

SALOMY JANE'S KISS.

BY BRET HARTE.

(Copyright, 1898, by Bret Harte.) PART II. Nevertheless, that night, after her father had gone to bed, Salomy Jane sat by the open window of the sitting room in an apparent attitude of languid contemplation, but alert and intent of eye and ear. It was a fine moonlit night. Two pines near the door—solitary pickets of the serried ranks of distant forest—cast long shadows like paths to the cottage, and sighed their spiced breath in the windows. For there was no frivolity of vine or flower round Salomy Jane's bower. The clearing was too recent, the life too practical for vanities like these. But the moon added a vague elusiveness to everything, softened the right outlines, and the sheds, gave shadows to the lidless windows, and touched with merciful indirectness the hideous debris of refuse gravel and the gaunt scars of burnt vegetation before the door. Even Salomy Jane was affected by it and exhaled something between a sigh and a yawn with the breath of the pines. Then she suddenly sat upright. Her quick ear had caught a faint "click, click" in the direction of the wood; her quicker instinct and rustic training enabled her to determine that it was the ring of a horse's shoe on flinty ground; her knowledge of the locality told her it came from the spot where the trail passed over an outcrop of flint scarcely a quarter of a mile from where she sat—and within the clearing. It was no errant "stook," for the shoe was shod with iron; it was a mounted trespasser by night, and bedded no good to a man

you, and I know it don't half pay for what you did. Take it—your father can get a reward for you—if you can't." Such were the ethics of this strange locality that neither the man who made the offer nor the girl to whom it was made were struck by anything that seemed illogical or inadmissible or at all inconsistent with justice or the horse thief's real conversation. Salomy Jane, nevertheless, dismounted from another and weaker reason. "I don't want your horse—though I reckon dad might—but you're just starvin'. I'll get suthin'." She turned toward the house. "Say, you'll take the horse first," he said, grasping her hand. At the touch she felt herself coloring and struggling, expecting perhaps another kiss. But he dropped her hand. She turned again with a saucy gesture, said: "Hold on; I'll come right back," and slipped away—the more shadow of a coy and flying nymph in the moonlight—until she reached the house. Here she not only procured food and whisky, but added a long coat and hat of her father's to her burden. They would serve as a disguise for him and hide that heroic figure, which she thought everybody must now know as she did. Then she rejoined him breathlessly. But he put the food and whisky aside. "Listen," he said; "I've turned the horse into your corral. You'll find him there in the morning, and no one will know but that he got lost and joined the other horses." Then she burst out: "But you—you—"



MADISON CLAY'S FLIGHT.

like Clay. She rose, threw her shawl over her head more for disguise than shelter, and passed out of the door. A sudden impulse made her seize her father's shotgun from the corner where it stood—not that she feared any danger to herself, but that it was an excuse. She made directly for the wood, keeping in the shadow of the pines as long as she could. At the fringe she halted, where there was there must pass her before reaching the house. Then there seemed to be a suspense of all nature. Everything was deadly still—even the moonbeams appeared no longer tremulous; then there was a rustle as of some stealthy animal among the ferns—and then a dismounted man stepped into the moonlight. It was the horse thief—the man she had kissed! For a wild moment a strange fancy seized her usually sane intellect and stirred her temperate blood. The news they had told her was not true; she had been humped, and this was his ghost! He looked as white as a spiritlike in the moonlight, dressed in the same clothes, as when she saw him last. He had evidently seen her approaching, and moved quickly to meet her. But in his haste he stumbled slightly—she reflected without that she should not stumble—and a feeling of relief came over her. And it was no reassurance of her father that had been prowling around—only this unhappy fugitive. A momentary color came into her cheek; her coolness and hardihood returned; it was with a tinge of sauciness in her voice that she said: "I reckoned you were a ghost." "I must have been," he said, looking at her fixedly; "but I reckon I'd have come back here all the same." "It's a little risky comin' back alive," she said with a levity that died on her lips, for a singular nervousness, half fear and half expectation, was beginning to take the place of her relief a moment ago. "Then it was you who was prowlin' round and makin' tracks in the far pasture?" "Yes; I came straight here when I got away." She felt his eyes were burning her, but did not dare raise her own. "Why—" she began, hesitated, and ended vaguely. "How did you get here?" "You helped me." "I?" "Yes. That kiss you gave me put life into me—gave me strength to get away. I swore to myself I'd come back and thank you—alive or dead." Every word he said she could have anticipated, so plain the situation seemed to her now. And every word he said she knew was the truth. Yet her cool common sense struggled against it. "What's the use of your escapin', if you're comin' back here to be ketchin' again?" she said pertly. He drew a little nearer to her, but seemed to her the more awkward as she resumed her self-possession. His voice, too, was broken as if by exhaustion as he said, catching his breath at intervals: "I'll tell you. You did more for me than you think. You made another man of me. I never had a man, woman or child do to me what you did. I never had a friend—only a pal like Red Pete, who picked me up 'on the shares.' I want to quit this yer—what I'm doin'. I want to begin by doin' the square thing to you." He stopped, breathed hard and then said brokenly: "My horse is over there, staked out. I want to give him to you. Judge Boompointer will give you thousand dollars for him. I ain't lyin'—his God's truth! I saw it on the handbill again a tree. Take him, and I'll get away, afore he takes him. It's the only thing I can do for

