

ROBERT HERRICK.

1591—1671.

Down Devon's dale returning spring
Brings timid larks that coo and sing,
And birds on Hawthorne hedges;
But there no songs like thine take wing
Of love, and swains-a-shepherding
And jovial Bacchic pledges.

As merry are thy laughing lays
As his who gained Hipparchus' praise,
And hymned the vine-god's glories;
As his of glad Sicilian days,
Ours who won Augustan bays
By honey-sweet amours.

What loves were thine! First, Julia fair,
E. throned in graces far more rare
Than Grecian Antiope;
Diana, Eleonora share
Thy rich regard, and thee in snare
Had Silvia gay, and Chloris.

Thou sang'st of roses soft and sweet,
Of flowers in bloom where lovers meet,
Of amorous Anacallis;
Of dances led by fairy feet,
The wassail, wake, the soft-eyed, neat
Corinna coy, and Phyllis.

Thine age was one of mighty men!
Duke Wit with Wisdom married then,
As later time confesses.
Will Shakespeare, Bacon, "rare old Ben"—
Can such a reign be known again
As was the good Queen Bess?

We, like thy friends of pastoral creed,
In hope to thy Blithedale need
Would raise the tried rhymes;
Thy prophetic power true indeed,
Oh praise thou hast a worthy need,
Thy "pillar" still thy verses!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.

LAFITTE'S HAND.

A STRANGE STORY FROM WESTERN TEXAS.

BY AMELIA E. BARR.

(Concluded.)

It was here, where they hoped to rest, they found their enemy waiting. Waking one morning in the gray dawn, they found themselves surrounded by Bowie's Rangers. From the first moment Dick knew there was no hope of either victory or escape. If Lafitte, and a score of men like him, had been by his side, he would have made a fight for life or liberty, but the men around him were thieves, and not fighters. Mirijilla had disappeared, the rest hastened to procure indemnity by swearing they were merely Dick's Llanos's hired men. Dick only accepted with a haughty silence the misfortune that had come upon him. Bowie himself was full of annoyance in facing his duty. He had long loved Kate Llano, and he wished with all his heart that Tom had escaped. But the men in his command were in a highly incensed state of mind. They had been called from home when their crops and cattle needed them, and all, more or less, were sufferers from these organized bands of horse-thieves. They were for hanging Dick at once.

"Give him a rope and a black jack shrift," they cried, unanimously. Bowie's influence was strained to the utmost in order to get the majority to agree in carrying the culprit back to the settlements for a fair trial.

"If we hang him here his friends will say ugly things about our motives; besides, he only can give exact information as to the right owners of the animals," urged Bowie, and, after some disputing, the plan was accepted.

Half a dozen picked men took charge of the prisoner and rode homeward with him. What a weird, weary ride to death it had been! Dick shuddered and shut his eyes many a time as he retraced his unfortunate steps.

His only hope was in Bram Bowie. This famous ranger was the very man to tie to in any trouble that did not involve guilt. As it was, Dick had seen his eyes fill, and his lips twitch, when he looked at him. If he had to die he thought he would like Kate to marry such a man; he thought it would be easy for any woman to love so handsome, and honorable, and brave a soldier. For Bram was one of those frontier heroes in whose faces the history of Texas may be read. He had been born on a battle-field, and reared in his solitary home in skill and craft against wild men and wild beasts, until he had eyes all round him, and ears like an Indian. And withal, his nature had a certain grand tranquillity, like the great windless depths of the Texas forests.

At length they reached the Colorado again. Dick looked sadly at the clear, sweet stream, which is said to draw back to it all who have once drunk of its waters. Two miles beyond it was Kate and home. He had been taken to Bowie's house, and was a watched prisoner in it.

"Bowie," said Dick, "I want to see my sister. Will you send for her?"

"I'll go myself, Dick. Dick, I am just about as miserable as you are; I wish to God there was anything I could do!"

"There is nothing, Bowie. You must do your duty. I wish I had done mine."

The man went out biting his lips, and when he returned Kate was with him. Oh, what a bitter meeting! What shame and sorrow and unavailing regret! Dick thought there was no

hope. Kate would not believe that. She knew that Bowie would do his best, and with all the men present she pleaded Dick's cause, until many a rough hand wiped gentle tears away. After Bowie had taken her home again, she determined to tell Africa, and under his protection ride around to all the adjacent ranchers and beg them on the morrow to be merciful. But Africa in some way had already divined the dismal news. She found him sitting on the floor of his cabin rocking himself slowly to and fro, with a stern, tearless face, equally wretched and hopeless.

