

The Huntingdon Journal.

"LIBERTY AND UNION, NOW AND FOREVER, ONE AND INSEPARABLE."

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A Select Story.

MY HOST.

A HIGHWAY ADVENTURE.

MY business called me through the northern part of the State of Illinois I crossed the Illinois river at Ottawa, intending to strike Rock river at Forest's Mills. Forest was an old friend, who had gone out some years before, and erected a mill upon one of the tributaries of the last mentioned river, he having bought a whole township in that section. It was some out of my way, as my most direct route was very near due west from Ottawa, whereas this route took me over sixty miles farther North. However, I had learned that there was quite a good road to Rock river, and I turned my horse's head in that direction. I calculated my time, and concluded that by moderate travelling I could reach the mill in two days. During the first day my road lay through a country mostly cleared and was well travelled; but on the second day I struck into a wilder region, and the way was little better than a bridle path through a dense forest. I passed several clearings where small huts were erected, and at one of these latter, I stopped and got some dinner. I found a young man in charge of the premises, the father having gone to "the mills." I asked what mills they meant, and the old lady said they were "Forest's mills."

From these people I learned that Forest's place was forty miles distant, and that the only dwelling after leaving two near by, between here and there, was a sort of stopping place kept by a man named Daniel Groomer. They said he generally kept food for man and beast, and also had a good supply of liquor, principally whiskey. His house was twelve miles to the mills. This suited me. I could reach by six o'clock, Groomer's, and there get some supper, and rest and bade my horse. Then I could easily reach Forest's by nine, as the moon was well on the second quarter. These good people refused to take any

was trotting around upon his bare feet, and then set forward again. There was another hut at the distance of half a mile, and a second about a mile off. I saw no more human habitations till I reached Groomer's. I found the travelling full as good as I had expected, and arrived at the forest inn at just half-past five.

This inn was situated on a romantic spot and to a lover of isolated nature must have been a charming retreat. The house was built of logs, the outside surface hewn and the seams filled with cement formed of some sort of fine, tough moss and pitch. There were three separate buildings to this house, the principal one being built with the gable end to the road, and the other two upon either side, running out like two I's. Then there was a barn a short distance off, with a pigsty connected. Take it all together, it was quite a place for such a locality. A small stream ran close by, so that water was plentiful.

As I rode up to the door, Mr. Groomer himself came out. He was a tall, gaunt man, with a fiery red head, and a face as coarse as it was ugly. But I was surprised when I heard his voice. I had expected a tone like the bellow of a bull; but instead of that his notes fell upon my ear like the speech of a woman. He smiled as he spoke, and I thought to myself how his appearance would deceive any one, for in conversation he was a different man.

I informed him that I was on my way to Forest's mill, and could only stop long enough with him to rest my horse and get some supper. He gazed into my face for some moments without speaking and finally said:

"Ah—yes—humph." Then he turned into the entry and called "like." He came—a tall, strapping youth of one or two and twenty, with a red head and features that could belong to no one but to a child of my host. "Like" took my horse and Mr. Groomer led the way to the "sitting room," as he called it. It was rough but comfortable, and the furniture consisted of a pine table, a mahogany bureau, and four long pine benches which were set against the walls. There were no chairs, these benches being sufficient to accommodate quite an assemblage.

Groomer asked me if I would like something warm. I supposed he meant whiskey, and I told him no. He said I had better take a little, 'twould do me good. But I assured him I never used it—that I felt better without it.

"But do you mean that you never drink whiskey?" he added, with elevated eyebrows.

"Never!" I told him. "Brandy, I s'pose; or mebbey rale old gin?" pursued my host.

"No," I replied. "I don't use any stimulous drinks at all." "You don't!" burst from his lips, while he eyed me from head to foot. "Wal, stranger, I'd give you sun'thin' for your picture to hang up in my house. Never drink! How in marcy's d'ye live! How do you contrive when ye get wet or cold?"

