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SELECTED TALES.

The Lieutenant's Tale;*

OR THE CONDEMNED SOLDIER'S LAST HOUR.

——"Take him hence,
The world shall not save him."

In the spring of the year 183—, I was stationed with my company in Florida, where we daily expected an attack from a body of Indians, who had completely surrounded us, though keeping at a very respectful distance. Our dangerous position rendered it imperative that the out-posts should be secured by an unusually strong guard. And at one point, more exposed than the rest, picked men were stationed, of tried fidelity and firmness, upon whom the safety of the camp mainly depended.

It was past twelve at night, and the stars, which a few hours before had decked the sky in glowing splendor, were now obscured by flitting clouds, that foretold a storm. Not being able to sleep, I rose from my bed, threw my cloak around me and sallied out. The garrison was hushed in utter silence—a silence whose intensity was painful, and well I wot, that within that fort were many eyes, which in vain courted the favor of the sleepy god.

The fort itself was a crazy affair, very much dilapidated, and has since gone to decay; and at the period of the commencement of my story could have afforded us but slight protection against the vigorous onset of a determined foe.

Soon after emerging from my quarters, I encountered the major, who being somewhat anxious about our situation, and withal wakeful, had come out, like myself for a nocturnal ramble. We had been sauntering about for some little time, occasionally conversing in a low under-tone, and were approaching a defective place in the pickets, near the south-west angle, when a yell, such as I never heard before, and never wish to hear again, broke upon the stillness of the night, not a hundred feet from our position, with most terrifying effect.—The major exclaimed, "some poor fellow has been killed, and that is the shout of victory;" and both of us ran quickly to the pickets, in the direction from which the yell proceded, where we knew a sentinel had been posted.—Here we found poor Edwards crouching in a sitting position, his eyes closed, not in death, but in sleep, and about four inches above his head was a tomahawk deeply buried in a picket.

"Would it had not missed its mark," muttered the major, taking the musket softly from the sleeper's hand, and laying it aside; "Lieutenant, call the officer of the guard."

He came, and Edwards was roused from his slumbers to find himself a prisoner—not, as he first imagined, in the hands of the Indians, but of his own comrades. He asked no questions, for he knew full well that the "Articles of War" awarded the punishment of DEATH to a sentinel found asleep unpon his post.

I will not attempt to portray the agnony of mind which he suffered: his trial came on the next day, and he was brought forward.

Where was the martial air which had always distinguished him among his comrades! instead of being the hearty robust soldier that he was a few hours before, you would have judged that he was just risen from a sick-bed.

His doom was sealed; and he heard his sentence, that he should die the next morning at sunrise, without evincing the slightest agitation; and when the order by the court, "remove the prisoner," struck his ear, he resumed his place between the guards, and strode haughtily away. About 1 o'clock, P. M., the officer of the guard informed me that Edwards had expressed a desire to see me before his execution. I immediately repaired to the old block-house, and in a moment was with this prisoner.

"Well Edwards, I am grieved to my inmost soul to see you here, condemned to die, and yet so young. It is hard, very hard; but I am constrained to confess the justice of your sentence."

"I know it; I am justly condemned, and am willing to expiate my crime with my life—but let that pass. I have sent for you, in the hope that you will grant me a favor."

"Name it Edwards, for I will cheerfully and faithfully execute any reasonable commission you may entrust to my care," was my reply. After expressing his gratitude for my compliance, he began his story nearly after the following manner:—

"I was born in Boston, Massachusetts; and until I had attained my seventeenth year, my life passed as happily as naturally joyous spirits, and the indulgence of affluent parents could make it.

"About that period I formed an acquaintance with a beautiful girl, nearly one year younger than myself, and ere many months had passed away, we were tenderly and devotedly attached to each other. At length, soon after attaining my eighteenth year, we were clandestinely married; but our happiness was of short duration. My marriage was discovered by my parents; I was sent to sea; the vessel was wrecked, and I returned home; but my wife was gone no one knew whither. My father would storm and rage, and then beg me not to mention her name. Her parents had removed to parts unknown, and all my efforts to ascertain her residence or her fate, proved utterly abortive.

"Nearly two years had elapsed, without affording any clue to the fate of my lost treasure. I became taciturn and unhappy, and at length enlisted as a private soldier under —— ——, no matter: it will soon be over.

