

"THE AFTERNOON OF LIFE."

Poetry is dead! she is dead!

They said:
Cover over her shining head;
Cold and calm is her beautiful brow;
And the voice that sang thro' the deepest night,
Thro' the long, long darkness singing of light,
Ah, the voice that sang is silent now.
Behold her lying so still and cold!
That was ever young, that could never grow old.

How did the Heavenly Maiden die?

They cry:
"Slain by Science," wise men reply;
"Bless you, the world is awake at last!
Bread and milk in its way is all very good,
But we've done with the food of babyhood.
She's a nursery fable now of the past;
She was well enough in her simple way,
Well enough, but out-lived her day."

Lying cold in her grave?

They rave.
Pride makes of learning a very slave.
The Mother of all the Ages came,
And she took her hand, low-sighing,
"Daughter, rise up from dying,
By the power of my mighty name,
They have blinded themselves with reading lies,
They have never looked in thy deep, true eyes."

"We two have known one another,
Mother,
And child we were when the world began;
In the name of Religion I call thee,
Science can never enslave thee,
Only the ignorant pride of man.
Science itself is a Wonderland
Of Poetry, some fail to understand."

Then the beautiful maiden stirred,
She heard
The love-toned voice, each tender word;
She rose up stately, living, and strong,
Walked with the angels on earth again,
Unseen by men soothed their secret pain
With the glad glory of her song.
But men only thought—nay, were scarce aware—
They had felt a breath of higher air.

F. GWILT.

AN ILLUSION.

(From the German of Goethe.)

BY NED P. MAH.

Her curtain, waving to and fro
In the fast waning light,
Tells me she lurks behind to know
If I'm at home to-night,

And if the jealous warning that
To-day she did impart
Lies—as it should be—heavy at
My conscience-stricken heart.

Yet I perceive the pretty child
Has given me no thought;
All that my fancy thus beguiled
The evening breeze has wrought.

JESSE JAMES.

IV.

THE DETECTIVE'S RUSE.

The telegraphic despatches which flashed the intelligence of the first notable train robbery on record over the continent did not mention the name of Wardell, the detective. While the community at large discussed the bold daring of this modern Claude Duval, and remembered the past exploits which had rendered him notorious, the silent sacrifice of the detective was a suppressed item in connection with the affair.

Those who knew Jesse James predicted that his new field of operations would be widely extended ere he was captured. Bank presidents breathed more freely, but the great travelling public, fearing not only a repetition of the Rock Island road robbery, were also apprehensive lest the daring act of outlawry should excite the emulation of other bandits. A score or more of detectives were detailed to "work up" the case. The Pinkertons made an especial endeavor in the matter, but one month's unsuccessful search resulted in the police deciding that Jesse James and his gang were no ordinary criminals.

Wardell, the detective, had disappeared immediately after the robbery. He was not a man to boast, and his failure to save the train sealed his lips. He had realized that no ordinary exercise of shrewdness and ingenuity would avail him in his endeavor to hunt down the bandits. Strategy, patience and rare courage were the essential elements in a successful battle with the desperadoes, and unless the actor in the scheme could penetrate to the very stronghold of the band, his efforts would meet with failure.

Ten miles from Forreton and double that distance from the place where the James band made their headquarters lived a man named Bruce. He was credited with being an emissary of the bandits; a kind of sentry to the district infested by James and his friends. Not only did he keep them informed of the movements of their enemies, but also, it was rumored, disposed of their stolen plunder when it took the shape of marketable jewellery or other valuables.

It was to this man's house, one wet, dismal evening, that Wardell, the detective, his face clean shaven, his attire that of a green country lad, wended his way. He had determined to feign to be a farmer's youth bent on reaching the adjoining county in search of work, although his real object was to ascertain if James ever came to Bruce's house. Should he do so, Wardell could secure assistance, watch the place and capture the outlaw; while to venture farther into the country, even with a large force of men, would be to warn the outlaws through their friends even long before they would be able to reach their stronghold.

