

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

The Tragedy at Granite Bridge.

by W.W. Buchanan.

It was on a beautiful autumn day, about three years ago, when I was most thoroughly enjoying “*La dolce far niente*,” that the even I am now about to narrate happened at Terrana, a beautifully situated but decayed gold field near California. Terrana had once been a great and productive “rush,” but at the time of which I speak had settled down into one of those still-to-be-met-with townships, that, scattered over a vast space, represent, to a small extent, both the commercial and mining interests. Long streets of calico tenements had given way to a floating population, but the business of the store-keeper depended principally upon the surrounding country, and among the deep shafts of the miner had grown up a wealth of green underwood, that made lovely the old hills of “stuff” they interspersed.

The police camp was situated in one of the now deserted gullies. The population had edged away from it, and “circumlocution” had not ordered its removal to a more convenient situation. So we had the comfort of living among greenness and pretty scenery, with only here and there a residence of wood or iron, to do away with utter loneliness.

Yes, it was only a “*far niente*” business of mine that day, and I do believe a “dolce” one, also; for I was perfectly idle, and quite capable of enjoying the rugged and beautiful view that spread before the window above the iron bedstead on which I reclined. The bedding was folded up, regulation fashion, to serve as a pillow, and a policeman’s ribs ought not to be particular; so mine did not feel any inconvenience from the contact with the bottom bars of my stretcher.

Directly opposite, and at the distance of about a quarter of a mile, rose up from the valley in which we were encamped, a green ridge studded with huge moss-o’er-grown granite boulders. Gray and water-worn they were, tossed here and there among the soft foliage of the wattles, and amid them stood sentry many a crooked and yet graceful box and peppermint, that, as they crept higher and higher up the ridge, at last stood out in bold relief against the clear sky beyond, where the ridge at length fell sharply into a rocky gully, where a wild creek rolled, in the flooded seasons. Upon this pretty spot my eyes were dreamily fixed, and I was wondering if anything more beautiful could be imagined, than that bold granite ridge of an American scene.

Suddenly a something caught my eyes, which had nothing in common with the green beauty of the grass or foliage; it seemed to me like the wave of a woman’s dress, but the distance was too great to permit of my forming a decided opinion.

Fortunately, the means of satisfying my curiosity were at hand, as a good telescope hung against the wall close by me, and in a few moments it was adjusted and at my dexter eye.

By its assistance, I soon perceived the animate object which had attracted my observation. It was a woman, certainly; but as she wore a hat, I could not distinguish her features perfectly. She was advancing, stealthily, as it seemed to me, through the rocky bushes. Her face was now turned in one direction, and again in another, so that her restless movements prevented my taking a good look at her face.

The evident anxiety to avoid observation, denoted by her movements, attracted me so entirely that I arose from my lounge, and devoted myself seriously to watch her. I thought it most likely to be but a meeting of lovers I was about to witness, but I had too often dropped upon strange discoveries not to be eagerly interested in the event. It was a slender and genteel-looking figure that stealthily moved around one of the boulders, as I once more got my glass to bear upon it, and as she stood for a moment in the shade of the rock, looking all around, to be secure from interruption, I had leisure to observe her more closely.

She wore a skirt of a peculiar pattern, which I carefully noted, a loose jacket of black cloth, and a black straw hat; but one thing more than another drew all my attention, and that was her hair. I never saw such a wealth of that natural ornament upon any woman's head.

At the moment when she had so riveted my gaze and after a quick glance all around her, she stooped over a fallen log, as if in the act of depositing something beneath it. As she did so, her hair became unfastened behind, and fell in bright coils over her arms, and down to the very log over which she bent. It was of a bright golden hue, and shone in the sun, with a beautiful brilliancy that hair alone can reflect.

Having completed her mysterious task, the female hastily gathered up her hair, and soon disappeared among the bushes and rocks, in the direction of the township.

Being now about equally puzzled and interested, I lowered the glass. Twenty different thoughts and suggestions entered my brain in connection with the strange object, and were it not that I feared intercepting some innocent love affair, I should have followed my first impulse, which was to go straight to that identical log, and see what she had there hidden.

