

THE ACADIAN

Cheir Miscellany.

A CHILD-FRIEND.

My little sweethearts, quaint and fair,
True child, and yet child-woman,
The halo of thy tender life
Is more divine than human.

Not all the sage's learned lore,
Not all that the pulpit preaches,
Compares with that wise holiness
That your sweet childhood teaches.

I watch your happy life move on—
Unquailed, because so truly
You seem to that dear inner law
That round each action duly.

While wearier mortals strive with care
To read the scroll of Duty,
By some unconscious angelhood
You live its rarer beauty.

I read in rapturous, burning words,
Of that rare, saintly maiden
Who calmed the Tuscan poet's heart,
With life's strange burdens laden.

My Beatrice! Life's hot day
Takes even's coolness, stilly
Where smiles beside its duty road
This trusting, stanches life.

My little sweethearts, quaint and fair,
True child and yet child-woman,
I bow before thy gentle life,
Divine, because so human.

—Kate L. Brown.

THE SKELETON'S STORY OF THE DEATH CHASE.

Ride closer!
It was two miles ahead to the foot-hills—
two miles of parched turf and rocky space. To the right—the left—behind is the rolling prairie. The broad valley strikes the Sierra Nevadas and stops as if a wall has been built across it.

What is it on the grass? A skull a rib there—bones scattered about as the wild beasts left them after the horrible feast. The clean picked skull grins and stares; every bone and scattered lock of hair has its story of a tragedy. And what besides these relics? More bones—not scattered, but in heaps—vertebrae with ribs attached; a fleshless skull bleaching under the sun. Wolves! Yes. Count the heads of bones and you will find nearly a score. Open boats are piled up at sea, with neither life nor sign to betray their secret. Skeletons are found upon the prairies, but they tell a plain story to those who halt beside them. Let us listen:

Away off to the right you can see tree tops. Away off to the left you can see the same sight. The skeleton is in line between the two points. He left one grove to ride to the other. To ride? Certainly! A mile away is the skeleton of a horse or mule. The beast fell, and was left there. If he left the grove at noon he would have been within a mile of this spot at dusk. It is therefore, plain that he did not leave until mid-afternoon, or possibly at dusk. Signs of Indians may have driven him from his trapping-ground; or, perhaps, he had exhausted the game and was shifting to new fields.

It is months since that ride, and the trail has been obliterated. Were it otherwise, and you took it up from the spot WHERE THE SKELETON HORSE NOW LIES, you would find the last three or four miles made at tremendous pace.

"Step! Step! Step!"

What is it? Darkness has gathered over mountain and prairie, as the hunter jogs along over the broken ground. Overhead the countless stars look down upon him—around him is the pall of night. There was patter of footsteps on the grass. He halts and peers around him, but the darkness is too deep for him to discover any cause for alarm.

"Patter! patter! patter!"

There is it again! It is not fifty yards from where he lagged. The steps are two light for those of an Indian. A grizzly would rush upon his victim with a roar of defiance and anger. A panther would hurl himself through thirty feet of space with a scream to unnerve the hardest hunter.

"Wolves!" whispers the hunter, as a sound suddenly breaks upon his ears.

"Wolves!"

The gaunt, grizzly wolves of the foot-hills—thin, and poor, and hungry, and savage—the legs tireless—the mouth full of teeth which can crack the shoulder-bone of a buffalo. He can see their dark forms flitting from point to point—the patter of their feet on the parched grass proves that he is surrounded.

Now the race begins. There is no shelter until the grove is reached. Instinct guides the horse and terror lashes him with such a whip as human hand never wielded. Over space, through the gloom, almost as swift as an arrow sent by a strong hand, but a dark line follows. A line of wolves spread out to "the right and left, and gallop after—tongues out—eyes flashing—great flakes of foam flying back to blotch stone and grass and leave a trail to be followed by the cowardly coyotes.

Men ride thus only when life is the stake. A horse puts forth such speed only when

TERROR FOLLOWS CLOSE BEHIND

and causes every nerve to tighten like a wire drawn until the scratch of a finger makes it chord with a wail of despair. A pagon could not skin this valley with such swiftness, and yet the wings of fate are broad and long and tireless. The line is there—aye! it is going! Indeed by inch it creeps up, and the red eyes take on a more savage gleam as the hunter crests out to his horse and opens fire from his revolvers. A wolf falls on the right—a second on the left. Does the wind cease blowing because it is a forest? The fall of one man in the mob suddenly increases the determination of the rest.

With a cry so full of the despair that wells up from the heart of the strong

man when he gives up his struggles for life, that the hunter almost believes a companion rides beside him, the horse staggers, recovers, plunges forward, falls to the earth. It was a glorious struggle, but he has lost.