"Taint no use, missec," he said; "I done see two dead men leave Mass'r Bram's house, and dem two dead men were my young mass'r and ole Africa."

Early in the morning the jury summoned the previous night assembled at Bowie's. Unfortunately for Dick, they were all men to whom horses represented the most solid interest of existence. Negroes were only born to take care of horses; corn and oats were only planted to feed them; pistols had been invented to defend them; God had made the prairies specially as a pasture for them. To steal a horse in these men's eyes was a crime to which murder or treason seemed venial in comparison. And Dick's daring and popularity, his skill in organizing raids, and his courage in carrying over the rider such large droves, had made him for three years a thorn in the side of the whole country west of the San Saba and the Red Fork. Without Dick Llano, Mirijilla and Lafitte were useless; no men would work under them.

The sheriff of the county was there and read the letter already alluded to. Bowie spoke in a scathing manner of the disgrace of condemning men on anonymous information. "I would not hang the meanest cur I have because some cowardly villain wrote and said he had bit him, and then was afraid to put his name against the charge." Then he spoke of Dick's youth, and of the great services his father had done Texas in her early struggle for freedom. Finally, he offered to become security for his future good behavior. The man's speech, though hesitating, had that touching eloquence which profound emotion strongly controlled represents. Kate's beauty and sorrow and sisterly devotion added to the merciful sentiment; for a few moments after Bowie's speech it seemed probable that Dick's life would be spared. The men stood together in groups, talking in whispers, and old Africa watched them with a scorn and hatred he took no trouble to conceal.

The question was decided by the entrance of Lafitte. He came as a penitent, prepared to confess all, and more than all, if he could by any means compass Dick's death. He ignored Dick altogether, and addressed himself with a wily eloquence to the jury. He had important information to give about horses and horse-thieves, and he gave it. There was no longer any doubt as to the result. Only Bowie, of all present, refused to sanction the death-sentence. When Kate began to plead, the men, unable to endure her tears, left the room as solemnly as if death was already in it—all except Bowie and Lafitte. Perhaps it was because Bowie covered the exit of the latter with his pistol that he remained; but, as he felt himself compelled to resume his seat, he glanced at Dick with a stealthy, smiling hate that was hideous to see.

Bowie felt as if he could strangle the reptile, and Africa raised himself from the ground—where he had sat embracing his master's knees—and faced him. The negro was *possessed*, no one could doubt it. Bowie watched him in amazement; Lafitte shivered and cowered under the basilisk eyes which regarded him.

"*Cursed—cursed—cursed!*" the negro cried, in a hoarse whisper, "now an' for eber! I wrote dat letter, *you did*, and I *se* *gwine to cut de right hand off you!*" And as he spoke he drew his keen hunting-knife and rushed up on the traitor. Bowie felt as if he was in a dream; for a moment the terrible passion of the negro fascinated him, the next he rose to interfere, but, before he could do so, there was a click and a shot, and Africa fell.

"*Dead or alive, I'll cut it off yet!*" he cried, with the fury of a demoniac, and then tottered towards his idol, with a look in which was concentrated an eternity of love. It would have gone hard with Lafitte the next moment but for Bowie; but the man's sense of justice prevailed even over his loathing hatred. "He did it in self-defense, boys," he said, calmly; "the negro would have killed him else." And with a few muttered curses and glances of contempt they strolled outside again. For it had been decided that Dick must die at sunset, and they sat down in the shade to smoke and wait for the hour. It was scarcely worth while to break another day about a young horse-thief, especially as there was an election on hand, and the little county town on the morrow would be a lively place.

"Bowie," said Dick, with a bright, tearless eye, "throw my blanket over Africa; in an hour or two you can bury us together."

Bowie did it, and then turning to the wretched brother and sister said: "Dick, is there anything on earth I can do for you?"

"Yes, Bowie, there is. I am willing to die; I have, perhaps, deserved it; but, for my father's sake, spare me the shame of being hung. I shan't mind a pistol-shot from you, and there are plenty of good rifles here. Ask these men for my father's sake to do me this favor."

