

## THE BOY AND THE PANTHER.

A WILD WESTERN SCENE.

"Oh, how the mother loves the child she nursed!"

It was a fine morning in August, when little Samuel Eaton was about seven years old, that he was making a dam in a brook that ran before his father's door—He was an only and beautiful child, his mother almost idolized him. There he was with his trowsers tucked up above his knees, working like a beaver, his mother's eye glancing out from beneath his sunburnt hair, and with some of his father's strength, tugging at a stone in the bottom of the stream.

"Sammy, you'd better come in, hadn't ye?" said Hannah, in a tone half-mother and half-mate.

"N-o-o-o, I guess not quite yet," said Samuel.

An acorn was floating down the stream. The boy took it up—looked at it—was pleased, and 'reckoned' in his mind there were more up in the 'gully,' and when his mother's back was turned, off he started for across.

The gorge of the mountain, into which he was about to enter, had been formed (by the work of centuries) by the attraction of the stream he had just been playing in—and walking on a level that bordered each side of the water, he boldly entered the ravine. An almost perpendicular wall or bank ascended on each side to the height of a hundred feet, composed of crags and rocks fretted by decay and storm into fantastic shapes and positions. A few scattering bushes and trees sought nourishment from the level above, and excepting their assistance and the uneven surface of the rock, the part seemed inaccessible but to bird and beast. About one-eighth of a mile from the entrance, a cataract closed the gorge, throwing up its white veil of mist, in seeming guardianship of the spirit waters. The verdant boughs hanging over the bank, cast a deep gloom upon the bed below, while so lofty was the distance, that they seemed to grow out of the sky, blue patches of which were to be seen peeping between them.

Hannah Eaton soon missed her boy, but as he had often wandered to the field where his father was at work, she concluded he must be there, and checked the coming fear with the hope that he would return at the hour of dinner. When the father came, neither he nor his men knew where the child was. Then the agitated mother exclaimed,

"He is lost! he is lost! my poor boy will starve in the woods!"

Gathering courage, she hastily summoned the family around her, and despatched them all but her husband, to search in different directions in the forest. To him she said:—

"Scour every field, and if you can't find him, join me in the gorge."

"He wouldn't go to the gorge, Hannah!"

"He would go anywhere," she knew not why, but the presentiment that the boy had followed the course of the stream dwelt strongly on her mind.

"I can't find him, Hannah," said the husband, as he rejoined her at the mouth of the gorge.

An eagle flew past the mother as she entered the ravine. She thought to herself that the dreadful birds were tearing her child to pieces—and frantic she hastened on, making the walls of the cavern echo with screams for her offspring. Her only answer was the eternal thunders of the cataract, as if in mockery of her woe, and flinging its cold spray upon her hot and throbbing temple. "Fool that I am, how can he hear me?" She strained her eyes along the dizzy height that peered through the mist till she could no longer see, and her eyes filled with tears.

Who but a mother can tell the feeling of a mother's heart? Fear came thick and fast upon the reeling brain of Hannah. "On my boy—my brave boy will die;" and wringing her hands in agony, she sank to her husband's feet.

The pain of 'hope deferred,' had strained her heart strings to the severest tension, and it seemed as though the rude hand of despair had broken them all.

The terrified husband threw water on her pale face, and strove with all the arts he knew to win her back to life. At last she opened her languid eyes, staring wildly around, and rose trembling to her feet. As she stood like a heart-broken Niobe, "all tears," a fragment of rock came tumbling down the opposite bank. She was herself again. Half up the ascent stood her own dear boy.

But even while the glad cry was issuing from her lips, it turned into a note of horror—"Oh mercy! mercy!"

The crag upon which the boy stood projected from the solid rock in such a way as to hang about twelve feet over the bank. Right below one of the edges of this crag, partly concealed among some bushes, crouched a panther.

The bold youth was aware of the proximity of his parents, and the presence of his dangerous enemy at the same time. He had rolled down the stone in exultation, to convince his parents of the high station he had attained, and he now stood with another in his hand, drawing it back and looking at them as if to ask whether he should throw it at the terrible animal before him. Till then the mother seemed immovable in her suspense, but conscious of the danger of her son, if he irritated the beast, she rushed some distance up the rock, and motioned with her head and hand not to throw. Yet with the fearless mind of childhood and a temper little used to control, he fearlessly threw the fragment with all his might at the ferocious beast. It struck one of his feet. He gave a sudden growl, lashed his tail with fury, and seemed about to spring.

"Get your rifle, Joseph!"

The poor man started not. His eye was fixed with a look of death upon the panther, and he appeared paralyzed with fear.

His wife leaned from her stand, and placing her hand upon her husband's shoulder, looked in his face and cried, "Are you a man, Joseph Eaton? Do you love your child?"

He started as if from sleep, and ran with furious haste from the ravine.

