

A NIGHT IN A STAGE COACH.

As Phillip Bruce concluded his story, silence, an oppressive silence, pervaded the party. This was broken by a sudden lurch of the coach which threw the rear passengers on top of those in the front, hurled the driver from his seat, and brought the vehicle to a sudden halt. When the passengers on top crawled out, and those underneath extricated themselves, and no limbs were broken, there was a ghastly attempt on our part to consider it a good joke. But when, on investigation, it was discovered that an axle was broken, and that it was about 10 o'clock at night, and we were some eight miles from a station in the midst of a scraggy oak timber, with no help but to have the driver ride back and bring out another coach, the joke would not develop.

I then suggested that while the driver was absent that we should build a fire, "camp out," and continue our stories.

This was agreed to. In fifteen minutes a good fire was blazing and we were squatted around it. Our female passenger was wrapped in the buffalo robes, while merschaums and pocket-flasks served to keep the male portion of the party in spirits and warmth, for the nights were getting perceptibly cool.

I then called on Ned Carry a New York traveling man to entertain the audience.

After a smack from the flask and relighting his merschaum, Ned gave us the story of

MAURICE DEVERAUX.

On the night of May 5, 1864, after the first day's battle of the Wilderness, the moon rose slowly up and cast its weird light over the battle field, while during the preceding twelve hours death had glutted itself in mowing down the noblest work of God.

It seemed to me that the moon looked larger that night, and its light partook more of the light of the dead than I ever saw it; for it was more ghastly when it peeped up from behind the distant hills and seemed to move slower as it came in sight of the deadly results of man's passions and ambitions. Then its reflection on the then jagged and torn trees, and on the wounded, dying and dead had a greenish hue that made us soldiers, hardened as we were, feel that we stood in the presence

of our master, death! I was a sergeant in one of the New York regiments who took part in that day's battle, and when the company roll was called that night Captain Deveraux was missing.

The captain was a true-hearted, genial-souled man, though born and bred in luxury, had such a fine sense of equality and justice, that while you always felt his superiority, you also felt his equality in his companionship. This, added to the fact that he was brave, almost to rashness, made him beloved beyond any other officer in the regiment.

When Captain Deveraux was reported not present, the men felt sure that something serious had happened, and when, on inquiry, one of the members of company B reported that he saw him return to the field when the regiment was safe and out of danger, bearing on his shoulder a wounded and dying officer belonging to another regiment;

then indeed we felt that our brave captain was either killed or badly wounded.

It did not take long to organize a party to search for him, and I, being the "orderly," was placed in command of the party. We arrived on the field just as the moon was rising above the distant hills and throwing its sombre light over the battle field. We felt as though we stood on some vast plain where nature had wrenched and distorted all its beautiful handiwork to illustrate death; the moon's melancholy light making a panorama most weird and blood curdling. The moaning of a soldier on our left attracted us towards a tree where, patient and silent, Captain Deveraux partially sat and partially lay, pale, helpless, and bleeding from a wound below the left breast.

We rushed to him, bathed his forehead with water, and put a spoon of brandy to his lips, which revived him sufficiently to enable him to open his eyes, recognize me, and press my hand. I gave him another spoon of brandy, bound up his wound and stopped the hemorrhage, placed him on the stretcher and was preparing to bear him back to camp, when he motioned to me to lay him down.

"How is it, captain?" I asked, while I held the light of the lantern up to look in his face.

"All is over I am afraid, my good fellow," said he, trying to smile in spite of all the pain that darted through