

exchanged. It was not because they did not love each other as before, but because of a nameless fear concerning the one who never had returned. They feared to speak, because their tongues might give utterance to the thoughts and fears that were surging within them, and this would but add to their disquietude.

Fisher came frequently, but his receptions were so cold that he could take little comfort from these visits. One day at the fort, when a number of the boys who were members of the scouting party were talking of the adventure, one casually referred to the tall and handsome young frontiersman who had joined them in pursuit of the Indians, and wondered at the strange providence that had caused his death, while not a man of the regulars had been killed or even wounded.

It was true, he remarked, that this young man was always in the lead, the bravest of the brave, and he believed that fully a third of the Indians who were killed or wounded fell from the effects of shots from his unerring aim. But still they marveled at the ways of Providence. The orderly and men had been so pleased with his bravery and soldierly bearing that they had given him a soldier's burial on the spot where he had fallen. But as he was nothing but a civilian, no record or report of his death had been made, and the incident had been soon forgotten.

But this was Fisher's position. He loved Moyne Jackson as well as his little soul could love anything, and he thought if she but knew that Dale was dead and could not come back to her any more, that she might soften a little towards him. He had perception enough to see that he was not looked upon with favor as long as Dale was believed to be alive. So he rode over to the ranch without delay and meeting the old man at the gate said:

"Mr. Jackson, it seems to me that you and your daughter are waiting a long time for someone you will never see again. She need not be continually giving me the cold shoulder, thinking that Dale will come back,

for I tell you he won't. He's dead. He was killed by the Indians that time he went with the soldiers."

When Fisher had delivered this message to the father, which he was too cowardly to give to the daughter, he turned his horse about and rode away, as he had not the courage to witness her grief over the death of her favored suitor. He chuckled a bit to himself to think how fortune had smiled on him and rode rapidly back to the fort.

The old man caught at the gate post to steady himself as the truth of the announcement flashed through his brain, and when Fisher had gone he tottered into the house and sank helplessly into a chair.

"Moyne," he feebly called, and when the pale, sad faced girl came to learn his wants he said: "Do ye remember the day I started to go to the fort and ye would go along? Do ye recollect that I tried to talk to ye of yer lovers, them two, Dale and Fisher? Well,—well,—Oh, Moyne, I can't help it, though I know it'll kill ye. Harry'll never come back. He's dead; killed by the Injuns that day he went with the soldiers," and the old man bowed his head in his hands and wept as if his heart was broken.

Every bit of color left her cheeks; she stood motionless for a time, looking into space, and trying to realize the extent of the blow that had befallen her. She covered her face with her apron and turned to the bed where his blanket lay. She kissed it again and again, until, overcome with emotion, she sank to rest and then into sleep, as she had on that memorable day when the Indians had murdered her brothers.

She never spoke of Dale nor of his death. These were themes now too sacred for conversation, even with her father. She never rose from the bed. All the days that followed she lay with this blanket about her, thinking, thinking, thinking, and of him who was gone, never to return. Her father watched over her with a tenderness that had been foreign to him of late. He watched and waited for returning life and strength, but