what will become of you? You'll be caught!" "I'll manage to get away," he said in a low voice, "ef—ef—" "Ef what?" she said tremblingly. "Ef you'll put the heart in me again—as you did!" he gasped. She tried to laugh—to move away. She could do neither. Suddenly he caught her in his arms and with a long kiss, which she returned again and again. Then they stood embraced as they had embraced two days before, but no longer the same. For the cool, lazy Salomy Jane had been transformed into another woman—a passionate, clinging savage. Perhaps something of her father's blood had surged within her at that supreme moment. The man stood erect and determined. "What's your name?" she whispered quickly. It was a woman's quickest way of defining her feelings. "Dart." "Your first name?" "Jack." "Let me go now, Jack. Lie low in the woods till tomorrow sun-up. I'll come again." He released her. Yet she lingered a moment. "Put on those things," she said with a sudden happy flash of eyes and teeth, "and lie close till I come." And then she sped away home. But midway up the distance she felt her feet going slower, and something at her heartstrings seemed to be pulling her back. She stopped, turned, and there, where she had been standing, had she seen him then, she might have returned. But he had disappeared. She gave her first sigh, and then ran quickly again. It must be nearly 10 o'clock; it was not very long to morning! She was within a few steps of her own door when the sleeping woods and silent air appeared to suddenly awake with a sharp "crack!" She stopped paralyzed. Another "crack!" followed that echoed over to the far corral. She recoiled herself instantly and dashed off wildly to the wood again. As she ran she thought of one thing only. He had been "dogged" by one of his old pursuers, and attacked. But there were two shots and he was unarmed. Suddenly she remembered that she had left her father's gun standing against the tree where they were talking. Thank God! she may again have saved him. She ran to the tree; the gun was gone. She ran thither and thither, dreading at every step to fall upon his lifeless body. A new thought struck her; she ran to the corral. The horse was not there! He must have been able to regain it and escaped—after the shots had been fired. She drew a long breath of relief, but it was caught up in an apprehension of alarm. Her father, awakened from his sleep by the shots, was hurriedly approaching her. "What's up now, Salomy Jane?" he demanded, excitedly. "Nothin'," said the girl with an effort. "Nothin', at least, that I can find." She was usually truthful because fearless, and a lie stuck in her throat—but she was no longer fearless, thinking of him. "I wasn't shot, so I ran out as soon as I heard the shots fired," she answered in return to his curious gaze. "Where you're hid my gun somewhere where it can't be found," he said reproachfully. "Ef it was that sneak Larrabee, and he fired them shots to lure me out, he might have potted me, without a show, a dozen times in the last five minutes." She hadn't thought since of her father's enemy. It might indeed have been he who had attacked Jack. But she made a quick point of the suggestion. "Run in, dad, ef you can find the gun—you've got no show

out here without it." She seized him by the shoulders from behind, shielding him from the woods, and hurried him, half expostulating, half struggling, to the house. But there no gun was to be found. It was strange—it must have been mislaid in some corner! Was he sure he had not left it in the barn? But no matter now. The danger was over—the Larrabee trick had failed—he must go to bed now, and in the morning they would make a search together. At the same time she had inwardly resolved to rise before him and make another search of the wood, and perhaps—fearful joy as she recalled her promise!—find him alive and well awaiting her! Salomy Jane slept little that night—nor did her father. But toward morning he awoke to a tired man's slumber until the sun was well up in the horizon. Far different was it with his daughter; she lay with her face to the window, her head half lifted to catch every sound—from the creaking of