"I wish to commit this package to your care, and after I am laid beneath the turf, should pleasure or duty lead you to New England, will you, if possible, seek out Ellen, and give it to her.

"Only a week since, I received a letter from her, informing me that she was residing with her uncle, that her parents were both dead, bequeathing her all their property, and asking me to point out the most practicable mode for obtaining my discharge, as she doubted not her ability to procure it for me. It was only yesterday I was indulging the pleasing hope, that before many months should roll away, we should again be united under happier auspices. Poor girl! she little thinks how soon I am to receive my eternal discharge. If you please, sir do not tell her that I was shot and died in disgrace; can't you tell her that I was killed in an engagement, or *anything* but disgrace."

I promised him that she should not know it.

Then drawing a miniature from his bosom he continued: "I wish to give you this also, when my last moment has arrived; until that time I desire to wear it next my heart My conduct may appear to be the result of weakness; but it is my last whim, and may I hope that you will indulge it."

I promised to do all he desired, and asked him if he had anything further to request before he should be led to execution?

"No, that is all. God bless you for your kindness; and I——" but he could say no more; and as he grasped my hand, the big tears fell hot and fast upon it. I hastily left the prison, my heart in an agony of sorrow for the utimely fate of the wretched man.

As I left the block-house, I heard a tremendous shout, and soon learned that General G—had forced his way through the enemy and had just entered the fort with his command. Every eye was lighted up with joy at a prospect of a speedy release from this station. Yes, by the next noon, we should all be on the march, and the old fort would again be lonely and deserted. Did I say *all?* No! the bones of one must lie here, and his name be forgotton. There would be none left to mourn: all must feel that he deserved the fate he suffered, yet still we might pity him.

I had just paid my respects to the General, and had again returned to my quarters with a heavy heart, when the orderly sergeant presented himself for orders for the morrow, and I then recollected it was our company who were to furnish the execution party, that should send their comrade into the presence of his God.

Recollecting myself, I gave the necessary orders, and had carefully laid aside the package intrusted to my care, when I was informed that General G—— desired my attendance upon him immediately. I hastened to his quarters, and found him engaged in earnest conversation with Major B—— and other officers. I only overheard the words "*he must die!*"—when General G——, turning toward me, asked if I was "officer of the guard for to-morrow." On my replying in the affirmative, he directed me to have every thing properly arranged for the execution; dismissing me with the simple remark, "*that's all!*"

"*That's all!*" How very little do we appreciate the woes of others while basking in the sunshine of prosperity ourselves.

I passed a sleepless night, dreaming, as it were, awake, and experienced a relief when I heard the first call for revellie. The sun rose brilliantly; not a cloud obscured the heavens, not even a zephyr lurked among the forest leaves; nature was hushed, as if she awaited in breathless silence, the musket's report that should hurry a troubled soul into eternity.

But our duty was before us; the hour of execution had arrived, and the criminal was brought forth. Of all the actors in that sad scene, no one appeared more composed than poor Edwards.—He was dressed in linen pants of snowy whiteness, white stockings and black pumps, and a shirt elegantly wrought by the delicate fingers of his young wife. Alas! how little did she dream that it was to become his shroud! He wore no cap or roundabout, and his dark clustering hair, overhanging his noble forehead, looked as if it belonged more to some bright-eyed maiden.

Motioning me to his side, he drew the miniature from his bosom, and taking one last fond look, pressed it to his lips, and turning away his head to conceal his tears, placed it in my hand.

I heard a deep sigh, but when he turned his face again towards me, all was calm. "Now, sir, I am ready." He started at the sight of his coffin, but the pang was momentary; and kneeling upon it he was asked if he requested any thing further. "Nothing, save that you will take sure aim," was the reply.

The execution detail took its position, and Captain D—— stepped forward and whispered a few words to each of the men composing it, which I could not hear. Choking with emotion, I gave the command, "ready, aim, fire;" the discharge followed, but not at the heart of poor Edwards; for instantly after the report, the words "*You are pardoned Edward's,*" broke forth close to my position; and turning, I met the cheerful look of Gen. G——.