After a momentary indulgence of these thoughts, I lifted the glass once more, to see if the woman's figure had altogether disappeared. No, it had not. I still saw occasional gleamings of her dress among the trees; but, sweeping the telescope back towards the log, which had now so great an interest for me, I saw something else, so unexpected that my suspicions were at once aroused.

One might have supposed that what I saw was but a natural sequence to what had preceded it, for it was simply the face of a man; but there was an expression upon that face, which convinced me that some other feeling than love was at work in the bosom of him who owned it. The face peeped out from behind the same rock where the woman had paused ere she hid whatever it was that she did hide, and it was a bearded face, with a hideous expression in it, and a pair of fierce eyes that watched the woman's retreating figure as if they would devour her.

Presently, when she had altogether disappeared, the entire figure of the man became visible. He was a low, villainous-looking being with a working-man's clothes on, and a slouched hat hiding the upper portion of his face entirely; but I could have sworn to it among a thousand, from that moment, so identifying was the glare of hatred or revenge that strongly marked every coarse feature.

Cautiously emerging from the concealment, in which he had evidently been watching the woman's movements, he strode rapidly to the log, and, stooping as she had done, got possession of what seemed to be a bit of folded paper. As she seated himself on the fallen tree, and unfolded the missive awkwardly, his teeth were clenched, and his lips drawn back from them, with an expression of determination and malice that could scarcely be equalled.

No doubt he was a very poor scholar; for although, as I afterwards discovered, the paper contained but a few words, he sat some moments, with his eyes angrily riveted upon them; then he lifted up his face, and looked out into the green loveliness spread between him and me, with a mixture of rage and agony imprinted on it that I can never forget. Slowly arising, he strode up to the highest point of the ridge, and disappeared as suddenly as if he had fallen over the precipice, which I was aware the rocks formed at that spot.

One thing, however, had not escaped my observation. As this wicked looking man dashed through the dense scrub of bushes that backed the rocks behind which he had hidden, he tore the piece of paper into bits, and flung them on his path.

"I should like to have those bits of paper," I soliloquized, "for if ever murder or revenue was written in a man's face, it was in his, and it might be worth my while to have an insight into the affair."

Thus thinking, I shut and replaced the glass that had served me in such good stead, and putting on my hat proceeded leisurely to secure possession of the atoms of paper. The instinct of the detective was aroused, and my "*dolce far niente*" had given place to the practiced officer's "*dolce di fare*" alone.

It was but a pleasant stroll up to the Granite Bridge, as it was called, and then I gathered up the scattered scraps of paper that lay among the grass I had not very great difficulty in placing them in position to render the written words upon them decipherable, but when I *had* deciphered them, I was sadly at a loss to account for the dreadful expression the perusal of them had occasioned in the stranger's repellant countenance. They were very short and simple—only, as far as I could discover, seven words, and those words were:

"Jack is going to Jericho to-morrow night."

The writing was in no way peculiar; it was just such a hand as any female of little education might write.

I sat down to think over it, as I scanned every word repeatedly; but I took care that no one should watch *me* from the camp, or anywhere else, as I chose a rock deeply hidden among the surrounding bushes for a seat. One thing was certain, and that I fixed upon as the foundation of my speculations regarding the missive; it had undoubtedly been placed near the log for the hand of some person who was expected to seek it, and who must unmistakably be acquainted with the secret of the hiding-place. The question then resolved itself into this:

"Was the man who had perused the lines the one for whose perusal it had been written?"

It was possible; and yet, if so, why the fierce expression of hate it had occasioned? Even to this, my imagination formed an answer: perhaps he was jealous of this “jack,” whose intended absence at Jericho was mentioned in the missive. In spite, however, of this very satisfactory suggestion, I could not divest myself of a fear that some terrible tragedy was contemplated by the man whose countenance haunted me like a nightmare, until it was unfortunately too late to prevent its occurrence.

