

"Now," said Jack, in the peculiar tone which admitted no doubt as to its earnestness, "my time has come. You or I die here to-night, or you and this woman get up and go with me. Mister, you ought to know me. If you want to shoot, you kin hev a chance, but I'm apt to hit, and I'll try, so help me Christ."

This fearful adjuration was uttered, not as the common profanity of an angry man, but in a tone and manner that gave it a fearful meaning. "Get up!" said he, as the gambler, with paling cheeks, seemed about to say something conciliatory. He arose instantly. "Now"—for the first time addressing the woman—"get your traps together. Quick! she thundered at the gambler, "you shall have your lover's company from this night to all eternity." Though a scene in which the comic was not altogether wanting, there was still something terrible in it. The woman, her cheeks blanched with vague terror, moved nervously about, gathering her apparel into a bundle. The gambler glanced furtively at his own revolver which lay on the table, and toward the door. But Jack's eye was upon him, and the implacable weapon was in his hand. Finally he placed his hand in his bosom, and drew forth a phetor, which he held up, and poured some of the shining places in his hand. Frightened as she was, the old glitter came into the woman's eyes as she saw it. There was no situation in life in which the client of the doublebarrel would be more to her. But Jack's face only changed to a look of intense contempt, as his enemy pitifully offered him first the handful, and then the belt. He was again mistaken in his mark.

When the woman stood with her bundle in her hand, Jack pointed to the open door, and bade her and her paramour move on together. He caused the woman to mount the dismounting donkey, and the gambler walked behind. Straight up toward the mountain they started, the implacable husband taking the gambler's weapon from the table as he left the room. Away in the gloom the strange procession passed, and as the donkey picked his careful way among the stones, plodding and patiently after the manner of his kind, the last sounds the bystanders heard were the wailing and sobbing of the woman, the stumbling footsteps of the gambler, and behind all, Jack's long and steady stride. And these died away in the silence and in the silent gloom of the night the witnesses to the strange scene stood at the door of the deserted cabin, and looked in each other's faces, silent, and wondering.

After four days Jack returned empty-handed. He was questioned now, for human curiosity cannot be restrained forever. A grim humor was in his face, as he said, "I've been waiting for ten. They've met enough for three weeks." Adding, "Any of you as was fond of Nimble-fingers, air informed that he was well when I kin away, only with one eye. But you won't see him again soon. He ain't mountain man enough to find his way back here, and I reckon he'll live to fight now."

Jack thereupon placed his pistols, got together such things as hunters carry, stated he was going "to California," and at sunrise started out toward the Northwest on a journey which, to this strange man, was only a question of time and life; and he has not been heard of to this day.

Months afterward, the Mexican guide of a scouting-party led the men, hungry, bewildered, and nearly with their hands, to where he said there was, ten years before, a spring among the rocks. They found it, and near it a deserted "dug-out." From this to the spring was a well-worn path. When he saw it, the eyes of the professional "traveller" opened wide, but as he approached the hut, he threw up his hand, exclaiming, "Madre de Dios,—it was a woman!"

Upon the floor still lay the sudden fragment of a Spanish woman's robe, and not far away the coyote-gnawed remains of a man's boot. What had become of the late residents, none could tell. But here at last was Jack's mystery; the house that he built, and in which Dolores and her last lover had met a fate which will never be known. There have been men very like Othello, outside of Shakespeare. But Dolores was not Desdemona.

DEANE MONAHAN.

Crime and its Punishment.

Crime is everywhere on the increase. It is characterized by system, cunning and boldness. It is not confined to dark lanes and deep cellars; it dwells in the best mansions, on the most prominent streets—rides in coaches, sits in opera boxes, may be seen at fashionable churches, often holds office, and controls public money. This state of affairs grows heavily on the lower order of criminals. These are special objects upon whom society, with its indignation and hatred of vice and crime, glides withering rays of scorn and blame, and demands that private interests shall be protected from the petty assaults of sneak-thieves, shop-lifters, and pickpockets. It will never do, say they, to allow such a run, uncontrolled, at large, and escape punishment—not only as a just reward to vice, but also as a terror to warn, frighten and restrain others from criminal practices. If, given, regarded as a threat, it is constantly working members of the law, because of the ability of the rich and powerful to employ talent to discover them, of course the small ones must be seized and held with a stronger grasp. Because nineteen hundred and ninety-six murders out of two thousand, in this city, during the past twenty-two years, have escaped justice, it became very important that a new method of punishment be devised. A couple of hundred dollars, got off unconvicted, unpunished and free, that is just the very reason why every petty thief, who, fatherless, motherless, penniless and friendless, steals a jack-knife or silver-plated spoon, a sack of potatoes or bag of meal, should be smothered up and summarily dealt with to the extreme limit of the law.—S. R. Pioneer.

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