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Select Poetry.

THE FARMER'S WIFE.

Up with the birds in the early morning— The dewdrop glows like a precious gem; Beautiful tints in the skies are dawning, But she's never a moment to look at them, The men are wanting their breakfast early; She must not linger, she must not wait; For words that are sharp and looks that are surly Are what men give when meals are late.

AN ARGUMENT FOR LIFE.

IT WAS a sharp, frosty, moonlight night, but the fresh waters of Green river had not yet been chilled, and they flowed rapidly onward, with confused murmurings, as if impatient to become a part of the great Ohio.

stood a full minute gazing upon the flowing river. "Don't be too sure of that!" said a voice behind him. Robert Craig turned with a start, and saw a tall man standing at the opposite side of the bridge, leveling a rifle upon him.

At the first glance, Robert Craig saw his danger, for he recognized in the intruder Ralph More, who, he was well aware, regarded him with the bitterest hatred, for the reason that both had been suitors for the hand of Mary Lane, and Ralph had, of course, been rejected.

He himself was unarmed; there was no hope for succor, on that lonely bridge at that time of night; retreat was impossible, as well as unmanly; resistance was equally out of the question.

"Ralph More," he said, in a voice that betrayed no emotion, "have you come here to waylay and murder me?" "Robert Craig," replied Ralph coldly, still keeping the deadly rifle at an aim, "did you suppose you could trample over me and live?"

"But surely," said Robert Craig, "you are not wicked enough to commit such a crime as I see you contemplate? I am unarmed and at your mercy. While I do not like you, Ralph, I never thought you capable of a cowardly act. It would be cowardly to shoot down an unarmed man, and you know it. You are a good marksman, but I am willing to fight you fairly, if you think that a mortal enmity must necessarily exist between us."

"Bosh! Do you think I am a fool? Do you think I can be cajoled by your smooth talk? No; I've got you, Robert Craig, and you shall never live to enjoy your triumph over me. You are within just five minutes of your death. I will grant you that time to pray—if you want to. Nothing can save you! There is not a soul within half a mile to hear you if you should yell. You'll be floating down the river miles below this by morning."

"But what do you say to being hanged for murder?" "There is no witness near. It can never be proved against me."

Robert Craig was silent. His enemy, who plainly meant murder, stood like a statue, with the rifle still pointed at his head, and watching him like a cat. There was an expression of savage exultation in his face, plainly visible in the moonlight; and Robert Craig saw that it was idle to think of asking for mercy.

Various ideas went whirling through his brain. He thought of running away and trusting to flight, but he dismissed the thought, for he could not escape the unerring aim of the relentless man confronting him. He thought of rushing upon Ralph, and engaging in a desperate struggle for the possession of the rifle; but he knew that it would be hopeless. He was twenty feet distant, and his enemy could shoot him down before he could reach him.

As if divining his very thoughts, Ralph said, with a demoniac laugh: "Oh, there's no chance for you! Run which way you will, I can bring you down before you can take three steps. Come, to prayer! You have only about four minutes left."

Robert Craig stood motionless, with the same coolness he had displayed from the beginning, he said:

"Ralph More, I see that you are in earnest!"

"Certainly I am. Ha! ha! You know me well enough to know that I did not come here for nothing."

"Yet you will not kill me," said Robert Craig, in a quiet firm tone. "I can

bring an argument to bear that will prevent you."

"Pooh!" retorted Ralph, contemptuously. "I would like to know what it is?"

"Well, I have a letter in my pocket here—"

"Stop!" exclaimed Ralph, fiercely.—"keep your hand away from your pocket. I understand your game—you have a pistol!"

"No; on my honor. If I had you could shoot before I could use it. I think you are quick enough for that."

"I suppose I am."

"Well, will you allow me to take a letter from my pocket or are you afraid?"

"Well, I do not think I'm much afraid."

"Shall I take the letter from my pocket?"

"Yes, but no tricks; my eye is on you."

Robert Craig, with the calmness of a man merely transacting some ordinary business, drew a letter from his coat pocket, and began deliberately to write on one side of the envelope with a pencil.

"What are you doing?" demanded Ralph, eyeing him sharply.

"I am merely writing a secret here, which, when you know it, will induce you to change your mind."

"What is it? Why don't you tell it to me?"

"You'll understand that when you hear me read it."

"Some trick; but remember I am watching you."