"Why," said I, with a smile, "I get dry again as soon as possible." "Dry, my sake, I should think 'twould be an everlastin' dry! Never drink!—Wal—here I've lived year in an' year out on't to fifteen years and you're the first man I ever seed as wouldn't drink a fit' o' whiskey on the top of a long journey. Fact—stranger—'tis by thunder!"

I told him I thought it very probable, and he then went out, and I heard him leave the house.

In half an hour my host came and informed me that supper was ready. He led me to a back room, where a table was set quite respectably, the dishes being of blue ware and nearly new. He and I sat down with me, and as I saw them attack the various articles of food, I felt assured there could be no poison in them. The meal consisted of boiled potatoes, fried bacon, and new wheat bread, and I did ample justice to the repast.

"You think you must go on to-night?" said my host, while we were eating.

"Yes," I told him. "I wish to see my friend, and I shall gain considerable time by reaching his place to-night."

"Is he expectin' ye?" Groomer asked.

"No," I answered.

"Perhaps he don't know that you're in this section at all?"

"No, he doesn't," I said; and I expected my host would urge me to stay with him until morning, so I had my answers all prepared.

But I was mistaken. He didn't urge any such thing. On the contrary he said he thought I was wise in my determination. He would like my company, but it would be better for me to push on. I was

horse was brought to the door. I took out my wallet and asked what was to pay. "Half a dollar," I paid it and then asked what was the most direct route.

"You see that big tree, just over the barn there?"

"Yes," I said.

"Wal, that's right in the best road—When you strike that you can't miss the way."

"But isn't there another road,—which follows this stream right down to the mills?" I asked, for I had been informed by the young man who had taken charge of my horse at noon, that Groomer's inn was right by the very stream which gave Forest's mill power, and that the road followed the stream direct.

"Oh," said my host, turning and looking off toward the stream, "that road ain't fit to travel now. 'Tother one's the best."

"But what's the matter with it?" I asked.

"Why the bridges are all washed away an' then there's been windfalls across't. I tried it last week, and had to come back.—The upper road is a matter of a mile or two further, but that's nothin'. Your beast is good for it, I guess."

I told him my horse would stand it well enough, and then asked where the other road struck the stream.

"Don't three miles this side of the mills?" he replied.

"It's all clear and direct?"

"Yes. You can't miss the way."

I had my host good bye, and then started on. I didn't like the idea of a new road at all. The youth before mentioned had told me what an excellent road it was from Groomer's to the mill by the river road.

He said it followed the stream which was very near straight, and that it was light & open the whole distance. However, of course Groomer knew, so I must make the best of it. I looked back as I reached the edge of the wood. I was upon a gentle eminence, and could overlook the shrubbery passed. I looked and saw like going from the house to the barn; he had a saddle upon his arm. I was sure it was a saddle—perhaps he had an errand to do.

Ere long I entered the wood and found it thick and gloomy. The path was plain enough, and had evidently been at some time a traveled road. Aye—I remembered, now, of having heard my informant of the noontide speak of the "old road." He said there used to be a road leading to Rock river, but when Forest commenced his settlement, a new road opened by the stream, and the old one was discontinued. He said nothing about any bridges.

At the distance of two miles, I came to a place where a bed of sand lay across the road. It was a sort of gully, and a stream must at some time have run there. I looked, but saw no track upon it. Water had swept across since any living thing had trodden it. I slid from my saddle and examined thoroughly; but I could find no tracks.

Of course the father of my noontime's host could not have gone this way! And yet he had gone to Forest's mills. I began to suspect mischief. There had been an uneasy sensation lurking in my bosom ever since I left the inn.—Something was wrong. I regained my saddle and looked about. The sun was nearly down, in twenty minutes, at the furthest, it would be out of sight.

Instinctively I drew one of my pistols from the holster. I raised the hammer, and found the cap in its place. I was just putting it back, when I noticed a mark upon the butt. It was a peculiar knot in the wood. That pistol I always carried in the left holster. It was not so sure as the other one. I took out the other and was sure the weapons had been changed by other hands than mine. They had remained in the saddle at the forest inn, and it had taken place there.

