

THE WAR-TRAIL!

CHAPTER XXXVII.—CONTINUED.

What bold fellow had ventured this? and with what object? were the questions I naturally asked myself.

Vague recollections were stirring within me; presently they grew more distinct, and all at once I was able to answer both the interrogatories I had put. I knew the man who had climbed that cliff. I only wondered I had not thought of him before!

Among the many odd characters in the piebald band of which I had the honour to be chief, not the least odd was one who answered to the euphonious name of "Elijah Quackenboss." He was a mixture of Yankee and German, originating somewhere in the mountains of Pennsylvania. He had been a school-master among his native hills—had picked up some little book-learning; but what rendered him more interesting to me was the fact that he was a botanist. Not a very scientific one, it is true; but in whatever way obtained, he possessed a respectable knowledge of flora and sylvia, and evinced an appetite for the study not inferior to Linnaeus himself.

If his intellectual disposition was odd, not less so was his physical. His person was tall, crooked, and lanky; and none of those members that should have been counterparts of each other seemed exactly to match. His arms were odd ones—his limbs unlike; and all four looked as if they had met by accident, and could not agree upon anything; his eyes were no better mated, and never consented to look in the same direction; but with the right one, Elijah Quackenboss could "sight a rifle, and drive in a nail at a hundred yards' distance.

From his odd habits his companions—the rangers—regarded him as hardly "square;" but this idea was partially derived from seeing him engaged in his botanical researches—an occupation that to them appeared simply absurd. They knew, however, that "Dutch Liege"—such was his sobriquet—could shoot "plum censeur;" and notwithstanding his quiet demeanor, had proved himself "good stuff at the bottom;" and this shielded him from the ridicule he would otherwise have experienced at their hands.

Than Quackenboss, a more ardent student of botany I never saw. No labor retarded him in the pursuit. No matter how wearied with drill or other duties, the moment the hours became his own, he would be off in search of rare plants, wandering far from camp, and at times placing himself in situations of extreme danger. Since his arrival on Texan ground, he had devoted much attention to the study of the cactaceae, and now having reached Mexico the home of these singular endogens, he might be said to have gone cactus-mad. Every day his researches disclosed to him new forms of cactus or cereus, and it was in connection with one of these that he was now recalled to my memory. I remember his having told me—for a similarity of tastes frequently brought us into conversation—of his having discovered, but a few days before, a new and singular species of mammillaria. He had found it growing upon a prairie mound which he had climbed for the purpose of exploring its botany, adding at the same time that he had observed the species only upon the top of this mound, and nowhere else in the surrounding country.

This mound was my mesa. It had been climbed by Elijah Quackenboss!

If he, awkward animal that he was, had been able to scale the height, why could not we?

This was my reflection; and without stopping to consider what advantage we should derive from such a proceeding, I communicated the discovery to my companions.

Both appeared delighted, and after a short scrutiny, declared the path practicable. Garey believed he could easily go up; and Rube in his terse way said, that his "joints wa'n't so stiff yet;" only a mouth ago he had "clomb a wuss-looking bluff than it."

But now the reflection occurred, to what purpose should we make the ascent? We could not escape in that way. There was no chance of our being able to descend upon the other side, for there the cliff was impracticable. The behaviour of the guerrilleros had given proof of this. Some time before, Ijerra, with another, had gone to the rear of the mound, evidently to reconnoitre it, in hopes of being able to assail us from behind. But they had returned and their gestures betokened their disappointment.

Why, then, should we ascend, if we could not also descend on the opposite side? True, upon the summit we should be perfectly safe from an attack of the guerrilla, but not from thirst, and this was the enemy we now dreaded. Water would not be found on the top of the mesa. It could not better our situation to go there; on the contrary, we should be in a worse "fix" than ever. So said Garey. Where we were, we had our horses—a spare one to eat when that became necessary, and the others to aid in our attempt to escape. Should we climb the cliff, these must be left behind. From the top was less than fifty yards, and our rifles would still cover them from the clutch of our enemies, but to what advantage? Like ourselves,

they must in time fall before thirst and hunger.

The gleam of hope died within us, as suddenly as it had sprung up.

It could in nowise serve us to scale the cliff—we were better in our present position; we could hold that so long as thirst would allow us. We could not do more within the granite walls of an impenetrable fortress.

