

The Buffalo Journal

BY S. J. ROW.

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YIELD NOT TO DARK DESPAIR.

Thou that one heart that loves thee,
In this dark world of care,
Whose gentle smile approves thee?
Yield not to dark despair!
One hand whose loving fingers
Are pressed in thine alone?
One fond, confiding bosom,
Whose thoughts are all thine own?
One truthful voice to guide thee,
And less thee in distress?
One breast, when thou art weary,
Whereon thy head to rest?
Till death thy form has shrouded,
And cold that heart so warm,
Till death the earthly bond,
Heed not the passing form.
Thou hast one tie to bind thee,
And little life to bid thee,
Let love, sweet love, entwine thee,
In this dark world of care!

THE DOWNEASTER AND THE BULL.

AN ADVENTURE ON A PRAIRIE.

What I am going to relate, happened in Muscatine county, Iowa, midway between Iowa city, then the capital of the State, and Muscatine city, a flourishing town on the Mississippi, in a section of the country called the Wapsinoec Settlement, from a creek bearing that name which runs through the settlement.

It was in '52 (and that part of Iowa was then thinly settled), that I found myself one evening at the Eagle Hotel, in West Liberty, a village of some five houses, about one mile east of Wapsinoec creek, (Wapsi—white, noc—earth, noc—creek; literally white-earth-creek) and situated on a beautiful prairie billow.

Some half-dozen travelers and villagers were lounging in front of the ample fire-places in the bar-room; for though the settlers had only a few days since finished their harvest, the evenings were somewhat cool, and a small fire was necessary to perfect comfort—talking of their prospects, and whether there was likely to be a large emigration pass through California in the spring to buy their surplus feed and other produce, when a new character burst upon the stage. As the door was flung open all eyes were fixed in a stare of astonishment and wonder upon the new comer.

The stranger was a raw-boned, lantern-jawed individual, with flaxen locks straggling about his shoulders. His long spindle legs were encased in blue jeans, and he wore a coat of the "steel pen cut," and in color what he would have denominated "but-ut," with an oil-cloth esp drawn so tightly down upon his head that it hid the appearance of having grown on.

Then what appeared most strange and unaccountable was, that he was dripping wet. His whitish-ellow ear locks were parted down to his cheeks, and streaks of dirt marked the divers miniature water courses across his forehead, and down his nose; water dripped from the claw-hammer tails of his coat and from the wrist bands of the same. On his back he carried an oil-cloth carpet-bag, securely fastened by stout leather straps, which crossed upon the breast. Marching into the middle of the room with an immense clatter of cow-hide boots, he halted and cast an inquiring glance around the circle occupying the benches in front of the fire. Bagley, the landlord of the "Eagle" arose, nodded and said:

"Howdy even'n', sur."
"Howdy yew few? Be yew'r the landlord o' this house?"
"Yes-er."
"Want 'er know? Reckon you couldn't keep a feller here, nor give him a bite o' suttin' for supper, could yer?"
"Yes-er."
"Ye mean to say ye ken—bed an' break fast?"
"Yes-er."
"God darn! glad to hear o'ut—an' if yeon kin jist mix a feller a little suttin' hot an' strong, with a good deal o' rum in't an' but leetle water it'll do me a mazin' sight o' good."
"Yes-er."
"Strong, mind; a good deal o' lieker. You've got rum?"
"Yes-er."

While the landlord was preparing his rum, the stranger sat in front of the bar with pack still on his back, evidently bent on seeing that the correct thing was done in the rum and water mingling. Then having imbibed a "regular snorter," he asked the landlord to assist in removing his pack. This being done, he was about handing his carpet-bag over to the landlord to put behind the bar, when he caught sight of an immense rent in it, and therefrom protruded the corners of articles of clothing within it. The instant he made the discovery, the carpet-bag tumbled from his hands, his jaw dropped, and for a few seconds he stood the very image of despair. At length he roused himself, and striking his clenched fist against his forehead, he howled in a voice of heart-rending agony:

"Ruined! ruined! ruined! Tetotally busted in a smash! One hundred and fifty acres o' the best land that ever lay out'dore, ripped all to flinders! Oh, Sarrer Ann, little knowest that we are ruined, busted family! Little thou thinkest thou art a beggar! Oh, Jewusalem! Heow shall I ever meet yeeon, sin! This destruction hev bin wrought! After all our skrimpin', an' skrewin', an' sinchin', an' turnin', an' twistin'; arter sellin' old-Barney an' the steers; arter sellin' the tew-year-old hafter an' the nine shoals; an' arter thob, oh, Sarrer Ann, goin' to church in caliker, we'er a busted famerly! Oh, Jewusalem, All, all lost—gone in a minit! Oh, heow, leetle Jed, an' Sarrer Ann, ken I meet yeeon?"