Rising from my seat, I carefully folded up the pieces of paper, and depositing them in my pocketbook, I proceeded to the edge of the ridge, where I had seen the object of my curiosity disappear. There, as I had supposed, I found the rock descend in a sheer face of some ninety feet, with but a jutting lichen or two to interfere with its uniformity, down to the smooth greensward below; but as I looked for an available spot for descent, I perceived at my left hand a ledge that ran in a sloping direction downwards, and so close to the foliage of a box that flourished in a cleft of the granite, that one could easily avail himself of its branches to secure a safe descent to the flat beneath.

The view spread out below was well worth my short walk, independent of any other motive. It commanded almost the whole lead and the scattered township, and the once green valley was broken up into a multitude of hillocks, and dotted with tent and hut in every direction. At that moment the thought struck me, that, among the many miners I saw working at windlass and pick, I should have some trouble in discovering the one with the demon-like face, so much alike seemed they all in dress and demeanor. “Probably,” I thought, “he has just disappeared down one of those shafts—nay, maybe he is watching me at this very moment, and believing me to be “Jack,” who seems to be so little a favorite with him.” The probability made me draw back and retrace my steps. I had no fancy for an encounter with so vicious-looking a being; and one, too, into whose private affairs I was so unwarrantably attempting to pry.

A night’s rest did not cool my interest, however, and breakfast was no sooner over than I went towards the township, determined to spend an otherwise idle day in making a strict search for that golden hair I had seen among the rocks. One did not meet with such a wealth of tresses every day, in this day of “*chignons*,” and I knew that the owner of it could not fail to be noticed, were it for no other reason. Still I had no object to justify me in asking every person I met for tidings of the woman of the beautiful tresses. I had no charge to bring against her or hers, and so I was obliged to confine myself to visiting the neighborhood of every likely hut or tent on the flat, but without success. Among many heads of black and brown, fair and red, I saw nothing of the golden locks. Little I dreamed when and how I was fated to behold them again. Neither saw I anything of the dark countenance of the object of my suspicion, and, tired and hungry, I sought my way campward, inwardly voting myself a fool for my pains.

Two or three days had passed, and Friday evening came. The day had been a close on for the season, and I was glad to go outside after supper, and enjoy, in the cool breeze that stole down over the bridge, my usual cigar. Dusk was just making indistinct the bold outline of the rocks, and permitted the numerous lights of the township, away on the right, to be distinctly visible, as the darkness contrasted with their brilliancy; and far-away sounds crept up softly to the camp—sounds of laughter and of merriment, of children’s voices, and of lowing cattle. I was leaning

over the fence, and indulging the melancholy humor naturally induced by the time and quietness of my position, when the shrill bark of my little Topsy, a terrier belonging to our force, gave notice of a visitor.

“Can you tell me if Constable Swinton is in?”

It was a man’s voice that asked the question, and I turned to find a figure behind me.

“I am Constable Swinton,” I replied. “Will you step inside?”

“I don’t know,” said the stranger. “My business is very private, and if there is any one inside I’d rather speak to you here.”

“O, we couldn’t tell you might be listening, here in the dark,” I answered, “and there are none of the men at home but Bill. I can ask him to step out for a walk. Come on.”

When my visitor had followed me into the barrack room, and seated himself in the seat that I handed him, I had time to examine his appearance at leisure. He was a strong and handsome young man, of perhaps twenty-four years, with brown hair, and digger’s clothes; and he had an air of honesty about him that won my interest at once. Something was oppressing his mind deeply, however, and even when I waited to hear what he had to say, he hesitated, and seemed awkward in opening his business.

“Well, friend,” I said, at length, “what is it that you wish me to do for you?”

“God knows,” was the strange reply. “I don’t know myself; but I do know that you have the reputation of being a decent, honest man, and I thought if I didn’t open my heart to someone, ‘twould burst.”

This was rather an unexpected address, but I could see the poor fellow was in earnest, and I assured him that he might depend upon the best advice I could give him, even if I could not assist him in a pecuniary or any other way.