While Ralph More lost none of his fierceness, and did not waver in his murderous purpose, it was evident that his curiosity was aroused, and he watched the young lawyer as he wrote rapidly on the envelope by the light of the moon.

"Well, what strange thing have you written?" he asked sneering, as Robert Craig finished.

"I will read it to you," replied Robert Craig.

Then he held the envelope up, so that the moonlight fell full upon it, and read as follows:

ON WILSON'S BRIDGE, Near Upland, Thursday night, Dec. 21, 18—.

If I am found murdered, be it known that Ralph More, of Upland, is the murderer. He stands before me, while I write this, pointing a rifle at me, and declares that he will kill me, because he is jealous of me. I am unarmed.

ROBERT CRAIG, Attorney-at-Law.

Ralph More uttered a disdainful laugh.

"Ha! ha! What good will that scribbling do you?" he said. "I can destroy it while you float down the river. You don't suppose I would go and deliver it to the authorities for you—even if it is your dying request. Ha! ha! ha!"

"You won't deliver it for me!" asked Robert Craig, as calm as ever.

"Do you think I'm a fool? Come, your time's about up!"

"Won't you deliver this for me after I'm dead?"

"No; of course not."

"Then I know who will."

"Who?" asked Ralph, puzzled by this strange conduct.

"The river!" and Robert Craig sent the letter whirling from the bridge, and it floated away on the bosom of that rapid current.

"What does this mean?"

"It means, Mr. Ralph More, that you may now murder me just as soon as you please. I am as well prepared to die as you are, and have fully made up my mind to die; but if I die, you do too. The difference will be this: I die as a martyr, and my name will be remembered in this community to be honored and loved; while you go to the gallows, a criminal, a convict, covered with infamy, and are there strangled like a beast, all who know you will, in years to come, only remember you and speak of you as the cowardly assassin who shot down an unarmed man. Now shoot, just as soon as you please, and that letter floating down the river will tell the tale on you, and you will be hunted down!"

Robert Craig stood with his arms folded, apparently as fearless of the threatening weapon as though it had been a mule-stalk. Ralph More seemed somewhat taken aback. He stood in silence a moment, still covering his intended victim, then said:

"Nonsense! Don't you suppose I can get that letter inside of an hour?"

"How?" asked Robert Craig, very complacently.

"I could swim for it if necessary."

"The water would chill you to death in ten minutes."

"I'd get a boat, then."

"You know very well that there is not a boat within ten miles, except at the nearest ferry, and there the oars are locked up, and could not be had before morning. By that time the letter will have floated many miles away, and probably be picked up and handed to the authorities. Oh, blaze away! I'd rather you would now, since I have made up my mind to die and have you hanged!"

Ralph More stood for a half a minute, with the threatening rifle still at an aim, apparently unable to make up his mind whether to risk the gallows or not; then he said:

"But if I spare you, and this letter is found, what explanations can be made of it?"

"I might say it was a joke; and in any event, if I should be still found alive, it would be easy to prove that you didn't kill me."

Ralph More placed his rifle upon his shoulder and walked away, muttering, with an angry oath:

"I'm a fool! I ought to have done the work without giving him a chance to play such a lawyer's trick!"

Robert Craig stood upon the bridge, watching the would-be assassin till he was out of sight, then once more gazed down upon the clear cold waters of the river, and said aloud:

"I'm the luckiest man living! No floating to-night, thank you!"

The next day Ralph More abruptly started on a trip to California, much to the surprise of the community, and he never returned to Kentucky.

Robert Craig? Ah, if I should give his real name, the reader would know that it was the life of a since famous man that was saved that frosty night, years ago, by an argument on the bridge.

KANSAS BILL ON GUARD.

THE Chicago Times in its account of the strike says: When one of the handsome privates of the First Regiment was ordered to keep the crowd off the platform at one of the depots the otherday, he doubtless thought it was about as easy and peaceful a duty as a soldier could be called upon to perform. Keeping the crowd off the platform!—Pshaw, what was easier? And the young warrior pranced proudly to the place assigned him, and grasped his gun firmly to call general attention to the dangerous weapon, said: "Now, stand back, gentlemen."