I began to think. Why was Mr. Groomer so particular to know if my friend expected me? And why should he be so anxious to have me set forward that night, instead of remaining with him and paying him a dollar or so more than I did? Then this road—I believed I had been deceived. There were no freshets to carry away any bridges, for it was now near Autumn and the river road had been travelled all summer.—And then the saddle I had seen like carrying to the barn. There was surely mischief in all this. Daniel Groomer had daughters in his house, and, perhaps others, whom he would not have to hear the noise of the robbery. And very likely he would not wish to have such a deed connected with his house at all. Of course he knew I had money. No one would be traveling, as I was, in traveling, without a couple of my pistols on my person taken out, might they not have been further dealt with? I took the one from the right holster and examined it. The ball was in its place and the cap on. Still I was not satisfied. I slipped the cap off, and found the percussion composition removed. There was not a particle left within the cap. And this was not all. I found the tube spiked with a little pine stick.

Here was the secret sure enough. I took my penknife and succeeded in drawing out the stick, and then I examined the other pistol, which I found in the same plight. I stopped and went to work in earnest. I had an excellent screw for removing bullets, and my pistol barrels were emptied in a very few moments. I had a serious objection to firing them off in the woods, where the report might betray the knowledge I had gained. So I emptied them, and then snapped a cap upon each. I found them both clear, and then proceeded to load them, which I did carefully.

And now, how should I proceed? That this road would lead to Forest's mills I had no doubt, and it would be nearer for me to keep on than to turn back. So upon that point my mind was made up.

And next—why would my host come? For that he meant to rob me I felt certain. Every circumstance—everything that had transpired between him and me—pointed to that one simple result. Would he go down the river road a piece and head me off? or would he follow me directly up? Most likely the former. I considered upon it a while, and then resolved to push on and keep on my guard.

The sun went down and it grew dark in the deep wood; but the moon was already up, and as her beams fell lengthwise upon the road she gave me considerable light when my eyes had become used to the transition. Half an hour had passed since I looked to my pistols, and just as I began to wonder if I had been mistaken, I heard the sound of a horse's tramp at no great distance. At first it puzzled me to tell the direction from which it came, but in a moment I knew it was in advance of me and upon my right hand, which was towards the river. Presently it stopped; I drew my horse to the left side of the path and kept on a gentle trot, having raised the lappel of my right holster.

In a few moments I saw a dark form amid the bushes, a little way ahead, on the right. As I came up a man rode out. It was my host!

"Good evening, sir," he said, with exceeding politeness.

"An—good evening," I returned. "I had not expected the pleasure of your company."

"No, I expect not," he returned, in a sort of hesitating manner. "And I should not have come out only for a little business I forgot when you were at the inn." It was plain as day. My pistols had been rendered useless—I had been sent off into this unfrequented wood, and now the villain had thought to take my life and money without any risk to his own body and then hide my poor carcass in the earth, where very likely others had been hidden before. My eyes were open and my hand ready.

"May I ask to what business you allude?" I said.

"Yes," he snapped out, something in agreement with his features. "I want money, money, sir."

As he spoke, he raised his pistol.

"Take care," I cried, raising my pistol, and pointing it in his face.

"Ha, ha, ha," he laughed in coarse triumph, "your Yankee pistols weren't made to harm such as me! I'll soon put you where I've put others afore—"

When a man knows death is staring him in the face, and that only his own act will avert it, he is not yet to wait long. At least I am not.—And my host's last words gave me ample proof of the correctness of my suspicions. Without waiting for him to finish, I fired. His finger must have pressed the trigger of his pistol, for within the space of a watch tick a sharp report answered and mingled with mine, and my hat shook upon my head.

Daniel Groomer swayed to and fro several times in his saddle, and then with a gurgling groan sank upon the earth. I slipped down after him, and when I stooped over the body I saw a few drops of dark blood trickling from his forehead.

For a few moments I felt awe struck and condemned. It was a natural feeling in such a presence. But when I came to reflect upon all that had preceded the deed, I felt that I had done my country service. I made the robber's horse fast. I reached the mills at half past nine, and found Forest and his family up. They were glad to see me, and introduced me to Mr. Price, whom I afterwards found to be the owner of the place where I had taken my dinner.

