AT AUNT NANCE ALFORD'S CABIN.

Story of a Tragedy Averted by a Woman's Determination.

By FRANK H. SWEET. [Copyright, 1909, by American Press Association.]

Alford's Cabin was the name of a stagecoach eating station balfway between two thriving Rocky mountain mining towns. It was kept by Mrs. for herself the distinction of having her warmly, crossed the plains with an ox team in 1859 and the further honor of having been the first white woman to enter Fairplay gulch, in which her cabin

Her husband's grave, over which the snows of three winters had drifted. was under a clump of stunted and gloomy pines up the rocky slope of the mountain.

There were two little grassless and sunken graves beside that of Aunt Nancy's husband. In one of them her little girl of five years had been laid and in the other her boy of six.

"I ain't never been back to the states sence I come out here, and I never expect to go now. All I care for in this



DON'T KNOW HOW GLAD I AM TO

with his up there." Aunt Nancy would s . . This it wave of her hand toward the pane under which were the three

The cabin was a long and narrow and fuller, stery structure of three rooms. Its. The night of the 15th of Au-

end. Aunt Nance Afford's cable, Anni had surend for and wide.

little woman about fifty years old, rising to go to bed, stopped suddenly, She always were a plainly made throw up her head and listened. starehed calleo gown, with a white strings in a next bow in front.

Hughes, one of the stage drivers, shouting wildly. brought Aunt Nance a letter from the Leiters came rare's to Aunt Nance, and they always miled her with pleasurable excitement. This was in a large brown envelope,

She glanced at it eagerly and saw of perhaps diffeen years.

gianced at the signature and read it aloud, "Your affectionate niece, Marcia Merrick."

"I declare I'd most forgot I had such a niece," said Aunt Nance, "But of Lucy's name is Merrick. I nin't heerd some of 'em was writin'."

she read. She wiped them on a corner of her apron when she had finished the letter and said to Kate Dooley, her

"It's from my sister's girl. My sister girl, Marcia, seems to be all alone in the world and not very strong. She wants to come out and stay with me awhile and try this mountain climate for her health.

"Well, she can come. I'll make her more than welcome. It's many a year since I see any of my own folks, and it'il do me good to see somebody right from New Hampshire with the Doolittle blood in her veins. I was a Doo-

little, Kate." She read the letter again. It was well written and stated briefly, in addition to the news which Aunt Nance had already communicated to Kate, that the writer was nearly sixteen years old and that she would have her own living to make, for her parents had left her little more than enough

money to take her to Colorado. "We'll talk about her supportin' hersel" when there's occasion for her to do it," said Aunt Nance as she

envelope.

She took up the photograph and looked at it long and lovingly.

"She's a Doolittle, out and out," she said. "She has the reg'lar Doolittle nose and her grandfather's chin right over ag'in. She's downright purty; she rooks like her ma, and Lucy was But shillon't write a word about her brother! I wonder how that is. Lucy had two children."

Three weeks later the stagecoach came whirling up to Aunt Nance's door, and Jack Hughes called out when he saw Aunt Nance at the open door:

"Light load today, Aunt Nanceonly one passenger, and I guess she's the one you're lookin' for."

A young girl, her plain black dress ceedingly active woman, who claimed to the ground. Aunt Nance embraced

"You're sister Lucy's Marcia!" she exclaimed excitedly. "I know without askin'. You're a reglar Doolittle, and you don't know how glad I am | in' to stay in here!" to see you!"

"You don't really look strong," Aunt | feller done?" Nance said while Marcia was eating the elaborate dinner prepared express-ly for her. "But, la, my dear, you'll look like another girl after a summer up here in this mountain air."

Then she suddenly asked in a softer tone, "Where is your brother David. Marcia?"

Marcia's smile gave place to a pained and troubled look.

"I don't know, aunt," she said. "Don't know? Why, how is that?" "It is more than a year since we have heard anything from David," said Marcia. Then she added: "That is one reason why I wanted to come west, Aunt Nancy, besides what the doctor told me about my health. I think David is out here. I did not write anything about it, for I thought I would rather tell you all about it myself. I thought you might understand the story

It was a brief and sorrowful little story of a boy's waywardness that she told, not an uncommon story of a naturally well disposed boy being led into wrongdolng by evil companions and finally running away after bringing dis-

grace upon his home. "All we have known for nearly two years is that he is in the west. We heard once of his being in this state. If I could only find him, I am sure he could yet be saved. He is so youngnot yet twenty."