Bowie nodded and went out. He staid some time, but he came in with a hopeless face. The tragedy that had just occurred seemed to have

been put in some way or other to Dick's account. The men were angry and impatient. Bowie himself thought it was a well to shorten so terrible a trial for all who cared for the lad. So, just as the sun dropped towards the west, they led him out to die. He was quite calm, and Kate kissed him over and over with a despairing love that even through its great agony strove to breathe of hope and of forgiveness.

"God is more merciful than man, Dick," she cried. "He will pardon the contrite; so Brother. I give you a rendezvous in a better world than this. Remember!"

She did not follow him out of the house, and Bowie remained by her side, for the tree selected as the tree of punishment was almost at the door.

"Gentlemen," said Dick, "I asked a favor you thought it right to refuse me. Still I ask it once more. Is there any one here who, for my father's sake, will give Dick Llano a man's death?"

No one spoke.

Suddenly Kate appeared on the veranda.

"Stop one moment," she cried, in a voice that compelled attention. "Dick! oh, Dick! *I will do it!*" and, with the words, he fell dead with a ball through his heart.

The next moment Kate was lying insensible in Bowie's arms, and he had quietly put his pistol in his belt again.

In the confusion no one cared to make an inquiry; the man was dead, that was enough. There was a cry of "Saddle up before sundown," and Bowie was very soon left with the two dead men and the insensible woman. They could scarcely have been left in more pitiful hands.

When Kate came back to her wretched self again it was midnight. Two negro women were watching her, and Bowie was sitting on the moonlit veranda his great heart almost broken for the sorrowful girl inside. The bodies of Dick and Africa had been buried under one of the great oaks that shaded the Llano homestead. Bowie had taken them there, and with his own hands laid over the grave the green turf it had displaced. He thought this would be the thing Kate would like best.

When he returned from his sad duty Lafitte was at his gate. He said he felt ill, and was afraid to ride further, and asked to be allowed to stay until the morning. Bowie pointed to a small room on the north veranda, but he never spoke to him, and Lafitte saw that his company was not desired, and that in fact, Bowie would peremptorily refuse it if offered. So he went to the room pointed out, and a servant took him some beef and bread and a cup of coffee.

Bowie cared no more about him; he had far more interesting things to think about. Kate was in his house; she had been conscious of his sympathy in that last supreme moment of her brother's life, and had relied upon his help. Did she love him? And when the first sorrow for her brother's death was over, would she trust her life to his care?

Soon after midnight he became conscious of a Presence! He knew not what it was, but it passed him swift as the wind, and the next moment a long horror-stricken shriek seemed to fill the whole atmosphere with clamor. Kate, and the women watching by her, heard it, and fled, white and trembling, out of the house. The negroes in the quarters heard it, and from every cabin they stumbled out screaming "Mass'r Bram! Mass'r Bram!" "Indians," was probably the first thought of all, especially of the dogs were howling in an unearthly manner, but a few minutes sufficed to explode this far. Far and wide no living thing troubled the peace of nature. The night was exquisitely warm, and light and still; the very cattle seemed to be asleep and dreaming.

Then Bowie noticed that of all on the place Lafitte alone had not heard the cry. They went in a body to his room. He sat in a large chair by the open window, still dressed, his pipe and newspaper fallen into a little pool of blood on the floor. He was quite dead, though scarcely cold, and on the table at his side, *cut off from his body*, lay his right hand. Kate stood with parted lips and deathlike face gazing at it; Bowie after a moment touched it, to assure himself it was not a vision. Then he noticed that beside the fingers there was a piece of paper.

"Why, that is Africa's writing!" gasped Kate, in a horrified whisper; and, stooping forward, she and Bowie read these words in the negro's unmistakable hand: "DEAD OR ALIVE, AFRICA KEEL'S HIS WORD!"

Far and wide the wondrous circumstance spread. Bowie would not suffer a thing to be touched, and sent riders to all the men who had been present at poor Dick's execution. Each man brought a little crowd with him, and all saw and read with a trembling terror the supernatural message. Some skeptic suggested that perhaps Africa had written this message and given it to Lafitte before the latter shot him, and that Lafitte had been examining it when he himself had been touched by the finger of Death. But the whole company relapsed into a solemn silence after the following conversation between Captain Bowie and the sheriff:

"Sheriff, what time was it when Africa was killed?"

"Four o'clock, precisely."

"What time was it when you gave me the San Antonio Herald?"