Again the mother looked towards her son. He had fallen upon his knees, and was whispering the little prayers she had taught him, not in cowardly fear, but a thought came across his mind that he must die. The distracted mother could keep still no longer. She rushed up the steep ascent, with the energy of despair, reckless of danger, thinking, only of her son. The rocks crumbled and slipped beneath her feet, yet she fell not. On, she struggled in her agony. The ferocious creature paused a moment when he heard the wretched mother's approach, true to his nature he sprang at the boy. He barely touched the crag, and fell backwards, as Hannah touched the opposite side.

"Ah!" said she laughing deliciously, "the panther must try it again before he parts us, my boy, but we won't part," and sinking on her knees before him—she fondly folded him to her breast, bathing his forehead with her tears.

Unalterable in his ferocity, and the manner of gratifying it, the panther again sprang from his station. This time he was more successful. His forefoot struck the edge of the crag. "He will kill us mother, he will!" and the boy nestled close to his mother's bosom. The animal was struggling to bring his body to the crag—his savage features but a step from the mother's face. "Go away, go away!" she shrieked, hoarse with horror, "you shan't have my child!" Closer, still closer he came, his red eyes flashing fury, and the thick pantings of his breath came in her face. At this awful moment, she hears the faint report of fire-arms in the gulf below, the panther's foot-hold fails, his sharp claws loosen from the rocks, and the baffled beast rolls down the precipice at the feet of Joseph Eaton.

The sun's last ray glanced on the little group at the mouth of the gorge. They were on their knees, the mother's bleeding hands over the head of her son, and the voice of prayer given to their Guardian for his mercy in thwarting the panther's leap.

## THINGS TO BE LOOKED FOR.

Sincerity—in patriotism.  
Friendship—without interest.  
Love—without deceit.  
Charity—without ostentation.  
Honesty—in parish officers.  
Fair play—among gamblers.  
Beauty—without pride.  
An advocate—without a fee.  
A parson—who practices what he professes.  
A fashionable man—without foppery.  
A sanctified look—without hypocrisy.  
A blustering man—without dice.  
Opposition—without sinister views.  
A subaltern officer—without money.  
Administration—inattentive to private matters.

All thoughts that we do not share, in time turn to sadness.—Lamartine.

[ORIGINAL.]

## THE BARD'S PLEA.

BY THE FOREST BARD.

My harp they say our songs are sad  
That thou and I are never glad;  
That melancholy gives a voice,  
To all the songs that are our choice.  
But they forget the pen must speak,  
The language that the heart supplies,  
And thus my harp, thy murmurs break,  
As joy sends smiles or sorrow sighs.

But though we grasp the poet's pen,  
Which ne'er may smile with joy again,  
We dare not write with leann art,  
Aught but the impulse of the heart.

A soulless sympathy we hate,  
That mocks us with an artful guise;  
That only seeks its sneers to state  
And pities but to criticize.

But go my heart be joyous thou,  
We'll sing in strains more glad some now,  
What tho' the heart may sorrow bear,  
The mask of joy we'll let it wear.

Yet had they known how oft I've rung  
With trembling hands thy plaintive chords  
They'd chide me not because I sung,  
Those songs that oft my joy affords.

Alone (like me,) they did not brave  
The wrath of life's tempestuous wave;  
Of all my loved ones here bereft  
Sole son of my race I'm left.

Then wherefore should my soul be glad  
With all my lov'd ones unreplaced I  
May not this heart indeed be sad,  
Where death so deep his footsteps traced!

## UNEASY JOE.

Joe Bunstead was one of those uneasy beings, who are never quiet for a minute, whether awake or asleep. He was always twisting and turning, always uncomfortable, and he was universally known among his companions as Uneasy Joe. Sometimes used to play off practical jokes upon him just for the fun of the thing, but generally speaking, if we let him have his own way, he made mirth enough by "teasing himself." Among his numerous dislikes, Joe detested rats and mice. Indeed he said they seemed born to existence only to annoy and tease him. When a rat he was bitten by a mouse, and severely, too for the reason he always dreaded them. If Joe had occasion to visit a new house, or to sleep in a strange room, he never failed to give the premises a careful investigation to assure himself that there was no mice about. He roomed together in New York, and I laughed a little for his watchfulness and close examination before retiring.

"Is it all right, Joe?" we asked after he had peered behind the furniture, and in every corner of the room.

"Yes, there can't be mice here, that's sure," he replied at last.

"Well, blow out the light then, and go to bed, you, Joe?"

"Yes, here goes!" and Joe suited the action to the word, and leaped into bed.

It must have been nearly morning when Joe awoke us with—

"Hist! hist! don't you hear that noise there?"

"Not a bit of it, Joe. You are dreaming," were the turning over to get a fresh nap.

"There it was again."

"What?"

"Why, the mouse."

"You are making all the noise, you uneasy thing you. Can't you let a feller sleep quietly?"

"Look here," said Joe, "it's all well enough for you who don't care a farthing for rats or mice, but you know that I have a natural horror for the vermin thereabouts. Didn't you hear that?"

"Joe, lie down and be quiet; you took that peep at strong last night, and hav'n't more'n time to sleep before morning."

"Pough! You hav'n't any feeling for my nerves!"

"Not you for mine to wake me out of such a good sleep for nothing."