A crowd, no matter how peaceably inclined component members may be, is a rude, impolite, unfeeling thing. Friction produces irritation. The most amiable man in the world is generally a selfish brute in a crowd. This crowd was as obnoxious as any crowd ever is. It failed in the most exasperating manner to appreciate the dignity of the soldier's position. It absolutely seemed to lose sight that he was there at all. It punched his elbows into his ribs. It trod on his toes. It got him somehow inextricably mixed up with his gun and cross-belt and cartridge box. He couldn't tell exactly which was which. As long as he couldn't keep off the crowd he wished from the deepest depths of his heart that the crowd would keep off him.—Once in a while a piping voice could be heard coming somewhere from the struggling mass of heads, elbows and shoulders, saying, "Now, gentlemen, you must stand back. I've got orders to keep you back."

The train on which were the regulars, whom the crowd was waiting to see, arrived just as the big bunion on the soldier's left foot had exploded under a crushing pressure, and just as he was contemplating the expediency of trying the effect of a shot into the crowd.

The hardy, sun-bronzed veterans filed off the train and fell into line with military dispatch and precision. "The men there don't seem to mind your guard much," said the captain to one of the officers of the road. "No," said the latter responding reluctantly.

"Send Kansas Bill here," said the captain of the regulars to an orderly.

Kansas Bill, a big mountain-hardened Indian fighter, with tawny, straggling

beard and long yellow locks, a la poets of the Sierras, came forward a moment afterward and touched his cap.

"Bill!"

"Yaas sar," with another touch of his cap.

"Bill, go up there and keep the crowd off that platform."

"Yaas sar."

Kansas Bill hitched up his breeches, whipped out a bayonet from his sheath, and fastened it on his gun with more racket than a company of militia could make.

Kansas Bill had been used to rough ways. He had fought Indians out West so long that he had forgotten all soft ways he ever knew, if, indeed, he ever knew any. He didn't say, "Now, gentlemen move off." Oh, no. He said, in a coarse, uncultured voice, "Get out o' here, get out o' here, get o' here, or I'll grease my sticker with ye. Do you hear, now? Take that, take that," and during these ejaculations began swinging that bayonet around in such a wild utterly reckless manner that the mob rapidly made way for him. Then he turned around and gave several departing loafers a savage prod where a departing man would most naturally receive a prod. Then he grabbed his gun by the stock, brought it to a right shoulder shift, and when he had finished this performance he shifted his quid to the other side of his mouth, expectorated gleefully, and had the entire platform to himself.

Following the Example of the Older Ones.

"What kind of house will we play?" asked one little girl of another.

"Oh, play calling," replied the other.

"Mary, here, she can be Mrs. Brown and sit on the step, and me and Julia will call on her and ask her how she is, and how her husband is, and if the baby's got over the measles, and tell her how nice she looks in her new wrapper, and hope it won't hurt her much when she has that tooth filled. And then we will say, 'good-bye, Mrs. Brown, come and see us some time or other, and bring the children and your sewing; and you are such a stranger, we don't see half enough of you.' And then me and Julia will courtesy, and walk off a piece, and I'll say to Julia, 'Did you ever see such a horrid old fright as she looks in that wrapper?' And then Julia she'll say, 'The idea of anybody having false teeth filled!' And then I'll say, 'Yes, and what a homely lot of dirty little brats them young ones of her'n is.'—Let's play it; what do you say?"

Samson and the Jaw Bone.

To illustrate how curiously persons sometimes try to explain matters that are a hard task for our credulity, I mention a little incident experienced by the writer of these lines. When I traveled, in 1871, in Palestine, an old gray friar from the monastery of Ramleh, about fifty miles West from Jerusalem, showed me the supposed place where Samson killed 1,000 Philistines with the jaw bone of an ass. When I expressed my doubts as to the length and strength of a jaw bone, considering the great number of surrounding enemies, the good monk explained the case in the following manner:

"Well, he took hold of the ass by the tail and swung the animal against the Philistines in such a manner that only his head, and of this especially the jaw bone, struck the Philistines, keeping off in this way the surrounding warriors and giving the blow the necessary force to kill." I affirm that in this manner Samson could have slain a million Philistines provided the tail of the ass did not break.—Sacramento Journal.

A sturdy, hungry-looking individual stepped into a Fulton restaurant recently, and after consulting the bill of fare called for a Welsh rabbit. After a short time they brought the piece of bread, nicely toasted, reposing in its bed of cheese, and after looking at it intently for a moment he asked: "Is that a Welsh rabbit?" "It is," was the answer. He lifted it with a fork and looked under it. "It is?" he echoed. "Yes, sir; it's just what you called for—a Welsh rabbit." "Well," replied the man, moving slowly back from the table, "you can take it away, just the same, and bring me some American beef, and remember when I want fried cheese I'll call for it."