

Huntingdon Journal

BY JAS. CLARK.

HUNTINGDON, PA., TUESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1849.

VOL. XIV, NO. 42

MY MOTHER'S VOICE.

My Mother's voice! how does it creep
In silence on my lonely hours;
Like healing sent on wings of sleep,
Or dew upon the unconscious flowers.
I might forget her melting prayer
While pleasure's pulses madly fly,
But in this still, unbroken air,
Her gentle tones come stealing by—
And years of sin and manhood flee,
And leave me at my mother's knee.

From the "War of Life," of Mayne Reed.

THE GUYASTICUTIS.

MAJOR TWANG'S STORY.

Mine gentlemen is also a travelling story, and though not so new as that of our friend Laurens, it is perhaps equally true.

I was journeying to the city of Washington in company with a friend, a Georgian boy, like myself. We went, as thousands have gone before and since, to try our luck at office hunting. You are well aware that the road from Georgia to Washington passed through the Palmetto State, a State distinguished for the fertility of its soil, as well as for the wealth, chivalry and intelligence of her sons. Here the Major winked knowingly at the company with one eye, while he kept the other fixed on the South Carolinian. I thought myself a smart traveller, young then; compared with my companion I was green as a pine. He was naturally sharp as a briar, and experience had polished his wits to the keenness of a cambric needle. His name was Cobb, Willey Cobb, a live Yankee.

We started from home on a capital of three hundred dollars. It was all that we could rake together. But we had a couple of stout Georgian ponies; and this we concluded, would be enough to put us through to Washington and back.

If we're stumped said Cobb, we can sell the cattle.

Unfortunately, before entering the Palmetto State it was our luck to pass through the town of Augusta, on the Georgia side. Augusta has always been considered a brisk little place. We found it so. Not being in a hurry, we agreed to stay over night and the next day.—We had fallen in with some very agreeable acquaintances. We got to playing—at first a nine-penny poker—then a quarter dollar loo—then brag, and finally our Augusta friends introduced us to the interesting game of faro. We played all night, and by day-break had deposited our three hundred dollars in the bank, where it stayed!

What is to be done? said I

I'm thinking, said Cobb.

Sell the ponies and start back? said I.

No such thing, sharply responded Cobb.

What better can we do? asked I.

What have you in your saddlebags? I inquired my friend, without heeding my last interrogatory.

A shirt, a pair of pistols, a plug of tobacco, and a bowie, was my reply.

We must sell the bowie first, said Cobb, we will pay our tavern bill, and get us out of this infernal hole.

And what next—on to Washington? I inquired.

Of course, said Cobb, we would look wise turning back—we would certainly be the standing joke of the county, added he.

But can we travel without funds? said I.

That we will have to find out, said Cobb, with a look as cheerful and happy as if he had relays of horses all along the road to Washington, and his bill paid at every tavern along the route.

I have an acquaintance, continued he, at the end of the first stage from here, we can stay all night with him; that won't cost anything; beyond that we must trust to the hospitality of the farmers; I think we can get through South Carolina and Virginia handsomely; the danger is, we may stick in the tar—we must travel through the turpentine State on the proceeds of your pistols; but let us dispose of your bowie and get out of this sharper's nest!

As Cobb was my senior, and in my estimation a great genius, I of course acquiesced. He sold the bowie-knife to one of our gambling friends for six dollars, the tavern was liquidated, leaving a few shillings in our joint purse, and with this we took the road through to South Carolina.

At the end of the first day we stopped with Cobb's friend, and were hospitably entertained. Cobb felt a strong inclination to borrow from him, but he could not bring himself to confess the cause of our necessity. He had a high idea of his travelling talents, and did not wish to acknowledge he had been outwitted by the Augusta sharpers. He left his friend's house therefore, after an excellent breakfast, our horses well fed and curried, but without an increase of our finances. On the contrary, we had given

en a quarter to the darky who had saddled our horses.

We were now fairly en route, travelling through, to both of us, a complete terra incognita.

That night we stopped at what appeared to be a planter's house; a snug establishment; I do not know what Cobb told the owner as we were preparing to leave in the morning, but I heard him remark somewhat jeeringly, as we got into our saddles, 'it ain't usual for folks to travel through these parts without money.'

'Rather inhospitable,' whispered I as we rode off.

'It's rather inhospitable,' said Cobb, 'especially for South Carolina—however, he's an exception I guess.'

And he was an exception, for the next place we stopped at, they turned to and blackguarded us outright, calling us impostors, and suspicious Yankees, and the next after that, the landlord, for the house was a tavern, threatened to levy upon our saddlebags, which he certainly would have done, but Cobb told him very significantly that they contained only a pair of pistols, and they were loaded and might go off. As if to assure him that he spoke the truth, drew out the pistols and handed one of them to me, then cocking his own, he told the landlord he might have the saddle bags now, as they were empty.

But Cobb was six feet two, with a pair of fierce black whiskers, and an eye as black as coal, and the landlord concluded to let the bags hang where they were, so we leaped in our saddles and rode off.

