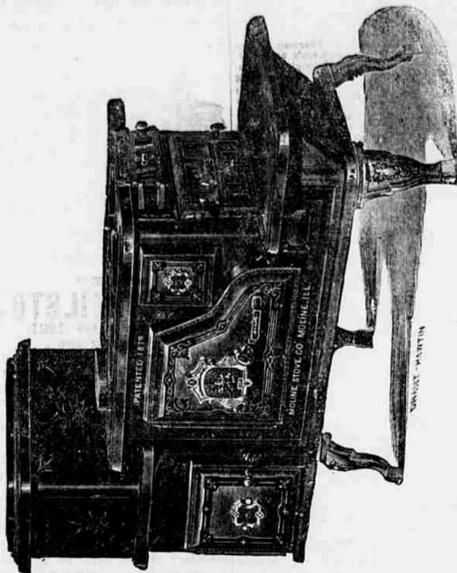


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**The Round of Life.**  
Two children down by the shining strand,  
With eyes as blue as the summer sea,  
While the stinking sun lit all the land,  
Laughing aloud at the sea-men's cry,  
Gazing with joy on its snowy breast,  
Till the first star to rise from the evening sky,  
And the amber bars stretch over the west.

A soft green dell by the breezy shore,  
A sailor lad and a maiden fair,  
Hand clasped in hand, while the tale of yore  
Is borne again on the listening air,  
For love is young though love be old,  
And love alone the heart can fill,  
And the door of fate is never told  
In the days gone by is spoken still.  
A trim 'tuit b' me on a sheltered bay;  
A wife looking out on a glistening sea;  
A prayer for the loved one far away,  
And prattling imp'neath the old roof tree.

A lifted latch and a radiant face  
By the open door in the falling night;  
A welcome home and a warm embrace  
From the love of his youth and children bright.  
An aged man in an old arm chair;  
A golden light from the western sky,  
He writes by his side with her very hair,  
And the open Book of God close by.  
Sweet on the bay the gloaming falls,  
And bright is the glow of the evening star.  
But dearest to them are the jasper walls  
And the golden streets of the land afar.

—Chambers' Journal.

**MOUNTAIN REGULATORS.**

BY COL. GEORGE W. SYMONDS.  
My first introduction to the regulators was romantic and decidedly dime novelish. Although I had had considerable experience in mountain work, my acquaintances were chiefly "moonshiners." I had heard much about the strength of the new vigilante order, but gave little credence to the marvelous stories that were told respecting the solidity, respectability and discipline of that famous mobocracy which had ruled the mountain Kentucky for the past four years with an iron hand, which had committed many outrages, made many mistakes, but which rendered the mountain counties safe to live in, and driven out the desperadoes and outlaws.

The agent for my division, early in the month of June, 1878, sent me on a mission of importance into one of the rich blue grass counties, which county, by the way, boasts of more pretty women, fast horses, fat Darhams and fine whiskey than any spot of like size in the world. Reliable information had been received at the headquarters of the Secret Service in Washington City that an extensive gang of counterfeiters had opened a mint not far from the famous Blue Lick Spring, and were manufacturing at wholesale the most dangerous character of "quer" money. The rendezvous of the gang was not definitely located, and I was detailed to "spot" their hiding-place. Accordingly, I went out on the Kentucky Central railroad to the little town from which I was to make a start, procured a horse and rode leisurely through the town into the open country. It was 4 o'clock in the afternoon as I left the hotel. Reaching the borders of the town, I spurred my horse into a gallop and turned into the first road I came to, running in the direction of the setting sun. I had a theory—which afterwards proved a true one—that the gang were located in an isolated and heavily timbered belt of country running from the borders of the blue-grass lands out into the barren ridges of Robertson county. I was thoroughly posted respecting the roads, was provided with a good post-road map and a pocket compass, and had no fears of losing myself.

A lowering sky indicated a possible storm. By 9 o'clock a heavy cloud swept across the canopy of stars overhead, and shut out the feeble light of the young moon. There was a distant rumble of thunder, and the southwestern sky was illuminated by vivid flashes of electric fire. A few pattering rain-drops warned me that the storm was close at hand, and I discovered that in the hurry of departure I had neglected to bring my gum coat and leggings. I did not fancy a wetting, and began to look about me for a place of shelter. The night had grown intensely dark, and a solid wall of black encompassed me on every hand. This gloom was occasionally pierced by a flash of lightning, enabling me to see objects close at hand. A particularly vivid flash, just as the rain began to fall in earnest, brought out in full relief on the right hand side of the road, the outlines of a gloomy looking stone building, the front of which was thickly covered with ivy, clinging in tangled masses from the ground to the tops of the dormer windows. I pulled up my horse and waited for another flash. It came, and I saw that the stone pile was a ruin and uninhabited. I had hoped for a hospitable farm mansion, a warm supper and a comfortable bed, but the rapidly falling rain did not admit of indecision. Dismounting, I led my horse through a gate, which I found after much groping, and guided him through an open doorway into one of the rooms of the stone ruin.

