WHEN POVERTY KNOCKED.

BY JULIET WILBOR TOMPKINS.

Poverty knocked at the door,
Cold, hard knuckles a rapping,
Love at the window saw him stand,
Knew the weight of his grim demand—
Drew the latch with a fearless hand,
Answering thus the tapping:

"Enter ye in, Sir Poverty,
Sith ye must come compelling!
Sit if ye will at our simple board,
Take if ye must from our scanty hoard;
Ye will learn full early that I am lord,
Lord of this sunlit dwelling!

"Grim ye may be, Sir Poverty—
We harbor ye not with chiding.
Never ye'll darken our daily cheer,
Though your face be stern and your ways be drear;
For know, Sir Poverty, I am here,
I who am Love Abiding!"

Poverty knocked at the door,
Love, at the signal starting,
Lifted the latch at his stern behest,
Softened his rigor with song and jest:
"'Twas no such terrible, fearsome guest!"
Said brave little Love at parting.

—New York News.

THE SPADE AND THE SHOT GUN

WHEN the Territory of Oklahoma was opened to settlement in April, 1889, Henry McNeill, of Kansas, was one of the thousands who joined in the race for a claim. More fortunate than some, he secured a choice bit of land, and joyfully set to work to build his dugout.

That necessary labor done, the question arose where he should conceal his provisions and other belongings while he took the unavoidable trip to the land office to get his "papers."

Neighbors, in the usual sense, he had none, the nearest settler being almost a mile away. The region was infested with straggling desperadoes—claim-jumpers, gamblers and horse thieves—and to leave his property exposed would be to invite any rascal to take it.

McNeill dug a sort of cave behind his sod house, making the pit deep enough so that some time in the future he could connect it with his cellar. In this hole he placed his few household goods. Then he boarded over the top, covered the board with sod and brush, and started away feeling sure that all would be safe.

McNeill was but one of many settlers with claims to file, and it was three days before he received his papers. Then, happy in their possession, he hurried back to his new house—only to find that it was occupied by two rough looking men who eyed him in a way that promised anything but a friendly reception.

Now McNeill was a Scotchman, and cautious, and he began by asking mildly if they knew of any vacant land in the neighborhood. They did not, but they volunteered the information that, finding this place deserted and being told that the man who had made the improvements had got discouraged and abandoned the claim, they had taken it up.

Were they claim-jumpers, or honest men who had been misled? McNeill resolved to give them the benefit of the doubt.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I built this house and made these improvements. This is my claim. I have not abandoned it and never thought of doing so."

The two men stared at him for a moment in silence. Then one of them laughed contemptuously.

"That won't go down, young feller!" he cried. "I don't believe you ever saw this claim 'fore to-day. And if you did, 'twas 'bandoned clear enough—no grub or tools in sight, to show that whoever'd been here meant ever to come back. Anyway, folks round about tell me the feller that was here was a 'sooner,' come into the country before the Gov'ment give the word, and if he hadn't got out the military would 'a' run him out."

"But," McNeill protested, "I can prove that I am the rightful owner. See, here is my receipt from the land office, and it describes this claim: 'The S. W. ¼ Sec. 17' "——

Here one of the intruders reached for the paper in McNeill's hand, as if to examine it; but no sooner had he secured possession than he threw it toward the other end of the room. In the next instant he leveled a revolver at the young man's head.

"Now you travel, sonny," the rascal roared, "and don't you ever set foot on this claim again, unless you want the sun to shine clean through ye!"

McNeill traveled; there was nothing else for him to do. But there was a gleam in his eyes which suggested that the matter would not rest there.

Naturally he went for help first to the men who had taken up adjoining claims. They sympathized with him, yet they would not interfere. Their advice was that McNeill should begin legal proceedings to expel the intruders. But the young man objected that that would take time, and he wanted to be at work on his claim, since the season for planting would soon be past.

Finally, ending the wearisome and fruitless argument, McNeill resolved to try to regain possession single-handed.

He borrowed a spade and a shotgun from the nearest neighbor, and after darkness had fallen crept cautiously up the "draw" or ravine that crossed his claim. Undetected, he made his way to the pile of brush that marked the entrance to his underground storeroom, and cautiously removing some of the sods and boards, dropped down into the hole.

But he did not dare to begin at once to dig. Not until he thought the rascals must be asleep did he start to burrow through the three or four feet of earth between his hiding place and the room beyond.

Very slowly he worked, feeling with his hands for any stone that might fall and betray him, and laying each carefully down. Hours he toiled, it seemed, much cramped for space and sometimes straitened for breath, before he felt sure he was almost through the wall.