Soon after General G——had arrived in the fort, on the day previous to the execution, he learned that one of the garrison was condemned to die; and calling the officers together for consultation upon the subject, he finally determined to pardon Edwards, in consideration of the previous excellent character of the latter, but concealed his intention from every one except Captain D——, who at the moment of execution, as directed by the General, whispered each man to aim above the condemned man's head.

The scene of unbounded rejoicing that spread throughout the garrison on the announcement of the pardon, exceeds my powers of description. None wore a happier countenance than Henry Edwards; he had been a great favorite with all, and ever after proved a valuable soldier; indeed General G—— once remarked, that there was not a better officer in his regiment than Sergeant Edwards.

It was now nearly six years since the occurrence of these events, and my health had become impaired by long service in a climate unsuited to my constitution. I obtained a "leave of absence," and went to Boston to reside for two or three months. During my stay in that city, I made diligent inquiries after Edwards, whose enlistment had long expired, and who, as I understood from General G——, resided in Charlestown, but for a long time could learn nothing about him.

At length, as I was strolling about the city one day, accompanied by a friend, I stepped into a shop to make some trifling purchases; and soon after entering, I observed a very gentlemanly man, whose countenance seemed familiar to me; but my eye rested on him only for a moment, as my attenion was called to other objects.

Presently my friend exclaimed, "Why what the deuce does the fellow want? he looks as if he was going to jump through one or the other of us."

I was ready to deliver a homily against impudent persons in general, and him in particular, when he surprised me with "Yes it is—no—but it is!" and before I could utter a word, he had grasped my hand and given it such a squeeze as brought the tears into my eyes.

"Well, well, this may be excessively agreeable to *you* but it is not so to *me*."

"Is this Lieutenant——?"

"Yes; but who are you, sir?"

"You don't know me? Well, that's the best thing I've heard for a month! My name, sir, is Henry Edwards.—Why I have been looking for you these three weeks, having by accident learned that you were expected to visit this city. Now, lieutenant, your friend *must* excuse you, and you *must* accompany me to my house immediately. My dear Ellen has long since learned to esteem Lieutenant——as one of nature's noblemen, whom she cannot entertain too courteously, for whose friendship to her husband she can never be sufficiently grateful."

I must acknowledge that I was extremely delighted to meet Mr. Edwards, and without a moment's hesitation proceeded with him to his house.

The reception given me by his beautiful and accomplished lady was such as one might expect an elegant and refined woman would bestow on a valued friend.

During my sojourn in Boston, I was ever a welcome guest in the family of Mr. Edwards. Inheriting a large estate from his father, who deceased some two years ago, he lived in a style of easy independence, surrounded by every comfort, and many of the luxuries of life; and it was with heartfelt regret, that on the expiration of my leave of absence, I was obliged to leave his hospitable mansion and rejoin my regiment in the regions of the far wild west.—*Recollections of United States Army.*

*This tale is founded upon a little sketch originally, from the pen of Charles H. Saunders, Esq.

CATCHING AN HEIRESS IN KENTUCKY. About two months since, says the Cincinnati Commercial, a novel circumstance took place a few miles back of Covington, in the State of Kentucky, the parties having numerous wealthy acquaintances in Cincinnati. It appears that a very rich old widow lady by the name of Murray had an only daughter, who was a most beautiful creature, and could have commanded the hand of the proudest of Kentucky's sons, but she, strange to say, loved a little gentleman tailor by the name of Petriken, who had been so fortunate as to woo her without her mother's knowledge. At length the fact came to the parent's ears, and she forbade young Petriken her house. A few weeks after the old lady had occasion to be absent one evening till a late hour; of course the lovers did not let such an opportunity pass of spending the evening together, and when they heard Mrs. Murray returning, the lover, not being able to escape, was put safely into a large closet. On the entrance of Mrs. Murray, she having had a hint from a faithful servant, made bold to question her daughter about the presence of her lover, and declaring that he had *just gone out of the house.* This the damsel stoutly denied, but her mamma would not believe her, and as a terrible punishment, ordered her to be locked up in the dark closet, there to remain till broad daylight! On her opening the closet door next morning, Mrs. M. was thunderstruck to behold her daughter asleep in the young tailor's arms! It is needless to add that the mother no longer opposed their union, and on that very day the blushing girl was united to her honorable lover, and they are now enjoying all the blisses and kisses of their romantic honey-moon.

A good Wife exhibits her love for her husband by trying to promote his welfare, and by administering to his comfort.

