

DECORATION DAY.



JERUD'S RHEUMATIZ.



WICH-I-TA!" This was the name that the brakeman screamed, as our train steamed slowly up to a low, unpainted freight house, at the terminus of the railroad. One car conveyed the passengers, three in number, to this wilderness station.

We took up our bags and walked out on the platform. There was no waiting-room; nor was there even a solitary hackman to whom we might appeal for transportation. If hackmen there had been, we could not have given him orders there to drive us.

The sun was setting. There was no shadow of a hill or tree. Slowly the prairie changed from green and brown to pale yellow, and there were no outlines of irregularity to mark its outer circumference.

A few blanketed Indians stood about, watching their "supplies" with evident anxiety. An occasional oath, borrowed from the vocabulary of the white men about them, was all the English which they uttered or knew.

No other building was in sight, save a one-story red structure just across what is now, I suppose, the main street in the city of Wichita, Kansas. In the doorway of this red structure, above which was a sign in black letters, "Tavern," a woman suddenly appeared.

She beckoned to us in the twilight, and seconded her motions by a shrill cry of "Come over here!"

We obeyed, and entered the tavern. Supper was soon provided at a long board table, where we ate with the cowboys and the freight hands. We had corn bread, white bread, canned vegetables and fresh pork, roasted and fried. Black coffee was served in cracked cups without saucers.

We were government employes, on our way to Fort Sill. At Wichita the railroad gave place to the stage line.

Before daylight we were aroused for breakfast, which was what we laid of supper, made into hash. We paid our bill to the landlady, who wrapped our greenbacks in a piece of buckskin and deposited them in a long, home-knit stocking which hung from her apron band.

The stage-coach was drawn up to the door by four horses, as gay and prancing steeds as one could wish to see. The vehicle itself, a stage-coach of the true overland style, was large and strong, with three seats beside the driver's. The canopy, sides and cushioned seats were of genuine brown leather.

We started off at high speed. The curly spring buffalo-grass seemed as soft as wool. The ground was unbroken save by the settlements of the prairie-dogs, whose towns made almost a continuous city on each side of the trail for many miles. The saucy inhabitants were out early, probably in the interests of farming, standing straight up and talking to one another, darting out of sight down their doorways, and peeping out again as suddenly.

The morning sun appeared, without shadows, as he had set the night before. There were now and then little farms planted with small peach-trees.

From the doors of dugouts, or tiny frame houses, half-dressed children peeped curiously forth. On we sped through creek and river, up slippery banks and on over the plains.

"If this is staging," we said, "then good-by to steam cars for the prairie."

But our pleasant way, like many another, was subject to change. At the end of fifteen miles we halted for a relay. Our horses were foaming, and must be replaced by fresh ones. We alighted at a small stage-line station, and were told to "take out our luggage."

In six minutes we were ready to start again. The four horses and leather-covered vehicle, which had dashed out of Wichita with its pledges of comfort and rapidity, gave place to a dirty, canvas-topped, two-mule coach without cushions.

The seats were high, and without cushions save as we leaned ourselves against the slender supports which held up the canopy.

Our new steeds were slow and stub-

born. By much flogging from a raw-hide instrument, whose like I have never seen, they were induced to plod along. They were thin in flesh, and lame.

Now and then we saw early wild crocuses and canterbury-bells, and the soft, trailing sensitive plant, with its silken balls spattered with golden dust. There were no more houses—only level, unbroken plain, with an occasional steep-banked stream, on whose margins grew a sparse fringe of cottonwood-trees.

A gray wolf trotted out of the timber and stared at us. Deer in the distance bounded away, while one solitary "prairie schooner" crossed our path, with its jingling kettles hung low underneath the wagon, grazing the tips of the grass.

"Twenty-five miles before another relay," said the driver, "and it will take us all day."

If the driver had been communicative the hours might have passed quickly; but he was taciturn. Such pay as he drew from the stage company was well earned, for between the stubborn mules and the sometimes bad road he had a hard time of it.

Toward evening we drew up to a little shanty, the first building we had seen for twenty miles, and alighted for supper and to change mules.

An old woman and her son kept the house. She was "glad to see me," she said, "for women don't come this way much, and I get lonesome."

We had expected to move on after supper, but the driver came in to say that the relay mule had strayed away, and we should have to wait till morning.

The old woman was delighted, nor were we sorry. "Staging" was losing its fascination, and we felt much obliged to the relay mule for running away.

