

ENCOUNTER WITH A BEAR.

By courtesy of Brother George C. Naegle, of Colonia Paribeco, Mexico, we are enabled to publish the following correspondence, written by him to his brother and sister, descriptive of a terrible and tragical event:

My dear brother and sister, Joseph and Frances, Toquerville, Wash. Co., U. T.:

This letter will surely be a shock and surprise to you and the members of our family in Utah and Arizona, and the pen will but feebly convey to you the sad intelligence of the fate of our dear brother Hyrum, who, from the horrible wounds inflicted by an enraged bear, died last night at 10 o'clock. This news will cause you to feel with us the bitter pangs of grief at his untimely death. I now send you the whole circumstances: Nearly all winter some of us boys have gone to the valley about fifteen miles from here, west, over the mountain on the Sonora side of the Sierra Madre, to the ranch. There we would stay the week and return home on Saturday night. On account of being so busy, and as father and some of the boys were over at the new purchase in Sonora, we were usually there only one at a time to look out for the stock, and especially to save the calves and colts from the bears, mountain lions and big grey wolves, which have been very destructive this spring. Already over three hundred dollars' worth have been lost. Brother Hyrum came home on Saturday night and said he had encountered a bear but did not get him. He also reported tracks quite thick; so we both went over last Monday; on Tuesday we hunted in different directions, and found several of our best calves gone. Then we decided to go together next day down the river Gabalan, back up North Creek, and gather up all the cows and calves. I believe that was the first day any of us had ridden together, the day through, during nearly the entire spring, and even when two were there we would ride in different directions, so as to get around among the stock and over more country. As we came up North Creek driving a little bunch of cattle, on turning a curve in the canyon and emerging from the point of a hill, Hyrum exclaimed, "There's a bear!" It was a monster, too. Instantly we jerked our guns and leaped to the ground. Hyrum had a 44-winchester and I a 45 70 marlin. We ran a few paces to a clearing where we had a full view and a fair chance at him. As Bruin was going along the bottom of the canyon Hyrum put in the first shot, and I the next, both hitting him. In rapid succession we fired several shots and I think most of them struck the brute. As he climbed the hill on the opposite side, my third shot brought him rolling and bawling down the hill.

Hyrum said, "that's cooked him," but he only lay a second and gathering himself up he scrambled to the top of the hill for about twenty or thirty yards and fell under an oak. Hyrum suggested, "Let's take it afoot," and started after him, but having only three cartridges in my magazine, in the haste and excitement of trying to put in more, unfortunately, the first one caught fast, and I could

neither force it in nor out until I got my pocket knife. By that time Hyrum was across the creek and climbing the hill, following the bear. I looked up and shouted to him not to follow directly after the brute, but to come in below him, take straight up the hill and come out above or on a level with him. He did so, and as soon as he reached the top he fired three shots bang! bang! bang! as quickly as he could. I think the bear must have been on the run while he was shooting, and with the third shot got out of sight over a little raise. In the hurry to adjust my gun and go there I did not look up again till I got the discharged cartridge out and others in. Both Hyrum and the monster being then out of sight, I jumped on my mule—a fleet little animal—and with gun in hand dashed across the canyon. Fortunately I did, for had I taken the journey afoot I should have reached there too late, for when I arrived on the top of the hill I could not see nor hear anything of them. I called "Hyrum, Hyrum, where are you?" but received no answer, and sped on the course I thought they had gone but a few rods over a little raise, when I saw the bear above and a little along the hill side, but I could see no Hyrum. Rushing toward the bear, I could see that he had some thing bloody in his mouth, munching and growling. Not seeing Hyrum anywhere I feared he had him down, and my horror no human tongue can tell when I first saw his blue overall under the bears body. He was gnawing Hyrum's hand. I shrieked: "My Lord! My Lord! has he got Brother Hyrum." The spurring up of my mule caused the brute to drop the hand and pick up his head. For fear of making an accidental shot and hitting Hyrum, or perchance the shot might not prove fatal to the bear, I jumped off to make sure aim. Being then quite close, my jump to the ground frightened him, or at least instead of touching Hyrum again or making for me before I could level down to shoot, he started off. Hyrum rolled over on his face, and rose on his knees and elbows. Then I could see my brother was not dead, but oh! such a bloody sight I am unable to describe. The bear was then about thirty yards from him. I fired and brought the brute to the ground, but he got up and started again. A second shot, however, brought him tumbling again, this time to get up a turn on me; but as he turned he fell, and grabbed in his mouth a dry pine limb about the size of my arm. That he crunched as though it were a cornstalk, and with it in his mouth he started off again. A third shot brought him writhing to the earth, and as my last cartridge was in the barrel I proceeded within six feet of his head and sent it through the brain of this huge brown bear. I then rushed back to Hyrum. All this was done in half the time it takes to relate.

Now came the trying ordeal for myself. There alone, with Hyrum's mangled body, fifteen miles away from home and help, how I cried and prayed. The poor boy was still resting on his knees on elbows, with the blood entirely covering his head, face and shoulders and still streaming to the ground. The first thing I did was to support his head and administer to

him, after which he cried "Water." I galloped to the creek and brought my hat full of water, and washed his head and face the best I could. Such a mangled head and face you never saw. The skull was laid bare from the top of the forehead about four inches back, and there was one wound on the left side, three-cornered, about two inches each way, and one other wound that we did not discover until just before his death, when some portions of his brain oozed out, two teeth having penetrated the brain. On the back and other side of his head, and just at the corner of his right eye, were seven or eight terribly ugly gashes, laying bare the skull. There was a long gash down the right cheek and two under the jaw, which was washed; his upper lip was half torn off. In all, there were twenty wounds on his head, face, and the right hand was chewed through and through; his left was bitten through in several places; there was one fearful bite on the left leg, just above the knee, and one heavy imprint of the bear's paw and claws, though not deep, on the right breast. Of course these wounds on his body were not observable at first, but I could see his critical state, and knowing that God alone could help us in our lonely and helpless condition, I told Hyrum to exercise all the faith he had strength to do and I would again administer to him. After this he spoke, and I asked him why he went so near the monster. He said the bear got over a little raise out of sight and was lying down, and he did not see him until within two rods, when the bear sprang up and after him. His gun would not go off, though he kept it leveled on the brute, thinking every second it would act. When the beast was nearly upon him he started backwards, still trying to pull the trigger, but it failed. The bear struck him with his left paw, the right one being disabled, breaking his jaw and knocking him down. The bear then jumped on him, grabbed him by the head with his mouth; and to protect his head and face he put up his hands.

About eight feet from where my brother lay I found his hat and gun. The latter was cocked and contained three cartridges. I think, in the excitement, he failed to press the lever, and that that accounted for its not going off.

After tying up his broken jaw and getting him on his horse (which I led), to my astonishment he rode a mile and a half to camp, where I laid him upon the bed and washed and dressed his wounds, bandaged them in salt water cloths and gave him a little milk and cold water to revive him, as he had swooned a couple of times from loss of blood. He rallied and I asked him what I should do—go for help or try and get him home. He replied "don't leave me here alone," and the thought to myself of leaving him while I rode fifteen miles over a very rough trail and returned with help could not be entertained. Again, such a thing as Hyrum riding so far in such a condition, could not be hoped for nor expected. But to my astonishment he had, by the help of God, ridden one and a half miles, and I told him that same God, and He only, could give him support and strength to reach