"A quarter past six. I had mounted my horse and was leaving your gate when you asked me if I had a late newspaper. I gave you the San Antonio Herald."

"Do you know the date?"

"Surely. I got it in San Antonio a week ago to-day. It was June 18th."

"Gentlemen," said Bowie, "I have only this to say. When I came back from burying Dick Llano and his servant, Lafitte stood at my gate. He asked for a night's lodging. He said he was sick; he looked to me like a man in mortal terror. I would not speak to him, but I gave him a room and sent him some supper. He told Cassie, my housekeeper, to ask me for a newspaper, and I sent him the very one the sheriff gave me, and from which you will see this slip has been torn."

Then all looked again at Africa's message. It was written on the top of the San Antonio paper, and the date was *June 18th*.

"Gentlemen, I was present when Africa was shot. The words which provoked the shot were these: 'You wrote dat letter, and I se gwine to cut de right hand off you!' Then, after he fell, he gasped out with his dying breath, '*Dead or alive I'll do it!*' Gentlemen, Africa has kept his word."

PERSONAL.

MR. SERJEANT BALLANTINE has been converted to polygamy by what he has observed at Utah. He thinks it is just the thing required to people a new colony. Very practical, as usual.

MR. JOHN MORLEY has finally decided not to give up his connection with the *Pall Mall Gazette*. A variety of statements on the subject have been circulated, but as Mr. Morley's decision in the matter has only recently been come to these rumors have not been contradicted. Mr. Morley will continue to do much of the political writing of the *Pall Mall*, though he will be relieved of some of the "inside" editorial duties.

THE famous Greeley farm in Chappaqua, Westchester County, will before long be sold under the provisions of Mrs. Greeley's will. Colonel Nicholas Smith, who occupied the farm until recently, has removed to Kentucky with his three children, and Miss Gabrielle Greeley, who, with these children, is heir to the property, is living in this city. The farm contains eighty acres and has several buildings upon it, including Mr. Greeley's big stone barn. The old homestead, where "Busy Life" and the "History of the Rebellion" were written, was destroyed by fire.

THE dynamite fiends might have literally danced upon the Houses of Parliament recently, as the Parliamentary police force were partaking of the hospitality of Sir Edward Watkin at the Cannon-street Hotel. But happily the circumstances are not known beyond Palace-yard. Mr. Denning exhibited considerable art so as to conceal his movements. He ordered his men to meet him in plain clothes in Cannon street, at seven o'clock. The order was not accompanied by an explanation of the object of the movement. It was only on rendezvousing opposite the hotel that the object was explained.

THE Marquis of Lorne, from a Boston point of view:—"His countenance, though not unlike the familiar portraits, had much more of expression and maturity of thought than they suggested. The well-marked features, especially the penetrating eyes and slightly aquiline nose, gave an expression of quick discernment and fearlessness. His complexion is the ideal of health in ruddy freshness, his bearing is erect, and his step easy and elastic. A shapely head, flaxen hair and moustache, and well-defined chin also catch attention, so that even the humble habits of Cambridge street, who had no knowledge of his presence in Boston, looked after him as he passed along with the expressions of admiration, blended with curiosity."

WHEN a man is old enough to know better, writes Wilkie Collins to William Winter, he generally commits some of his most flagrant indiscretions. This new book, "Heart and Science," so mercilessly excited me that I went on writing week after week without a day's interval of rest. Rest was impossible. I made a desperate effort: rushed to the sea; went sailing and fishing; and was writing my book all the time "in my head," as the children say. The one wise course to take was to get back to my desk and empty my head, and then rest. My nerves are too much shaken for travelling. An armchair and a cigar, and a hundred and fiftieth reading of the glorious Walter Scott, (King, Emperor, President and God Almighty of Novelists)—there is the regimen that is doing me good. All the other novel-writers I can read, while I am at work myself. If I only look at "The Antiquary," or "Old Mortality," I am crushed by the sense of my own littleness, and there is no work possible for me on that day.

SPEAKING of American novelists, the *Pall Mall Gazette* explains that "what Englishmen are likely to find fault with in American novelists is not that they are immoral—they are neither more or less immoral than our own,—but that they are not sufficiently American. With one notable exception, the best of them produce a peculiarly refined, perhaps over-refined, species of the European novel, keen, analytical, epigrammatic, cynical, but with none of the dash and freshness which we expect from a country of such vigorous youth and so vast a future."