Bruce, who was a hospitable, jovial sort of a man, made the new comer welcome, and evi-

dently believed that he was a country lad in search of work, as Wardell represented himself to be. He gave him a comfortable meal, made him a bed by the kitchen fireplace, and ordered his servant, a hump-backed negro, to awaken him early in the morning, as Wardell professed to be anxious to do some work around the house to pay for his lodging ere he resumed his journey. He professed to be very tired and retired early; his regular breathing soon convinced Bruce that his guest was asleep.

"Bring me my toddy, Scipio," he said to the negro servant, "and my writing paper in the pantry."

The servant obeyed his orders and sat down in one corner of the room.

Wardell, a keen listener and observer of all that transpired, kept up his feigned slumberous snore as the man after writing with a pencil for a few moments called the servant again.

"Scipio."

"Yes, sah."

"Sit down near the table; I want to talk with you."

The negro did as requested and regarded his employer inquiringly.

The latter cast a quick searching glance in the direction of Wardell and asked:

"That fellow's asleep, I suppose?"

"Oh, dead certain, sah. He's been snoring for half an hour or more."

"Very well. How long have you been here, Scipio?"

"Bout a week, I reckon."

"How would you like to change?"

The darkey shook his head dubiously.

"Dunno, sah. I spects I'se putty well off here."

"That may be, but I've got a friend who wants you."

"A fren', sah?"

"Yes, Scipio, the gentleman who was here a few nights since."

The servant gave utterance to a startled cry.

"Ye don't mean Jesse James, massa."

"Hush! not so loud," said Bruce warningly as he glanced at the sleeping figure of Wardell.

"That's just who I do mean. How would you like to work for him?"

"Not a bit, sah. Ef he ever git mad at Scipio he'd carve dis darkey dead, sure."

"Nonsense," replied Bruce impatiently. "He wants a cook and can't trust the usual run of servants. I've recommended you, and one hundred dollars a month is good pay."

The negro's eyes fairly started from his head.

"A hundred dollars?" he repeated.

"Yes."

"He'll give dat?"

Bruce nodded assentingly.

"I'll risk de carve, massa."

"You'll go."

"Yes, sah."

"Well, start to-night then. You'll find a good master as long as you mind your own business and don't interfere with his. Take this note I have written to old Bucher who keeps the tavern. He'll read it and understand it, and will direct you to where your new employer can be found. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sah, and much obliged for your kindness."

Bruce, with a parting tip of the whisky bottle, stumbled off to bed, while the hunchback began to pack his few articles of wearing apparel besides the clothes he wore, in a bundle.

He was some time in concluding the task, and at last, having made due preparations, he left the kitchen by the rear door.

He had scarcely left the room when Wardell sprang to his feet, and putting on his hat and boots, hurried after him.

He followed the darkey at a safe distance, as the latter traversed the road leading to the tavern kept by Bucher.

At last, at a lonely spot in the highway, he hailed the other.

"Scipio."

The darkey turned and awaited his coming with some curiosity.

"I've come to save you, Scipio," replied Wardell in grave tones.

"Is I in danger?" muttered Scipio in alarm.

"In deadly peril of your life. You know too much."

"What d'ye mean?"

"I mean that Bruce wants to get rid of you."

"What for?"

"Because you may betray Jesse James. Do you know why he sends you to him?"

"No."

"To put you out of the way. He's afraid you may tell somebody about seeing James at his home. You're a dead nigger if you don't get out of this district pretty quick."

The terrified Scipio was quaking in his boots.

"I don't want to see an honest fellow like you killed," said Wardell. "Now I'll tell you what to do. You change clothes with me and get to Forreton and beyond right away."

"Change clothes," repeated the confused Scipio.

"Yes."

"What for?"

"Because Bruce has friends who would fetch you back to him if they met you. Put on my clothes, draw my big hat over your eyes, and no one will recognize you."

The simple negro scared out of his wits at the possible peril which menaced him, acquiesced in Wardell's plan without hesitation.

Within a few moments the transfer of apparel

was made, and the negro, at the direction of Wardell, started on a keen run across the fields towards Forreton.

