

Choice Literature.

THE LUMBERMAN'S STORY.

(Concluded.)

"One morning the old gentleman started out early to go to Butternut, a little bit of a town six miles from their cabin. I don't know exactly what took him there, but something, I imagine, about shipping their trunk home. At all events, he went; and it fell out that it was about the most unfortunate time for him to go that he could have picked out. It does seem sometimes, ma'am, as though there was an inherent incongruity in all things. Did it never strike you that way? As though all affairs seem to take a positive delight in going just as criss-cross as they can? Well, I've noticed it time and again. It was just as bright a morning as any you ever see when he started; but 'twas the time of year when you couldn't put faith in the weather. So when he went he said to Miss Elsie that she needn't look for him back if it began to storm, and not to be uneasy if he didn't come. He'd be back, he said, by two o'clock if he came. Night drops down sudden upon this country in the December days, and you can't see very much after three o'clock without a light. It did begin to snow about noon; and Elsie was sure he would not start for home; and she was right. She had heaps of sense, and didn't wear herself out soul and body with nonsensical worrying, as some women do. She was at ease in her mind about her father.

"About ten o'clock in the forenoon, Cousin Albert, as she called him, started out with his gun for a last tramp, as he said—for in a day or two they were to break up and go home. He would be back in an hour or two. He didn't come in one hour, nor two, nor three. And all the time the snow was coming down, softly, quietly, little sharp flakes, keen and cutting. It came without any wind—came as if it meant business. Darkness came, and Cousin Albert had not come. Elsie began to be anxious, for he had not intended to go more than a mile at the farthest away from the cabin. You may have been lonely in your life, ma'am, but if there's any loneliness to be compared to that one feels in such a spot as she was in, I've yet to hear of it. And it was so dark that, as she stood again and again in the door, she could see nothing but black darkness; not a star. How she looked and waited and prayed no one but her own frightened heart and the Great Heart above knows. She knew what was possible, for she had heard the stories of men who had lost their way in the woods, who had perished with cold, who had accidentally shot themselves and lain till only their white, bleached bones remained to tell their story. She had heard of wolves and all the critters that ever existed in the woods tearing belated travellers to pieces. In fact, she had heard of every thing horrible that had ever happened in that country, and lots of things that never had happened and never would happen.

"When seven o'clock came, she was just too anxious to stand it any longer. She knew that if anything had happened to Redding it was a matter of life or death. A night in the woods would be the end; and if there was anything to be done, there was no time to lose. It had stopped snowing, and the wind had gone down a little; but so dark as it was! not a star, not a ray of light from anywhere. She wrote a little note, saying that she had started for the camp, and left it on the table; then she dressed herself as warmly as she could, took a lantern, and started. She knew the way to the camp, and hadn't an idea but what she could keep it. But there was a sharp, hard crust of snow on the ground, and the fall of the afternoon covered what little path there was; and it was so dark and so cold. Pine woods differ, ma'am—and this had a growth of underbrush, and 'twasn't non-too easy to keep the path in broad daylight; but take it in pitch dark and it was worse. She was not weakly frightened, but every nerve was a quiver with excitement and anxiety. She said afterwards that it seemed as though she listened with every nerve and fibre of her very body and soul. She expected to hear some sound of distress; but she only heard the howling of the wind. Oh, a pine forest is a beautiful thing, no doubt; it is, for a fact. But think of the gloom and the horror of that long four miles to that girl under the tall, ghostly trees! Other trees seem to me to have something of a soul about 'em; but the pine-tree is a spectral sort of a thing. It goes up towards the heaven, to be sure; but it don't seem to me to have much tenderness towards earth. It's like some natures, I think—very aspiring and all that, but not very sympathetic. I've seen trees that I felt like putting my arms around; but I own I never felt that way towards a pine, though I might take my hat off to it. Do you understand, ma'am? Well, that's nothing to do with the story, only just to explain how she might have felt in that journey of hers.

"After a while, with her excitement and the darkness and all, she could not be sure of keeping the right path. And, ma'am, for the greater part of that four miles she went on her hands and knees, carrying the lantern in her mouth or in one hand, just as she could; the wind moaning through the trees—for there's always that doleful sound among 'em—the snow beginning to fall again, the sharp, icy ground cutting through her gloves and through her gown, and listening, listening, hardly breathing, for fear she would miss some sound she ought to hear. Think of it, ma'am! But she got through; and when she reached camp she roused us and told her errand, and then like a dead thing fell to the floor. We weren't long getting ready for a start. We knew the necessity. Men that have lived in such a country know that the weather ain't to be trifled with. Well, we started with plenty of torch-lights, and more strength, but not a bit more grit, I'll be bound, than that slip of a girl had shown. And we went, fortunately perhaps you would say providentially, and maybe you'd say right—in the right direction; for we hadn't been out an hour before we found Redding. He had been shot, and had rolled down into a sort of ravine like, down out of sight, where he was a little sheltered from the storm, but where he was clean hid. Shot through the hip, ma'am; a mighty mean sort of wound it was; and falling down that creaky gully like had made it only worse for

