

THE NEWLY FOUND HOME—A FRAGMENT.

[The subjoined was written by J. Sterling Morton for Dr. George L. Miller's Omaha Daily Herald and published by the same in 1870. It is one of the true stories of the pioneer days of the territory of Nebraska. There were three men frozen to death in Otoe county during the storm described. They were a Mr. Harvey and a Mr. Poe and his son.]

The first and second days of December in the year 1856 will never be forgotten by the early settlers of Nebraska. Waking from a dream, filled with tropical skies, bright sunshine and many flowers, we found ourselves in whirling clouds of snow; and storm songs, sounding hoarse and fierce, sweeping by us on the tireless winds.

The evening of the last day of November was calm. The sun went down in gorgeously gilded clouds, and the prairies, stretching out towards the great mountains, were touched with an air of such supreme serenity that, in their primeval purity, it seemed as though they might have been among the last works of the sixth day of the creation, and when God saw that it was good He had smiled upon them, and, catching the Divine expression, they had retained it forever.

For some sturdy men among us, that was the last earthly sunset. They were out "hunting lands;" looking for new homes, where they should bring wives and children and nestle down by the clear waters, near gems of groves, upon these vast fallow fields of the West.

And when the day had died and the stars crept out one by one, lulled by fatigue, these men wrapped their robes around them, and lay down to dream of dear ones at the old home in the East.

But at midnight there came a change. In the far Northwest the horizon began to darken. Gigantic clouds commenced to gather like huge warriors, and the black battalions of the coming storm were hurrying hither and thither across the sky, like mighty soldiers eager for assault, and hungry for the din and blood and anguish of remorseless carnage. The trumpet-calls of the wind, careering over the plains, and roaring along the valleys of the streams, sounded the long roll of elemental war. The stars, blotted from the sky, gave light no more. Darkness and storm enveloped the roadless, trackless prairies, in a fearful, impenetrable gloom, and the world seemed to us, out in the black night, one vast, unpitying, unyielding tomb. The sharp, frozen points of sleet and snow stung the face like needles of fire, and the wild wail of the winds wounded the air like voices of the lost and damned. The eye could not look into, nor the mind imagine, the path which should lead out of that awful danger—a danger that dragged your grave into your living presence, that

painted to yourself your own corpse, rigid, white, frozen, looking grimly up into tomorrow's sky, a ghastly mockery of that self, which in the morning so proudly vaunted its strength and prowess. And mingling with these agonies of the imagination would weirdly wander the image of mother—mother praying—praying at home, by the big, bright fire in the dear old chimney corner; praying for her wandering, storm-shrouded boy. And then father, brother, sister, and the faces of loved friends, would seem gliding by, smiling out of the deep dreariness and desolation, until the reason reeled in delirium of despair, and we shrieked and cried frantically for help—*help!* where no help could come, save that which is divine.

All night we aimlessly, guidelessly kept moving on; moving we knew not where, in the thick, choking, numbing storm. It was a century of terror condensed into a few hours. But at last light streaked the sky, and the glorious sun baptized another day.

"And then a sudden lull, gentle as sleep, Soft as an infant's breathing, seemed to be Laid, like enchantment, on the throbbing storm."

We three were saved. Directed to the east by the sunlight we sought the settlement on the river. Passing along the course of the little Nemaha we came upon two forms lying in the snow. They were those of a father and his son who had been "looking for a claim" the day before. The parent had ceased to breathe and the blood was cold in his veins and still forever.

But the boy yet lived, though his pulse was fitful and uncertain like the ebb and flow of an eddy. We took him up gently and bore him speechless, and his extremities hard-frozen, to the nearest cabin, a mile off.

We placed him on a pallet of robes and chafed his limbs and poured a few drops of brandy into his mouth.

His heart beat stronger again. The warm blood of youth began once more to vitalize his sturdy frame.

But with this came also the wildest delirium and words and mutterings. And then reason, almost, resumed its sway. His eye seemed resting on something a great way off; it grew brighter and brighter.

Clearly he called out in a strong, silvery voice:

"There, there, is our new home; see the bright water shining in the brook; see the flowers and the grand trees nodding in the wind! Oh! it is so pretty. And there are beautiful birds there too; I hear them singing now and their wings make music in my ears.

"This is what we came out for. This new home.

"And now *they* will all come. Brother, sister, mother; all come; this is the very home mother told me about when I was

small; and now she will come and make it so good and happy.

"Come, mother, come."

And so the poor lad died, and his new "claim" was not here, with earthly parents, but with the Father in a brighter, better, land than this.

Side by side, parent and child, we buried them in the prairie. Never, here, did their brawny arms turn the furrow and sow the grain. Fifteen years the snows of winter and the flowers of summer have covered their pioneer graves. But it is pleasant to have faith that they found that brighter home, away up beyond the azure fields which God has sown with the stars, and of which the eyes of the dying boy caught golden visions when his last breath whispered: "Come, mother, come."

"WE DO NOT TAKE PRISONERS."

The last letter from Resil Manahan, the Topeka boy who was killed this week, was received a short time ago. It is written in an easy, entertaining style, and is entitled to a place among the best soldier letters received. He said:

"If you ever want to experience a feeling that nobody can describe, just be sleeping in the middle of a road and be woke up with Mauser and Remington bullets flying over your head, then have two old cannon go off about twelve feet from you, have the man next to you say, 'My God, I'm shot,' watch the doctors bind up the wound, have a splinter out of the building back of you fall into your pocket, and hear the 'ping,' 'ping,' of the Mauser bullets. You just ought to have a few eight-inch shells go over your head; they sound more like the exhaust pipe of an engine than anything else. Well, that afternoon, the 10th, after wading through mud and water from twelve noon till after dark, and digging trenches for two hours, and going to sleep in wet clothes with nothing to eat, and being woke up every fourth hour to stand guard; after you have done all that you ought to be pardoned if you think the Philippines are not worth the trouble they are causing. * * * *"

The Filipinos put up white flags and then when our officers go out to see what they want they are fired upon. They shot from a church just across from the smallpox hospital and killed one of the patients who was looking out of the window. *We do not take prisoners; neither do they; so you see it is kill or be killed.*"

Mr. and Mrs. Manahan have received a great many letters of sympathy from friends who knew their son as a bright student, and they have issued a statement thanking their friends for their sympathy.—Topeka (Kan.) State Journal, April 29.