On the following morning a party started out under my guidance. They were Forest and Price, and three men who worked in the mills. When we reached the spot where the tragedy had happened we found the horse as I had left him, and my host lay upon the ground stiff and cold. He had not died at all, the ball having made but a small wound, though it had passed clear through.

A little way in the wood we found a place where the ground seemed at some time to have been disturbed, and upon digging there we found two human bodies. Subsequently one more was found only a few rods distant.

The body of Groomer was taken up to his house, and there we found that like had fled. He had probably been out and found his dead father, and fearing that he might be implicated, he departed.

Mrs. Groomer, who was a mild, broken down woman, acknowledged that she had long been aware of her husband's crimes, but that the fear of his death had kept her silent.

I, like, I believe, has not yet been found, but his mother is still living in Illinois with a married daughter, who is well off. She has grown more strong and happy since the night on which I had the highway adventure with my host.

Select Miscellany.

A MIXED JURY; OR, LIFE IN OLD KENTUCKY.

Some years ago, way up in Bourbon county, Kentucky, there was considerable business going on in court. There was one case of murder or wilful shooting of one John Brown, by one Amos Devilcatcher. The case excited a great deal of interest with the public and consequently much feeling was enlisted in it. Now about the same time, another case of peculiarly intense interest was up before the court, in the same court-house; it was a financial case; in which J. Barber was indicted for a conspiracy with intent to share certain business men of the community, out of their honestly acquired cash. The juries in each case being sworn in the business of the two respective courts proceeded. After much litigation, questioning and cross-questioning, testimony

and rebutting testimony, the cases were summed up, the jurors charged by the judge and sent out to deliberate according to law and facts.

The murder case was rather a plain one but conscientious scruples on the part of some of the "twelve men good and true," and doubts on the part of others, with a dogged determination on the part of two old and rather volubly jurors, kept the panel "hung" off and on, for some eight and forty hours.—Now things were no less slowly working in the other case. The jury room in which the financial case was being deliberated upon, was immediately over that of the murder case, the one in the 3d story and the other in the 2d of the building.

Tired out, monstrous dry, and weary of the monotony of the thing, one of the financial jurors managed to telegraph somebody on the rear ground side of the court house, and soon a communication took place between those within and those without said jury room.

"What the—'s up?" quoth one of the murder case jurors, as he sees a long string of variegated hues, dangling down before the partially grated window.

"O ho!" says another, "going to raise their liquor!"

"Not so bad," says another awfully dry juror, "is that other jury out?"

"They are overhead; suppose we notify them we're on hand for a drink, or a game of euchre?" says the foreman. The jury soon agreed on that point, and just then the variegated string which was composed of sundry neck and pocket handkerchiefs of the upper jury, then began to ascend.

"Jug of whiskey, by snakes!" said one.

"Raise the window, and snatch it in!" adds another.

"Here she comes!"

"Stand by!"

"Take care, you will be out the window, major!"

"Hold up your coat tails, captain, I'll snake her!" says the major, and leaning well out he grabs the jug. These pulling a nearly took the major out of his boots, but he held the jug, like grim death to a deceased collied puzson. The lower were on the eve of giving "three cheers," for their triumph of strategy over art, when the foreman brought them to order by—

"Hish-h-h-h! the sheriff's at the door!"

"Gentlemen, have you made up a verdict?"

"Not a verdict!" say the jurors.

"How long are you going to hang out damn you, anyhow! Here you've been out since Friday morning here's Saturday night, Devilcatcher wants you to let him know whether he's got to be hung or go home to-morrow. I'll starve you out if you don't come down soon," says the sheriff.

"Come in the morning, sheriff," says the foreman, "we'll settle the prisoner's hash to night sure!"

The sheriff now visited the other jury, whom he found rather dry and cross as he was, but with no verdict. After gratifying them with the intelligence that unless they made up a verdict by next morning, he should be under the necessity of starving them out, he left.

Let us go up stairs among the financiers, and see how they are getting along.