"So far I am successful," murmured the detective as he glanced down at the garments he had donned, and contentedly read Bruce's note. "Now to make a mock hump on my back, to practice the darkey's shambling gait and talk, to blacken my face and put on the false wig I have, and then to start for the home of the James boys."

Two hours later the disguised detective knocked at the door of Jacob Bucher's tavern for admittance.

The old inn-keeper was gruff and surly, but after reading the note from Bruce, put on his hat and said,—

"Follow me."

Wardell was burning with impatience and curiosity to learn the fate of the landlord's daughter, but he dared not do farther than peer in at the door.

Mrs. Bucher sat alone in the bar-room, the girl nowhere in sight. As his guide traversed a by-path well trodden with horse tracks, he ventured, assuming Scipio's extravagant peculiarities of dialect, to ask,—

"Didn't ye have a daughter, Massa Bucher?"

The landlord of the backwoods hotel answered with a fierce oath and the words,

"Yes, but she's gone."

"Whar she gone?"

"I dunno. She cut out without our knowin' it, and we haint had trace of her since."

The remainder of the journey was pursued in silence. Across a long stretch of timber over a small morass and finally near an elevated thicket surrounded by a broad level prairie, and commanding a full view of the surrounding country, a cabin was reached.

It consisted of several low, rambling structures. Bucher did not venture to knock at the door, but standing at some distance from the house, gave utterance to a peculiar shrill whistle.

The door of the cabin was opened a moment later, and a man peered cautiously out.

"Who's there?" he demanded, a gleaming revolver in his hand telling that he was prepared for emergencies.

"Bucher!"

"All right, come in."

"No," replied the tavern-keeper advancing, "I just come to show this darkey the way."

"Who is he, the cook?"

"Yes."

"Sent by Bruce?"

"The same."

The door swung open and closed.

Wardell, the detective, in his new disguise, stood in the very stronghold of the outlaw band of Jesse James.

V.

THE OUTLAW'S DEN.

Behind the uncouth, blackened face, beneath the coarse clothing, beat a heart which signalled peril deep and deadly to the detective if he was discovered. As he entered the cabin, the sudden transition from darkness to light prevented clearness of vision, but his sight becoming accustomed to the radiance emanating from a tallow dip on a table in the centre of the apartment, his eyes took in the strange scene about him.

It was a rudely-furnished room, with a table, a rough bed and a few chairs, the walls being hung with firearms. A gleaming rifle stood in each corner of the apartment; a belt, with revolvers and knives, lay on the bed, while their owner, Jesse James, was seated at the table engaged in conversation with the men of his band around him.

He turned as the door opened and regarded Wardell. The latter trusted in his disguise to prevent a recognition. The careless manner of the outlaw told that he had been completely deceived.

"Who are you?" he asked, as the man who had admitted the detective informed him that Bucher had brought him there.

"Scipio, sah."

"Sent by Bruce?"

"Yes, sah."

"Can you cook?"

"Yes, sah."

"Very well," replied James, glancing over the note from Bruce, "I've only one word to say to you. If you ever leave this vicinity, or utter one word you hear in this place, you know what to expect."

"Massa Bruce told me."

"Death! do you understand?"

"I spects I does, massa."

The outlaw pointed to a cupboard near the door communicating with the next room, and ordered Scipio to prepare a meal at once.

"The nigger interrupted my story, boys," he said, turning to his companions. "Let me see, where was I?"

"You were telling us about your early youth," said Bob Younger.

"Oh, yes. Well, you see my father, or Robert James, was a Baptist minister, and brought us up until he went to California, where he died, in a pretty strict manner. My mother was Zerelda Cole, of Kentucky, and had as much pluck and energy as any one of us here. When we moved to Kearny, we enjoyed ourselves as all boys do, running away from school and going a-quail hunting, and having a good time generally. We were pretty fair boys, with nothing vicious about us, for we didn't drink any more than we do now, and our-licking with other

lads was innocent amusement. But the war came, just think of it, boys, and we in Missouri, the hottest of secession sentiments, as the papers call it.