'This will never do, Harry,' said Cobb as we jogged leisurely along.

'Never,' said I.

'We must hit on some plan to raise the wind,' continued he.

'I wish we could,' said I.

'Think,' said he.

'I'll try,' said I, and I commenced turning over in my mind every plan I could think of, that would be likely to relieve us from our present difficulty.

But raising the wind by the mere process of thought, is an achievement which has puzzled sharper intellects than mine, and I was abandoning the twentieth project, when Cobb, who was riding ahead, suddenly checked his horse, and wheeled around in the saddle with a triumphant gesture shouted out—

'Harry—I have it!'

'Good,' said I.

'I've treed the varmint,' continued he.

'You have?' said I.

'Like a knife,' said he.

'I'm glad of it,' said I, 'but how?'

'Never mind, I'll tell you all to-night; I've not got the thing straightened out yet. How far do you suppose we are from Columbia?' inquired he.

'About twenty miles I should think,' answered I. 'We have come five, and they said twenty-five miles from the tavern.'

'Well, then, ride slowly,' said he.—

We must not reach Columbia before dark; what sized place is it?

'I haven't an idea,' replied I; it ought to be a good chunk of a place though—it is the State Capital.'

'So it is—you're right—it'll do,' said he; and we rode on in silence, he buried in profound meditation, evidently maturing his plans, and I dying of curiosity to know them.

After a half hour after dark we entered the town, and rode up the street—Cobb looked inquiringly at the different stores as we passed.

'Here's the thing!' ejaculated he, pulling up in front of a shoe shop, and getting off his horse.

He entered the shop, I could see by his gestures to the owner of the establishment, that he was in the middle of the story. All that I could hear was the following. 'After you have made the hole, you may nail on the lid, and paint the letters upon it—here they are.' Saying this he took a scrap of paper and, writing some words upon it, handed it to the store keeper.

'I'll send a dray for it in half an hour,' continued he, as he paid for the box; and bidding the man good night, he came out, mounted his horse, and we continued our way to the principal hotel, where we drew up and dismounted.

'I'll be back in an hour, Harry,' said he, throwing me his bridle; in the mean time, take your supper, and engage a snug room, and wait for me. Don't register till I come—I'll tend to it.'

So saying he disappeared down the street.

Agreeably to his instructions, I ate supper, and heartily too, for we had not tasted victuals since morning; and was shown to my room, where I waited patiently for about two hours. I was still ignorant how the supper was to be paid for, when the door opened, and Cobb entered. A couple of darkies followed at his heels carrying the box that I had seen him purchase, upon the lid of which was painted in large bold letters,

The Wonderful Guyasticutis! and underneath an oblong hole or slit, newly chiseled in the wood.

Cobb held in his hand a broad sheet of paper. This as soon as the darkies had gone out of the room, he spread out upon the table and pointing to it, he triumphantly exclaimed:

There—now, Harry, that's the varmint!'

'What the d— is it?' said I.

'Read for yourself old fellow!'

I commenced reading,

THE WONDERFUL GUYASTICUTUS,

TUS,

Caught in the wilds of Oregon, near the boundary of 54° 40'.

This was in large capitals. Then followed the description in smaller letters.

This remarkable animal hitherto unknown to naturalists, possesses all the intelligence of the human, combined with the ferocity of the tiger, and the agility of the orang outang! He is of a bright sky color, with eleven stripes upon his body, and one more round his nose, which makes the even dozen, and not one of them alike!

In his rage he has been known to carry Indians up to the tops of the highest trees, and there leave them to perish with hunger, thirst, and cold! which accounts satisfactorily for the uncivilized nature of the red man!

The highly intellectual citizens of Columbia are respectfully informed that this wonderful quadruped has arrived among them, and will be exhibited this evening at the Minerva room, at the hour of eight o'clock. Admittance 25 cents.

Presently a low moaning was heard behind the screen; then a groan and the most piteous of whines. Down, Guy, down! still, dog, still! cried a voice, in hoarse commanding accents.

'The chain is my cue, said I to myself as I waited for the appointed signal. The people had all arrived, and already began to stamp and clap their hands, and exhibit the usual symptoms of impatience, crying out at intervals, the Guyasticutus!

'But you don't think you can gull the intelligent people?'

'Bah! intelligent people; it is plain Harry you don't know the world, said he contemptuously.

'And what do you expect me to do?' I asked him.

'Let us see the savage varmint.'

At this the Guyasticutus growled fearfully.

'Give him a bone,' cried one.

'Go it, old 54° 40!', exclaimed another.

'The whole or none,' shouted a third.

'Fifty-four forty or fight,' cried a fourth.

'Go it, old Guyasticutus,' came from a fourth part of the room.

