

Mountain Sentinel.

"WE GO WHERE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES POINT THE WAY;—WHEN THEY CEASE TO LEAD, WE CEASE TO FOLLOW."

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MISCELLANEOUS.

JAMES BOWIE.

THE NAPOLEON OF DUELLISTS.
Four years ago when Theodore Parker the eminent *theophilanthropic* preacher of Boston visited Europe, having a letter of introduction for that purpose, he called on Thomas Carlyle. The English *solitaire* plied the American with innumerable questions relating to our customs and habits of social existence on this side of the great water, but manifested the keener curiosity concerning the people of the backwoods. Parker drew for the other's amusement a vivid sketch of the achievements of Bowie, the famous arch-duellist of Texas. Carlyle listened with sparkling eyes till the close of the narrative, and then burst into exclamations of involuntary enthusiasm.

"By Hercules! that man was greater than Cæsar or Cromwell—nay, nearly equal to Odin or Thor. The Texans ought to build him an altar."

The burning sympathiser with the hero in all its phases, rubbed his hands together, chucking in an ecstasy of savage glee, and made Parker repeat the story of bloody anecdotes. Finally he put the question:

"But by what miracle could it happen that the brave fellow escaped the capital penalty of the law after such countless violations?"

To this interrogatory Parker, as he himself confessed, could return no satisfactory answer; and as ten thousand readers have perhaps pondered the same problem without receiving a rational solution, it may not be uninteresting to explain it briefly, especially as a clear elucidation can be detailed in a few words.

Let it be remembered then, that although the great system of common law, that "perfection of human reason" for the Anglo-Saxon race, prevails throughout all the states of the west, wholly as to its definition of crimes, and partially as to its mode and measure of punishment annexed to each, nevertheless in its practical application to given cases it is controlled by the power of a far mightier law—the omnipotent law of public opinion; because in most western courts juries are absolute judges of both the law and the fact, and their interpretations often evince direct antagonism with the *dicta* of my Lord Coke and the classic comments of Blackstone.

On the subject of homicide in particular public opinion has passed the bounds of all books of jurisprudence, and settled as an immutable statute, this extraordinary axiom:

"It is justifiable to kill in fair combat everybody and everything who ought to be killed!"

In Bowie's numerous rencontres he always kept within the prescribed limits of this latitudinarian rule, and hence he was always acquitted by frontier juries, and frequently with *addenda* to their verdicts highly complimentary to his character as a chivalrous gentleman. In truth most of his desperate engagements grew out of his innate and invincible disposition to espouse the cause of the weak against the mighty. One illustration by incident will present this peculiarity in the strongest light, and may, besides, reveal a thorough knowledge of the heart and soul of the man.

On the evening of the fourth of June 1835, the steambot "Rob Roy" started from St. Louis to New Orleans with a full crew of passengers. Immediately after "getting under good head way," to adopt a favorite backwoods phrase, one person attracted universal attention by the annoying eagerness with which he endeavored to make up a party at cards. Indeed, his oft-repeated and persevering efforts to that end soon became insulting and unendurable; and yet his appearance was such as to deter the bravest on board from administering the chastisement which he so richly deserved. He was a huge mass of mighty bone and muscles, with swarthy features, bearing the impress of many a scar; piercing dark eyes, that seemed to possess the power of blasting the beholder—cold-gleaming eyes, such as haunt the memory painfully, a rank luxuriance of coal black hair, immense whiskers and moustache. This savage looking figure was habited in the costliest clothing, and adorned with a profusion of jewelry, while the outlines of several murderous weapons were plainly distinguishable beneath his gaudy vest and superfluous coat. Nor did he need these to render him an object of terror. A connoisseur in the science of billigerent gymnastics, would have confidently pronounced him a match for any five men on deck, without any aid from lead or cold steel.

At length, after many failures, he prevailed on a wealthy young merchant of Natchez to join him at a game of *poker*. They sat down beside a small table near

the bar, and were soon absorbed in that most perilous of all excitements, of which the two alluring ingredients are the vanity and pride of individual skill, and the uncertainty of general hazard. At first the stakes were small, and run of cards seemed wholly in favor of the merchant; but presently they bet more freely, and the gold eagles and hundred dollar notes were showered down on the board with extravagant ardor; and then the current of fortune changed—ebbed away from the young merchant and flowed to the professional gambler in a stream like the ocean's tide. As usually happens in such cases, his want of success only piqued and maddened the loser, and he sought to recover himself by venturing such desperate ventures as could not but deepen and confirm his ruin. And thus they continued during that long summer night. The intensity of their excitement became equivalent to insanity. Every nerve was strung, every energy of the brain was taxed to the utmost, their teeth were set as hard as those of antagonists in the tug of mortal strife, the sweat rolled from their brows like great drops of rain.