Lighting a little pocket lantern which I always carried, I looked about me. The room in which I found myself was bare and without floor. I did not notice at the time that it had been used as a stable before. The floor above was intact, and I was glad to get shelter from the rain, which was now descending in torrents. Removing my saddle I tethered my horse to a projecting hook in one corner of the room and started about on a tour of exploration. There were eight rooms on the ground floor, all spacious and in ruins. A broad hallway bisected the house, at the far end of which a dilapidated stairway led to the upper story. The rooms on the second floor were in a better state of preservation, and one could not help being impressed with the idea that the mansion must at one time have been a noble pile. Two or three of the rooms contained odd pieces of furniture once rich and costly. In one of the best furnished rooms I determined to take up my abode for the night. Some shreds of carpet clinging to the floor, the walls were hung

with faded tapestry and the glassed windows were protected by heavy oak shutters, fantastically carved and brightly polished. A ponderous sofa covered with decaying hair-cloth occupied one corner of the room. I dragged it out to the fire-place, brushed away the dust, started a blaze on the hearth, and lighting my pipe, stretched out at full length on the sofa to wonder at my strange situation, and marvel at the cause of the ruined grandeur around me.

I have neglected to say that I had had no sleep the night before, and the stillness of this old house, broken only by the patter of the rain and sighing of the wind among the trees, acted on tired nature with scorpionic effect. A dozen times I sank into a doze to be aroused by a crash of thunder. Finally the storm abated and the thunder died away in angry and fast receding growls. The fire burned down on the hearth and weird shadows crept into the corners of the room. A strange hush fell upon the house, the pipe slipped from my grasp and I fell into a profound sleep.

How long I slept I do not know, but awoke finally out of a troubled dream to find the room thronged with fantastic figures. Fitting climax to my dream! I started up and stared about me with wondering eyes. Before I could express my astonishment one of the figures addressed me, and, in spite of the muffled voice and feigned accent, I thought I recognized the familiar tones of my old friend, Lance Worthington.

The figure was clad in a long, flowing robe of white, which shrouded it from head to foot. The head-piece of the mask was pierced with holes for the eyes, nose and mouth. The others were similarly disguised, and I could almost fancy myself at the secret meeting of some knightly order of the feudal age.

"You need not be alarmed," said the shrouded figure, "you are among friends, colonel, and mean you no harm, and we do not intend that you shall do us any harm. You are surrounded by regulators. If you are one of us make yourself known. If not a member of the order, our high priest will administer the oath of allegiance, and soon make you one."

"You need not disguise your voice, for I recognize you," said I, recovering my self-possession. "You are Lance Worthington?"

"Stop!" interrupted a dozen voices, and I saw the gleam of a dozen pistol barrels under the folds of the white shrouds.

"You will consult your own safety and no one here," said a tall fellow standing at the foot of the sofa.

I saw that his pistol covered my heart and was silent.

"You may think this an idle matter, but I assure you it is the reverse," said the figure which I thought Lance Worthington. "We are regulators, and have met for business."

"Well!" I interrogated, rather tauntingly.

"We perfectly understand that you are here by accident, and have no intention of spying on our actions. Nevertheless, self-preservation is the first law of nature, and you must join our order."

"Suppose I object to such forced membership?" I ventured, and looked about for my pistols.

They were gone!

"The order deals vigorously with all who disobey its commands!" cried a muffled voice at my ear.

"You do not mean?" I cried, starting up.

"Be quiet, old fellow," interrupted the voice which I recognized as Lance Worthington's. "Let me advise you. This house in which you have taken shelter is the sometimes rendezvous of one of the strongest Regulator lodges in the state. We number 250 members, and nearly all are present to-night. We are all armed, and your pistols are in our possession. This meeting is accidental, but the rules of the order are imperative, and you must become one of us."

"Suppose I refuse?" I said.

"Then you must suffer the penalty of contempt!" cried the veiled figure at the foot of the sofa.

"And that?"

"Death!" cried a chorus of voices.

"Gentlemen," said I, beginning to take a serious view of the matter, "I am opposed to your order and have so expressed my mind a hundred times, and if you force me to take any oath I shall not consider it binding, for I take it under protest."

"He who is once a regulator is always a regulator," waived the tall figure at the foot of the sofa. "You will never betray the secrets of the order."