The he took out his knife. Piece by piece, bit by bit, he shaved away the earth. Suddenly his blade penetrated the thin partition. He had come out as he had planned, directly under the bed. He could hear the deep breathing of the enemies as they slept.

It was no part of McNeill's design to assault the "jumpers," although he believed they would not hesitate to kill him. He hoped to dispossess them by strategy. He must wait patiently for an opening.

Hardly daring to stretch a muscle now that he was so near, afraid to doze, lest he might dream and cry out, McNeill placed himself as restfully as he could, and prayed for the long night to wear away.

At last he heard sounds that told him the claim-jumpers were astir. One prepared breakfast, the other guarded the door. McNeill in his hiding place listened intently.

"Wonder if we're goin' to be bothered with the youngster as claimed this yer place?" one of them growled. "We'd ought to be a-movin' that ar team we picked up as soon's we can. If the feller that used to own it should come along jest now, lookin' for his hosses, he'd be mighty apt to find 'em."

"That's so," responded the other. "Guess you'd better take the hosses and slope for the Panhandle to-day, hadn't ye? If the little tenderfoot does come back I can manage him. Sorry I didn't fix him yesterday when I had the chance."

Well, McNeill reflected, if it must be "kill or be killed," he knew which would suit him the better.

"Hadn't we ought to be goin' up the draw to water them ar hosses before anybody does get around?" one of the ruffians said presently.

"Reckon we had. I'm ready."

"Better take the Winchester?"

"Oh, I guess not. It's kind of onhandy, and we ain't likely to be bothered by anybody so early in the mornin'. Buckle on your six-shooter; that'll be enough."

As the sound of their footsteps died away, McNeill jumped for his spade. With the desperate energy of an honest man who fights for his own, he drove at the thin crust overhead. Down it fell; up he clambered into the dugout.

He ran for the Winchester. Then on second thought he laid it aside and took up his shotgun, the surer weapon at close range. Swinging the door almost shut, but leaving a crack through which to watch the approach, he waited patiently.

Twenty minutes later the claim-jumpers came back. They had started an argument while they had been gone. That was the only thing in their minds. Wrangling about the price they should ask for the stolen horses, they approached the dugout.

Then suddenly, in their very faces, the door flew open, they looked down the barrels of a shotgun and heard a stern voice say:

"Throw up your hands—quick!"

Only an instant of hesitation—a glance at the face of the speaker—and four brown hands went high in the air.

"Now, about face! March! Side by side—six feet apart, there! Gang as I tell ye, an' dinna stop nor look back, gin ye wad keep whole heids.!"

Thus commanded McNeill, in his excitement dropping into the speech most familiar to his boyhood. And it was in the same tongue that the young man responded when, after they had covered half a mile, the rascals complained of the fatigue of holding up their hands so long, and begged most piteously to be allowed to let them down to rest.

"Ye can clasp them atop your heids an' ye'll do weel enouch," McNeill said, grimly. "Long will they rest, I'm thinkin', or e'er again ye lay them on anither mon's gear!"

The young man was a true prophet. When he and his next neighbor had disarmed and tied the desperadoes and taken them to Guthrie, it proved that they were "wanted" not only for the theft of the horses they had hidden in the ravine, but for various crimes committed in Kansas. In the Kansas penitentiary they remain to this day.

Thus well rid of the claim-jumpers, McNeill took part of the reward the State of Kansas paid for their capture, and—bought the spade and the shotgun. The rich farmer would be deeply offended if any one should call him a sentimental man; but he never allows the tool and the weapon to be mishandled, and I have a notion that if his handsome house caught fire he would save the spade and the shotgun first.—Youth's Companion.

Was Weak in Mathematics.

The Atlanta Constitution the other day received the following letter: "Sur an Frend—Do the Carnage liberrary lend Books techin Matthewmattics to Outside your citie? I want Onlie Books on Matthewmattics, as I am all right on spellin an am a purty good Grammatician, if I do say it Miself. I kin Spel an Grammarize, but Matthewmattics is one too Much for Me."

A Large Family.

It is announced from Barringen, in Bohemia, that Herr Story, a wealthy citizen, has just had his thirty-seventh child baptized.

Finding What You Seek

Minister Tells of Cases of an Optimist and a Pessimist Who Illustrated an Old Truth.

"I used to know a man who had a habit of carrying odd stones in his pockets," said a minister. "He was a busy man, but in his moments of leisure he studied mineralogy and became a connoisseur on the subject.