“Thank you,” he said, in reply. “I expected no less; and, indeed, I don’t know but that I have good cause to tell the police my trouble; for when a man’s wife disappears, and he is afraid she may be murdered, ‘tis time, maybe, to talk.”

“Your wife? I should think so, indeed. Pray tell me about it.”

“Well, friend,” said he, “‘tis a miserable story, and a sore one to me; and God knows I fear it has been a bitter one to herself. ‘Tis about four years ago, that Jack Murran and I were working mates on the diggings, and I was lucky or unlucky enough to get married to as pretty and as good a girl as was in the township. Yes!” he repeated, clenching his hand, and raising it up to his head, as if determined to fight with any one who dared to contradict him, “I believe she *was* good; but for all that, that spawn of the devil, Jack, circumvented her.”

He paused for breath; but as I did not attempt to interrupt him, he soon continued:

“We were scarcely married a year, when things went so badly with Jack and me, that I thought it my duty to try and better them. I went to some diggings a considerable distance off, leaving Julia with a married sister, and trusting to Jack’s promise of seeing to her comfort, as if he had been my own brother. Well, I was two years away, without seeing or doing anything encouraging enough to think of sending for my wife; and at last, uneasy at her long silence, I returned, to hear from her sister that she had gone off with that vile scoundrel, Jack Murran, and none of our acquaintances had the least idea where they were.

“You may think I was a spooney, mate, to go, after such treatment, and tramp from digging to digging, for nine months, in hopes of finding my wife; but I believed, and believe to this day, that the poor girl had been circumvented in some way, and I determined to save her if I could. All to no purpose, however, until I gave it up for lost, and came here to work for wages in the Granite Company.

“I was low-spirited, as you may suppose, sir, and little inclined to frequent shanties or public houses for amusement, and my Sunday was generally spent in a lonely walk through the bush. It was the only place where I could—to tell the truth, and I don’t mind telling it—have a good cry in peace, without the fear of twisted faces and hard hearts to stop it; for I tell you’tis all gammon, my friend, when a man loses everything he values in life, the tears come as naturally into his eyes as they do into a woman’s; all the worse for himself if he quench them back—they either turn his heart to iron or break it.

“ ‘Tis a fortnight, near by, now, since I strolled one Sunday afternoon up to the Granite Bridge there, and I nearly died when I came face to face with Julia and Jack Murran, sitting together on a log. I stood there like a dummy, and saw my wife’s face grow as white as chalk, and Jack’s as black as thunder. What did I care for him? I was looking into the eyes I had loved, and saw the tears creeping into them, as the blood gathered back red into her cheeks. It was only a moment, but the cloud broke in my old mate’s face, and he stood up as if to strike me.

“ ‘Stand back,’ he said, ‘or I’ll punch you into a mummy!’

“ ‘Stand back yourself,’ I answered him; ‘I’ve nothing to say to you at present. Keep back from my wife—I want to speak to her.’ And I stretched out my arm between him and her. ‘Julia, will you come home with me!’”

“As I asked her, she half got up from the log, and then she fell back again faint-looking. I could scarcely hear the answer she gave me, it was so low; so I asked her again, my very heart trembling as I spoke:

“ ‘Julia, will you come home with me?’

“ ‘No, Fred,’ she said again; ‘I’ve disgraced you enough, and I’ll not carry the disgrace home to you. I’ve made my bed, and I must lie on it, let it be what it will.’

“ ‘Now you have your answer,’ said Jack, sneeringly, ‘and be off with it!’

“I paid no more attention to him than if he’d been one of the trees. Julia’s lips were shaking, and her eyes bent down, but I felt that she was not speaking what she wished—that she was afraid of the brute near her.

“ ‘Come on, wife,’ I said to her, ‘with me once more, and you need not be afraid of all the fiends in torment, if they were all Jack Murrans, every one!’ But she only shook her head, and I turned away choking, as if my heart could not beat nor my blood run.