The passengers formed a circle around the players, and looked with that interest which such extraordinary concentration of intellect and passion never fails to inspire even in bosoms that shudder at its excess. The merchant and the gambler attracted all eyes, and kept many awake and gazing all morning. Among the latter was one presenting a countenance so piteous that it might have melted hearts of marble to tears. A pale and exquisitely beautiful face peeped incessantly from the half-opened door of the ladies' cabin, weeping all the time as if oppressed by some dreadful sensation of immediate sorrow. It was the merchant's lovely wife weeping her farewell to departing hope!

There was one spectator also, whose appearance and actions excited almost as much curiosity as the players did themselves. He was a tall, spare man of about thirty, with handsome features, golden hair, keen blue eyes of preternatural brightness, and his firm, thin lips wore a perpetual smile—a mysterious smile of the strangest, the most inscrutable meaning. With the exception of his red calico shirt, this person was dressed wholly in buckskin, ornamented with long swaling tassels and wild figures wrought out of variegated beads, after the fashion of some western Indians. He stood close beside the card table, and held in his left hand a sheet of paper, in his right a large pencil, with which ever and anon he dashed off a few words as if engaged in tracing the progress of the game.

Still the merchant and gambler persevered in their physical and mental toil. The dial of the stars, with its thousand finger of golden fire, pointed to the world shadows of midnight; but still they did not pause. It still was "shuffle and cut, & pass ante up, and I call you, and rake down the pile." Towards the morning a tremendous storm arose. The red-lightning flashed awfully—the hail poured like a frozen cataract—the great river roared till it rivalled the loudest thunders of heaven; and the very pilot at the wheel was alarmed. But the mad players heard it not. What was the tumult of the raging elements to them whose destiny hung upon the turning of a card? And the smiling blue-eyed stranger in buckskin still stood by them with his pencil and paper, calmly noticing the developments of the game.

Finally the storm passed, as the beautiful day-break came out like a thing of glory in the great grey east. Then the infuriated merchant, distracted with his heavy losses, dared the climax of folly. He staked five thousand dollars, comprising his last cent of money in the world, on "two pairs of kings." The whiskered gambler "called" him; they showed hands: the blackleg had "two pairs of aces," and "raked the board." The merchant dropped to the floor as if he had been shot through the brain, and that beautiful young wife flew to his side and fell shrieking upon his bosom. They were both borne away insensible to the ladies' cabin.

As he deposited the winnings in his pocket, the gambler emitted a hoarse laugh that sounded frightful as the chuckle of a fiend; but he instantly lost color as a low, calm voice remarked in his ear—

"Villain, you play a strong hand at many different games, but here stands one who can beat you at all of them!"

He turned, met the glance of those keen blue eyes so preternaturally bright, and shuddered. But he immediately regained his presence of mind—for he was no coward—and then he frowned till his shaggy brows met like the coil of a serpent, and demanded sternly—

"Beggars, who are *you* to banter a gentleman thus rudely?"

"I am James Bowie, of Texas," the other answered with a ringing laugh; "and

you are John Lafitte, a bastard of the old pirate!"

The gambler reeled in his chair as if he had been struck by a thunderbolt, but recovered again from the shock in a moment, and asked in a firm tone—

"What game do you wish with me?"

"*Poker* first, and *pistols* afterwards, if you play foul," replied Bowie.

"Very well," rejoined the other, and they took their seats at the table.

For a time their success seemed equally balanced, the gain and loss being alternate. At last the gambler ventured one of his skillful manoeuvres in dealing. Bowie smiled strangely as his quick eye detected the trick. He said nothing, however, but looked at his hand, and bet five thousand dollars, staking the money in ten large bills. The gambler went five thousand dollars higher, which resulted in a "call." Bowie held "four jacks;" but, with his habitual fiendish chuckle, his antagonist showed "four queens," exclaiming as he did so—

"By heaven, the pile is mine!"

"Not yet," shouted Bowie, as with both hands he raked the heap of notes to the tune of twenty thousand dollars into his own pocket.

Choking and purple with rage and shame, the gambler roared—

"To the hurricane deck, and let pistols be trumps this turn!"

"Good as gold!" replied Bowie, and the two hastily ascended the stairs and assumed their separate positions—the gambler over the stern, and Bowie over the prow.