"He classified his own collection and after some years it was examined by an expert and appraised at a value of $17,500. He confessed that he had picked up most of his treasures in streets and besides paths where others saw only worthless things.

"Recently I traveled abroad with a young man recently graduated from a famous university. He expressed the belief that this country is in the hands of unscrupulous politicians, that the government aims to rob its new possessions, that the churchgoers are generally hypocrites and that the capitalist class to which he belongs by inheritance is deliberately impoverishing the masses. His allusions to his own experiences showed that he was finding what he expected to find.

"In the same traveling party was a man well past 70. He was full of hope for the future of his country; he had good stories to tell of comradeship with men dead and living.

"He smiled to every child he met and had a kind word for every person he met. Everywhere men, women and children were eager to talk with him and to do him service. When he reached home he probably said that he had never met so many agreeable people nor had so enjoyable a trip.

"Seems to me that each of these two men found just what he looked for and that most other folks will have the same experience. Those who look for selfish motives and evil purposes live in a world where they see evidnces of corruption everywhere. Those who expect the best from their fellow men are always making discoveries which delight them.

"It is simply the difference between the mineralogist and his neighbors. He found something valuable and they found nothing, because they were not looking for anything of value and he was."—New York Sun.

Every failure teaches a man something, if he will learn.—Little Dorrit.

WHIPPED WRONG MAN AT THE KEY.

Question Is, Did He Come Back to Get the Right One.

"Fighting" over a telegraph wire with a man several hundred miles away is not an unusual occurrence among telegraph operators. W. H. Le Hew, a Seaboard Air Line train dispatcher, tells of a fight he once had over the wire, with an odd sequel. He was quarreling with an operator, J. H. Chapman, many miles out on the road, and the quarrel waxed warm. Le Hew declared he would go down the next day and personally whip his antagonist. Chapman thought it would result as most "wire scraps" do—in nothing—and did not worry any more about it, believing he and Le Hew would be as good friends as ever the next time they worked together over a wire. The next day, however, Le Hew boarded a local freight train, and, according to promise, got off at a distant station to whip Chapman. He walked into the telegraph office and demanded.

"Are you the operator here?"

"Yes, sir," replied the man at the instrument.

Without further ado Le Hew sailed in and whipped him.

That night Chapman called up Le Hew, saying he was surprised that Le Hew had come there while he was away at dinner and had whipped his substitute.

Astounding Speed of Birds.

Five hundred and forty miles an hour is beyond the wildest dreams of Mr. Behr, the mono-railist, but the Rev. E. T. Daubeny of Market Weston, London, England, states that that is the speed at which the northern blue-throat (declared to have "only moderate powers of flight") migrates. It gets, he says in Nature Notes, from Egypt to Heligoland in a spring night of barely nine hours. The Virginian plover makes 636 miles an hour in its journey from Labrador to North Brazil. The bird that travels at this unimaginable speed soars so high that the resistance of the air is reduced to a minimum.

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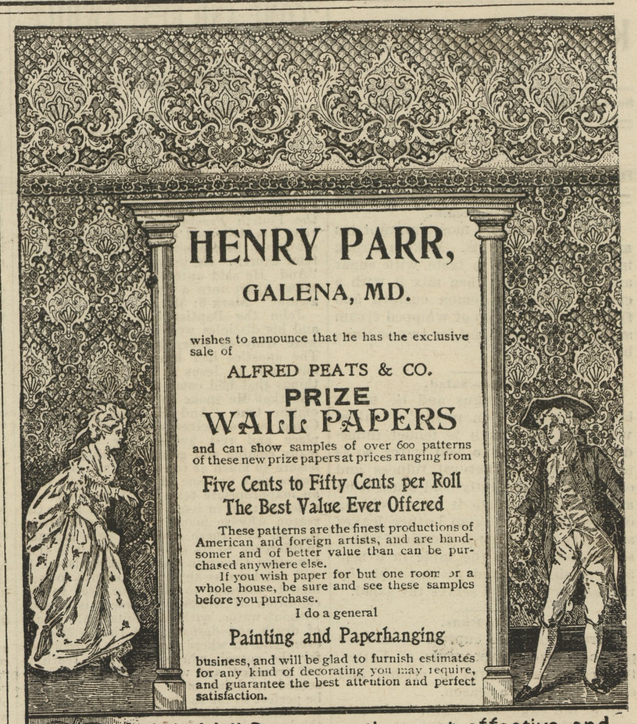
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