A Poor Wife "dears" and "my loves" her husband, and would'nt sew a button on his coat to keep him from freezing.

A Sensible Wife looks for her enjoyments at home—a silly one abroad.

A Wise Girl would win a lover by those virtues which secure admiration when personal charms have failed.

A Simple Girl endeavors to recommend herself by the exhibition of frivolous accomplishments and mawkish sentiment, which are as shallow as her mind.

A Good Girl always respects herself, and therefore always possesses the respect of others.

"John, did you leave Mr. Jones's umbrella at home?" said a fond mother yesterday to her first-born.

"No, ma," said John.

"And why did you not, my son?—Didn't I tell you to?" said the mother.

"Yes, you did, ma," said John; "but didn't you always tell me to keep something for a rainy day, and as it looks as if to-morrow would be wet, what better thing can I *keep* than an umbrella?"

"Boy!"

"Yes Massa."

"Stabulate my steed."

"Massa."

"Denote to him an adequate quantity of nutricious aliment and I will award to you a pecuniary compensation.

"De lor! Here ole Missy, here's a Dutchman a talkin' to you!"

The Wisconsin Repulican says, the candidate for justice at Green Bay, offers to marry all bachelors, who will vote for him, at *half price*, and editors *free*.

LOST FEELINGS.

BY THE LATE MRS. JANE GRAY.

Return again! ye that have left my heart
To loneliness and pain;
Ye that of all my gladness made a part,
Return again!
Oh! treasure of my bosm, pure and kind,
That reconciled me to my earthly lot,
How I have flung you on the chilly wind
That heeds you not.

Return again! From whence? From the deep sea
Of death where ye were flung?
From the thick clouds that o'er your memory
Are darkly hung?
Pearls of my soul, ye cannot! I have given
To those who heed them not, your priceless store!
Stars of my spirit ye may shine in heaven—
On earth no more!

MISCELLANEOUS.

METHODIST E. CONVENTION.

TUESDAY, May 13. Bishop Andrew in the Chair. After the presentation of memorials, the resolution of Drs. Smith and Pierce was taken up, when Mr. Crowder, of Va. addressed the convention.

Mr. Evans then offered a resolution to stop the discussion, which gave rise to a debate, in which several delegates participated, and without coming to a vote the convention adjourned.

WEDNESDAY, May 14. Bishop Soule in the Chair. After the performance of religious services, Rev. J. Early, chairman of the committee on Finance, and Dr. Capers, chairman of the committee on Missions, submitted reports, which were read.

The resolution of Mr. Evans, offered yesterday, was then taken up, and discussed by several delegates from the border Conferences; after which it was withdrawn by the mover, when the resolution of Drs. Smith and Pierce was called up and read.

When the vote was about to be taken, Mr. Boyle arose in his place and said that he had come to the convention with cherished impressions that a separation was not necessary, but since he had witnessed the discussions and heard the representations of the brethren from all parts of the South, he was fully satisfied that the separation was inevitable.—He should therefore vote for the resolution, and felt it due to himself to make this avowal, believing that it was understood by the delegation from Missouri, that though the necessity with them might not be so imperious, yet, making common cause with the South, it was the interest and duty of Missouri to go into the Southern organization.

Mr. Green, of Missouri, said he had been for a long time a member of the Missouri conference; he claimed to understand the sentiments of that people; and he did not believe that the interests of Methodism in that region required the separation. Mr. Green, in an animated address, sustained the doctrines of the resolution. Having concluded his remarks, the question was taken and passed with one dissenting voice.

The following is the resolution:

Resolved by the Delegates of the several Annual Conferences in the South and Southwestern States, in General Convention assembled. That we cannot sanction the action of the late general conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, on the subject of slavery, by remaining under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of this body, without deep and lasting injury to the interests of the church and country; we, therefore, hereby instruct the committee on organization that if, upon a careful examination of the whole subject, they find that there is no reasonable ground to hope that the Northern majority will recede from their position and give some safe guaranty for the future security of our civil and ecclesiastical rights, that they report in favor of a separation from the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the said general conference.

On the passage of the resolution, Bishop Soule observed that the vote was very remarkable for its unanimity.

On motion, the convention adjourned, with benediction by Bishop Soule.