"It wasn't war, it was massacre, hate and retaliation. Frank, there, joined Quantrell, and you bet he didn't forget his Southern blood, and soon made a mark as a fighter and a guerilla. The war fever was on me; I went to Quantrell and asked leave to join him. He refused, and I had to go back home; but later I acted as a spy for the guerillas; so things went on until 1862."

"One morning, who should ride up to our house but a lot of Federals; they dragged my step-father, Dr. Samuels, out of bed, refused to listen to a word he said, and, getting a rope, they strung him up to a tree near by. After they had ridden away, my mother rushed out and cut him down, just in time to save his life. The soldiers beat and cuffed me, threatened to kill us all and arrested my mother and sister the next day, and locked them up in a military prison at St. Joseph."

"That settled me. I was only fifteen years old, but the cruelty of my enemies fired my mind with hatred and a burning desire for revenge, I swore to get even with Uncle Sam, and I've done it. I hurried to Quantrell and insisted upon being taken into his service. This time he did not refuse, and I became a full-fledged guerilla."

"You know the rest, boys. When the war ended I retired with a record which the Unionists call a hard one. They say that I shot down defenceless soldiers in the hospital. They can say what they like, but I never missed an opportunity to pay them off for what they did to me and mine. After the war I went to Texas, came back and found the country too hot for me. They wouldn't call the war ended, they refused to shake hands and settle down to peace. I was 'Jesse James, the guerilla,' Dr. Samuels the old 'secessionist,' my folks 'rebels.' I did the next best thing, I became an outlaw, and here I am, with the boldest and bravest band in the country around me."

The faces of the speaker's comrades expressed deep interest as they listened to their leader's narrative. His keen, black eyes, determined face, and general expression of features inspired them with confidence. They exhibited their admiration for his noted deeds of daring as one of their number spoke up,

"I say, Jesse, tell us about the Kansas City affair. We weren't all with you then, and some of the boys would like to hear it."

"You tell it," replied James, "I never blow my own horn."

"You see, boys," said the speaker, "Jesse here needed a little money. There was but one convenient plan, and that was to stop a train on the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy railroad. He wouldn't do that. The road once passed a friend of his who was in poverty, and Jesse never forgot it, and never will. That road is sacred; eh, Jesse?"

The outlaw bowed assentingly.

"Well, we heard that the fair at Kansas City was in progress, crowded with people from all over the State, and taking in a small fortune a day."

"Jesse came to me and Bob Younger one day."

"Boys," he said, 'we'll take a trip down to Kansas City.'

"I looked at him curious-like."

"In day-time?" I says.

"Certainly."

"But the risk?"

"Cole," he says to me, 'there's a little fortune waiting at that place. Risk or no risk, we strike the town at afternoon and leave it at evening with a few dollars to keep us in food and clothes for a month or two.'

"I knew that settled it. We rode to the city. Near the fair grounds Jesse gives me his horse, jumps down and walks over to the office of the ticket-seller, as coolly as though he was a friend."

"See here," he says, peering in at the window, 'Supposing Jesse James and his band should ride up here and demand that box of money lying over there, what would you say?'

"The ticket-seller looked up a little surprised at Jesse's strange words."

"What would I say?" he replied; 'I'd see you in Halifax first.'

"Jesse pops a gun under his nose like a flash."

"You would, eh," he says, cool as a cucumber. 'Well, I'm Jesse James, and my men are near at hand, so I'll thank you to hand over the money.'

"The man saw he was gone if he refused. The box came out through the window and we got away."

"How much was there in the box?"

"Ten thousand dollars."

"Did they follow you?"

Cole Younger laughed scornfully.

"Follow us?" he repeated. "Yes, and mighty little good it did them. The very next night Jesse rides back into town and sends for one of the editors of the papers that treated us square. He presents him with a watch, rides away and gives the police on the watch the slip for good."

"Supper's ready, massa," came at that moment from Scipio.

The disguised detective had been an interested listener to all that transpired. As he busied himself about the table his ears were open to catch any words that might indicate the future intentions of the band.

From the guarded undertone employed in their subsequent conversation Wardell could