“Well, I went home; but you may believe I would not give it up so. I watched Julia’s place night and day, in hopes of seeing her by herself; but Jack was suspicious, and used to come backwards and forwards to his place, even in work hours, and I was afraid of getting her into trouble if I was seen, for I knew what the man was.

“At last, however, I met her in the street, going to the butcher’s, I think, and I stopped her there and then, and told her I’d never rest, night or day, until I spoke to her by herself, and heard from her own lips that she loved that scoundrel better than me, her own lawful, wedded husband.

“ ‘For Heaven’s sake, Fred,’ she said, looking round so frightened, ‘go away and let me pass! He’s sworn he’ll murder me, if he sees me speaking to you!’

“ ‘Do you like Jack better than me?’ I asked, planting myself right before her. ‘If ‘twas your last word you said, do you?’

“ ‘No, Fred. I don’t! never did! Now go, for the love of Mary! I’ll write to you first chance. I’ll put it under the log you found us sitting on, on Sunday.’ And she ran away.”

The reader may fancy with what a strange feeling I listened to the latter part of my excited visitor’s relation.

“Under the log!” I exclaimed. “A log on the Granite Bridge, almost opposite the camp?”

“Yes. What makes you ask? Maybe you know something about it?”

“Go on, and finish. I will tell you after. But yet stay—was your wife’s hair remarkably long and fair?”

“It was, like gold!” he cried; “like switches of gold, and as long as a willow branch! There never was such hair seen, nor ever will be again,” he added, sadly.

“Why do you say so?” questioned I. “Why do you say *was*?—have you, then, any certainty—”

“No,” he interrupted, “only suspicion. But I’m afraid, sadly afraid he’s kept his word, and murdered her. On Tuesday last I saw her knocking about the little garden as usual, and next

morning she was not there?"

"And Jack?"

"O, he's round just as usual. But I'll tell you what seems strange to me: I traced him once up to the very log where the poor girl said she'd put the letter for me. Now maybe he found that out, and was watching to see if I'd go to get it."

"I'm afraid you're right," I replied, taking out my pocket-book, and drawing from it the scraps of paper, which I had pasted together. "Isn't that your wife's writing?" I asked, as I handed it to him.

"My God—yes! And is she—is she—then, dead?"

"I know no more than yourself as to that," I said. And then I told him what I had seen on the Bridge, and how I became possessed of the note, which had no doubt been intended for him.

"O, I see it all!" he exclaimed, starting up wildly. "He's found her out—perhaps she's talked in her sleep, poor thing, she used to be a great hand to do it—and he's pretended to be going away, so as to catch her. O, may the vengeance of Heaven overtake him! She's murdered—she's murdered!"

"Be cool, and try to console yourself, man," I reasoned. "It may not be as you fear; he may have only sent her away to get her out of your neighborhood; but if it is so—if your unfortunate wife is really murdered—you and I need all our wits about us to find it out, and bring punishment home to the villain."

"That's true, friend!" he said, grasping my hand; "And I will be guided by you. Tell me what is best to be done." And we sat down and arranged our plans, and at last parted.

You may guess how strange I thought it, that my purposeless look through the window near my bed should have been the beginning of so seemingly tragic an adventure. I was heartily sorry for the poor fellow who had just left me; and the reflection that I had already conceived such a dislike and suspicion of the man whom I had discovered to be the "Jack" of the note, did not send me to work in the affair with less will.

I hurried over my breakfast on the ensuing morning, most anxious to proceed in the prosecution of my plan. The plan was this: I had given the almost unnecessary instruction to Fred to keep strict watch over the suspected man's movements during the day, and I had determined to take advantage of his absence at work, to make a rigid examination of his hut, for traces of the woman or of her murder; and so, followed by the little terrier Topsy, of which I have spoken, I at length left the camp, and took my way in the direction of the hut which Fred had described to me as being that of Jack Murran. I was too early. The place was surrounded by a close paling fence, but as I approached and looked over it, I perceived the man of the not-to-be-forgotten countenance, engaged near the middle of the garden in some gardening operation. A momentary survey convinced me that he was planting vines, and I had not so satisfied myself, before he lifted his

head and saw me.

