The Huntingdon Journal.

WM. BREWSTER, "LIBERTY AND UNION, NOW AND FOREVER, ONE AND INSEPARABLE." Editor & Proprietor.

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Nov. 10 1859.—1y.

A SERMON STORY

MISDIRECTED REVENGE.

Years ago this way; out and away from the settlements of civilized men; among the scattered inhabitations of those hardy daring souls who dared to meet the savage full in his path; before whose strong right arm the forest giant fell, and the lurking panther bit the ground, or howling, fled and hid himself among the shadows of his den. Association with scenes of struggle and blood gave these men much of the brute nature, with which they came so constantly in contact. The savage was a foe too subtle to be dealt with openly—his white antagonist proving himself to be full as keen and wary as the red man. No moment of his life could he safely say was fraught without danger of its loss—his vigilence became unceasing, and his courage always at command. His thoughts and movements were free and unfettered, and it necessarily followed that his passions were seldom under the control which iron law throws around the dweller and occupant of cities. In short, man, in the wilds and pathless forest of the West, lost much of the attributes of his fellow man of the paved street and crowded mart, and approximated more to the unreasoning Indian and the untamed brute. His love was fierce, burning, eager and overwhelming—his hate furious, unappeasable, and destructive to the death.

Of this nature, Mike Barclay might be cited as a representative.

Yet there were among these children of the West those who, though their associations were the same as his, lost not their identity with all that is refined and humanizing, so completely as did he.—They, too, could battle sternly for their log built homes, and tread the courts of nature with a like free step; but their instincts were not of the same animal nature as was his, and they could find recreation and pleasure in the calm delights of home, where he sought the shelter of a roof, for nothing more than the mere animal requirements of sleep or food.

Chauncey Bird was an instance of such men as these.

These two men were rivals for the hand of Helen Randolph.

Mike Barclay was in height, say, five feet eleven; of a rugged, compact build, bull neck, upright figure and firm tread. Exposure to sun, wind and, storm, had reddened his uncovered neck, and given him strongly marked features, of the swarthy hue of the Indian. He had, what might be termed a fine grey eye, but it seldom looked you full in the face. Stiff wiry, reddish-brown hair covered his mouth and chin, and hid the expression of the first named feature. But when excited or angry, the gizzly moustache was seen to rise up and encircle the nostrils, so that they emitted the breath with a hard, rushing sound, similar to that of a chased and badgered animal. Even in repose, the face, altogether, had a hard, set look, not unlike the aspect of an untamed beast, ready at a moment's warning to rise furious and maddened, and tear the object of its suddenly aroused danger.

Chauncey Bird was not quite so tall, nor of so large and massive a frame as Barclay; yet, though net cast in so herculean a mould, he was the superior in a physical point of view. This might be accounted for by the face of his being far more temperate in his living and regular in his habits. He did not swallow bad corn whiskey in preference to water, nor chose for a couch the damp foot of a tree rather than a buffalo bed in a comfortable cabin. He had health and strength, and he took care that they should be preserved as long as nature kindly would allow.—There were other differences in the two men. Not only externally were they unlike their minds as well were opposite. While Barclay was revengful, unrelenting in his hate, and eager for the taste of blood, Bird was; thought fierce and brave when aroused, gentle of heart as any child. He was likewise the younger of the two, Barclay being forty two or three abouts, Bird not more than thirty-three or four. A pleasant, genial face—a large dark eye, which lit up the countenance like a lamp; a mouth small and bow shaped, and a generally upright and straight forward bearing were attractions more to the taste of a refined nature, than the rude attentions and coarse attempts at homage, paid by her elder admirer; and she made no secret of her preference for the manly Chauncey Bird.

The *Dramatis persona* being introduced let them now come forth, and act the parts assigned them on the great stage of life in this far Western wild.

Mike Barclay, after an indifferent day's search after game, was slowly winding his steps homeward to seek some consolation in the whiskey jug, or in the society of the choice spirits, who was now and again assembled in his cabin. The disapointment attendant on his toilsome journey, together with other sources of annoyance, tended little to the maintainance of an amiable frame of mind. Mike Barclay was in a savage mood, and needed but a trifle to turn the current of his wrath in full and dangerous fury on the first who crossed his path.

