

RAFTSMEN.

BY S. B. ROW.

CLEARFIELD, PA., WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 30, 1861.

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GOOD NEWS FROM HOME.

Good news from home, good news for me,
Have come across the deep blue sea.
From friends that I have left in tears,
From friends that I've not seen for years.
Good news!
And since we've parted long ago,
My life has been a scene of woe;
No sister's voice falls on my ear,
But now a joyful hour has come.
For I have heard good news from home:
Good news!
No father near to guide me now;
No mother's tear to soothe my brow;
No sister's voice falls on my ear;
No brother smiles to give me cheer.
Good news!
But though I wander far away,
My heart is full of joy to-day.
For friends across the ocean's foam,
Have sent to me good news from home:
Good news!
When shall I see that cottage door,
Where I've spent years of joy before;
Where I've known no grief nor care,
My heart was always happy there.
Good news!
Though I may never see it more,
Nor stand upon my native shore;
Where'er on earth I chance to roam,
My heart will be with those at home:
Good news!

A STAB IN THE DARK.

Some years ago in the city of New Orleans, Gaston Holt, a money-broker of reputed wealth, sat in his private office, awaiting the presence of his young cashier, Charles Lewis. Mr. Holt had told Charles that he wished to see him at eight o'clock in the evening; and the clock was striking that hour when Charles entered the office.

"You wished to see me, Mr. Holt?" remarked Charles—a manly and handsome youth of twenty-three—and speaking with a coldness that would have startled the proud broker at any other time.

"Take a seat, sir," said Gaston Holt; "I have something of great importance to say to you."

"It cannot be of more importance than what I have to say to him," thought Charles, as he sat down facing his employer, who was a tall, hard-featured man of over fifty years of age.

Gaston Holt gazed at the young man for some time in stern silence, and was evidently puzzled how to begin his conversation. At length he said:

"Mr. Lewis, you have been in my employ nearly three months, I think?"

"You are right, sir," replied Charles.

"If you were discharged, Mr. Lewis, you would find it very difficult to be engaged elsewhere."

"Very true, Mr. Holt; New Orleans is crowded with applicants for all kinds of employment."

"You are also largely indebted to me, Mr. Lewis, for money advanced."

"I am indebted to you, Mr. Holt. I was much indebted to others when I entered your office; but at your earnest solicitation I allowed you to assume those debts—debts I incurred by becoming security for those whom I thought, not only honest, but personal friends. I am very grateful to you for your kindness."

"You admit that you are very grateful?" said Gaston Holt, quickly.

"Certainly."

"Prove that gratitude, Mr. Lewis. To give you a chance to prove it, I have desired this interview," continued Holt.

"I trust my industry and ability," began Charles, much astonished at the sudden paleness that swept over Mr. Holt's dark countenance.

"I know—I know, of course," cried Mr. Holt, springing up, and pacing the floor. But I demand a stronger proof; I demand a sacrifice. Young man I am informed that you are about to marry."

Charles flushed crimson, but remained silent; while Mr. Holt, having worked himself into a passion, resumed:

"At least I know that you and Olivia Sancia, the Italian's daughter, have plighted your vows."

"That is true, Mr. Holt. The matter is wholly her's and mine," said Charles rising, in his turn, and drawing himself very erect.

"I see no reason for its introduction here, sir!"

"I will give you a reason, Charles Lewis," said Mr. Holt, in a slow, deep tone. "I love Olivia Sancia."

"You'll what?" cried Charles, starting back.

"I was not aware that you had ever seen her."

"You know it now, Charles Lewis! And now I demand that you shall immediately relinquish, and forever, all pursuit of her hand. Come, she is only a fruitman's daughter; and a young man of appearance and fine prospects can surely make a higher match, than to wed the daughter of Jerome Sancia."

"I might make the same remark to Mr. Gaston Holt," retorted Charles, with stinging contempt, and speaking falsely; "for Olivia Sancia is worth a hundred times as much as you, Mr. Holt. You insult me by making such a proposal!"

"I tell you, young man, my heart is set upon making her my wife," exclaimed Mr. Holt.

"Beware how you stand in my way! I am a bitter enemy, Mr. Lewis. I saved your reputation in assuming your debts; remember that!"

"I have not forgotten it, Mr. Holt—my reputation as a business man, but not as an honest man. Were I to live a thousand years, I should never place my honesty in jeopardy."

"You refuse? You assume a high crest to me, Mr. Lewis?" cried Gaston Holt, bitterly, and clenching his hand. "I will discharge you; I will strip you and your mother of every dollar you have. I will crush you to the dust with a load of debt. Young man, the debt is a slave—a soul-slave to his creditor."

