

Jones had sworn to go out there and shoot Burton, when the fight was postponed by the unexpected arrival of Jones' wife and child.

In his endeavor to care for his wife and child, Jones was mollified a little, and half regretted that he had been so violent about the piece of land. But he was determined not to be backed down, and would certainly have to shoot Burton, or be shot himself.

When he thought of the chance of being killed by his old partner, the prospect was not pleasant. He looked wistfully at Kitty, his two-year-old child, and dreaded that she would be left fatherless. Nevertheless he wouldn't back down. He would shoot or be shot.

While the father was busy cutting wood, and the mother was busy otherwife, little Kitty managed to get the shanty door open. There was no latch as yet, and her prying little fingers easily swung it back. A gust of wind almost took her breath away, but she caught sight of the grass without, and the new world seemed so big that the little feet were fain to try and explore it.

She pushed out through the door, caught her breath again, and started away down the path bordered by sere grass and the dead stock of the wild flowers.

How often she had longed to escape from restraint, and paddle out into the world alone. So out into the world she went, rejoicing in her liberty, in the blue sky above, and the rusty prairie beneath. She would find where the path went, and what was the end of the world. What did she care if her nose was blue with cold, and her chubby hands, as red as beets! Now and then she passed to turn her head away, from a rude blast, a forerunner of the storm but having gasped a moment, she quickly renewed her brave march in search of the great unknown.

The mother missed her, but supposed that Jones, who could not get enough of the child's society, had taken the little pet with him. Jones, poor fellow, thinking that the little darling was safe within, chopped away till the awful storm broke upon him, and last drove him, half smothered by snow, and half frozen with cold, into the house. When there was nothing left but retreat, he seized an armful of wood and carried it into the house with him, to make sure of having enough to keep Kitty and his wife from freezing in the coming awfulness of the night, which now settled down upon the storm-beaten and snow-blinded world. It was the beginning of that awful storm in which so many people were frozen to death, and Jones fled not too soon.

When once the wood was stacked by the stove, Jones looked for Kitty. He had no more than inquired for her father and mother read in each other's faces the fact that she was lost in the wild, dashing storm of snow.

So fast did the snow fall and so dark was the night, that Jones could not see three feet ahead of him. He endeavored to follow the path which he thought Kitty might have taken, but was buried in snow drifts, and he soon lost himself. He stumbled on thought the drifts calling out Kitty in his distress, not known whether he went. After an hour of despairing, wandering and shouting, he came upon a house, and having rapped upon the door he found himself face to face with his wife. He had returned to his own house in his bewilderment.

When we remember that Jones had no sleep for to nights preceding this one, on account of his quarrel with Burton, and had now been beating against the arctic hurricane, and tramping through the treacherous billows of snow for an hour, we cannot wonder that he fell over his own threshold in a state of extreme exhaustion.

As it was, the wife must needs give up the vain search she had been making in the neighborhood of the shanty. She had a sick husband, with frozen hands and feet and face to care for. Every minute the thermometer fell lower and lower, and all the heart in the little cook stove in Jones' shanty could give would hardly keep them from freezing.

Burton had stayed upon the forty acre lot all day, waiting for a chance to

shoot his old partner, Jones. He had not heard of the arrival of Jones' wife, and he concluded his enemy was a coward, and had left him in possession, or else meant to pay some treacherous trick on his way home. So Burton resolved to keep a sharp lookout, but he soon found that impossible, for the storm was upon him in its blinding fury. He tried to follow the path but he could not find it.

Had he been less a frontiersman he must have perished there, within a furlong of his own hut. But endeavoring to keep the direction of the path he heard a smothered cry, and then something rose up covered with snow, and fell down again. He raised his gun to shoot it, when the creature uttered another willing cry, so human that he put down his gun, and went cautiously forward. It was a child.

He did not remember that there was such a child among all the settlers of Newton. But he did not stop to ask questions. He must without delay get himself and the child to a place of safety or both would be frozen. So he took the little thing into his arms and started through the drifts. And the child put its fingers on Burton's rough cheek, muttering "papa!" And Burton, held her closely and fought the snow more courageously than ever.

He found the shanty at last, and rolled the child in a buffalo robe while he made a fire. Then when the room got a little warm he took the little thing upon his knee, dipping her aching fingers in cold water, and asked "Kitty," she said.

"Kitty," said he, "and what else?" "Kitty," she answered, nor could he find out any more.

"Whose Kitty are you?" "Your Kitty," she said.

She had known her father but that one day, and now she believed that Burton was her father.

Burton sat up all night and stuffed wood into his impotent little stove to keep the baby from freezing to death. Never having anything to do with children, he firmly believed that Kitty, sleeping snugly under blankets and buffalo robes, would freeze if he let the fire subside in the least.

As the storm prevailed with unabated fury the next day, and as he dared neither take Kitty out nor leave her alone, he stayed by her all day and stuffed the stove, and laughed at her droll baby talk, and fed her on biscuit, fried bacon and coffee.

On the morning of the second day the storm subsided. It was cold, but knowing somebody must be mourning Kitty for dead, he wrapped her in skins, and with much difficulty he reached the nearest neighbour's house, suffering only a frost-bitten nose by the way.

"That child," said the woman, to whose house he had gone, is Jones'; I seed 'um take her out of the wagon day before yesterday."

Burton looked a moment at Kitty in perplexity. Then he rolled her up again and started out, "travelling like mad," as the woman said."

When he reached Jones' he found Jones and his wife sitting in utter wretchedness by the fire. They were both sick from grief, and unable to move out of the house. Kitty they had given up for buried under some snow mound. They would find her when Spring should come and melt the snow cover off.

When the exhausted Burton came in with his buffalo skins, they looked at him in amazement. But he opened it and let out little Kitty and said:

"Here, Jones, is this your pet kitten?"

And Jones got up and took his old partner's hand and said—

"urton, old fellow," and then choked up, and sat down and cried helplessly.

And Burton said: "Jones, old fellow, you may have that forty-acre patch, it came mighty near making me the murderer of that little Kitty's father."

"No, you shall have it yourself," cried Jones, "if I have to go to law to make you." And Jones actually decided his interest in the forty acres to Burton. But Burton transferred it all to Kitty.

This is why this part of Newton is called 'Kitty's Forty.'

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