him. No, he didn't shoot himself; it was done by some cowardly critter, by accident no doubt; for, instead of staying to see what the damage was and to help out of it, the miserable man ran off—'fraid, I s'pose, that some harm would come to him. It had happened about two o'clock in the afternoon, and there he lay till we found him at four o'clock in the morning. Yes, he was most gone; he had shouted till his voice was just all sunk down to a whisper, shouted and shouted, hoping some human thing would hear him. Then he gave up. He had matches and pencil and a note-book. He had written all about it and what he wanted done in case he was found; and he knew that he'd be found sometime. And then he had put the book under his head and just given up to die. His wound had bled till he had mighty little life left, and he probably couldn't have breathed much longer anyway. Well, we had taken brandy with us and we gave him some. And then, ma'am, some went back to camp and made a litter to carry him there on, for we couldn't carry him any other way, and we had come without anything more than a jack-knife with us. Then, after a while, we got him to camp. I forgot to say that the old gentleman was there. He'd got so far towards his own cabin, and, not feeling uneasy about his daughter, seeing the cousin was there, why, he let us coax him to stay. And 'twas a se thing, for he sort of comforted Elsie; and 'twas a mighty sight better for them to be there with the sick man than in their own place, so far from anybody. Things seem to have a way of happening right now and then, don't they? Well, can you imagine it, ma'am? our going through the gray of the winter morning, carrying that half-dead man on the rough stretcher, the flare of the pine torches, the solemn stillness, and now and then the groans from under the blankets that we'd wrapped around him? When we were within half-a-mile of camp, who should meet us but Miss Elsie! She couldn't wait. I do suppose it seemed to her that we'd never get there. Of course it was natural that she should feel anxious about her cousin, seeing he was more like a brother; but when I saw the look on her face as she stood there with the light of the torches shining on her, I knew that 'twas something more than common feeling that took her through all that suffering. Well, the snow kept on falling, and the wind blew, and, as true as you live, though we sent for a doctor as quick as we could, the drifts were so piled up that it was a week before we could get one to see the poor fellow. I was disabled just then by an ugly cut I'd given one of my feet, so I couldn't go to chopping, and I helped take care of Redding. Of course we made 'em all as comfortable as we could; but our cabin was pretty full, and not much of a place for a sick man and a delicate woman. And just as we could we built 'em a little house—you'd laugh to call it a house, I s'pose—near ours, and got 'em into it—two rooms. But after they were all fixed up you'd say yourself that there were worse places in the world. You see, the wound was a mighty bad one. It's no joke to have a lo' in the hip, ma'am, and then not having care at once. It is poor fellow didn't go as near death's door as any one ever did and not go through, then I'm mistaken. But he had good care, and he was young and strong, and what was better than all, he was hopeful and wanted to live. Miss Elsie was a capital nurse; and what she and I didn't think of to do for the invalid nobody ever thought of. And of course his friends and their friends were written to, and after a while everything good to eat or drink or wear was sent to 'em. And they were mighty comfortable for folks that were uncomfortable, you understand.

"They had to stay right there till March, ma'am, for he couldn't be moved, and they wouldn't leave him. And when he did go, he went on crutches. Just a pale ghost he was, too. But the doctor said he would get so he could go without the crutches after a time, though it would be a long, long time before he was his old self again, if he ever was. It was the meanest kind of a hurt, ma'am—bone shattered and splintered—and then the long lying there in the night, and the dreadful strain to the nerves, and the long fever that followed, and there's no sort of telling what the poor fellow had to go through. But he was clear grit, and he pulled through."

"I suppose he and Elsie married, didn't they?" I asked, with the genuine desire for a love story that ended well.

"No, ma'am, they did not. I know that's what one would naturally look for; but it didn't come. Ma'am, that young man had a sweetheart in the East; and after a time letters began to come, and I began to see, for I'm rather observing, that Elsie looked sad, and more than once, when there didn't seem to be no cause for tears, seeing Redding was doing well, I could see that she had been crying. And after a while Redding told me himself, right before Elsie, and said he knew his kind cousin and good friend would be glad. And he showed us her picture, and praised her—oh, my! you'd have thought there never was a human like her. And he used to write long letters; and when he'd get 'em, which wasn't so very often, why, he'd look like a new man. Curious, isn't it, how much love some one man or one woman will win in this world, and not care for it more than for the dust under his feet, and another, who would give his very soul for the same love, might beg on his bended knees and not be able to win it? Curious, and mighty hard, too. And Redding didn't seem to see what was plain to my eyes as daylight: not that she was foolish and did anything that anyone in her place mightn't have done, for she was a genuine true woman, and showed it all the way through; but somehow I could see that many a time his loving talk about the girl at the East just hurt her like a knife had been run right into her heart. We do hurt people we love many a time; and he was fond of her, and used to say that she was the second-best woman in the world. I imagine—in fact, I know—that that don't answer when one wants to be the first-best. She and I grew to be good friends; and maybe I could read her a little better than the rest of 'em." I looked up to the man's face, and he read my question and my thought in my eyes.