MADISON APPEARS TO SALOMY.

the sun-warped shingles above her head to the far off moan of the rising wind in the pine trees. Sometimes she fell into a breathless, half ecstatic trance—living over every moment of the stolen interview—feeling the fugitive's arm still around her, his kisses on her lips, hearing his whispered voice in her ears—the birth of her new life! This was followed again by a period of agonizing dread—that he might even then be lying, ebbing his life away, in the woods, with her name on his lips, and she resting here inactive—until she half started from her bed to see to his succor. And this went on until a pale opal glow came into the sky, followed by a still paler pink on the summit of the white Sierras, when she rose and hurriedly began to dress. Still so sanguine was her hope of meeting him that she lingered yet a moment to select the brown holland skirt and yellow sash which she had worn when she first saw him. And she had only seen him twice! Only twice! It would be cruel, too cruel, not to see him again. She crept softly down the stairs, listening to the long drawn breathing of her

father in his bedroom, and then, by the light of a fluttering candle, scrawled a note to him, begging him not to trust himself out of the house until she returned from her search, and leaving the note open on the table, swiftly ran out into the growing day. Three hours afterward Mr. Madison Clay awoke to the sound of loud knocking. At first this forced itself upon his consciousness as his daughter's regular morning summons, and was responded to by a grunt of recognition and a nestling closer in the blankets. Then he awoke with a start and a muttered oath, remembering the events of last night, and his intention to get up early—and rolled out of bed. Becoming aware by this time that the knocking was at the outer door, and hearing the shout of a familiar voice, he hastily pulled on his boots, his jet trousers, and fastening a single suspender over his shoulder as he clattered down stairs, stood in the lower room. The door was open, and waiting upon the threshold was his kinsman—an old ally in many a blood feud—Breckenridge Clay! "You are a cool one, Mad," said the latter in half admiring indignation. "What's up?" said the bewildered Madison. "You ought to be and scootin' out o' this," said Breckenridge grimly. "It's all very well to 'know nothin', but here's Phil Larrabee's friends he's just picked him up, drilled through with slugs and dead as a nail, and now he's lettin' loose Larrabee's two half brothers on you. And you must go like a d—d fool and leave these yer things behind you in the bush," he went on querulously, lifting Madison Clay's dust coat, hat, and shot gun from his horse, which stood saddled at the door. "Lucky I jacked them up in the woods comin' here. Ye ain't got more than time to get over the state line and among your folks afore they'll be down on you. Hustle, old man? What are you gawkin' and stavin' at?" Madison Clay had stared amazed and bewildered—horror-stricken. The incidents of the last night for the first time flashed upon him clearly—hopelessly! The shot, his flight, Salomy Jane alone in the woods, her confusion and anxiety to rid herself of him, the disappearance of the shotgun, and now this new discovery of the taking of his hat and coat for a disguise! She had killed Paul Larrabee in that disguise, after provoking his first harmless shot! She, his own child, Salomy Jane, had disgraced herself by a man's crime—had disgraced him by usurping his right, and taking a mean advantage, by deceit, of a foe! "Gimme that gun," he said hoarsely. Breckenridge handed him the gun in wonder and slowly gathering suspicion. Madison examined nipple and muzzle; one barrel had been discharged; it was true. The gun dropped from his hand. "Look here, old man," said Breckenridge, with a darkening face; "there's bin no foul play here. That's bin no hirin' of men, no deputy to do this job. You did it fair and square—yourself." "Yes, by God!" burst out Madison Clay in a hoarse voice. "Who says I didn't?" "Reassured, yet believing that Madison Clay had served himself for the act by an overdraft of whisky, which had affected his memory, Breckenridge said curtly: "Then wake up and litte out, ef ye want me to stand by you." "Go to the corral and pick me out a horse," said Madison slowly; "yet not without a coat." "I've suthin' to say to Salomy Jane afore I go." He was holding her scribbled note, which he had just discovered, in his shaking hand. "Struck by his kinsman's manner, and knowing the dependant relations of father