"Too had," says one too had, there's that thunderin' villain, Devilcatcher, confined in that room below us, and he and the sheriff have nabbed our whiskey."

"Look here, boys," says another—"I don't believe there's any prisoners in that room. I'll go a boss that that killin' scape jury's there, out as we are, for a verdict!"

"Well, what do you say," observes another, "suppose we drop 'em a line!"

"Good! Go it!" cry sundry voices.

"Get the handkerchiefs!"

"Here, men, hand over your handkerchiefs. Now, so, who's going to write?"

"I'll do it," says the foreman; and upon the margin of an old handbill was written "are you Devilcatcher's jury!"

"The line was dropped to the lower window with the billet, and soon responded to—

"Well, we are, ole boss!"

"Have you drank all of our burbin up!" was the next question propounded. Up came the answer.

"No sir! Come down and get some!"

"Good! says one of the upper jurors, let's rawn down to the boys! Ask them if they have a bench to stick out to drop down on!"

"Yes, come on, bring down your cards, if you've got any," was the response. The lower window was half grated, but there was an opening large enough to admit the body of a man. The bench was thrust

out, lots were cast, and six of the twelve of the financial jurors pass out of the upper room into the lower one. Commiserating their brethren "up aloft," the six financial case jurors proposed that the yet unfinished "burbin" should be sent up, and six of the killing case jurors volunteered to form a committee and go up with the jug! Climbing up over one another's shoulders in the dark was no safe nor rapid movement, but at length the arduous feat was duly accomplished, and the mixed juries as long as the candles and whiskey lasted, had the best kind of a time, all things considered. Near midnight they fell into a comfortable and profound snooze.—About the break of day a thundering rap! rap! rap! at the jury room door aroused the sleeping jurors.

"Have you decided, men, upon a verdict?"

"We have by snakes!" cries one of the killing case jurors.

"Get up boys," cries the foreman, let's give in a verdict, for I'm about froze and starved out. There was a unanimous acquiescence by the "twelve." The sheriff's deputy opened the door and marched the jury into court; the sheriff proceeding up stairs to stir up the other jury.

"Have you agreed, men—are you ready to go into court?"

"Lord bless you sheriff, yes sir!" cries one of the fagged out financial jurors. Let us down, O, sheriff, do!"

Open went the door, some of the jurors were none the better of the night's litchations and sleeping in the cold unheated room rather inclined to make up a verdict suddenly. They seized their hats and marched into court.

"Mr. Foreman," cries the clerk, have you agreed upon a verdict?"

"We have!" was the solemn response.

"Guilty, or not guilty?"

"Guilty!"

"Stop! Hold on!" cries the prisoner Devilcatcher.

"Silence!"

"I shan't do it!" he yells.

"Silence e-a!" cries the court.

"No, Mr. Devilcatcher, I shan't!" dawds the judge.

"Judge," continues the prisoner, do you see that jury? Sheriff, do you know 'em?"

"Eh! What?" says the judge.

"Here's a pooty mess, that's a fact," exclaimed the sheriff, as he rushed out of one court into the other, and in a minute rushes back again, exclaiming:

"Judge, discharge this jury, the cursed whelps are all mixed up with the other jury, and how they got mixed up in this way I'll be shot if I can find out!"

The judge gave them *jessey*, discharged them; Amos Devilcatcher was remanded to jail, from whence he made his sudden exit that night. Blessing his eye sight that detected the mixed jury and saved his bacon. Barber, the financier, "got off in pretty much the same course."

SUPPORTING A WIFE.

A correspondent writes us a long statement of his business affairs, hopes, expectations, desires, etc., and solicits our official opinion, from the editorial sanctum of *Life*, whether his means and prospects warrant him in undertaking the support of a wife. We answer no. And as the principle involved has a social as well as an individual application, we prefer to make a leader, instead of a note of the query.

We are opposed to the principle of one human being supporting another, unless that other is entirely incapable of self-support. There is no reason in nature why a man should support a woman or a wife, any more than a woman or a wife should support a man or a husband. It is true many men do support wives, and many wives support husbands. But it is all wrong. It is a false relation entirely. If both are capable of self-support and one support both, it is clear that one has the care and labor of two and the other is idle. In this way both are accused; one by excessive toil, the other for want of wholesome occupation.