"One you, Mr. Holt, this amount," said Charles, drawing forth a pocket-book, and counting out upon the table a roll of bank-bills. "There is what I owe you! Give me a receipt in full and take it."

"How came you with this money?" exclaimed Mr. Holt, as he summed up the amount, and gave the desired receipt.

"A small legacy left to me by my mother's brother," he remarked, as he secured the receipt. "And now, Mr. Holt, I am out of your power, and voluntarily, out of your service. Gratitude is not due to a man who pretends generosity to gain selfish ends."

"I will blast your name, Charles Lewis!" cried Mr. Holt, "and a dangerous enemy; and, by my life! henceforth and forever I am yours!"

"I am warned in time," replied Charles, buttoning his coat over his broad breast. "Had you not desired an interview with this

evening, I would have demanded it of you, Gaston Holt. I meant to place certain papers, accidentally in my possession, in your hands; but since you are to be my enemy, I would be a simpleton to throw away the weapons chance has given me."

"What do you mean, young man?"

"I mean Gaston Holt," replied Charles, "that I have discovered that I have been toiling for a forger. This day I discovered it. I intended to give you the only proofs of your guilt, that you might destroy them; and so, having proved my gratitude for supposed kindness, would have ceased to be your debtor and cashier the same moment. I shall retain those proofs; I have them in my pocket now. I will not use them against you unless I shall have cause to suspect you are determined to continue the dishonorable practice, or unless—"

"Unless what?" said Mr. Holt, livid and fierce.

"Unless you presume to think of Olivia Sancia," replied Charles, as he turned to leave the office.

"Take this with you!" cried Gaston Holt, springing at him, and striving to plunge a dirk into his bosom.

But Charles was strong and vigilant. He caught the descending hand of the infuriated man, and with a powerful wrench, hurled him upon the floor.

"Assassin and forger; you shall hear from me to-morrow!" said Charles, as the disarmed villain glared at him from the floor.

Then turning, he slowly departed.

"If he lives till daylight, I shall be ruined!" exclaimed Gaston Holt, springing up in dismay, and rapidly following Charles. He soon overtook him in the street, and, as Charles faced him, whispered:

"Be merciful, young man! Give me three days to close up my affairs, and then I will leave New Orleans forever."

He begged so pitifully, and seemed so heart-crushing, that Charles consented, only stipulating that the rascal should leave the country.

"I will swear I will!" said Holt.

The parted—Charles going toward his home, in the upper part of the city, while Holt hurried elsewhere in search of Jerome Sancia, the father of Olivia. He soon found him in his favorite drinking saloon and taking him aside, said:

"You have work to do, Jerome."

"Yes!—What is it, senior?" asked Jerome—a swarthy, evil-browed fellow, whom no one would suspect to be the father of so lovely and amiable a girl as the fair Olivia.

"You are about to lose a large sum of money, my friend Jerome. I promised you a certain amount in case I became the husband of Olivia. You know Olivia is not your child?"

"You and I know only it, senior," replied Jerome.

"Why else? She does not suspect. She cannot. She was so young when I stole her from her parents in Italy, that she knows nothing of her origin."

"Her father is in New Orleans."

"Ah! I can see that."

"Not yet, Jerome. But I wish her to be my wife before the rich Italian leaves for Cuba. You sold me the secret of her birth for a good round sum, and you shall have thrice as much when I am her husband. Suppose you should go to her father and tell him?"

"Tell him?" cried Jerome. "The old man would dirk me on the spot. He is a magazine of gunpowder, that old man. He wronged me yonder in Italy, and I've had a good long revenge of him. Tell him!—my wife might, if she met him, for she has grown very pious of late."

"Well there is work to be done in haste. You know Charles Lewis?"

"Of course—Olivia's love."

"Unless you put him out of the way, I shall never have a chance to give you any more money, Jerome."

"So, understand," said Jerome, setting his teeth hard. "So you know, Senior Holt? Last night I had occasion to stop Olivia; she was very impertinent, you see, and Charles Lewis saw it—saw me slap her ears; not hard; oh, no!—and he threatened to pound me if I ever dared to touch her again. You see he suspects Olivia is not my child. My wife has a tongue entirely too long, and she esteems that young fellow."

Holt, placing said enough, Jerome," continued Holt, "you shall have a bill in the desperado's hand. 'If he lives three days I must leave America, and you—'"

"You shall not leave, Senior. I will attend to this little business."

After much more villainous discourse, the pair separated, and Gaston Holt returned to his office.

