesseeans recently disenfranchised by the glorious march of Rosecrans. I have talked with many. The contest with the cause of all our trouble and grant me the privilege of living out my days under the old Government and in the Union. 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