At that instant the sun was just rising in a cloudless sky. Nature looked sublime. The woods and waters appeared as parts of one divine picture, with the boundless blue of heaven for its background. The broad bosomed river rolled away like an immense sheet of burnished silver, speckled here and there with the flash of golden bubbles; shining fishes gambolled in the sparkling wake; and all the bright birds—those sweet singers, whose life is a dream, and that dream only music—chaunted their wild anthem to the new day; while the two great duellists, the most deadly ever known in the southwest, stood with cocked pistols, eye to eye, and their fingers fixed on the hair-triggers, prepared and waiting to slay and be slain.

"I am ready. You give the word," cried Bowie, in his clear, ringing voice, and with that inseparable smile of strange meaning on his lips.

"I am ready. Fire!" shouted the gambler, in tones murderous as death.

The two pistols roared simultaneously. Bowie did not move though he barely escaped with his life, for the bullet of his foe had cut away one of the golden locks of his yellow hair. The gambler was shot through the heart, and dropping on the brink of the deck, had almost tumbled into the river. He was buried by the squatters at the next wood yard. And thus perished justly a bastard son of the great pirate Lafitte.

There never was a jury empanelled in the west who would have brought in a verdict against any man for killing him, and more especially under the circumstances, because public opinion pronounced that "he ought to be killed." And such were desperadoes that Bowie commonly exterminated.

The generous victor immediately proceeded to the ladies' cabin and restored the winnings of the gambler to the young merchant and his beautiful wife, who both received the boon as a gift from heaven, with as much gratitude and joy.

If we should write a volume concerning the exploits of James Bowie, his character could not be rendered more transparent than it is revealed in the foregoing anecdote. He was always the same—the friend of the feeble, the protector of the oppressed, and the sworn enemy of tyrants. He was brave without fear, and generous beyond precedent; and though he had faults, gigantic ones, too, he atoned for all the errors of a stormy life by the splendor of his magnificent death. His tomb is the Alamo, his epitaph the word "Texas," and his fame will fill a humble though safe niche in the Temple of Freedom through all time. He can never be forgotten till the bowels of the earth cease to furnish metal for the fabrication of those bright blades of steel which bear his imperishable name.

A Dublin paper says that a school-master in Ohio advises that he will keep a Sunday school twice a week—Tuesdays and Saturdays.

Snooks was advised to get his life insured. "Won't do it," said he; "it would just be my luck to live forever, if I should."

There are 19,500 practising lawyers in the United States.

THE QUAKER AND THE COW BOYS.

From the New York Era.
The intervening period from the commencement of the year 1776 to the close of '78, was an eventful time for the infant Republic. They had declared their independence, had thrown off the yoke of Britain and the time had now arrived, when, in the words of a patriot, "it was time to be seen whether America had virtue enough to be free or not." The year of '78 was particularly distinguished by the evacuation of Philadelphia by the British, by several brilliant engagements in the "contested field," which shed an undying lustre upon the American arms, and for the multifarious bands of predatory ruffians who infested the forests in the vicinity of New York, Philadelphia, and the "neutral grounds." They were composed of renegade Tories and villains of all descriptions, principally native Americans. They were fierce and cruel; savage alike in their manner of living, and, indeed, verifying the assertion of the poet, that

He who loves not his country, can love nothing

It was a balmy morning in June; the sun shone with intense brilliancy, and its burning rays reflected upon some parts of the armor of a solitary equestrian, who was winding his way from West Chester to Philadelphia. His horse might have been better days, as well as himself—both appeared jaded and worn with toil. The former was a large black and noble looking animal; the maigre appearance of his ribs, which stood out in bold relief, "bore testimony ample" of his meagre & stunted fare. His rider was a man whose demeanor at once stamped him as one of the "brave sons of liberty," a certain expression about the mouth, the bold and fearless glance of a black eye, and the noble contour of his form, spoke of him as the bravest of the brave, when deeds of danger were nigh. His holsters contained a pair of pistols, which were the only arms visible. A military coat rather worn, a rough foraging cap, completed his warlike accoutrements. An air of determined bravery was bleeded with a humorous expression which lingered about his visage, and upon all this

"Middle age
Had slightly passed his signet sage,"
"By Jove," exclaimed he, "here is old Baker's they told me of at Chester;" and spurring his Rosinante, he soon dismounted at the door of a miserable inn, and giving his noble animal in charge of an attendant, he made his way into the interior of the dwelling.

The landlord was alone. Our adventurer knew him to be a staunch Whig, and greeted him cordially.

"Well, Baker," said he, "is there any news stirring?"

"None of consequence, sir—are you going to the city?"

"Yes,—what is the distance?"