This was the conclusion at which Garey and I had simultaneously arrived.

Rube had not yet expressed himself. The old man was standing with both hands clutching his long rifle, the butt of which rested upon the ground. He held the piece near the muzzle, partially leaning upon it, while he appeared gazing intently into the barrel. This was one of his "ways" when endeavoring to unravel a knotty question; and Garey and I, knowing this peculiarity on the part of the old trapper, remained silent, leaving him to the free development of his "instincts."

TO BE CONTINUED.

The Little Shoes.

It is wonderful what trifling things produce an influence on the heart and mind. A seed borne on the wings of the wind, drops at last into suitable soil, and by and by grows up into a stately tree. A little spring leaps out of the side of a hill, and the child who stoops to drink of it can spout its breadth; but it flows on down to the valley, and winds along the plain and gathers strength and volume in its course until it rolls a stately river, bearing the commerce of cities in the ships that navigate its waters. And so it is with human life. A look, a word, has changed the whole career of many immortal beings. The writer once lived opposite a beer-shop called "The Fox and Geese," and with pained attention often watched the doings, and alas! heard the sayings of the customers. One winter evening, a shoemaker's boy came with an assortment of children's shoes and the landlady of "The Fox and Geese," who had a most marvellous shrill voice, began by calling to a dirty little slave of a nurse-girl to bring "Aldlehead" (as she pronounced Adelaide), to have her new shoes tried on. I could see the little creature, who was at once fine and filthy, sitting under the gaslight in the bar, and kicking and screaming as the shoes were coaxed on her feet. At last a pair fitted and the spoilt pet was lifted up triumphantly in her mother's arms. "Here, do look at her—the darling has let me get a pair of the very best ones on—lock, dad, do!" said the mother calling to her husband. Just then a tall man, very thinly clad, came out of the tap-room, passed the bar, and saw the child stretching out her feet for her father to see. Now there was a poor woman who had been hovering about at the corner, peeping now and then timidly into the bar window, and then creeping to the door; she had a child in her arms, and looked ready to drop with cold and weariness. I had seen that woman on many a Saturday night, waiting and watching thus for her husband to come out. Ah! there he is riveted for a moment, looking at the child showing her low shoes; with a start he rouses himself and rushes out.

"What Bill, going so soon?" bawls the landlady. Bill pulls his hat down over his eyes with one hand, clutches his old jacket tight over her chest, and answers the words with a sort of a grunt. He is outside; there's his wife and little one. For a moment the woman looks at him timorously, and half swerves aside, as if she feared—what, I will not write, least the manhood of my readers should be wounded. Something in Bill's look reassures her, and she goes up closely to him, feebly but yet coaxingly. He took the child from her tired arms—the little creature gave a short, quick cry of fright—and as he lifted it I saw that its little feet were bare; it drew them swiftly up under its poor frock, but not before the father saw them. I wish his wife might have seen his face as those two little blue chilled feet met his eyes. I noticed that he put them in his bosom, and buttoned his jacket over them, and held the child close, on his way with a heavy stamp, as if he had beat his feet on the ground. His wife, slumped and tottering, had hard work to keep up with him.

I had a faint suspicion of what was passing in the man's mind. From that night I was glad that I saw him no more among the frequenters of "The Fox and Geese." He, and his wife and child, for weal or woe, had dropped out of my ken, and almost out of my mind.

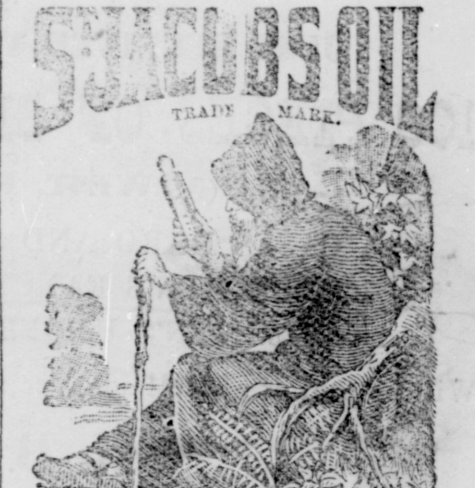
Some months after there was a meeting at the Temperance Hall of the district, and many working men were present, and gave their testimony to the good effects of perfect sobriety: now and then they told little bits of their history about the reasons that led them to give up the public-house. One tall, well-dressed, respectable looking man, listened earnestly until one who sat near him called out, "Say a word William Turner; you have known as much about the mischief as any one here or anywhere; can't you tell us, for I never heard how it was that you changed right about face from the path of destruction to the field of hope; come, man, out with it, it'll, maybe, do good."