He now neared an opening in the wood, which displayed to view a fair green glade and there, straight before him, and within easy shot, a splendid buck was grazing upon the fresh green grass, and tender shoots that spread around him in rich profusion. His brow, cleared in an instant, and Mike Barclay's nearest approach to a smile itself athwart his swarthy visage.

With caution of an experienced hunter, he shifted his position as far as possible from the direct current of the wind, that game might not be startled too soon by the scent of a foe, and then, slowly and cautiously, sheltered behind an intervening tree, he took deliberate aim at the tempting prey.

Hast ever wandered about for a whole day, reader mine, and tasted not from dawn to sunset? Hast ever done so in the free fresh air of the country—thy companions, healthy limbs, and wholesome exercise? Thou hast? Then is thy judgement on the present state of Barclay's interior organization sound, reliable and to the purpose. You will say he must have been exceedingly hungry—you are right—he was.

Carefully—oh! very carefully did his eye measure the distance, the precisely fatal point of aim, and the true and unerring sight of his well-tried rifle. He was a good shot and he knew it; but this was a rather more than ordinary occasion, and such a prize as this must not be lost for want of a little extra caution; besides the animal to the experienced eye watching him, was a safe and certain prey, and that position would not be altered, Mike well knew for the moment.

The deadly tube, then, was in exact aim for the victim—the knee was firmly planted, and the shoulder rested easily yet steadily against the tree, the finger was upon the trigger, and the muscular force necessary, upon the instant, about to be applied, when—crack! crack! echoed through the glade, and by a rifle bullet from some unknown source, the noble buck lay stretched upon the turf.

Mike Barclay sprang furiously to his feet, a fierce oath burst from his lips, as he saw himself thus cheated of his prize exactly at the moment of its being grasped. A figure at this moment emerged from the woods out into the glade, and quickly advanced to the prostrate buck. As the face was turned full toward Barclay, he saw it was the very man, of all others, he would have least forgiven an injury.

A moment, and he stood confronting him, with one foot planted upon the body of the buck, fire flashing from his eyes, and the heavy moustache wreathing itself around his nostrils, through which the laboring breath came thick and fast.

'Chauncy Bird, stand off! this buck is mine!'

'Yours, Barclay, pray how do you make that out?'

This was asked in easy, good-humored tones, as though the speaker was rather more amused than offended at the decided assertion.

'Because I choose to call it mine!' was the insolent rejoinder, to the other's half laughing query.

'You are joking Barclay,' said the other, quietly.

'I am!' was the answer in a growl.

'Of course, you are. Why you don't mean to say that you have a claim to that which you never drew a trigger on?'

'Claim or no claim, this is my game and you lay hand on it, if you dare!'

The smile that had wreathed itself about the mouth of the youngest of these two, by degrees disappeared, and in its place there came a nameless look of stern determination. It boded a rising storm.

'Enough of this nonsense, Mike Barclay Remove your foot!'

This quickly—sharply—imperatively.

The forest ranger moved not, but the glance of a demon was in his eye.

Like the spring of a panther in its head long, passionate fury came the dash of Chauncy Bird upon him; and ere he could cast aside his rifle and gainhold on his antagonist down he went, hurled like a heavy stone to the earth, where he lay senseless and motionless, and for the time bereft of life completely.

When he recovered and looked dizzily around him, there was no sight of Chauncy Bird, nor of the disputed prize

But the rifle lay there on the ground, close to his head.

He took it up, looked earnestly at the priming, and a red, painful glow was on his swarthy brow, as he strode in the direction of the forest.

It was right. Save two persons all within the cabin of old Sam Randolph had retired to rest. He boasted a mansion of greater pretensions than the generality of his neighbors—inasmuch as it was divided by single partitions into separate rooms.—In one of these slept Randolph and his wife, in the main sitting room of the house were these two waking ones, Chauncy Bird and Helen Randolph.

The fire on the rude hearth glowed mellow and pleasant, and gave these fully as much, and more light, even, than they would absolutely have required, had their secret been fathomed.

Helen set farthest from the hut door, upon a bench—which served them both—looking pensively into the fire. Chauncy with one arm thrown gently around her waist, spoke in a low tone of the future. She listened, well pleased; and smiled happily, as she followed his cheery words.

The fire-light played in her eyes, and added a rosier tinge to the blush already on her cheek. Her soft, neatly arranged hair set off the pretty oval of her face to the best advantage. One little hand was placed confidently in his, while the other played heedlessly with the white corner of her apron

Truly a pretty sight.

