OUR OWN LITTLE HIGHWAYMAN.

BY JUAQUIN MILLER.

I had been duly elected to the re-sponsible position of Judge of Northern Oregon by the people thereof te-fore I yet had a beard. With that matchless confidence and audacity which is born of youth and fed on vanity. I had taken the oath of office and entered upon its duties, and, with one law book and two six shooters, proceeded to sternly administer justice, if

One sultry twilight, as I sat smoking a pipe on the steps of my office, an old man came shuffling down the steep hill from a little cluster of cabins that clung to the side of the mountian, with its top crowned by a gallows and graveyard.

The cabin constituting my office and my residence-my country residence and city residence—lay at the edge of the tumble-down old mining town. This town was deep down in a canyon. Indeed, it was called Canyon City. You will find it on the map of Oregon. It is now the county seat of Grant county. We who had found this mining camp and built this dismal mountain town, 200 miles from any other place, first named it Orodelphia; but it didn't look like Orodelphia. It looked like Canyon City. The miners called it Canyon City and Canyon

City it is to this day.

Brown, bold hills, high and barren, heaving to the clouds all around us; a high, timbered mountain for a background, away to the south and east, with the graveyard and gallows looking squarely down upon us, whence the Shoshone Indian sometimes shet arrows at night into our one populous street, and wounded, drunken and howling miners-this, in short, is a charcoal sketch of my seat of justice, where the old man who shuffled down the hill in the twilight found me sitting that sultry evening.

'They stole two horses," began the bent and weary old men, as he shuffled up close, lifted his tattered hat in his left hand, and cluched a coiled rope in his right. "My children!"

I stood up in an instant lifted my face to the gallows, and then glanced at the rope in his right hand; but before I could speak he put up a hand in protest and went on. "No, no! I-I don't want 'em

punished. No, no, not like that, judge; but if they'll go back with me, I'll take 'em back, I will, and—and I'll forgive 'em, and-and-

The poor old man quite broke down. He put on his hat and pulled it over his eyes, as he turned aside. "They are your children?"

"The law will have to-"

"No, no, no! I don't want the law. I want my children. Why in the world they run away I don't know. Of course, it was dull for 'em down in the settlements, and then they hearn of the mines, I s'pose, and wanted some excitement, so they saddled up and rode 200 miles through the Injun country, and I after 'em. And now they won't go back. Why. one of 'em—" The old man twisted his hat and his rope together in his two hands, and caught his breath and that he did not care to tell; but in a moment he went on. "One of 'em, the-the girl-was to have been married only last week; but they took my hosses and run away. They're up there now, in that old cabin with the roof half off. They've made a bed out hill, and they tell me they won't go back. They say they're going to stay and dig gold. Now, jedge, I want you for to go and talk to 'em. Get em to go back. I'm all alone. Their mother died when they were babies, and I brought 'em up. I brought 'em up by hend, jedge. And - and, jedge, they're not bad. They only don't want to stay at home. They say they will dig lots of gold and bring it to me; that they won't go back to the settlements no more. Now, jedge, you come up in the dark and talk to 'em. Don't let anybody see you, for I don't want 'em took up for stealin.' I only want you to tell 'em to go back."

In a moment more we were climbing the hill toward the roofless old voice, as he had stood there in the country. twilight, twisting his hat and his rope children. I knew it was not the law ily. They were half outlaws, and I was about to try to enforce; but I thought it was justice, and my heart orable deed at their door, save that of wide open. Put her in my house. yon, and stood by the door, we were feared in the settlements, I rememquite away from the noise of the ber. And now one of them was stotown. All was as still as if we had stood at the door of one of the everlasting homes on the hilltop.

from the deserted old cabin. I lis- children only a few hours before. tened. Not a sound. I stepped across the sill.

Click, citck! ner, two white little hands shot out, row at the women who could so adand two bull-dog Derringers looked us roitly draw a derringer. in the face, as if about to bark.

it was a sultry evening.

I do not know why, but I began to had come to stay. they get hungry they perhaps will not or daughter either, that had been seen to reach out and that was all. be so ready to draw Derringers on stelen. their father. And if they are not They were evidently very poor, below, and it was buried on the hill, your children, I don't see what better however, and, making little headway not far from the old cabin under the

the shadow of the gallows as I spoke, sometimes did not rise from the brok- Silent? He was savage. as if trying to make out the horses en old chimney under the shadow of that were grazing among the graves the gallows. At such times the camp boy now! The weak, ruthless, negathere in the darkness. He took a few pretty clearly understood that the two tive little wretch, to let such a woman steps in that direction, as if to make lovers were supperless.

two vicious characters, with bulldog

that town, after I did start, with a haste hardly consistent with judicial

The next day there was a sensation in camp. A pretty woman had come to town! The arrival of a pretty mining camp, hundreds of miles away in the wilderness -- why, it almost took

said. Come with her lover—a beardless fellow, a mere boy. They had been discovered walking down the one street that morning, looking curiously at the mines, miners, and all the strange sights of the half savage camp.

