

tage, and the door was shut, Grumps stretched his ruffled, battered, ill-used, and dishevelled little body down on the doorstep, thrust his nose against the opening below the door, and lay in humble contentment all night, for he knew that Crusoe was there.

Of course such an occasion could not pass without a shooting match. Rifles were brought out after the feast was over, just before the sun went down into its bed on the western prairies, and "the nail" was soon surrounded by bullets, tipped by Joe Blunt and Jim Scraggs, and, of course, driven home by Dick Varley, whose silver rifle had now become, in its owner's hand, a never-failing weapon. Races, too, were started, and here again Dick stood preëminent, and when night spread her dark mantle over the scene, the two best fiddlers in the settlement were placed on empty beer-casks, and some danced by the light of the monster fires, while others listened to Joe Blunt as he recounted their adventures on the prairies and among the Rocky Mountains.

There were sweethearts, and wives, and lovers at the feast, but we question if any heart there was so full of love, and admiration, and gratitude, as that of the Widow Varley as she watched her son, Dick, throughout that merry evening.

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Years rolled by, and the Mustang Valley prospered.