"He'll be back bright and early in the morning," said the old woman. "Elnathan, he tied the big dinner-bell onto his neck so's to be sure to find him. To-morrow's Decoration day; did you know it?" she asked, as we sat by the corn-cob fire.

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"We always decorate, Elnathan and me. There ain't any graveyards around here, only just one single solitary grave." She wiped her eyes, which had filled with tears. "See it out there, that bit of white loomin' up close to the barn?"

We could distinguish in the gloaming what looked like a headstone, and told her so.

"Yes," she went on, "that's a grave. It's my old man, Jerud; Elnathan's father. He died three years ago, and we buried him out there. That headstone you see ain't marble—it's a platter that Elnathan bought up to Wichita. We couldn't find no headstones proper, so he got the name and date painted on this and set it up at the head. Like to look at it?"

We answered that we certainly should like to see it, and followed her. In the barn-yard were our mules, some prairie hay, a bunch of last year's corn-stalks and a Texas cow with wide branching horns, a look of defiance in her bony, repulsive shape. The fence was made of cotton-wood rails, and to the south of it, on the outside, was the grave.

At the head was a very large Queen's-wave platter, with "Jerud Whitehead" painted across it in black letters. It stood straight up, like any headstone, and though, as the old woman said, "it sometimes topples over, especially in the spring when the ground thaws," it was little trouble to right it again.

"I'm going to decorate Jerud's grave to-morrow," she said, on our way back to the house.

"Yes, I shall always decorate Jerud's grave. He would 'a' been a soldier if it hadn't been for his rheumatiz." Elizabeth Orinell in Youth's Companion.

Of the fifty-one thousand breweries estimated to be in the world, twenty-six thousand are in Germany.

"Well, Jerud, I would say, 'suppose you start in one of your good spells?' and he'd answer, 'All right.' Half a dozen times I'd pack up his things and get him ready to go, when all of a sudden his rheumatiz would come back, and he'd have to stay at home. So the war passed, and poor Jerud, he sighed when the boys came home, and pretty near almost died."

"Jerud wasn't given to work very much, on account of his rheumatiz; but I never laid that up against him. We come out here for the stage company five year ago, and done pretty well. Elnathan and I done most of the work."

"Was your husband a soldier?" we asked, sadly and respectfully.

"No," she answered, "not exactly; but he would 'a' been. They was going to draft 'em in our town one time, and Jerud he was took with rheumatiz so he was confined to his bed for a month. He was awful sorry, for he did want to fight for his country; and he said he'd just as soon be drafted as to volunteer—it showed how bad they wanted him."

"Then another time," she went on, "Squire Smith offered him five hundred dollars to go as his substitute; and I was willing, for we needed the money bad enough. Jerud got all ready to start, as peart as could be, but the very last thing he was took down with the rheumatiz again. Jerud was as good as could be, and as brave; and I've seen him stand in the door leaning on his cane and cheering the boys when they marched away, and saying how he did wish he could go, too."

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"It always seemed to weigh on Jerud that he hadn't been a soldier. He would sit out on a bench at the door for hours, watching Elnathan and me plant the corn, and having that far-

away look in his eyes you hear talked about. And one time he died. We've decorated his grave ever since, just as if he'd been a soldier."

"Do you have many flowers around here?" we asked.

"Oh, no, there ain't no flowers, so to speak. I don't care much for them little wild things, and I ain't never planted any poppy seeds and hollyhocks and geraniums and pinies. I've got something in that trunk over there that's better than flowers to decorate graves with."

We looked at the trunk. It was covered with calfskin, tanned with the hair on, the fur side out, and studded with brass nails. We wanted to ask what was in it which was "better than flowers to decorate graves with," but we restrained our curiosity.

That night we went to sleep to dream of grassy mounds and shining concave headstones.

It was late in the morning when the relay mule was found; but the driver himself had then disappeared, and our starting was postponed. After the breakfast dishes were washed the old woman dressed herself in her old-fashioned best clothes, put on a bonnet which had been hers "before the war," and sat down by the ancient trunk. We did not talk, for she seemed sad and absent-minded.

She unlocked the receptacle which held something better than flowers to decorate graves with, and drew carefully forth a neatly-folded patch-work quilt. Then she walked slowly out to the grave.

After standing for a few minutes talking with Elnathan, the two took the quilt by each of its four corners and spread it evenly above the grave. Then the old woman sat down on one corner of the "decoration," while Elnathan went away to his work.

The quilt was set in diamond pieces—grass-green and yellow and blue and black and purple. It was the gayest of its kind that I had ever seen. The warm spring sunshine lighted up the bright tints into a kaleidoscope of beauty.