One day the beautiful woman on the high woman on the hill, under the shadow of the gallows, came down, walking very fast and alone. She looked neither to the laughed at those who got robbed. Was it not all in fun, or had the willy straight on down to the house of the Jack of Clubs, knocked, entered about the gallows, came down, walking very fast and alone. She looked neither to the laughed at those who got robbed. Was it not all in fun, or had the willy straight on down to the house of the Jack of Clubs, knocked, entered about the gallows.

Was it a love affair? Men grew bold with curiosity as the day wore by, and the two still wandered about the town or around the placer mines in the canyon. She was very beautiful. A bit stout.

but rosy with youth and health. They were both shy at first-the over particularly so. And, indeed, when a half drunken miner made bold to speak to them, the man, or rather the boy, shrunk back, blushing and embarrassed, while the woman, or girl, was left to do the talking. Who were they? Where did they

come from? Was it a runaway match? Would he keep her long? Could that beardless boy keep that one beautiful and made faces. woman all his own in this town full of tall and brawny men?

These were only a few of the many he two still wandered up and down the camp, looking curiously at all men and all things they met.

They next visited the German baker. short, ugly barrel of the derringer just keep your shirt on, judge. Then, as the sun went down and lift-glistened in the sun just under his And, chuckling as if it was ed the gallows to awful prominence on the high brown hill, over the graveyard, the beautiful lady, with storm, and the little brook in the bed table and laid a blue chip on the ace ed from our savsge little town. It was the air and dignity of a river. How as if the sun and the moon and the the rain did come down. stars had set forever on Canyon City.

Men took their pipes, however, as called across the canyon to his shaggy mate prowling around the graveyard and the gallows.

Suddenly looking up in that dieection, I saw that the half roofless cabin chimney.

It all came to my mind like a flash. were the two little desperadoes I had let her come to-?" encountered only the night before in

that same old cabin. I was more curious now than ever: but I kept my own counsel. Later in two hands, and caught his breath and half stopped as he spoke here, as if the evening I went around to the exhalf stopped as he spoke here, as if there was something behind all this press office and waited for the arrival of the stage. From the driver I of Clubs bets the last scad on that ere the transfer of the stage. The teamster, doubtful of his ability man had been seen riding furiously and another stranger is a coming." for the settlements and driving two

horses before him. Curious to know who he was, I climbed onto the box with the dusty of the saddle blankets, they've of mail bags and passengers; and, driver, after he had emptied his stage when he had turned his leaders with a long, lazy swing and was drawing up at the stable, I began to pump this traditionally dig-

nified and silent master of the road. "It was Crittenden," laconically answered the driver, as he drew up at hostler.

"What! Not old Crittenden that killed -" "The Crittenden that killed his

man last year, and the year before, and is going to kill another this year. You see, there's a feller been a foolin' with a gal of his. Run away with her, or somethin' worse. Whoa! Charley. Yes, I will take a cigar. Well, goodnight, judge."
The boldest men and the bloodiest

men, too, in all the settlements were cabin that clung to the hillside, under these Crittendens. A proud old souththe gallows and the graveyard. I ern family. Poor as could be, but so cannot tell to you the pity and the proud! Of course they were hated, pathos that was in that old man's and were feared, too, by the whole

No man ever struck hands in friendtogether, pleading for his runaway ship with this hard and unhappy famlen or gone astray.

And to think that this dreaded head of this clannish and most dread-

"His children, indeed! It was the old man's daughter that had been stolen; not his horse," I said to my-Two black bushy heads shot up from | self, that night, as I went to bed, and

I saw her; I saw her daily; but she

suspect this whimpering old man of They made inquiries about the some sort of falsehood and trickery mines and seemed anxious to go to the next (perhaps she dreaded the the moment I saw those two resolute work. One day a miner met them crossing); but early on the third day heads shoot up in the dark corner of far up in the canyon with pick, pan the was seen to slowly descend toward that deserted old cabin. Then the and shovel. Nothing remarkable the town. Men stood watching, pistols! "If these are your children," about that, except that the woman waiting. The foot log was hidden in I said, with a spice of resolution, as carried the heavy pick and shovel and the depression of the stream, and we reached a cool spot, about fifty led the way; while the man, or rather yards distant, "if these are your children, they are not worth your tears or lowed timidly behind. Hearing this, your trouble. You had better take I decided in my judicial mind that it whirled about in a sudden turn of the your horses and return home. When was the old man's boy, not his horses, stream below. A white hand was

you can do than to let them alone. I with the pick, they were soon out of gallows; but whether by accident or think we'd better let them sleep." favor with the butcher and baker. It design she died no one could say, The old man was looking up under began to be noticed that the smoke Her lover was silent now as before.

certain of his object, and then re- A pistol was pawned soon. I called No doubt he was hungry; no doubt he certain of his object, and then returned. Then he melted away in the darkness, and I saw him no more.

