

SAVED BY A FLASH OF LIGHTNING.

My name is Hunt. Yes, sir; Anthony Hunt. I am a settler on this Western prairie. Wild? Yes, sir; it's little else than wilds now, but you should have seen it when I and my wife first moved up here. There was not a house within sight for miles. Even now we have not many neighbors, but those we have are downright good ones. To appreciate your neighbors as you ought, sir, you must live in these lonely places, so far removed from the haunts of man.

What I am about to tell of happened ten years ago. I was going to the distant town, or settlement, to sell some fifty head of cattle—fine creatures, sir, as ever you saw. The journey was a more arduous event with me than it is now; and my wife had always plenty of commissions to charge me with the shape of dry goods and groceries, and such like things.

Our youngest child was a sweet little gentle thing, who had been named after her Aunt Dorothy. We called the child Dolly. This time my commission included one for her—a doll. She had never had a real doll; that is a bought doll; only the rag bunnies her mother made for her. For some days before my departure the child could talk of nothing else or was else about the matter of that—for she was a great pet, the darling of us all. It was to be a big, big doll, with golden hair and blue eyes. I shall never forget the child's words the morning I was starting, as she ran after me to the gate, or the pretty picture she made. There are some children sweeter and prettier than others, sir, as you can't but have noticed, and Dolly was one.

"A very great big doll, please, daddy," she called out after me; "and please bring it very soon."

I turned to nod a "yes" to her as she stood in her clean white-brown pinafore against the gate, her nut-brown hair falling in curls about her neck and the light breeze stirring them.

"A brave doll," I answered, "for my little one—almost as big as Dolly."

Nobody would believe, I dare say, how full my thoughts were of that promised doll, I rode as if it were a hot iron. I meant to buy it was not often I spent money in what my good, thrifty wife would call waste; but Dolly was Dolly and I meant to do it now.

The cattle sold, I went about my purchases, and soon had no end of parcels to be packed in the saddle-bags. Tea, sugar, rice, candles—but I need not weary you, sir, with telling of them, together with the calves for shirts and nightgowns, and the delicate for the children's new frocks. Last of all, I went about the doll, and found a beauty. It was not as big as Dolly, or half as big; but it had flaxen curls and sky-blue eyes, and by dint of pulling a wire you could open or shut the eyes at will.

"Do it up carefully," I said to the storekeeper. My little daughter will cry sadly if any harm comes to it.

The day was pretty well ended before all my work was done, and just for a moment or two, I hesitated whether I should not stay in the town and start for home in the morning. It would have been the more prudent course. But I thought of poor Dolly's anxiety to get her treasure, and of my own happiness in watching the rapture in her delighted eyes. So with my parcels in the best way they could be, I mounted my horse and started.

It was as good and steady a horse as you ever rode, sir; but night began to set in before I was well a mile away from the town; it seemed as if it were going to be an ugly night, too. Again the thought struck me—should I turn back and wait till morning? I had the price of the cattle, you see, sir, in my breast pocket; and robbers, sir, are, and murders, also, were not quite unknown things on the prairie. But I had my brace of sure pistols with me, and decided to press onward. The night came on as dark as pitch, and part of the way the road would be pitch dark beside. But on that score I had no fear; I knew the road well, every inch of it, though I could not ride so fast as I should have done in the light. It was about six miles from town, sir, suppose, and I knew the time must be close upon midnight, when the storm which had been brewing broke. The thunder roared, the rain fell in torrents; the best I could do was to ride onward in it.

All at once, as I rode on, a cry startled me, a faint wailing sound, like the cry of a child. Reining up, I sat still and listened. Had I been mistaken? No, there it was again. But in what direction? I could not tell. I couldn't see a thing. It was, as I have said, as dark as pitch. Getting off my horse, I felt about but could find nothing. And while I was seeking, the cry came again—the faint wailing of a child in pain. Then I began to understand. I am a superstitious, but I asked myself how it was possible that a child could be out on the prairie at such an hour and in such a night. No; a real child it could not be.

Upon that came another thought—one less welcome: Was it a trap to hinder me on my way and ensnare me? There might be midnight robbers who would easily hear of my almost-certain ride home that night, and of the money I should have about me.

I don't think, sir, I am more timid than other people—not as much so, perhaps, as some; but I confess the idea made me uneasy. My best plan was to ride on as fast as I could, and get out of the mystery into safe quarters. Just here was about the darkest bit of road in all the route. Mounting my horse, I was about to urge him on, when the cry came again. It did sound like a child's—the plaintive wail of a child nearly exhausted.

"God guide me," I said, undecided. "What do you do. As I sat another moment, listening, I once more heard the cry fainter and more faint. I threw myself off my horse, with an exclamation.

"Be it ghost or be it robber, Anthony Hunt is not one to abandon a child to die without trying to save it."

But how was I to save it?—how find it? The more I searched about the best could my hand light on anything, save the sloppy earth. The voice had quite ceased now, so I had no guide from that. While I stood trying to peer into the darkness, all my ears alert, a flood of sheet lightning suddenly illumined the plain. At a little distance, just beyond a kind of ridge or gentle hill, I caught a glimpse of something white. It was dark again in a moment, but I made my way with unerring instinct. Sure enough, there lay a poor little child. Whether boy or girl I could not tell. It seemed to be three parts insensible now, as I took it up, dripping with wet, from the sloppy earth.

"My poor little thing!" I said, as I hushed it to me. "We'll go and find mamma. You are safe now."

"And in answer the child just put out its feeble hand, moaned once, and nestled close to me.

With the child huddled to my breast I rode on. Its perfect silence soon showed me that it slept. And, sir, I thanked God that he had let me save it, and I thought how grateful some poor mother would be! But I was full of wonder for all that, wondering what strange fate had taken any young child to that solitary spot.