The wings of the dark line oblique to the centre—there is a confused heap of snarling, fighting, maddened beasts, and the line rushes forward again. Saddle, bridle and blanket are in shreds—the horse a skeleton. And now the chase is after the hunter. He has half a mile the start, and as he runs the veins stand out, the muscles tauten, and he wonders at his speed. Behind him are the gaunt, gaunt and the tireless legs closer, closer, and now he is going to face fate as a brave man should. He has halted. In instant a circle is formed about him a circle of red eyes, foaming mouths and yellow fangs which are to meet his flesh.

There is an interval; a breathing spell. He looks up at the stars—out upon the night.

IT IS HIS LAST HOUR,

but there is no quaking, no cry out to the night to send him aid. As the wolves rest a flash blinds their eyes—a second, a third, and a fourth—and they give away before the man they had looked upon as their certain prey. But it is only for a moment. He sees them gathering for a rush, and firing his remaining bullets among them he seizes his long rifle by the barrel and braces to meet the shock.

Even a savage would admire the heroic fight he made for life. He sounds the war-cry and whisks his weapon around him, and wolf after wolf falls disabled. He feels a strange exultation over the desperate combat, and as the pack give way before his might bows a glem of hope springs up in his heart.

It is only for a moment; then the circuit narrows. Each disabled beast is replaced by three which hunger for blood. There is a rush—a swirl—and the cry of ribs afire is drowned in the chorus of snarls as the pack fight over the feast.

* * * * *

The grey of morning the sunlight of noonday—the stars of evening will look down upon grinning skull and whitening bones, and the wolf will return to crush them again. Men will not bury them. They will look down upon them as we look, read the story as we read it, and ride away with a feeling that 'tis but another dark secret of the wonderful prairie.—Detroit Free Press.

GOOD.

A pretty good story is told of the young, bold, gritty pastor of the first Baptist church of Pittsfield Mass., bearing on the old notion that when a holy marries a minister she practically marries his whole congregation. It seems that a short time ago he married a vivacious young lady whose family was of the Episcopal church and this gave occasion to some of the tattlers of his church.

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We think of him sauntering into the Bank and Drawing his little Check, and we are mad. We imagine him in his Luxurious Library, and We Wonder if it is not sin for any Person to be so Happy. However, none of us can read his Conscience. We do not know the Pangs which shoot through him as he lies Down at Night, nor the Fears which Oppress him as he Rises in the morning. It is better to have Innocence than Riches.

THE RAG MAN.

We see the Rag man Riding up and down our Streets with nothing to do but play Sweet Music on a Tin Horn. He is never Sick. He has a Roll of Bills in one pocket, and a Handful of Silver in the Other. No Policeman Dares Arrest him, and if there is a Dog Fight or a Runaway he is sure to see it all. When we look upon him we Complain that Fortune has treated us unfairly, but we must not be Hasty. Unless he has an Honest Conscience his Money and his Elegant Home will do him no good. He may Spend his Summers at Long Branch and his Winters in Jacksonville, and the absence from home Cannot Cleanse his Soul of its Stains. It is far better to be a Poor but Honest Boy than to be a Millionaire Rag-man.—Detroit Free Press.

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NOTICE.

All Persons having Legal Demands against the Estate of Anderson C. Martin of Horton, Kings County, deceased are requested to make the same known, duly attested to the undersigned within three months from date hereof. And all persons indebted to the said Estate are requested to settle their accounts immediately with

JAMES B. MARTIN } Admrs.
JOHN L. MARTIN }
Wolfville, Oct. 16, 1885. tf

Wolfeville, July 6, 1885.] Admr.

DAMAGED MEN.

You can see any day, in the streets of any city, men who look damaged. Men, too, of good, original material, who start out in life with generous aspirations. Once it was said that they were bright, promising lads; once they looked happy into the faces of mothers, whose daily breath was a prayer for their purity and peace. Ah! what if some of them had vowed their souls away to confiding wives, who silently wonder what can be the meaning of this change—the cold, slow-creeping shadow—that is coming over home and heart. Going to the ball, the spell of evil companionship: the willingness to hold and use money not honestly gained; the stealthy, seductive, plausible advance of the appetite for strong drink; the treacherous fascination of the gambling table; the gradual loss of interest in business; the rapid weakening of all noble purposes; the decay of manliness; the recklessness and blasphemy against fate; the sullen despair of ever breaking the chain of evil habit; what victories of shame and contempt, what harvests of hell have grown from such seed as this. Snare, if you will, like a fool, at the suggestion of reform, religion; every man knows, in his better moments—that all there is of true life is personal virtue and rectitude of character. Going to the bad. But there is hope. Earth and heaven are full of hands ever ready to help the lost man back to the better way. All the good there is in the universe is full of sympathy with that little goodness which in wadly reproves and protests.—Mechanicsburg Farmer.

J. B. DAVIDSON, Wolfville, N.S.

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