The man, thus urged, quietly rose at

the first word, and looked for a moment very confused;—

"The little shoes, they did it."

With a thick voice, as if his heart was in his throat, he kept repeating this. There was a stare of perplexity on every face, and at length some thoughtless young people began to titter. The man, in all his embarrassment, heard this sound, and rallied at once. The light came into his eyes with a flush; he drew himself up and looked at the audience; the choking went from his throat. "Yes, friends!" he said, in a voice that cut its way clear as a deep-toned bell, "whatever you may think of it, I have told you the truth, the little shoes did it. I was a brute, and a fool. Strong drink had made me both, and starved and stripped me into the bargain. I suffered, I deserved to suffer, but I didn't suffer alone; no man does who has a wife and child, for the woman gets the worst. But I'm no speaker to enlarge on that; I'll stick to the shoes. I saw one night when I was all but done for, the publisher's child holding out her feet for her father to see her fine new shoes; it was a simple thing, but, friends, no fist ever struck me such a blow as those little shoes. They kicked reason into me. 'What business have I to clothe others and let my own go bare?' said I, and there outside was my wife and child, in a bitter night. I took hold of my little one with a grip, and I saw her chilled feet. Men! fathers! if the shoes smote me, what did the feet do? I put them, cold as ice, to my breast; they pierced me through and through. Yes! the little feet walked right into my heart, and, by God's mercy, mastered my selfishness. I had a trifle of money left, I bought a loaf, and a pair of little shoes. I never tasted anything but a bit of that bread all the Sabbath-day, and I went to work like mad on Monday. From that day to this I have spent no more money at the public-house; and, thank God, I have, through faith in the merits of my crucified Saviour, been led to greater blessings than those of temperance. This is all I've got to say: it was the little shoes did it!"—Clara Lucas Balfour.



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TO be sold by Public Auction, at the Court House in Georgetown, in King's County, on TUESDAY, the twenty-eighth day of February next, A. D. 1882, at the hour of Twelve o'clock, noon,—

ALL that tract, piece or parcel of Land, situate, lying and being on Lot or Township Number Sixty-Three, in King's County, Prince Edward Island, formerly known as Fairchild's Point, and bounded and described as follows, that is to say—Commencing on the north shore of Murray River, at a stone placed on the Bank Head, and running thence north four degrees and thirty minutes west, for the distance of seventy-seven chains, to the shore of Greek River; thence along said shore eastwardly and southwardly to the shore of Miak River Bay; thence following the various courses of said shore southwardly, crossing a sand point to Murray River shore to the stone or place of commencement, containing one hundred and ninety-six acres of land, a little more or less, together with all rights, members and appurtenances thereto belonging or in anywise appertaining.

The above sale is made pursuant to the power of sale contained in an Indenture of Mortgage, dated the first day of March, A. D. 1880, and made between James Munu and William McKenzie, the younger, of the one part, and Jane Bell of the other part.

For further particulars apply at the office of Messrs. Hodgson & McLeod, Solicitors, Charlottetown. Dated this 7th day of January, A. D. 1882. JANE BELL. Jan. 7—2iew tle k ea

Prince Edward Island RAILWAY.

TIME TABLE NO. 17.

WINTER ARRANGEMENT.

To take effect on the 1st Dec., 1881.

TRAINS OUTWARD.

Table with columns: STATIONS, MIXED, MIXED, MIXED. Rows include Ch'town, Royalty Jc, N Wilt's, Hunter R'r, Bradalbe's, Co'ty Line, Freetown, Kensington, Summ'side, Wellington, Port Hill, O'Leary, Bloomfield, Alberton, Tignish, Royalty Jc, York, Bedford, Mt. Stew't, Cardigan, George'n, Mt. Stew't, Morell, St. Peter's, Bear River, Scouris.

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L. B. ARCHIBALD, Superintendent, Railway Office, Charlottetown, Nov. 29, 1881 [67, wky]

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