and daughter, Breckenridge nodded and hurried away. Left to himself, Madison Clay ran his fingers through his hair and straightened out the paper on which Salomy Jane had scrawled her note, turned it over and wrote on the back: "You might have told me you did it and not leave your ole father to find it out how you disgraced yourself and him, too, by a low-down, underhanded, woman's trick! I've said I done it and took the blame myself and all the sneaking of it that folks suspect. If I get away alive—and I don't care which—you needn't foller. The house and stock are yours; but you ain't any longer the daughter of your disgraced father." MADISON CLAY. He had scarcely finished the note when, with a clatter of hoofs and a led horse, Breckenridge reappeared at the door elate and triumphant. "You're in nigger luck, Mad! That stolen horse of Judge Boompointer had got away and strayed among your stock in the corral. Take him and your" safe—he can't be outrun this side of the state line." "I ain't no hoss thief," said Madison grimly. "Nobody sees ye ar, but you'd be wuss—a fool—ef you didn't take him. I'm testin' that you found him among your hosses; I'll tell Judge Boompointer you've got him, and ye kin send him back when you're safe. The Judge will be mighty glad to get him back, and call it quits. So—ef you're wit to Salomy Jane—come." Madison Clay no longer hesitated. Salomy Jane might return at any moment—it would be part of her "fool womanishness"—and he was in no mood to see her before a third party. He laid the note on the table, gave a hurried glance around the house, which he grimly believed he was leaving forever, and, striding to the door, leaped on the stolen horse, and swept away with his kinsman. But that note lay for a week on the table undisturbed, in full view of the open door. The house was invaded by leaves, pine cones, birds and squirrels during the hot, silent, empty days, and at night by shy, stealthy creatures, but never again, day or night, by any of the Clay family. It was known in the district that Clay had flown across the state line, his daughter was believed to have joined him the next day, and the house was supposed to be locked up. It lay off the main road, and few passed that way. The starving cattle in the corral at last broke bounds and spread over the woods. And one night a stronger blast than usual swept through the house, carried the note from the table to the floor, where, whirled into a crack in the flooring, it slowly rottled.

But though the sting of her father's reproach was spared her, Salomy Jane had no need of the letter to know what had happened. For, as she entered the woods in the dim light of that morning, she saw the figure of Dart gliding from the shadow of a pine toward her. The unaffected cry of joy that rose from her lips died there as she caught sight of his face in the open light. "You are hurt," she said, clutching his arm passionately. "No," he said. "But I wouldn't mind that if—" "You're thinkin' I was afeared to come back last night, when I heard the shootin', but I did come," she went on, feverishly. "I ran back here when I heard the two shots, but you were gone. I went to the corral, but your horse wasn't there, and I thought you'd got away." "I did get away," said Dart, gloomily. "I killed the man, thinkin' he was huntin' me, and forgettin' I was disgraced. He thought I was your father."

The Last Day OF THE MEGEATH HISTORY CLUB. CLUB CLOSES TODAY.

First Come, First Served. Members will be served in order and we reserve the right to refund the fee on any membership that may have been taken after the roster is filled. We will retain the fee for ten days if so desired and serve them from any sets that may for any reason be returned under the 10 days' approval option. With this understanding we will accept applications all day Saturday and any received by mail the coming week, and will continue to allow 10 days' examination and return privilege within that time. No applications will be entertained after Saturday night, except as above stated—mail orders from our OUT-OF-TOWN FRIENDS. If you have a friend or neighbor who has Ridpath ask him whether you need it or not. If he has used it we know his verdict. Nearly 100,000 people have paid over \$4,000,000 for this work at double the price we secured for you through our Club. They are being sold today throughout the country by canvassers at double our price and millions of dollars will be hereafter paid for them at the higher price.

Eight Massive Volumes, 6,500 Pages, 4,000 Illustrations



MAIL THIS TODAY.

Megeath Stationery Co.,

Omaha.

Enclosed find \$1.00 for membership in the History Club. Send set to address below. I agree to pay balance in 15 monthly payments.

Name _____

Address _____

TODAY OR NEVER

FOLKS WHO WAIT WILL HAVE TO PAY TWICE THE CLUB PRICE.