It was after midnight when he stole forth into the street, muttering:

"I must secure those papers; he said he had them with him. He never lies. I know the room in which he sleeps; it is easy of access. He will keep those papers on his person, or conceal them in his room. In either case, if Jerome does for him, the papers may be found; so ruin me; and I think I had better trust my own hand rather than Jerome's. At all events, I will try for the papers—at least look about—for I am in agonies of dread."

He hurried on until he paused before the modest residence of Charles Lewis.

The darkness and stillness of the hour, and the open window of the young man's room, tempted him. He easily scaled the little fence before the house, and gained a noiseless entrance into the room. It was by no means the first time Gaston Holt had found himself in so dangerous a situation; and having taken off his shoes before he scaled the fence, he began to advance step by step into the apartment, with which he was quite familiar from former visits of feigned friendship. He paused, and listened very intently, but heard no breathing, and knowing the position of the desk in which Charles kept his private papers, slowly groped his way thither. He reached it, when a slight noise attracted his attention toward the window and as he glanced that way he saw that some dark body had dropped into the room as noiselessly as a cat. Filled with terror, he sank to the floor and glided behind the bed, so that he stood between it and the wall. The next five minutes was a period of horror to him, for he could neither see nor hear anything. He wondered that he could not hear the breathing of the sleeping Charles; and suddenly conceiving that the bed was vacant, he swept his hand softly over it. The bed was vacant.

"No doubt he or some one saw me enter, and is after me," thought he, as an icy sweat began to pour from his face and bosom.

He waited and listened. The suspense was a horror. Again he heard a slight noise; and by its nearness, he knew the intruder was not far from him.

Gaston Holt unseathed a heavy knife, and cautiously retreated, hoping to pass around the head of the bed, and thence to the window, whence to escape.

When he reached the head of the bed, he found it close to the wall, he could retreat no further! Listening intently, he detected a soft, gliding noise, as if a mass of clothing was being pushed toward him by hair-breaths.

Pausing no longer, he sprang over the bed, and rushed for the window. His hand and foot were upon the sill, when the intruder sprang upon him, and plunged a blade at his throat, but merely wounded him in the shoulder.

Gaston Holt turned upon his unknown enemy with a savage curse, and struck back swift and fierce. There was a deep groan; and Gaston Holt bounded into the yard, leaped over the fence—not forgetting to secure his shoes ere he fled like the wind. At the next corner he paused and listened. He heard no disturbance.

"He is finished!" he muttered, after a few minutes of contemplation; and then, congratulating himself that he had escaped so well, hurried to his home, entered unperceived by his servants, and went to sleep, muttering:

"If I had the papers now, I should be perfectly happy. But I shall be summoned there early in the morning, and will have excellent opportunities for search. On the whole, I think I will go asleep early unsummoned, and be the first to start."

He had been asleep less than an hour when his door was broken into by a squad of police, and an officer flung him on the shoulder, saying: "Arrest you for the murder of Jerome Sancia, in the house of Charles Lewis!"

"Ah! then it was Jerome!" cried Holt in dismay, and swooned with terror.

It appeared that Charles had been detained down town until almost morning; and when he entered the room, he found Jerome lying on the floor, nearly dead from a terrible gash on his breast.

Knowing he was dying, Jerome confessed all, and that he had stolen there to assassinate Charles, although he had agreed with Holt to defer the deed till next night.

His confession restored Olivia to the bosom of her happy father, whence she was afterwards taken for life by Charles Lewis.

Jerome Sancia died where he fell; and Gaston Holt is still serving under the execrable decree of law, having been condemned to hard labor.

SECESSION—ITS EFFECTS—ITS OBJECT.

SPEECH OF A SOUTHERN DEMOCRAT.

On the 22d Jan., the Report of the Committee of Thirty-three being under consideration in the U. S. House of Representatives.

Mr. CLEMENS, (Democrat,) of Virginia, said he thanked God that he was permitted, after a long sickness, to take his stand upon that floor in renovated health, at a time when his services might prove most valuable to his constituents. He would not now speak in passion. It would not befit the solemn and portentous great events. We are in the midst of the dying days of the Republic, and he would not therefore utter, even in a whisper, one word which might tend to bring down the impending avalanche upon the quiet homes of the people. He would, at the same time, speak as a Southern man, identified with all the interests of the South. He would speak as a Western Virginian, and as the custodian of those who were not old enough to know the perils to which they were exposed, by those who were now riding on the crest of the popular wave, but who were, nevertheless, destined to sink into the very trough of the sea to ever rise again.

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