I waited patiently. To be sandwiched in between a graveyard and wiched in between a graveyard and so I did not call.

A pastor was pawned soon. I caned was starving. The camp didn't care; the camp, I think, was glad of it.

But pretty soon the camp began to see that a little circle and wall of

derringers in hand, and have to wait there for the return of a sort of Ancient Mariner, whom you begin to bold demands on both butcher and found that this work was being outli around the new who still seemed to be growing stout, despite their hungery, began to make found that this work was being done

of Clubs was a short, stout, black road leading to John Day's city. looked like the Jack of Clubs, and there now as it ever did.

inside that house. before, seemed in great haste, and looking neither to the right nor left, The man blew a long, curling cloud but walking very fast, started on up of smoke, closed his eyes and chuck through the town, toward the cabin on the hill. Men lecred at her now.
They looked at each other and winked of his dust last night, and he says it

Cid Berry boldly crossed her path, a beard. Sabe?" She did not speak. She refused to understand that he stood before her, the judge-I'il-I'll murder him !" uestions men put to each other, as but hastily tried to pass on around.

her weak and boyish lover, disappear- of the canyon began to take to itself of diamonds.

night. All took refuge in the gam- us had been in prison, including the was their custom, and sat on their bling saloons, and even in places of honored judicial head of the camp, doorsteps and smoked in the twilight; less substantial character; and the one and there is not a bit of doubt that a while the bat whirled by, and coyote topic there was the beautiful stranger great many of us ought to have had a on the hill; her morals and her im similar and even more extended expemorality; her reckless visit to the rience. But all that did not settle fiture of their bold leader, Cid Berry. was defying the gloomy old gallows

The Jack of Clubs was sought and that looked down upon us. had taken on a few fresh shingles, and consulted. She was thoughtful and that a smoke was curling lazily up mysterious, "What in the world did slowly around the grave on the hill, from out the ugly, tumble-down old the woman want? Was she starving? for the boy was certainly not strong Who was she, anyhow? What was now. Still it was to be seen that he she? And, above all, who was he? kept steadily on at his singular task-The pretty lady and her boy lover And what manner of man was he, to a task of sad, desolate love and devo-

ye no questions. She's a woman." "Of course, she's a woman."

learned that fifty miles away an old card. She's a woman and a stranger, to pay, demanded his hire in hand. "Another stranger. From Oregon?"

"No, Cid." "From Idaho."

"No."

"From-from the states?" "No, no, Cid Berry. From-from, the hard work let her hard voice fall soft and low; her eyes drooped down was doing its work. timidly for a time; then, clasping her up, said: "From-from up there."

spoke; but one by one they melted away, and left Cid Berry standing there, thinking of the beautiful woman The nugget, however, was not re-

there, he said: -Mrs. Jack-it gold will make up newly come to the camp, and he was for it, Mrs. Jack o'Clubs, she shall shot dead in his tracks. have the hull mine. I'm going a When these men told what they prospectin' in the mornin', and, Jack, had done they were cursed and des-I won't be back for half a year. When pised. A party went out in the darkmy mule's tail disappears over that ness and brought the body into town. was with the old Oregonian. As we their dreadful ready use with deadly Put her in, I say; for it takes a very from the settlements, came pouring climbed higher up and out of the can-weapons. Even the women were big house to hold a very small baby." its people into the saloon to see the And, with this, the man dashed out corpse.

into the driving storm. The door had long since disappeared bed family had plead with me for his other side of the stream, under the amination, it was found not to be graveyard and gallows, were com-pletely cut off till they had thrown two men was unbounded. long, quivering logs across the swift, seething stream. And it was perilous enough to cross! The water was, threw up his two hands and crowd: under a pile of blankets in a dark cor- waited to get a good look on the mor- far below, a boiling, feaming whirl-

wild beasts and wilder men. How all eyes were lifted to the We went outside. Perhaps it was refused to make friends with any cabin now. If that woman should cooler there; for, as before observed, one. The two kept patching up the come down to town now, each man cabin and it began to look as if they would hold his hat in his hand while she passed.

She did not come the next day, nor Pretty soon an object was seen

They recovered the lifeless body far

And how the camp did abhor that die! No one would speak to him now.

HARD OR SOFT COAL

By and by the beautiful woman, stones was being built around the new half suspect has only just left one of the graves, "for this occasion only," is not pleasant.