"Well, then," said I, rising to my feet, "I am forced to this thing, go ahead."

"Let the high priest administer the oath!" said the voice in my rear, and the tall figure at the foot of the sofa stepped forward.

"Hold up your right hand!" commanded the high priest.

I did so, and slowly repeated the oath which bound me to secrecy, which obligated me to murder, and which I faithfully kept until regularly released. After the ceremony was over several of the figures unmasked and disclosed old friends of mine. I was not deceived as to Lance Worthington's voice, and he was the first to congratulate me as a brother regulator.

In the course of our conversation he told me that the ruined house in which we were assembled was the scene of a terrible murder years ago, and had the reputation of being haunted by the ghost of the murdered man. It had not been occupied for years, and the Regulators had taken advantage of the superstitious legends connected with the pile and transformed it into a place of rendezvous. They had no fear of interlopers here. He told me that horse and cattle stealing was so common in the county that it was necessary to organize some sort of association for protection. They had accordingly allied themselves to the new "vigilante" order, which had been so successful in breaking up crime, and organized themselves into a lodge of Regulators. The captain of the lodge was one of the wealthiest young stock raisers in Kentucky, and the members were from the best families in the state.

"We have an important and painful duty to perform to-night," he said in conclusion, "and you can accompany us or not, as you choose."

I pleaded business and declined.

"I know what you are after, I think," he said quickly, "and if you will ride with us to-night, and after our business is over, go home with me, I will assist you. A man in my employ has been approached indirectly by the parties you are after, and he knows enough of their movements to put you on their track. He is an honest fellow and has already taken me into his confidence. Now, ride with us to-morrow, and I will ride with you to-night."

To make a long story short, I finally agreed to make my first trip as a regulator, and was provided with a shroud similar to those worn by the other members of the lodge. When I went down to my horse I found him similarly disguised, and could not help smiling at his weird and uncanny appearance.

"You will answer to the number two hundred and fifty-three," said the captain of the lodge as I was mounting. "We are known only by numbers when we are at work."

We rode in the direction in which I had come, four abreast, and the long line of white-robed spears, moving along swiftly and silently, were enough to inspire terror in the heart of the bravest man, had we chanced to meet one during our journey. I learned afterward that had we met any persons they would have been forced to take the oath. An hour passed in this way, and we were fast nearing the shire town of the county. I recollected that I knew nothing of the object of the midnight ride, and asked my right hand companion for information.

"E-h!" he whispered; "you will see."

We were nearly there.

To my dying day I will not forget the dual tragedy enacted that night "by order of Judge Lynch!" A horrible murder had been committed a few months before in the county. The motive, adulterous lust. A wife and her paramour were arrested, charged with the murder of a husband and friend. They were intelligent, their social position was high, and their wealth in abundance was at their command. In spite of popular indignation against the murderers and strong circumstantial evidence connecting them with the crime, it was very probable that the law—which is not always justice—through some technicality would free the evidently guilty pair, to enjoy undisturbed their blood-stained lust. The case was laid before the regulators, and they gave it a fair and impartial trial. Every mitigating circumstance in favor of the innocence of the accused persons was carefully considered. When the fatal ballot was cast at the close of the investigation there was no merciful "white ball" dropped into the box, and Judge Lynch had pronounced sentence of death. It is needless to prolong this article by describing that night's work. It is a matter of history, and the verdict of the world, after the first shock of horror passed, was "Served them right!" Executions, be they legal, illegal or semi-legal, have a painful and horrid similarity. A jail was surrounded by masked men, the jailer forced at the muzzle of a dozen pistols to give up the keys, a man and woman, whose hands were stained with the blood of a fellow-creature, were aroused from dreams of possible liberty; a confession of guilt was made by both, they were told of the fate in store for them; a few minutes' time was given them to prepare for that final arraignment before the bar of a just God, and in spite of the sobs and prayers for mercy, and cries and lamentations, were "hanged by the neck, and left dead."

It was stern and terrible punishment. "A life for a life!"

At the edge of the town the law dispersed, the masks and shrouds were removed, and each man sought his home by the nearest and most direct road. I accompanied my friend Lance Worthington, and we were safe in bed before sunrise. Neither spoke of the occurrence of the night and both tried to forget it in sleep, but it was many long days before I could drive away the haunting faces of those two wretched beings, or forget the agony of their last frantic appeals for mercy and life.

The next day I possessed myself of information which warranted me in swearing out warrants against three noted counterfeiters before the nearest United States commissioner, and next with the assistance of a posse of my newly made brethren, I succeeded in overtaking the "crooks," in capturing their materials, machines, dies and manufactured money, and lodging them all safely in jail.

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