The Texas cow peered through the not too substantial fence at the amazing brightness, astonished into a betrayal of unusual emotions. Presently she waked around the yard in a freedom of movement which startled me.

The old woman, after sitting for an hour with her head bent low upon her loyal breast, rose and folded the quilt. My companion was sure that she had been laid the quilt away in the old trunk remarking, as if to herself:

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TURN ON THE LIGHT.

SECRET CUBAN DOCUMENTS MADE PUBLIC.

Secretary Olney Offered Spain Assistance of the United States in Putting Down the Cuban Rebellion — State Department Secrets Aired in the Senate.

A Decided Stir in the Senate.

WASHINGTON, May 21.—Documents of state made public disclose the fact that Richard Olney, then secretary of state for the Cleveland administration, offered Spain the assistance of the United States in putting down the Cuban rebellion, a spectacle made the more humiliating by Spain's refusal to accept the proffered aid. The offer was made notwithstanding Consul General Lee's report that the insurgents were gaining in strength.

This was the most startling of the revelations made by the partial disclosure of the state department's secret archives. The exposure was made in the Senate by Senator Foraker of Ohio. During the past week the debate in the Senate has been pregnant with intimations and innuendoes of reports from United States officials in Cuba, held at the state department which, if published, would disclose a condition on Cuban soil which would influence public opinion in a decided manner. The facts therefore which Senator Foraker announced, without stating from whom they came, created a decided stir.

While one of the Consular reports was read without the name of the author being disclosed, it is stated to be a communication from Consul General Lee, which fully sets forth his idea of the condition that exists in Cuba. The extract was quoted as follows, no date being given:

"I can not understand the truth of the claim that all the provinces of the island are pacified except that of Santiago de Cuba, because there are more insurgents under arms at this time than at the period when I first reached the island, some ten months ago, and I do not think it a fair inference to draw from existing conditions that the war is approaching a termination, because in pursuance of an established policy the insurgents avoid as far as possible all serious engagements."

"The impossibility of expelling the Spanish troops from this island by force of arms is well known to them, and they do not propose to risk the lives of their men and the success of their cause upon one or more pitched battles. I conclude, therefore, that the war will drag its weary length along so long as the insurgents can dig sustenance from the ground on one side, or money be obtained by the other, with the continued result of untold human suffering, loss of human life, the murder of innocent men, women and children by both sides and the frightful havoc which disease makes in the ranks of soldiers, particularly among the unacclimated Spaniards."

"The poverty and distress of the people are increasing, and the loss of property of all sorts is daily becoming more enormous. No one can fully appreciate the situation without being here in person. The number of poor, distressed, starving women, children and old men of all races have greatly increased in this city within the past few weeks, while in other points on the island the suffering has been proportionately great."

The letter from Secretary Olney to Spanish Minister De Lome, under date of April 4, 1896, is the one in which intervention is suggested.

He said his purpose was not at that time to suggest intervention, but that the United States could not contemplate with complacency another ten years of Cuban insurrection. His suggestion looked to finding a way "to co-operate with Spain in the immediate pacification of the island on such a plan as, leaving Spain her rights of sovereignty, shall yet secure to the people of the island all such rights and powers of local self-government as they can reasonably ask. To that end the United States offers and will use her good offices at such time and in such manner as may be deemed most advisable."

Mr. Olney then suggests that neither Spain nor the Cubans can reasonably object to this intervention, and adds that if anything is to be done, it should be done at once and on Spain's initiative. In closing he says the communication is prompted by the friendliest feelings towards Spain and the Spanish people, and adds: "To attribute to the United States any hostile or hidden purposes would be a grave and most lamentable error. The United States has no designs upon Cuba and no designs against the sovereignty of Spain."

Mr. Foraker read only the following extract from Mr. De Lome's reply, which was dated June 4, 1896:

"In brief, there is no effectual way to pacify Cuba, unless it begins with the actual submission of the armed rebels to the mother country."

Death for Train Wreckers.

NEW YORK, May 21.—Governor Black has signed the bill providing the death penalty for train wreckers, who cause death.

JAP TOWN WIPED OUT.

Nearly 4,000 Houses Burned and Between Forty and Fifty Lives Lost.

VIENNA, B. C., May 21.—The steamer Empress of India from Yokohama, brought news of a fire which completely wiped out the town of Hoshioji, in the silk district of Japan. Nearly 4,000 houses were destroyed and between forty and fifty lives lost. All the houses were frail wooden structures, and the fire took but a short time to sweep the town, giving the helpless members of the community little chance to escape.