"About five miles to go the direct road, but—"

"But why, pray?"

"Why, the 'Cow Boys,' are as thick as blackberries—a band of twenty robbed two men yesterday, and only on Monday there was a man murdered out-right."

He stepped to the window and mused anxiously.

"Baker," observed he at last, "I have been told you are honest, and I doubt not. My name is Barton, and I am paymaster in the army, and with me I have several thousand dollars. To go through the forest you speak of as I am now, were an act of consummate folly. Can you rig me with a poor horse and countryman's dress, with a wig and Quaker hat?"

"Yes, Major, I have the very things. If you'll come this way I'll show you."

In a few minutes Major Barton returned having undergone a complete metamorphosis. A pair of home spun breeches, drab coat and broad brimmed beaver hat superseded his military equipage, every trace of which had disappeared, and his soldier-like bearing had given place to the demure and quiet deportment of the honest Quaker. Albeit his bold eye flashed occasionally from under the broad brim of his upper integument, and sadly belied the staid and suffering disposition which it became him to assume. The money was carefully deposited in a pair of saddle bags, which were thrown across the saddle, and Major Barton mounted.

"Good morning, Baker," said Barton. "Take good care of my beast."

"I will," shouted the worthy landlord, "and luck be with ye."

The Major rode on in silence, and thus communed with himself; this is indeed making a virtue of necessity, to be compelled to ride this sorry jade.

It was a transformation with a vengeance, and no one would there have recognized any but the honest Quaker. He had proceeded into the forest about a mile and was turning a short angle in the road when he was commanded in a stentorian voice to stand. But two men were near

him, and these two were as villainous looking beings as one would wish to look upon. Squalid wretchedness was depicted upon every feature, and in a voice rendered hollow by every misery, they demanded his money.

"Alas, my dear friends," said our worthy Quaker, "I have but little, which I will bestow upon thee, if thou demand it. But friend (to the one that held the bridle) release my beast and fear not that I shall attempt to escape thee. Why dost thou pursue this course, ruining both body and that immortal part which dieth not? I would have thee cleave unto some calling—and if ye will imbrue thy hands into the blood of thy fellow man, join the forces of your country and—"

"Look here," shouted one of them, "you infernal canting hypocrite, stop your preaching."

The Quaker fumbled first in one pocket and then in the other, and producing some change, he handed it out to them in silence. They eyed the paltry sum with looks in which shame and wrath struggled for mastery.

"Three fips and four coppers," mumbled one, glancing at the Quaker, who sat complacently composed on his horse.

"Three fips and four coppers! d—d you begone!" and bestowing two or three kicks on the old horse, which merely started him on a gallop, they dashed thro' the tangled waste of underwood, and were soon beyond the ken of the "honest Quaker," alias Major Barton of the Continental army. He sobered the animal into a patient trot, more becoming his garb, and "whistling as he went for want of thought," he soon entered the city in safety, and with his comrades in arms had many a hearty laugh on his adventures with the Cow Boys.

Peter Single's Escape from Matrimony.
"We are liable to disappointments," says my aunt with a sigh.

"True, we are," I answered, "but you surely don't pretend to call mine a disappointment?"

"What else, you blockhead?"

"Why, an escape, aunt,—a wonderful, miraculous, and delightful escape."

"Why, these words are strange, Peter."

"No more strange than true, my good aunt, and every day's observation. Merely peeping, aunt—looking into the secrets of their hearts—the secrets and the houses of those who are married—and I thought then of the true blessings of liberty."

"'Tis a gift of Heaven bestowed upon man by his divine Creator; and animated beings, free from the thralldom of slavery, sing together for joy—for why?—because they are free."

"Why, Peter, you seem inspired!"

"Amen, aunt, when speaking of liberty."

"Then you don't regard the loss of Dolly?"

"Not a fig—not a fig. Did you ever hear of the reason of our separation, aunt?"

"No."

"Well, I will tell it to you; 'tis an excellent joke, I assure you. We were on our way to church, for the awful crime of matrimony, trading along the path leading to the holy pile, quite loving and affectionate, when all of a sudden Dolly looks up in my face, and cries, 'Peter, Peter! What dolly?' says I, 'Peter, who is it to make the fire after we are married?'"

"You, of course, Dolly," I replied; "that you must be aware, is a female's place—her duty." "Mr. Single, I tell you that it is unmanly, ungentleman like, and unhusband like, too, to say that I must make the fire. And do you think I will get up on a cold, frosty morning, while you are sleeping in bed, and make your fire, sir?"