At this the audience became convulsed with laughter. The groaning now became louder and more terrible, and Cobb's voice was heard in hoarse accents apostrophising the Guyasticutus. Then commenced a struggle behind the screen and the rattling of the chain. This was my cue. Putting on a look of terror, as I had been instructed by Cobb, I rushed up the open space between the spectators and pushed in behind the curtain. I stole a glance backwards as I entered, and saw that the audience had already caught the alarm. Some of the people had risen to their feet—and stood pale and trembling! Behind the screen, Cobb was running to and fro, scraping the sanded floor, rattling the chain, and chiding some imaginary object in the most threatening accents. He was in his shirt sleeves, and streams of what appeared to be blood was streaming over his neck and bosom!

'Down, savage down,' cried he.

Boo-oo-oom-wow, roared the Guyasticutus.

'Oh, Mr. Wolf,' cried Cobb, seeing me enter—'come here—for God's sake help, or he'll be off.'

'Hold on to him, shout I in a loud voice—hold on.'

Boo-oo-wow-wow groaned the Guyasticutus.

'Help, help,' cried Cobb.

'Hold on!' shouted I.

'It's against the rules,' answered I.

'And besides, a stranger makes him savage.'

'Oh, it does,' said he apologetically.

'Terrible,' said I.

'You'll have a good house, I think,' said he, after a short pause.

'I hope so,' said I.

'The bills are out, Mr. Van Amburg was about putty early this morning.'

'Mr. Van Amburg,' ejaculated I.

'Yes, Mr. Van Amburg; your partner.'

'Oh—yes, Mr. Van Amburg my partner,' I chimed in as I saw that this must be the nom de manager of my friend Cobb—but Mr. Van Amburg did not put up the bills himself?

I said this to cover the faux pas I had made.

'Oh no, of course not,' replied the landlord—he hired a boy.

'Certainly, that was right,' I added.

'Breakfast'll be ready in a minute—ye'll come down!'

'Oh, of course.'

Cobb now returned, bringing with him about six feet of a log chain, done up in paper.

After repeating his groaning and growling, descended to breakfast, Cobb first locking the door, and putting the key in his pocket.

We were evidently objects of interest at the breakfast table, Cobb calling me Mr. Wolf, and I addressing him as Mr. Van Amburg. The servants waited upon us with delighted attention.

After breakfast we returned to the room, when Cobb went through the groaning rehearsal, and shortly after left me.

This he repeated at intervals during the day; upon each succeeding occasion louder, if possible, and more terrific than before.

Night came on at length, and with our box covered up in one of the landlord's quilts, we started for the Miner's Rooms.

These I found fitted up with a running screen, and brilliantly lighted with candles. Cobb had the box and chain behind the screen, while I remained at the door to look after the Treasury. We had no tickets, each one paying his or her quarter, and passing in.

In a very short time the room was filled with ladies, gentlemen and children—tradesmen with their wives—merchants and their families—young bucks and their sweethearts, and even a number of the intelligent members of the State Assembly. Expectation was on tip-toe to see the wonderful Guyasticutus!

Presently a low moaning was heard above the groveling things of sense; pity it is so few can elevate themselves above self and selfish considerations, to take a broader and more liberal view of what becomes their manhood.

The chain is my cue, said I to myself as I waited for the appointed signal.

The people had all arrived, and already began to stamp and clap their hands, and exhibit the usual symptoms of impatience, crying out at intervals, the Guyasticutus!

'Give him a bone,' cried one.

'Go it, old 54° 40!', exclaimed another.

'The whole or none,' shouted a third.

'Fifty-four forty or fight,' cried a fourth.

'Go it, old Guyasticutus,' came from a fourth part of the room.

At this the audience became convulsed with laughter. The groaning now became louder and more terrible, and Cobb's voice was heard in hoarse accents apostrophising the Guyasticutus. Then commenced a struggle behind the screen and the rattling of the chain. This was my cue. Putting on a look of terror, as I had been instructed by Cobb, I rushed up the open space between the spectators and pushed in behind the curtain. I stole a glance backwards as I entered, and saw that the audience had already caught the alarm. Some of the people had risen to their feet—and stood pale and trembling! Behind the screen, Cobb was running to and fro, scraping the sanded floor, rattling the chain, and chiding some imaginary object in the most threatening accents. He was in his shirt sleeves, and streams of what appeared to be blood was streaming over his neck and bosom!

'Down, savage down,' cried he.

Boo-oo-oom-wow, roared the Guyasticutus.

'Oh, Mr. Wolf,' cried Cobb, seeing me enter—'come here—for God's sake help, or he'll be off.'

'Hold on to him, shout I in a loud voice—hold on.'

Boo-oo-wow-wow groaned the Guyasticutus.

'Help, help,' cried Cobb.

'Hold on!' shouted I.

'It's against the rules,' answered I.

'And besides, a stranger makes him savage.'

'Oh, it does,' said he apologetically.

'Terrible,' said I.

'You'll have a good house, I think,' said he, after a short pause.

'I hope so,' said I.

'The bills are out, Mr. Van Amburg was about putty early this morning.'

'Mr. Van Amburg,' ejaculated I.

'Yes, Mr. Van Amburg; your partner.'