Getting in sight of home, I saw all the windows alight. Deborah had done it for me, I thought, to guide me home in safety through the darkness. But presently I saw that something must be the matter, for the very few neighbors we had were gathered there. My heart stood still with fear. I thought of some calamity to one or other of the children. I had strayed a little one from perishing, but what might not have happened to my own.

Hardly daring to lift the latch, while my poor tired horse stood still and mute outside, I went slowly in, the child in my arms covered over with the flap of my long coat. My wife was weeping bitterly.

"What's amiss?" I asked in a faint chorus of voices answered me: "Dolly's lost!"

"Dolly's lost!" Just for a moment my heart turned sick. Then some instinct, like a ray of light and hope, seized upon me. Pulling the coat off the face of the child I held, I lifted the little sleeping thing to the light and saw Dolly!

Yes, sir. The child I had saved was no other than my own—my little Dolly. And I knew that God's good angels had guided me to save her, and that the first flash of the summer lightning had shone just at the right moment to show me where she lay. It was her white sunbonnet that had caught my eye. My darling it was, and none other, that I had picked up on the drenched road.

Dolly, anxious for her doll, had wandered out unseen to meet me in the afternoon. For some hours she was not missed. It chanced that my two elder girls had gone over to our nearest neighbors, and my wife, missing the child just afterward, took it for granted that she was with them. The little one had gone on and on, until night and the storm overtook her, when she fell down frightened and utterly exhausted. I thanked Heaven aloud before them all, sir, as I said that night to God and His holy angels had guided me to her. It's not much of a story to listen to, sir, I am aware of that. But I often think of it in the long nights, lying awake; and I ask myself how I could bear to live on now, had I run away from the poor little creature in the road, had I louder than a squirrel's chirp, and left my child to die.

The manner in which a command is obeyed is of more importance than the mere fulfillment of it.

Good temper is like a sunny day, it sheds a brightness over everything; it is the sweetener of toil and soothes of disquiet.

The muscles of the human jaw exert a force of 531 pounds.—Ez. Think of that, young man, in choosing a partner for life.

When the sun of virtue is set, the blush of shame is the twilight. When that dies, all is darkness.

If you listen patiently to calamity, you are only a trifle less guilty than the actual calamity.

If patrons were more disinterested, ingratitude would probably be a great deal more rare.

Grains of Gold. None are overstocked with patience. The right must sometimes yield or fight. Temper is so good a thing that we should never neglect it. It is better to need relief than to want heart to give it. It is a very easy thing for a man to be wise for other people. A punctual man can always find leisure, a negligent one never. Let not a neglect of your life always be a murmuring stream. All persons know when they are knaves; few when they are fools. Every art is best taught by example; good deeds produce good friends. Most men like self-sacrifice in their friends better than in themselves. Men generally make way for him who is determined to push boldly past them.

Golden Moments. How sorry one would be for a man who, starting out upon a journey, had his pockets full of golden coins which, one by one, had slipped through some unattended hole or rent, so that when he came to the end of his trip he had not one left, but lay down upon his bed a beggar! How strictly we would look at our own pockets after hearing the tale, and make very sure that what coin we had should be well spent, or hoarded carefully, and not scattered in the roadside dust! Yet, we keep little account of the golden moments. Rapidly they slip away through the rents of sloth and ignorance.

The New York Commercial thinks the state of affairs at Grenada not merely shocking, but denounces it as disgraceful that a state government should permit such a scandalous and horrible condition of affairs to exist for even one day. But it is not surprising. Governor Stone seems to have about as much life in him as a graven image, and about as much intelligence as a Flathead Indian. An official who did not make a move in the Chisholm matter until the united sentiment of the country forced him, is just the kind of a man to allow a city to be turned into a hotbed of disease.—O. Republican.

Science is making long strides, and the present days will be red-letter days in the history of human progress. But we will never be perfectly contented until some one suggests a plausible explanation of the fact that "hand-picked" apples are always plentier the day after a storm.

Last year a country editor offered his paper one year for the largest watermelon. The offer has not been repeated this season. Instead of doubling up his subscription-list for the grand scheme, the editor did nothing but double up the editor.

"I am compelled to show you how people die," said, courteously, Leopoldo Michele, an old officer of the Italian army, to an official in Rome to whom he had vainly applied for relief, and drawing a sharpened knife from his bosom he drove it into his breast.

There's need of young ladies rooting in a rouge box to get up a healthy color, when a little judicious application of the scrubbing-brush to the kitchen floor will accomplish like results.—Etna Gazette.

No man has ever been able to take the exact measurement of the height of his ambition. And yet with some men, it doesn't seem as though it would take more than a minute to do it.—Oil City Derrick.

Natty young fellows, who lounge at the doors of theaters and other places of amusement, are styled "door-nobs." The title is inappropriate, inasmuch as it suggests something of real value.

Rather funny that a Colonel should have been killed in the first engagement with the Indians. He must have been a new Colonel, not used to taking position.—Detroit Free Press.

There is no use drinking expensive whisky that one may die of spontaneous combustion, for a human body can never be cremated at the moderate cost of \$10.—Andrew's Bazar.

A Detroit lady who plastered her face with an ointment warranted to remove freckles, is now seeking something to cure forty or fifty eruptions artificially grouped around her nose.

Cyprus, just transferred to England, is about as large as Connecticut. This is conceded in return for England's great kindness in housing all Asiatic Turkey.—Graphic.

"What is faith?" asked a Sunday-school teacher of a boy scholar. He belonged to a base-ball nine, and replied, "On betting on a left-handed pitcher."

The height of politeness is passing round upon the opposite side of a lady, while walking with her, in order not to step upon her shadow.

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