I was in uniform, and a heavier cloud lay on his brow as he saw me; but making an effort at friendliness of manner, I addressed him, leaning carelessly over the fence as I did so.

“Planting vines, mate? Are you not rather early?”

“I don’t know,” was the surly reply; “they must take their chance.”

“I was thinking of putting in a few up at the camp,” I continued. “Can you tell me where I can get some good cuttings?”

“I got these at Selby’s; but they’re not cuttings, you see. They’re two years old.” And he gathered up his tools, and prepared to go.

“What is the best manure for them?” I asked, as he came nearer to me, on his way to the gate. “Bones are good, are they not?”

“Yes, mate,” he replied, fastening the padlock of the gate carefully, and giving me a diabolical look from under his brows, as he added, “And I don’t think that the flesh bein’ *on* the bones would make any differ.”

“What a wretch!” I muttered, as I turned away, and made a feint of proceeding quickly down the road; for I saw that although my man was going in the direction of his work, he had looked back twice to convince himself that I had moved.

“Bones with the flesh on them!” I thought, as I turned the corner, and lost sight of the brute. What could he mean? Could it be possible? But surely the man was not a born idiot—or perhaps he thought I was one. However, once satisfied that he had turned round the spur of the ridge, where I knew Fred was in wait to watch him and give me timely notice, I hastened back to the fence, and prepared to bound over.

I believed myself quite justified in what I was about to do, by the suspicions the man’s conduct had given rise to, and I was not without a professional interest in the case I had undertaken to unravel.

I vaulted over the fence, then, but as I stood upon the newly-turned soil, among the vines, a sight met my eyes that absolutely horrified me; and coming as it did, so suddenly and unexpectedly, to confirm my worst suspicions, made my very heart beat oppressively for one little dreamy instant. About five yards from me was the little dog Topsy, busily dragging at some object, that a few seconds served to convince me was a long, thick tress of golden hair, clotted with blood, and attached to a piece of shattered skull. I repeat, my blood ran cold. I was so helpless that for some moments I could not even attempt to rescue the fearful relic from the little animal.

Topsy had squeezed through between the palings, and no doubt attracted by the scent of the blood, had scraped a hole in the moist soil. It was just where Jack had planted one of his largest

vines, and Topsy had almost unearthed it, in her search for the buried scent. Need I say that the man's late words recurred to me with fearful import?

"The flesh on the bones would make no differ!"

For a moment I scarcely knew what to do. I could not bear to touch that significant and blood-bedaubed hair; but it must be done, and hastily seizing an old rag that lay on the ground, I drove the dog out, and as hastily wrapped the terrible "find" in it. Then I bounded once more over the fence, and hastened to seek assistance at the camp.

Sending a constable to watch the murderer, in case anything should reach his ears and give him warning, I returned to the garden in company with all our available men. In the course of half an hour, we had dug up every freshly-planted vine, and discovered most of the unfortunate woman's body, completely dismembered, and buried in different parts of the garden—here an arm, there a leg; here pieces of the scalp, and half-charred bones, and all hacked and hewed, and smashed nearly out of all semblance to humanity.

Not without many shudders, we finished our sad work; but with the most perfect sense of joy that it should have fallen to my lot to execute the duty, I had proceeded on my way to arrest Jack Murrin. I had learned from Fred that he was working in the lead, almost directly opposite the precipitous ledge to which I have already alluded, as formed by one portion of the Granite Bridge, and I knew that I should find poor Fred himself on watch ere I reached the shaft of the murderer.

It happened as I expected. Fred presented himself, as another policeman and myself rounded the point of the bridge. There was a horrible fear in his inquiring eyes as they sought mine, that nearly unmanned me; but I thought a straightforward course was the best both for him and me.

"Fred," I said, putting my hand on his shoulder, and meeting his eye pitifully, "be a man—it is as you feared."