OUR CONSULS IN DANGER.

Their Names Withheld for Fear of Assassination by the Spaniards.

WASHINGTON, May 21.—Another stirring debate on Cuba occurred in the Senate yesterday. It was of the give and take order, with sharp parliamentary fencing. The main speeches of the day were made by Senators Foraker of Ohio, Cannon of Utah, Lindsey of Kentucky and Hoar of Massachusetts. Mr. Foraker is one of the Cuban sub-committee of the committee on foreign relations. He spoke in favor of a reference of the resolution to the committee, but on the direct question, declared his purpose of supporting the resolution recognizing Cuban belligerency, when it should be reported by the committee.

Mr. Cannon was bitter in his denunciation of Spanish atrocity, characterizing the captain general of Cuba as "That mad dog Weyler."

Mr. Lindsey declared that if the information furnished by United States consuls was so shocking as to subject them to danger of assassination if their names were disclosed, it was time to send warships to Cuba and to terminate all diplomatic relations with that country.

It was developed in the course of a colloquy between Senators Foraker, Morgan and Vest, that the state department had withheld the names of the United States consuls reporting on the serious condition of affairs in Cuba because it might lead to their massacre. Mr. Vest declared that this presented the most serious phase of the subject, as it was time to protect our officials with warships if their personal liberty was threatened for making reports to their government. No action on the resolution was taken, but Mr. Morgan said he hoped to secure a vote to-day on Mr. Hale's motion to refer. He desired to do this, he said, in order that the Cuban resolution might not antagonize the tariff bill on Monday.

INCALLS TALKS.

The Kansas Ex-Senator Scores the Senate Sugar Schedule Unmercifully.

WASHINGTON, May 21.—In the course of an interview soon after his arrival here yesterday for a visit, ex-Senator Ingalls of Kansas said of the sugar schedule of the Senate tariff bill:

"From the Republican point of view it would be better that the tariff bill should fall than that the sugar schedule should stand. It is the most brazen and audacious help-up of the century."

"It makes train-robbing respectable. It has no excuse except the insatiable greed and rapacity of the most shameless squad of plunderers that ever escaped the penitentiary."

"Ordinary marauders are content to rob a bank or swindle a community. These brigands propose to pillage the nation and to compel Congress to become their accomplice. The trust schedule will defy competition, annihilate the beet sugar industry and add to the oppressive burdens of every citizen of the United States, for the avowed purpose of swelling the already inordinate gains of a remorseless monopoly."

"These are the performances which explain Populism and which, if not restrained, will make anarchy possible."

Of the jail life of Sugar Trust Broker Chapman, Mr. Ingalls said: "In the old, barbarous days, if a common, plain, plug citizen violated the laws and was convicted and sentenced to imprisonment, he was hustled into the Black Maria with a policeman on the step and turned over to the jailer with unfeeling and inhuman lack of ceremony. But here, when a man suspected of corrupting legislation defies the Senate and is convicted by due process of law, the execution of the sentence is deferred till the delinquent has expressed his readiness to endure the penalty. Obsequious attendants receive him upon his arrival in the city as a distinguished guest. He is consulted about the hour when he prefers to have his incarceration begin. A diagram of the prison is submitted to him that he may select the most eligible apartments. Persian rugs alleviate the harshness of the stony floor. Vans of furniture are forwarded to replace the simpler appointments of the cell. Trunks of fashionable apparel are conveniently stored for his access. Fellow-prisoners are detailed to act as valets of the chamber and cup-bearers. A daily menu is prepared by a great chef for the selection of viands and beverages to solace his weary hours. Eminent citizens in carriages escort him to the gate. The iron cot is found to have been removed to make place for a brass bedstead, with luxurious upholstery, whereon this minion of fortune may woo 'tired nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep.'"

Dawes Commission Change.

WASHINGTON, May 21.—Judge A. R. Montgomery of Kentucky, one of the five members of the Dawes Indian commission, by request, has presented his resignation to the president. Thomas Needles of Illinois, who was a candidate for commissioner of Indian affairs, is being considered for the office by President McKinley, but charges have been filed against his former administration of the office of United States marshal in Oklahoma, and have delayed action.

The President Entertains.

WASHINGTON, May 21.—The delegates to the International Postal Union were given a reception at the White House last night by President and Mrs. McKinley. The house was beautifully decorated and the conservatory was thrown open.