"Yes, you're right; I did love her, and maybe that's the reason my sight was so clear. I saw 'twasn't any use, and no more use 'or her than for me. And, as I say, it seemed to me a mighty strange thing. There's nothing top of earth so beau-

tiful or so precious as this thing we call love, and there's nothing in all the world that there's such a tremendous waste of, and all the time hearts are hungry for it."

"Was he to blame, do you think, for her loving him? I mean, do you think, he—he—" I was at a loss just how to put my thought.

"You mean did he trifle with her, as the story-tellers say? Do you think he'd left that camp alive if I had thought so? No, ma'am; he was a manly man. I know there are men who think it's fine fun to give a woman the heartache, but he wa'n't that sort. There are good live men in the world, though I will say that there are plenty of times when it looks mighty the other way. And he wa'n't no more to blame for her loving him than she was for my loving her. You can't help this sort of thing. Love don't go by rule, and there's no use in trying to understand it anyway. It means happiness and all fine things to one, and sacrifice to another."

"Well, they went away, and before they went they just made a big supper, and invited us all in and gave each one of us fellows something as a keepsake. See here." And he drew out from under his vest a miniature-pine cone made of fine gold, an exquisite thing in design and workmanship.

"You ought to wear it in sight," I said.

"I know it's here, ma'am," he said simply. And he placed it again over his heart.

"Surely," I said, "she had the adventure she longed for. Did they never find the man who shot Mr. Redding? For, with all my love of Romance, I had a fondness for facts."

"Not for sure. He always suspected a miserable half-breed Indian who used to hang round. Probably he hit accidentally and then was too big a coward to do anything but run; which is why I say I've no use for an Injun any time."

"I'm sorry," I said musingly, "that Mr. Redding hadn't loved her instead of some one else, seeing that she loved him."

"So am I," he answered; "so am I. 'Twould have looked a little like less a dead waste of loving; wouldn't it now?"

"But she went away with a heartache, and I stayed with a heartache, and the chances are about a hundred to one that he found his heartache waiting for him a little further on. For that's the only thing in life that I know of that every one of us is sure to find sooner or later. But this is where I leave you. I've a saw-mill just here. Haven't spent a winter in camp since that one, and never shall again." He passed out of my sight, and left me pondering over his story of love and pain—the story as old as life and yet eternally new.—*Lippincott's Magazine.*

THE REVISED OLD TESTAMENT.

FACTS RELATING TO ITS PUBLICATION.

Exactly four years lie between the publication of the revised version of the New Testament and that of the Old; the former was issued May 17, 1881, the latter on Tuesday, 19th ult. Copies had been sent to the newspapers on Friday. Great precautions were taken to prevent any getting into circulation before Saturday, the Archbishop of Canterbury being the only personage outside of the company of revisers permitted to have one; and not till Friday was the Queen presented with her copy, one of the "standard" edition in five volumes, of pica, royal 8vo. The two copies presented to Convocation on 30th April, remained under lock and key till the day on which copies were sent to the newspapers. Till Friday night not even the enterprising Americans, who are said to have offered £2,000 for a copy, were able to get a glimpse of any portion of the work. The remarkable coincidence is pointed out by the *Jewish Chronicle* that the day of publication was the eve of the Feast of Pentecost which commemorates the revelation on Mount Sinai, the first publication of the Decalogue in any form. The reason given by the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, to whom the copyright belongs, for not publishing editions of the Old Testament to correspond with those of the New is, that these would have been of a thick and "dumpy" character, where as the public have shown of late years a very decided preference for thin volumes. The paper upon which the Revised Bible has been printed was manufactured at the Oxford university's mills at Wolvercote, where 375 tons of rags have been worked up into 250 tons of paper. This would cover two and one-quarter square miles. In a strip of six inches wide it would go round the world; if the pages were laid open one after another, it would be sufficient to encircle the globe. The sheets piled on reams as they leave the mill, would make a column ten times the height of St. Paul's, or, folded into books before binding, a column a hundred times the height of that cathedral. The copies prepared by the Oxford Press alone would, if placed flat one upon the other, make a column more than fourteen miles high, or, placed end on end, a column seventy-four miles high. One thousand five hundred and sixty goatskins have been used in binding the copies presented to the American Committee of Revision on 21st May. A special Act of Congress has been passed to admit these books into the United States, duty free. The "copy" was supplied by the revisers to both universities. Each set up two sizes; and a fifth, "a parallel edition" in which the revised and the unrevised Scriptures are printed side by side, page for page, was divided between the two. The Revised Bible will have a circulation compared with which the most popular volume of the most popular profane author that ever lived is scarcely worth mentioning. It is being distributed by the waggon-load and the ton, and wherever the English language is spoken it will be the new book of the month. Mr. Frowde, of the Oxford warehouse, states that arrangements were made that everywhere, in America as in Britain, the book should be ready for retail distribution at the same time—namely, on Tuesday morning. The parcels for the country booksellers were all despatched on Monday, and at a quarter of an hour after midnight on Tuesday morning the distribution to the London booksellers began. Mr. Frowde told the interviewer from the *Pall Mall* that he was not at liberty to say how many copies