METORIC SHOWER.—The last number of Silliman's Journal contains a paper by E. C. HERRICK, Esq., of New Haven, from which it appears that the August exhibition of meteors, as seen in that city, was last year fully equal to that of any former year since 1837. In three hours on the night of August 9th—10th, 367 meteors were seen, and on the night of the 10th—11th, in six hours, 622 meteors.

PAYING A DOCTOR'S BILL.—Some paper tells of a singular old gentleman, who was waited upon with his doctor's bill for medicine and visits. After cogitation for some time on its contents, he desired the young man who called with it to tell the doctor that the medicine he would certainly pay for, but as for the visits he had charged, he should return them again!

THE "CRUSADE."—The Cincinnati Gazette, noticing a late article in the government paper, speaking of the case with which a "crusade" could be got up to "the Halls of the Montezumas," says:—

"We feel, as we fear, the spirit of the temper of the article in the Union. It bodes no good. It is evil. The cry of "Ho! West!—one blast from the bugle, proclaiming as watchwords the 'Halls of the Montezumas, and the mines of Mexico,' would start into being twenty thousaud volunteers!" Ay, so it would. What then? Why in this valley, teeming with life, a spirit of aggrandisement—of mad and maddening excitement—of a selfish and burning thirst for power—of military excitement—of conquest in its worst form—would rule as a tyrant master, sweeping all before it, and, as sure as it lives, desolating the hope of the virtuous and the free. Let all parties shun this spirit, as they would dishonor. Let the country smite it down, in its early manhood, ere that manhood be smitten unto death by its foul and degrading breath."

SOUTH CAROLINA AND THE ADMINISTRATION—In allusion to the fact that Messrs Calhoun, Elmore and Pickens have successively declined the Embassy to England, tendered to each of them by President Polk, the Charleston Mercury says:

"It is now known that the Hon. F. W. Pickens has declined the mission to London. We are not sorry, under the circumstances, to see the public men of the State *avoiding the entanglement of Federal office*, and are persuaded that they thus act more in accordance with the wishes of the people than by accepting office. We wish well to Mr. Polk's administration, and desire to be able to give it a hearty support; but it is much better for us that the leading politicians of the State should be free.

A WONDERFUL ENGINE.—A London paper says that "a wonderful engine has lately been constructed by Professor Reingle, who is securing patents in every civilized country of the earth. The power, which is self-produced in the engine, is obtained from condensed air, which, though easily manageable, begets an immense force; the present engine, which stands on a space not exceeding two feet square, having a power equal to five hundred and sixty-eight horses.—For pumping water out of mines it is gravely proposed to use a 10,000 or 20,000 horse power in order to do the work promptly. It is stated, that, with the present small engine, two hundred and twenty tons can be propelled at a rate of twenty-five or thirty miles per hour. The description of the action of the machine is very vague, but it is said that several very eminent and scientific men have examined it and expressed their astonishment. [Professor Faraady, having seen the drawing and heard the theory and practice of this invention explained, complimented the inventor by declaring, that he had discovered perpetual motion of the moft terrific description."

THE ALLEGHANY CITY FIRE.—We have understood, says the Pittsburg (Pa) Chronicle of Monday, since issuing our extra of Saturday morning, that the loss will be much below the sum at which it was first estimated. The impression got out that the warehouses were full of goods and produce, and all naturally concluded that the total destruction of these would make the loss amount to some hundred thousands. But we are gratified to learn it is not the case. Fortunately the stock in all the warehouses was very small, and the buildings being mere sheds, the loss is a small consideration.

THE OREGON QUESTION.—*Arbitration.*—The Washington Union, the organ of the administration, and speaking probably by authority, remarks thus on the proposal to submit the Oregon question to the arbitration of some European government:—"The New York Courier suggests *arbitration*. We understand that Mr Calhoun declined this proposition when made by the British Minister—and declined it, it is said, upon grounds of the strongest character. We are content to wait for the publication of that document, with the general remark, that the umpirage of a third power has been able to settle satisfactorily the controversy between two States in relation to disputed territory."

TRIBUTES FROM THE LADIES.—Mr. Clay acknowledges under date of the 5th inst. the receipt of two valuable presents from the ladies. The first is a silver waiter, costing $200, from the ladies of Norwich, Conn., being two large and beautiful silver pitchers.

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Md.