This outburst from the tall Yankee took us all by surprise. We could not imagine what had happened to cause him so much alarm and grief, for the tears were flowing plentifully down his brown weather-beaten cheeks.

"What in the world has happened to you, sir, to cause you so much distress? You are certainly not lamenting at this rate over that rent in your carpet-bag?" asked I, advancing to where the Yankee stood.

"Oh, no, no! Holy Jewusalem, 't was nothin' else but that! Oh, murder, murder—I daren't hardly think o' it! There's a poor poor Sarrer Ann, feelin' so proud, an' talkin' to leetle Jed about our fine new home in the prairie, jist like me an' her us'tn' after to dew an' here, Oh, Jewudas! Is a whole quarter section of the nearest land in Iowa gone to eternal smash!"

The poor fellow's feelings now completely mastered him, and he hid his face in his hands and sobbed like a child. His last words however, gave me a clue to the mystery, and taking up his carpet-bag, I commenced hauling out shirts, vests and handkerchiefs, all thoughly water soaked, till at the bottom I found a carefully-rolled bundle.

Mr. Yankee had now controlled his grief, and stood near, with his hands on his knees, bending over me in breathless suspense. Unrolling a hickory shirt, I found within a large brown paper parcel, and within that a handkerchief, carefully pinned, and within it a package done up in a newspaper. On opening the newspaper I found what I had expected to find from the first, viz: a land warrant for 100 acres of government land, all snug and dry.

It is almost useless to attempt to describe the extravagant joy of the Yankee. The moment he saw that his land-warrant was safe and sound, he gave a perfect howl of delight, and snatching it from my fingers, he pressed it to his bosom, as he might have done Sarrer Ann, had she been present, and with tremendous strides commenced pacing back and forth across the room. It seemed impossible for him to be still an instant.

"Glory to God," he cried; "glory to the most highest! Sarrer Ann, all our savin' an' scrimin' aint in vain! Go on with your tork—plan an' kakerlate! Take little Jed on yer knee an' sing! In the ev'nin' when you go out to milk, look to 'rd where the sun is goin' an' think—'twix the land, we'll be happy there; he'll hev the land, we'll be happy yet! The steers is saved! The shoats is all right! The hafter an' old Barney's bound to count! Oh, fellers! you see in your midst a happy head o' er famerly—you witness a joyful human—"

"If you will excuse my interrupting you, sir, and if it is a fair question," said I, "how did you come into this sorry pickle?"

"Excuse the question? Sartin', 'show. Tell yer the bull story in er minit—give the bull particklers—a full akcount. Jewudas! what a narer escape that quarter section did hev."

"Well, but let us have the story."
"Yes, sartin', sartin'. Well, gents, my name is Peleg Snodgrass, son o' Mr. Snodgrass, from down in Maine—"

"Never mind that—tell us how you got so wet."

"Yass, sartin'. Well, you see, back har, 'bout a mile beyond Nockyernose creek, I wur walkin' along as happy as a lark, lookin' about over the prairie, and thinkin' how beautiful the great All Bein' had made the world, an' what awful taters this side would raise, when I saw a big drove o' cattle jist one mile ahead o' me. I was a-lookin' at 'em, an' an' almighty great brindle bull jumped out o' the tall grass an' begin to shake his all-fired great curly head, an' beller, an' switch his tail, and paw the sile over his back. I concluded it best tew let on like as if I wur n't afeard, an' so I begin tew whistle Rahe her down Sal, an' other good chunes, thinkin' as heow I'd slip past the old cuss; but jist as I got opperize, he gin a snort, an' begin to walk to 'rds me, stoppin' once in a while to put a rake in the sile with his fore feet. I put in a few quick steps 'bout then, but was afeard tew run, cos I knowed of I did, he'd feel encouraged. 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