All hopefull anticipation for the future no thought but happy ones of the passing present. No time for fear or death, this—none.

And yet if she but knew—oh! fate!—if she but knew!

A sound at the window drew the attention of them both. It was only a wooden aperture, opening and closing with a small shutter, hung on a leather hinge, and fastened within with a wooden bolt.

'I thought I heard a noise at the window,' said she.

'Doubtless the wind,' was his reply.—'The night was somewhat tempestuous, and even as they spoke, the rushing wind rattled in fury through the trees without.—They looked at one another, with a satisfied nod—and the subject was forgotten.

There was a floding voice in the wind, but she could not hear it. If she but knew—oh! fate!—if she but knew!

Wrapping in themselves, they were preoccupied with their whispering thoughts again.

What's this? This knife-blade slowly passing through the window crevice—and lifting, with stealthy touch the wooden bolt! It moves upward till it meets the obstacle—it presses against it—the window is held at the will of the invisible one without, while an indistinct face looks peeringly into the room.

Look up, Chauncy Bird—look up for her sake! You have not an instant's time to spare! Before it is too late forever Chauncy Bird, look up! Is there no power on on earth—in heaven—to make this man look up?

None!

But there is a power hovering vengefully, wickedly over the fated roof; and even now—now, as Chauncy Bird leans forward—it swoops upon its pray.

Bang.

A scream of agony—a fair, young form writhing upon the floor—blood flowing from her innocent white breast—those dear features, gazed upon but now so fondly, working conclusively in the struggle with death—a rattling in the throat—stiffening of the delicate limbs.

Murder has been done! Another branded Cain wanders forth upon the earth—accursed, abhored of God and man!

Suspicion fell of course, upon Mike Barclay. The friends, aroused from their sleep to look upon this unmanly and most cowardly murder, took their instant way forward to his dwelling.

He was at home—oh! yes; and fast asleep.

What was he accused of, that his house should thus be entered, at the dead of night, and himself thus rudely questioned?

Of murder!

He commit murder? He cast back the foul assertion! Who—who was it that he was accused of having murdered?

'Helen Randolph!'

As the name fell from their lips, Barclay turned pale; and, for a moment, gazed around him, spell bound. At length he found breath. In a hoarse whisper, he spoke.

'I am not guilty of her murder! I would have laid down my own life rather than a hair of her head should have come to harm! I've not been near her house these three days!'

The gray haired man, who had called the murdered girl his child, pressed forward and confronted him

'Mike Barclay—in the face of heaven, I demand you to answer me! Are you not the man who slew my child?'

The other looked full and deliberately at the questioner.

'In the face of heaven, I swear that I am innocent of that girl's death.'

'And in the face of Heaven I charge you with a black and damning lie!' exclaimed a voice, close in his ear.

He turned; and, as his eye fell upon the speaker, he started as though stung by an adder.

'*You—here?*' he gasped.

'I am here! Nay more—I am come to revenge the death of her I love, and whom you have so maliciously destroyed. I demand the death of this man!' he exclaimed turning to those assembled in the hut. 'He is the murderer of Helen Randolph!'

'What proof of it have you?' shrieked Barclay.

'The proof is here?' and as he spoke, he held up a glittering bowie-knife to the gaze of all, this this is my proof. He has not been near the house for three days past; and yet here, unstained by rust is his own knife, with his name full upon the blade!'

It was even so. There were the two tell tale words—'Mike Barclay!'

Stunned—overwhelmed—taken completely by surprise—he had not one word to utter tor himself. He could only sink helplessly to his knees, and grasp forth:

'Tis true—' tis true! I am the man who fired the shot, though it was not meant for her!'

'Who then, was the intended victim?' demanded her father.

The murderer merely pointed to Chauncy Bird; then hid his face within his hands.

There was a look of keen, intelligent meaning that passed upon the instant across the faces of those rough men assembled there in the cabin of Mike Barclay. The oldest of them all advanced.

He stood a moment without speaking—merely looking fixedly upon the faces around him, one by one, Then he broke the silence.

'What is your dicision, men?'

'Death!' they murmered, one and all.

It was morning. The earth looked glad and beautiful; while nothing in Nature told of those two scenes, now transpiring so near each other, under the same blue sky.