"I'll help you find him." said Aunt Nance earnestly, "We'll begin at once, I know all the stage drivers around here and people in nearly all the mounmin towns. If he's anywhere in this part of the state we'll find him, dear, Merrick alu't a common name."

The mountain summer soon came on in all its soft and tender beauty. Marcla lived out of doors much of the time. She rode on horseback down into the grassy guides or far up to the mountala summits, where the snow lay in little parches throughout all the summer days. Soon the color came to her checks. Her thin shape grew rounder

extends was dreary and without a gust was one long remembered by suggestion of the brightness and come the dweders on that mountain side for within save for the turkey red man by those in the guide below. They allow curtains with white lace borders. referred to it long afterward as "the has wishin things were very differ- time of the hig storm."

At 9 o'clock the wind abated its grub and Auni Nance herself fury. At to it had died away so that were totiles on which the stage drivers no sound was heard but the pouring of discoursed until Aunt Nance's fame the rain. Marcia and Kate Dooley

went to bed. she was a short, stender and wiry it was 11 o'clock when Aunt Nance,

Tibe rain was falling sofily now, and aprent tied around her waist, the high above its gentle sound she heard. a voice shrick out as if in mortal one day in the early spring Jack terror. Then she heard men's voices

"What in the name of wonder is gonearest postoffice, eight miles distant, int on up there on Taylor mountain at this time of night?" she asked herself as she hurried to a door and looked out into the darkness.

"Dear, dear!" she said, with more and Aunt Nance drew out a photograph of irritation than of fear in her voice. I wonder when this country's ever goin' to get civilized so folks 'll live as the face of a young and delicate girl if they was Christians! There's mischief goin' on up there! I saw them "Who in the land can she be?" said Taylor mountain boys whisperin' to-Aunt Name. She unfolded the letter, gether and lookin' savage when they were down here to dinner today. I've

a notion to- Who's that?" The rear door of the room had opened suddenly and been closed.

Aunt Nance turned quickly. Before course she's my sister Lucy's girl her, his back to the door, his hands spread out upon it as if he would hold from her for two years. It's time it against all resistance, stood a hatless and coatless young man, his clothes She sat down and read the letter drenched and tattered, his face ashen slowly, her eyes filling with tears as pale, his eyes wild and staring, while

his slender form quivered with fear. "Oh, please come in and shut that door!" he cried, stretching out one hand imploringly. "They're after methose men are! Can't you hide me? is dead, and so is her husband. Their I haven't done what they say I have. Hide me! Hide me!"

Aunt Nance slowly closed the door, but seemed to hesitate.

been wild for a long time, but I am innocent of this wrong, and if you'll help save me I will live a right life from this moment. I'll go back home tomorrow—back to New Hampshire!"
"New Hampshire!" Aunt Nance

caught eagerly at the words. "Are you from New Hampshire?"

she asked slowly. "Yes, yes! Oh, are they coming?" "From what town?" she asked eager-

"The town of Rockingham." "Now tell me your name, quick!" "David-David Merrick." She took his wet cheeks between her

ands and drew his face down to hers, while she kissed him soothingly. inid, with bor arms around his neck.

folded the letter and restored it to its "You've the Doollittle eyes, David, Don't be afraid.'

The door of Marcia's room and opened suddenly, and she stood there with a shawl thrown lightly around her. The next instant she cried out

"Oh, it's David-my brother David!" The tramp of feet was heard outside. The look of amagement on the the best lookin' one of our family. boy's face gave place to one of terror, and Aunt Nance said quickly: "Go in there with your sister, David."

A moment later six or seven rough looking men filed into the cabin. Aunt Nance knew them every one. She met them standing with her back to the door of the room David and his sister had entered.