Pretty soon I started; and I got down the hill and into the heart of

The two were evidently desperate, body, so far as the camp should care. Singularly enough, in a place so hungry, starving.

There was a famous, or rather infautterly isolated, where everbody knew mous, house in the heart of town. everybody, there began to be frequent kept by the Jack of Clubs. The Jack and reckless highway robberies on the woman in any part of this earth that woman, with a bullet head and a foot I have yet visited is an event that like avoid-fashioned coffin; and when loosens every tongue; but the arrival she was mad, and stood straight up, of a pretty woman in a rude, wild and dug her fists in her ribs, and grew but still it keeps firm place on the woman, with a bullet head and a foot This little cluster of shanties was only black in the face with rage, she maps of the country, and looks as big

The town was appalled. It stood on monte game in the saloon, I saw a its feet in silent consternation. It re- man, or rather felt a man come up to fused to sit down while she remained my side and look me steadily in the face. I did not move or seem to no-Cid Berry went up to a drinking tice this; but I felt my face grow red. booth in the open street, and without Then I saw, or rather felt this man eye fixed on the door of the infamous step back and speak in sharp, short, house, poured out and drank, alone whispers to a companion. This comand in silence, a draught that would panion happened to be a friend of stagger a sailor. After a while the mine, and so soon as the obtrusive beautiful woman came out. She, as party went out I went straight up to

was a little feller and a feller without

"And he means to hint that I-I, "Keep cool, now. You just keep He caught her by the shoulder and cool. It's got to be somebody. It's spun her about. Then, for the first got to be one of us, ain't it? Here we ime, her face met his, and something are. Everybody knows everybody. Toward night they went to the else met his face also; for her arm No strangers up from the settlements butcher's and bought some meat. sprang up like a steel spring; and the yet. It'll all come out straight You

> And, chuckling as if it was a great joke to be suspected of highway rob

Which one of us was the highwayman? It is to be admitted that our No man sat in his cabin door that moral status was not high. Many of wretched place; and, also the discom- the question as to which one of us

tion.

"Now, stop right there! I'll answer After a while the boy employed a teamster to haul him down some evergreens from the mountains, to plant "Yes, she's all woman. That's just on the barren, brown hillside about

> The boy at once gave him a large nugget of gold, and, turning away, went on up the hill to his cabin.

> The teamster ran to Cid Berry with the nugget. Consternation, curses, and the laughter. Berry has been robbed of this nugget only the night before. The remaining Derringer

And do you know we all suddenly hands, she lifted her face, and looking came to like that little highwaymen of ours? He was now even a greater It was so still inside that house that hero than Cid Berry, who had slain the rain outside seemed beating like a an Indian chief. Hang him? He the stable and threw the reins to his hurricane. Cid Berry pushed himself was a hero now, a sort of Alexander. back from the side of the woman, and, Canyon City had a highway robber without knowing it, took off his hat. of her own and such a handsome, Some men went to the window, and young and dashing Dick Turpin it looked out at the rain that came dash- was, too! All this would make our ing down into the town. No man town famous in the land. We were

> on the hill and the awful mystery of turned, though Cid Berry proudly reher sex. At last, pulling himself to-gether with great effort, looking down hunger that drove our hero once more all the time and talking low and em- and very soon to the highway, for in barassed to the short woman sitting a short time another robbery was attempted. This time, unfortunately, "If gold will make up for it, Jack our hero attacked two men who had

Beautiful, very beautiful was the The next morning the storm was face. The hands were so small and booming. Many a cabin had been delicate! One of them still held the

Suddenly a stranger, who had pushed his way through the crowd, "It's Crittenden! Yes, it is! You pool, mad and wild and wicked as the know the girl that was betrayed at the Forks, and they said had gone to

'Frisco to hide!" "Kate Crittenden?" "Yes, Kate Crittenden. Well, this here is her sister." "Brother, you mean."

"No, I mean sister. That murdered creature there is a girl. See!" And springing forward he loosened the great folds of sable hair from the

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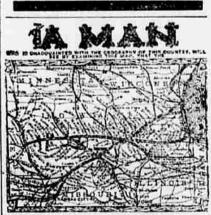
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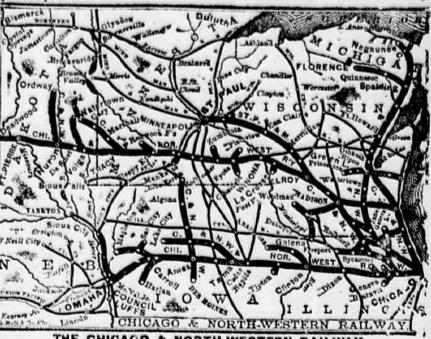
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