"She is dead?"

"Yes."

"Murdered?"

"O yes, my poor friend!"

His lips trembled, his face grew white as ashes for a few seconds; but then such a scarlet fury dashed into it that I dreaded the consequences of a meeting between him and the murderer at that moment.

"Listen to me calmly, Fred," I urged. "We are going to arrest this villain; we want to see him hanged, you know. Now will you take my advice? I have proved myself to be your friend, I hope. Nothing is more likely than that if he gets a sight of us going down the lead, he will make for the

bridge, up the way by the tree, that he seems to know so well. Once on the granites, he is off; there is not a man at the camp. Will you go round the point, and get to the bridge? If all goes well, you will see him arrested from there; and if he makes up the rock, you will have him.”

“Ay, I’ll have him!” he said, between his clenched teeth, as he turned quickly, and went up to the place I had indicated.

Poor fellow! he looked wild and dreamy, and I don’t think he had yet realized the full horror of the deed that had been committed.

Well, forward we went, my mate and I. Two or three miners who worked on the surface looked curiously at us as we passed, but one that I recognized in a moment, turned the windlass handle mechanically, with his face to us, as he wound up the stuff.

“So far so well, Corry,” I said; “he doesn’t see us yet. Go round upon the other side you, and handcuff him as I speak.”

“I arrest you in the queen’s name, Jack Murran, for the murder of your wife.”

Like a fury he turned a face black with passion towards me, and before my mate could interfere, he had planted a blow of his fist between my eyes, that felled me to the ground like a dead ox, and in a second he was off towards the bridge. For a moment I lay stunned, but a rage I had seldom before felt in such intensity made me spring to my feet, although dizzy, and obliged to hold on to the windlass for support, as I looked after the flying scoundrel.

It was as I had supposed. Fast as fear could urge him on, he was making his way towards the precipice I have mentioned; close on his heels was my fellow-trooper, Corry; but once the path on the face of the rock, to which he alone was accustomed, gained, and the pursuer had no chance. All my reliance was on the husband of the victim.

As I rose from the ground, the murderer had reached the rock, and like a goat bounded up its face. Assisted by the drooping branches of the tree, he soon reached the crest, and there he paused and looked back, to laugh a derisive defiance at the baffled pursuer. One horrid oath, and he turned again, to meet the revengeful grip of Fred’s hands.

It was a terrible picture; but it did not last long. I was forced to witness it helplessly, while Corry as helplessly tried to climb up the steep face of the rock. A death grapple it was, in which the one sought to escape, and the other for revenge! Hand to hand, foot to foot, writhing in relentless fury, they struggled on the verge of the precipice, careless or heedless of its vicinity, their figures thrown out in strong relief against the clear sky that formed the background to their elevated foothold, and every lineament strongly marked with the passions that threw a strength more than human into their limbs.

It did not last long, I said; it seemed but a moment to me, and that I had scarcely time to note the dread purpose of the murderer. Inch by inch he neared the edge of the steep; but justice prevailed. One violent struggle—a wrench for life, and Fred hurled his opponent over the rock,

and stood looking down upon the smashed and groaning sinner like an avenging Fate.

My dizziness had almost entirely left me by this time, and I rushed towards the spot where Jack lay. It was a piteous sight—bad as the creature was, it was painful to witness his sufferings. He had struck against a portion of the rock in his fall, and his body presented one mass of contusion and bleeding laceration. He lay in a heap upon the green grass that lay up to the very foot of the ridge—a heap so twisted and unnatural that it was easy to perceive that many of his bones were broken.

It was needless to fetter those broken limbs. We carried him on a stretcher to the camp; he was quite sensible, and suffered fearfully. He died in a few hours afterwards, in a great agony; but not before he had made a heart-rending confession of his cruel and inhuman crime.

As for poor Fred, he seemed like one crushed into a state of hopelessness. Whether or not he ever recovered himself, I cannot tell; for we have never met since we parted at the Granite Bridge.

The Flag of our Union, August 22, 1868