"He come in here, didn't he, Aunt Nance?" said Joe Haskin, the leader of the crowd. "We seen him, and we Nancy Alford, a small, cheery and ex- and hat covered with dust, stepped want him. Now, didn't be come in

> Aunt Nance replied fearlessly: "I don't tell lies, and I won't tell one now. He did come in here, Joe Haskin. He's in here now, and, what's more, he's go-

> "Do you know what him and another "I nelther know nor care," replied Aunt Nance boldly, "but I know thisyou men ain't his judges. Vengeance

don't belong to you. It belongs to Him!" She pointed upward as she spoke, and then she added: "You can't lay your hands on that boy tonight. He's in this room behind me, and you are six or eight men to one woman, but there's not one of you that'll lay your

door. "You wouldn't, Joe Haskin, when you remember how I walked three miles in the worst snowstorm we had last winter to nurse you back to life and strength when you was at death's door with pneumony.

hands on me to move me from this

"You wouldn't, Hi Sanders, when I had you brought right here and took care of you myself when you had that better and feel more kindly toward him broken leg last fall.

'You wouldn't lay hands on the woman who closed your wife's eyes in death less than a year ago, Tom Leesom. Every man of you has set at my table ag'in and ag'in, with or without money-it made no difference. "Touch me? Why, I don't believe I

myself could keep you from usin' that ope you've got outside on the man who'd lay rough hands on Aunt Nance "No, you couldn't," said Joe Has-

kin, "You're right-we'd make mincemeat of him! And if you're goin' to stand 'fore that door and'am." interrupted Aunt Nance,

"and there ain't no other way into the room. She waved her hand lightly toward

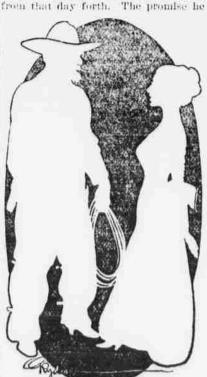
he open door. "Good night!" she said. They went out into the darkness, Refore noon the next day Joe Haskin tode up to Aunt Nance's cabin She went to the door, and he did not dis-

"Weil," he said, "if things don't turn at queer sometimes! We got after the wrong fellow sure enough last light. You see, there's been a gang of multiposts and hose thieves lurkin' bent on Taylor mountain. The boys get tired of 'em, and last night they

took after a couple of the sneaks, "It seems that this young fellow told the truth when he said he didn't blisted to 'em. He was wanderin' along on his way to Eagle elff and tool, refuge from the storm with some

The guilty ones was caught this pornin' down in Deer gulch, and they if the grace to say that the young above with 'em didn't belong to their mg. If you've got him in your cabin vit you sort o' 'pologize to 'im for he little inconvenience we put 'im to ast night and say that we'll do anything we can for him now't he's out bad company?

He was done with bad company from that day forth. The promise he



"Ma'am," said the young man, "I've SHE MET THEM STANDING WITH HER BACK

TO THE DOOR had made in his terror he kept faithfully, although he did not have to go back to New Hampshire to keep it. Invading lines of railroad have

driven the lumbering old stagecoaches and their jolly drivers to other parts of the mountains, and there is now a little brown railroad station on the spot where the cabin of Aunt Nance

once stood. It is a dinner station, famous all along the line, and if you were to travel that way you would be likely to be met at the door by a tidy and talkative old lady, who would be no other than Aunt Nance herself, while David and Marcia Merrick, in homes "I though: so-I thought so," she of their own, may be found in the lit-" town but a few miles distant.

Law Points.

The title to real estate is held in Mathewson versus Mathewson (Iowa), 117 N. W., 755; 18 L. R. A. (N. S.), 1167, not to be affected by the destruction of the deed by the granter after its delivery without the grantee's consent.

One who cuts timber upon the land of another in good faith-that is, believing it to be his own land-is held in J. F. Ball & Bro. Lumber company versus Simms Lumber company, 121 La., 627; 46 So., 674; 18 L. R. A. (N. S.), 244, to be liable for its value at the stump and not as manufactured into

Facts From France.

French death duties are graded from

Nearly 316,000 marriages took place in France last year.

The two great race courses of Paris are within the great public park, the

More than 80,000,000 snalls are received annually by the Halles Centrales, the great market of Paris, French soldiers are now being fed

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Respectability.

Max O'Rell was once staying with a friend at Edinburgh. Starting for a walk on Sanday, he took up his walking stick. "Do you mind taking an umbreila?" asked his conscientious host. "It looks more respectable."

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