A wife, as well as a husband, is either useful, or worse than useful. There is no neutral ground. She cannot exist without influence. She either produces or she destroys. She is either properly employed about something, or she degenerates below indolence into vice and dissipation. There is, we repeat, no middle ground.

We are no advocate for making drudges of wives; nor would we make drudges of husbands. We would fain see a large portion of the wives of this country emancipated from one half or three quarters of the toil, confinement and drudgery which a pernicious system of cooking and eat-

ing, and a host of false and extravagant habits and customs have forced upon her. But we would never have her emancipated from usefulness. We would have her recognize her equal rights and duties, and we would have her claim the one and perform the other.

It is true that a defective system of domestic education has transformed many of the females of our country into mere butterflies of fashion, whose life is mainly spent in aiding the follies of others, and who think much more of marrying for the sake of a man to support them, than for the sake of a husband, with whom to divide the cares and duties, the joys and sorrows, the privileges and responsibilities of the family relation.

We object to the principle a husband supporting a wife, because the whole tendency is to enfeeble, degrade, and enslave the woman. The supported wife may be well cared for, she may be treated with exemplary kindness. Her husband may be all that a man and husband can or should be. But all this will not save her from degeneracy. If her mind is not called out and exercised in relation to the realities of life, it certainly will be in relation to its fantasies. If she is not in some sense a sound, practical, working, business woman, she will surely be in many respects, trifling, vain, and frivolous. We adhere to the antediluvian notion, that a wife should be a help meet for man, as well as a social mate; and our advice to both wife and husband is "help one another."—*Life Illustrated.*

Taking it out in Coffins.

Mr. G—, a veteran lawyer of Syracuse, used to tell a story of a client, an impetuous old farmer by the name of Merrick, who in olden times, had a difficulty with a cabinet maker. As was usual in such cases, the matter excited a good deal of interest among the neighbors, who severally allied themselves with one or the other of the contending parties. At length however, to the mutual disappointment of the allies, the principals effected a compromise, by which Merrick was to take a note for forty dollars at six months, payable in cabinet war!

Lawyer G— was called upon to draft the necessary papers to consummate the settlement which having been duly executed and delivered, the latter was supposed to be fully and amicably arranged.

G— saw no more of the parties until about six months after, when one morning just as he was opening his office, old Mr. Merrick came riding furiously up, dismounted, and rushed in defiantly exclaiming: "I say, Squire, am I bound to take coffins?"

It seems, on the note falling due, the obstinate cabinet-maker had refused to pay him in any other way.

A Touching Incident of the War.

A young English sailor, who, in a skirmish with the Russians, had shot a man, describes his feelings in a letter to his friends, which strikingly shows how greatly war is opposed to the sensibilities of our nature. Seeing the man at whom he had aimed fall, he felt that he must go to him.

"He lay quite still," he says, "and I was more afraid of him lying so, than when he stood facing me a few minutes before. It's a strange feeling to come over you all at once, that you have killed a man. He was a fine young fellow, not more than twenty-five. I went down on my knees beside him and my breast felt so full as though it would break. He had a real English face, and did not look like an enemy. What I felt I can never tell; but if my life would have saved his I believe I would have given it. The wound was fatal, and he soon breathed his last. I laid his head gently down upon the grass," he continues, "and left him. It seemed so strange when I looked at him for the last time. I somehow thought of everything I had heard about the Turks and the Russians and the rest of them; but all that seemed so far off, and the dead man so near."

THE NEUTER GENDER.—How many genders are there? asked the schoolmaster.

"Three, sir," promptly replied little blue eyes; "the masculine, feminine and neuter."

"Give me an example of each," said the master.

"Why, you are masculine, because you are a man; and I am a feminine because I am a girl."

"Well, proceed."

"I don't know," said the girl, "but I reckon Mr. Jones is neuter, as he's a bachelor."

The decrease in marriages in Boston the last month, was six.