"Why, Dolly, my dear, this is strange conduct; and I went on to tell her that I would prepare the wood over night, and have everything ready for her; and, Dolly, you know business will call me out early." "I don't know, nor I don't care, Mr. Single; make the fire I will not." "You won't make the fire, madam." "No sir."—Then, Dolly, bang me if I have you." Then, Mr. Single, bang me if I care." And so we parted; yes, on the spot; and I have rejoiced at the event ever since."

A gentleman was agreeably surprised, the other day, to find a plump turkey served up for his dinner, and inquired of his servant how it was obtained.

"Why, sir," replied the black, "that ar turkey has been roostin' on our fence for tree nights; so dismornin' I seized him for de rent ob de fence."

"Uncle Zeké, did you know the United States have been in the habit of encouraging and acknowledging *tories*?"

"Certainly not, Cimón, what kind of *tories*?"

"*Territories*. Now give me some peanuts, or I'll catch the measles and make you pay for 'em."

The Habit of Reading.
Young men should always cultivate a habit of reading, for it may be to them not only the means of such usefulness and information, but the perennial source of many of the finest and highest enjoyments of life. They who make good books their constant companions, will never want good and faithful friends in their prosperous days, or seasons of reverse. There can be no blank in the lives of those persons, who from active love, hold daily fellowship with the wisest and best of the race.

We think we could hardly be tempted to exchange our habit of reading for any other friend it may be our fortune to find on earth. And we are sure that any young man who will make this his friend, will esteem it among the wisest steps of his life, and so we counsel the young, from our own experience, among all their gettings in this world, to get the habit, the love of reading, and always to have at hand a good book with which to fill up every leisure hour. In this way they may come at last to know that the gems of life are found in its waste places.

The Wonders of Nature.

There is a tree called the Manchanceel, in the West Indies; its appearance is very attractive, and the wood of it peculiarly beautiful; it bears a kind of apple resembling a golden pippin. This fruit looks very tempting, and smells very fragrant, but to eat of it is instant death, and its sap or juice is so poisonous, that if a few drops of it fall on the skin, it raises blisters and occasions great pain. The Indians dip their arrows in this juice to poison their enemies when they wound them. Providence has so appointed it, that one of these is never found, but near it grows a white wood, or a fig tree, the juice of either of which, if applied in time, is a remedy for the disease produced by the Manchanceel.

True Sublimity.—The eloquent and thrilling response of Kossuth to the Sultan's demand that he should renounce his religion and embrace Mohammedanism, is worthy of being regarded among those memorial sayings that in times of trial have been encouraged and sustained by the unflinching trust inspired by the Christian faith. "My answer does not admit of hesitation. Between death and shame the choice can be neither dubious nor difficult. Governor of Hungary, and elected to that high place by the confidence of fifteen millions of my countrymen, I know well what I owe to my country even in exile. Even as a private individual I have an honorable path to pursue. Once Governor of a generous country—I leave no other heritage to my children—they shall, at least, bear an unsullied name. God's will be done. I am prepared to die."

Song.—Oh, marry the man you love girls, if you can get him at all; if he is as rich as Cæsar, or as poor as Job in his fall. Pray do not marry for pelf; he'll bring your soul into thrall, but marry the man you love, girls, if his purse is ever so small. Oh, never marry a fop girl, whether he is little or small; he'll make a fool of himself and you, he knows nothing well but to draw. But marry a sober man, girls, there are a few left on this ball; and you'll never rue the day, girls, that you ever married at all.

The following instructions to unhappy swains, the victims of misplaced affection, strike us favorably. Try 'em: "When a girl refuses you, assume a philosophical air and tell her you are glad of it; you you only made the proposal to win two bottles of champagne and an oyster supper you had bet with a friend, who had thought you had not spent to talk of matrimony to a ternaunt. Them's um."

Legislative Wit.—There is an enormous amount of Legislative stupidity at the present time, and it is really refreshing to meet with a specimen of as good legislative wit as the following: A wag in one of our Southern Legislatures, perceiving a mosquito alight on a neighbor's hand, immediately arose and addressing the chair moved that the mosquito have leave to withdraw his bill.

The Emperor of China is dead. A letter from Mr. Williams, Missionary to the Flowery land, dated Canton, February 25th, brings the intelligence. The Emperor's name was Tunkwang. "The Glory of Reason." He was it seems son of Kinking, and has been on the throne since 1821. His age was 60. A son, some 17 years old, will probably be his successor.

A clergyman, praying at a camp meeting in a most fervent manner for the power of the devil to be curtailed, a zealous old negro loudly exclaimed—

"Amen! yes bless de Lor, but he tuck smack smooze off!"