This is one of holiness and silence,

A young girl, laid apparently to rest up on an humble couch, and sleeping thereto a calm and peaceful sleep, no wind of heaven can ever visit that marble cheek and bring with it a shudder or a chill.—No sorrows now can move that heart—no terror dwell within that placid bosom.—The summer's heat and winter's cold are alike indifferent to her; for she had departed to the land where there is but one season, and that an everlasting spring—hath found shelter in the courts of heaven and slumbers on the bosom of her God!

Another scene.

And this one also of death; but very different from the last,

This is one of retributive horror; stern Western justice, merciless death.

The giants of the forest wave in melancholy cadence to and fro, and murmur a solemn requiemn for the disembodied spirit. Hard by the glistening river dashes against the rocky shore; and seems to whisper as it passes on, the tidings of the hour. Even the birds seem stricken with a nameless terror—and their twittering song has lost its joyousness.

There on that tree!—a horrid *death* is hanging between ground and sky—and the murderer follows his victim through the realms of space.

Let the curtain drop upon this horror! shut the hideous sight out forever from view

Mike Barclay's race is run. He hath sown the wind—he hath reaped the whirlwind.

SWEET NETTIE GRAY.

MAKING LOVE ON AN APPLE TREE.

Everbody said that Nettie Gray was a beauty; not one of your polished city belles, but a gay, romping saucy piece of nature's own handiwork, yet gentle and affectionate withal, possessing a depth of feeling and sentiment which few were able to fathom.

Now, "Sweet Nettie Gray," as she was called, had long been beloved by one Charley Grafton—the handsome young merchant who kept the only store in the little village of N——could boast of; where he had, for some four or five years, dealt out tea, sugar, coffee, tobacco, calicos, Silks, pins, needles, hardware, and a variety of merchandise, to the villagers and surrounding farmers, he had realized quite a little fortune; a part of which he invested in the purchase of widow Morton's beautiful cottage and grounds, which, at the death of her husband, she had been obliged to dispose of and take a cheaper place where she could live less expensively; while from the surplus of the price received for the cottage, she realized a snug little income. Charley had also taken the widow's son into the store, as his increased business made it necessary to procure assistance. The salary paid to little Johnny was a material help to his mother, for which she was very grateful to the young merchant, and she never failed to speak a word in his praise whenever an opportunity presented. This, with the numberless acts of generosity which Charley was never tired of performing, made him the hero of that little village, and caused him to be beloved and respected, by both young and old, for many miles around. To say that Nettie Gray was indifferent to his many visits, or for the ardent love he entertained for her, would be doing injustice to her warm, appreciative heart. But the spirit of mischief seemed to possess her, and, though she was uniformly kind and gentle in her disposition towards her lover, and would converse freely and unreservedly with him on any topic, yet, when he approached the subjest that lay nearest his heart, she was off like a frightened bird. Not that she was afraid of him, or that the subject was distasteful to her, (for her own heart was equally interested) but she was delighted to tease him, and heartily enjoyed his discomfiture on such occasions. She knew he loved her with all the strength of his soul, and she had no fear of alienating his affections from herself—an event which would have given her the deepest pain.

Charley had begun to think seriously of marriage; and why not? There stood the cottage embowered in trees, many of which were bending under their heavy load of rare fruit, unoccupied. It needed only the gentle presence of his bright eyed Nettie to make it a paradise. His income was more than sufficient to satisfy their most extravagant wants, and why should he not marry? Many times he had visited Nettie for the express purpose of making known his wishes, but had as often been prevented from saying what he wished to say, by the little mischief's running away at the first word he uttered on the subject. To think of supplying her place from the many fair damsels in it—who would gladly have accepted his hand—was out of the question. It was Nettie he loved, and Nettie only, and he felt sure she returned his affections, but how could he ever get married if he was not permitted to propose. 'I must resort to stratagem,' he thought, and he partially formed many plans to bring the little beauty to terms, and as often abandoned them.

His mind was busy with such thoughts as one bright morning in September he walked towards Farmer Gray's mansion. He leisurely ascended the hill, at the top of which upon a level table land stood the great old house, when he was startled by a familiar voice calling out:

'Bring the ladder, Dick! I want to get down;' and looking up, he beheld Nettie seated in the wide spreading branches of a large apple tree that stood in the field near the road. Dick, perched upon the topmost round of a ladder that leaned against a pear tree, was quietly filling a basket with rich fruit.

'Wait a minute, Sis,' replied Dick, without looking up; 'I have got my basket almost full. I'll come in a minute.'