A Place for Dan McTaggart.

TORONTO, CAN., May 21.—Governor Levey to-day appointed Dan McTaggart of Montgomery county, free silver Republican, to be a director of the state reformatory, in place of K. F. Wallace, deceased.

Cats Sniff in Sleep.

Cats can sniff even during sleep. When a piece of meat is placed immediately in front of a sleeping cat's nose the nostrils begin to work as the animal is received, and an instant later the cat will wake up.

A NOVEL LODGE ROOM.

Under Ground Chamber Used by a Secret Society in Tennessee.

One of the strongest and most resourceful lodges of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows in the state of Tennessee is Gap Creek lodge, No. 72, which has for its lodge room a large cave in Carter county, eight miles east of Johnson City, says the St. Louis Globe-Democrat. So fascinating is the home of this lodge that some members of the order in nearby towns have transferred their membership to it. Gap Creek lodge has been holding its meetings in this cave for more than a year, having rented the subterranean chamber from its owner, Dr. Nathaniel Hyder. The lodge has a membership of seventy-five, which includes many of the best men in Carter county. This strange lodge room is located in an elevated strip of woodland. The entrance to it faces the east, and on approach it presents a somber appearance, which might be considered typical of mysteries that are known only in the hearts of the faithful members of the great secret order. From the entrance it is twelve feet down an incline to the first chamber—the anteroom. This chamber is 14 by 18 feet and has been provided with all the necessary equipments to make it a desirable room in which to prepare candidates for initiation into the order. To the rear of this chamber is an opening and twelve feet farther down, on an angle of 45 degrees, is the lodge room proper. This chamber is 18 by 60 feet. The walls are almost perpendicular to a height of eight feet. While, when viewed through the entrance from without, these chambers present a dark and mysterious appearance, light is nevertheless so reflected from the outer entrance as to penetrate both chambers, so illuminating the lodge room that no artificial light is required by day.

THE HUMAN CHAIN.

On the 27th of last January Leon Watson, Lyman Warren and several other boys were skating on Leoney's pond, near Pensauken, N. J. Most of them were staying near shore, as they considered the ice dangerous at the middle of the pond, where also the water was fifteen feet deep. But Lyman Warren, not so wise as his companions, struck out suddenly for the middle of the pond.

As suddenly the ice gave way, and in a moment Lyman was struggling in the icy water. He clung to the edge of the broken ice, but it was too thin to hold him, and broke off as fast as he caught hold. He struggled hard to keep his head above water, but if he could swim at all, his skates and the coldness of the water prevented him from doing so now.

The other boys skated as near as the yielding ice would let them, and then for a few moments looked on in horror at Lyman's struggles. The ice would not bear a skater on his legs up to within a dozen feet of where the boy was drowning. There was no pole nor tree, and of course no rope within reach. But the boys could not let their companion drown! One of them, Leon Watson, had heard of the "human chain," for such rescues, and resolved to put it into operation.

Leon lay down on the ice near the hole, his head and hands toward Lyman. Then another boy lay down, holding firmly Leon's ankles; another lay down and held his ankles, and so on until the last of the chain were on the perfectly smooth sure ice close by the shore. Then Leon worked himself along to the very edge of the hole. If the ice broke through with him, so that he should presently find himself in the water, he did not much care, for he felt sure that the other boys would cling to him and fish both him and Lyman out.

But the ice did not break. This ice will often hold up a boy who lies sprawled on it, with extended arms. Leon worked himself so near that Lyman, struggling desperately, was able to catch hold of one of his hands. "Now work back, and pull me, boys!" Leon shouted to the other fellows; "I've got him!" The other boys "put the human chain into operation;" that is to say, they began to wriggle and draw, somewhat like a snake, and they drew the boys at the end of the chain little by little to the edge of the pond.

Then they got the dripping and half senseless Lyman on his feet, and made him dance his way across the fields to a house, where he got some warm and dry clothes. Then he went home, and next day was apparently none the worse for his adventure. It might be well for boys to give a little time, in their skating, to practice on the "human chain." But they should be careful to practice it on firm ice. No sensibly skater ever goes on ice which he has reason to believe is dangerous—unless, indeed, in some such way as these New Jersey boys did, in the hope of saving a life.

Curious Postal Mistake.

Many curious mistakes occur in the postoffice, but one which came to the notice of a mail clerk on the train between Boston and Portland last week was out of the ordinary. A letter addressed to a person at Frankfurt-on-the-Main, Germany, had been sent here from England, and was being carried to the state of Maine.

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