RIDPATH'S HISTORY OF THE WORLD

Tells the story of men, their origin, development, customs and beliefs; what they have accomplished of good and evil; how by their genius they have built great nations; and how by their follies and vices they have ruined them.

From primeval man to your next door neighbor—from the founding of the first dynasty, 4200 B. C., to the passage of the Dingley tariff bill—the evolution of mankind and the nations is traced step by step, graphically, interestingly, with no important fact omitted, with no unnecessary crowding of unimportant details.

The style is flowing, the narrative as absorbing as a romance—in striking contrast to every other work that has attempted to deal with such a range of facts and figures.

The set of eight imperial octavo volumes contains over 4,000 illustrations, race charts, maps, genealogical and chronological charts, etc., and 6,500 pages (size 7 1/2 x 10 1/2), equal in matter to 65 books of ordinary size.

How to Join the Club.

Bring or send One Dollar—membership fee. The books (all of them) will be sent you at once. Keep them for 10 days, look them over, and if you care to return them your dollar will be refunded.

The purchase is completed by fifteen small monthly payments—\$2.00 per month for half Russia (by far the most sightly and serviceable), or \$2.50 for sumptuous full Morocco.

NO MORE CLOTH STYLE—SOLD OUT MONDAY.

MEGEATH STATIONERY CO., Omaha.

WHEN OTHERS FAIL CONSULT

DOCTORS Searles & Searles



SPECIALISTS

Guarantee to cure speedily and radically all NERVOUS, CHRONIC and PRIVATE diseases of Men and Women.

WEAK MEN SYPHILIS SEXUALLY cured for life. Night Emissions, Lost Manhood, Hypo, Gonorrhea, Venereal, Gleet, Syphilis, Stricture, Piles, Prostatitis and Rectal Ulcers, Diabetes, Bright's Disease cured.

Consultation Free. Cured at Home.

by new method without pain or cutting. Call on or address with stamp. Treatment by mail.

DRS. SEARLES & SEARLES. 1125, 14th St., OMAHA, NEB.

Two Weeks' Treatment FREE To All

THEY ARE OLD

SPECIALISTS

In the treatment of all Chronic, Nervous and Private Diseases, and all WEAKNESSES OF MEN and DISORDERS OF WOMEN.

Cataract, all Diseases of the Nose, Throat, Eye, Stomach, Liver, Blood, Skin and Kidney, Dropsy, Loss of Manhood, Hydrocele, Gonorrhea, Gonorrhoea, Gleet, Syphilis, Stricture, Piles, Prostatitis and Rectal Ulcers, Diabetes, Bright's Disease, etc.

Free Book and New Method. Treatise by Mail. Consultation Free. Omaha Medical and Surgical Institute.

Room 8, 127 1/2 North 16th St., Omaha, Neb.

STRICTURE CURED AT HOME.

When we say "cured," we mean no patching up, but a positive power to return cure. Our treatment is by a New Method, safe, positive, and requires NO SURGICAL OPERATION.

No loss of time, and is used secretly at home. We procure all forms of nervous diseases, chronic inflammation and swelling in the urine passages, prostatic enlargement and irritation, and all other troubles to the flow of urine requiring the use of the "Cure." We have been in business over 20 years, and are as sure to cure stricture, and prostatic disease as the sun in the sky. Free and sealed book from KEMFIRE MED. CO., 25 A Smith Bldg., Boston, Mass.

Relieves Kidney & Bladder troubles at once. Cures in 48 Hours all URINARY DISCHARGES.

Each Capsule bears the name "MIDY"

Be aware of useless counterfeits.

SANTAL CAPSULES MIDY

Prepared by Dr. J. C. Williams, Lowell, Mass.

Each Capsule bears the name "MIDY"

Be aware of useless counterfeits.

Prepared by Dr. J. C. Williams, Lowell, Mass.

Each Capsule bears the name "MIDY"

Be aware of useless counterfeits.

Prepared by Dr. J. C. Williams, Lowell, Mass.

Each Capsule bears the name "MIDY"

Be aware of useless counterfeits.

Prepared by Dr. J. C. Williams, Lowell, Mass.

Each Capsule bears the name "MIDY"

Be aware of useless counterfeits.