'Come now, Dick! quick! quick!' again called the impatient voice of his sister.

Dick evidently began to think there was something wrong, for, as he turned around his eye instantly caught sight of our hero coming up the road, but a few rods from where they were. He instantly decended from the tree, but instead of carrying he ladder to assist his sister to descend he gave a loud shout, threw his cap in the air, cleared the wall with one bound, and ran rapidly down the hill, shouting at the top of his voice, 'O, Mr. Grafton, I've treed a coon!' Then placing his hands upon the ground before him, he turned some five or six somersaults, picked up his cap, and ran with all his might to the house. The little rogue evidently loved mischief as well as did his pretty sister,

Charley's first thought was to go to the assistance of Nettie, and he leaped the wall and approached the tree. Taking the ladder from the pear tree, he was about placing it for her to descend, when a sudden thought suggested itself. 'She is not run away from me now,' and not stopping to consider the ungallant act, grasped a lower branch, and with a gay remark, swung himself lightly up and took a seat by her side.

Nettie, who was an amiable girl and could take a joke as good natured as one could give one, only laughed heartily at the trick her brother played upon her, complimented Charley upon his skill, and invited him to help himself to the blushing fruit that hung in such tempting profusion about them. After chatting on a variety of themes, he determined to approach the subject, and, if possible, get an intelligent answer. For some time he sat in silence, then said.

'Nettie I have something to say to you.'

'Ah! have you?' she replied.

'Charley, please hely me down, and you can say it as we walk to the house.'

Charley saw the mischief in her eye and resolved to go on without heeding her request, yet he changed somewhat the mode of attack.

'Nettie, I am going to be married.'

'Married! Charley, married!'

Without heeding her prayerful glance that was raised to his face he went on.

'Yes, Nettie, my business is now quite prosperous; I have a pretty home, it needs only the additional charm of a pair of bright eyes. I have found a gentle girl, whom I love with my whole and who is willing to become my wife. I have resolved to marry. I have been a long time to tell you, but you would not hear it.'

Nettie had listened to this speech in utter amazement. She had longed to hear that she was the beloved of Charleston's heart, and she meant, after she teased him to her heart's content, to give to his love, and become his duteous loving wife. But her hopes were suddenly dashed to atoms. It was too much. A giddy faintness came over her, and but, for the support of Charley's arm she would have fallen to the ground. Charley noticed her emotion, and feared he had gone to far. It was but for a moment, *however. She soon regained her self-possession*, and sat up rightly by his side. Her face was very pale, but her cheek flushed proualy as she replied, and there was a spice of bitterness in her tone.

'May I ask the name of her who has been honored with the offer of the hand and heart of my noble friend?'

'First let me discribe her. She is a beatiuful girl, and possesses a warm and loving heart, She has but one fault, if fault it may be called. She delights to tease those who love her best, and she has she given me a sever heart pang. Yet, Nettie, I love her deeply and fervently, and it shall be the object of my life to guard her from harm, to protect her as far as I am able, from the slightest breath of sorrow, and I shall be abundantly rewarded by her love. Nettie, I have now offered her my hand, tho' she has long possessod my heart. I do it now, Nettie. Dearest, can you ask her name?'

Nettie gave one long, inquiring look as though she but half comprehended the words.

'Will you be my wife, Nettie?'

'What!' she replied half bewilderingly, "Are you not going to be married? Are you not forever lost to me?'

'Yes, if you will consent to be mine.'

She realized what it would be to lose him, her head sank upon his bosom, and bursting into tears, she murmured.

'Yes, Charley, I will.'

Soon master Dick came bounding into the orchard, one hand filled with a huge slice of bread and butter, while with the other he tossed his cap into the air, shouting that he fully comprehended the state of affairs, shouting at the top of his voice.

'Hello, Mr. Gaafton, ain't you glad I treed her for you?'

Both greeted this sally with a burst of laughter, and soon all three were engaged in a wild romp upon the green turf.

We hardly need add that the same autumn witnessed a right merry wedding at the mansion of Farmer Gray.

PIGEONS.—We understand that various portions of the country wild pigeons are very numerous, and that the fall crop suffers greatly from them. Large droves hover round, and light upon new sown fields and eat up the seed.

☞ There is but a breath of air and a beat of the heart between this world and the next.

☞ Any feeling that takes a man from his home, is a traitor to his household.