

The men about the trees had given Ford a few short minutes for prayer; and he had taken the time. Bittee, bound, and with a rope about her neck, reaching up into the tree above her, still lay upon the ground. The man's face turned upward in silent prayer. Then, facing the men about him, he shouted in a voice hoarse with passion,

"Cowards! cowards!"

As though the words had awakened an echo from above the white mists, there came out of the heart of the redwoods a long, shrill shriek, and then another, and another. The hands upon the death ropes loosened their hold; the masked faces of the men turned from their victims to the forest; and through the brush, into the clearing, rushed the Chinaman, wild eyed and frantic.

"Whuf for make-a *kill*?" he screamed, waving his arms before him. "Whuf for make-a kill? No belong Chinawoman girl; belong white woman; make-a look, see!" In his hands he waved a paper.

"Catch-e paper, make-a say no belong Chinawoman girl," he went on wildly.

From Loong's hands the leader of the men took the paper. He studied it by the light of the torch, and as he read its contents he stumbled back.

"Stop, stop!" he cried, turning to the men, a moment later. "We're all *wrong*. We have no Chinawoman here, but the daughter of the men you're all workin' for—Banks!" And pulling off his mask he ran to the tree beneath which Ford was standing and with a knife cut him free.

"Hold up!" shouted the men. "How do you know the paper is true?"

"True?" answered the leader. "I know it's true; I wrote it myself—years ago."

Once freed, Ford hurried to Bittee, lying white and still on the ground.

"The light," he shouted as he bent over to unbind her, "bring the light!"

But even when he had loosened the cords about her she did not move. They had tied their knots too well; Bittee was dead.

YOU NEVER CAN TELL.

You never can tell when you send a word—
Like an arrow shot from a bow
By an archer blind—be it cruel or kind,
Just where it will chance to go.
It may pierce the breast of your dearest friend,
Tipped with its poison or balm;
To a stranger's heart in life's great mart
It may carry its pain or its calm.

You never can tell when you do an act
Just what the result will be;
But with every deed you are sowing a seed,
Though its harvest you may not see.
Each kindly act is an acorn dropped
In God's productive soil;
Though you may not know, yet the tree shall grow
And shelter the brows that toil.

You never can tell what your thoughts will do
In bringing you hate or love;
For thoughts are things, and their airy wings
Are swifter than carrier doves.
They follow the law of the universe—
Each thing must create its kind;
And they speed o'er the track to bring you back
Whatever went out from your mind.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

A WOLF'S POINT EPISODE.

By Eugene Traugher.

ROSE McClanahan was the acknowledged belle of Wolf's Point. I say "acknowledged," because nobody in that isolated section of country, two days' travel up the Missouri River by steamboat from St. Louis, would have had the temerity to dispute the fact, especially in the presence of her father. When Rose was seven years old, the governor of Missouri, en route from Jefferson City to Boonville upon one of the magnificent steamers that then navigated the swift running waters of the "Big Muddy," stepped upon the shore while the boat was "wooding up" at the landing, and catching the child in his arms, kissed her, and declared that she would some day be the handsomest woman in the old State.

So it was that when Rose was sixteen years of age, and the governor's prediction was fast emerging into a reality, her father, Jim McClanahan, was wont to swear by General Joe Shelby, his hero, that the girl would some day marry a member of the Legislature or a circuit rider.

The people of Wolf's Point were primitive in their ways, rude in manner and speech, and happy in their ignorance. Indeed, the great arc light of civilization, which now sheds its refulgent rays over a prosperous and enlightened community, was at this time spluttering like a tallow dip and continually threatening to go out.

Now and then a wandering Methodist preacher would reach the "Point" on his circuit and hold a revival. He would warn the people to free themselves from the "hip lock" of Satan, and as a rule his advice would be kindly received, and everybody would join the church. But when the preacher departed, their religious zeal rapidly subsided, and fell as low as before his arrival. Jim McClanahan was always among the first to turn away from the beckoning of Satan at the yearly revival, and to "backslide" after its close. But as he remarked on one occasion, when he was cut off from membership on account of drunkenness, "They could turn him out of the church if they had a mind to, but he'd be darned if they could keep him from being a Christian!"

During the summer months the residents of the "Point" would raise sufficient truck to last them through the winter; in the fall they voted the Democratic ticket and hunted 'possums; and in the winter they chopped cord wood and attended "break downs." In their estimation, physical prowess was the crowning trait of character, and every man was measured by his ability as a fighter. Next to fighting came fiddling, and the man who could reel off the "Arkansas Traveler" or "Chicken in the Dough Tray" occupied a position in some respects even more enviable than that of the "bully." But the man who was both a fighter and a fiddler—who can tell rightly of his fame?

Such a man was Jim McClanahan; but he had a rival in young Bud Henshaw, who was closely "crowding" him for the championship both in music and in pugilism. Notwithstanding the fact that he had set his heart upon a member of the Legislature, or a circuit rider, for a son in law, Jim had given it out that any man who would best him in a rough and tumble fight could thereby secure his consent to marry Rose. The challenge was one which none of the young men of the neighborhood had cared to take up, until Rose reached her sixteenth year. Then it was that Bud Henshaw, who had been "keeping company" with her for several months, suddenly sprang into prominence by knocking an ox down with his fist.

One afternoon, when Jim was sitting in the shade of his log house, Bud Henshaw shuffled into view.

"Hope I see you," said Jim.

"'Pears to me there ain't nothing the matter with your eyesight," replied Bud.

"Better brush off your breeches and set down," Jim suggested.

"Ain't got time," Bud answered quickly. "Fact is, I came over to ax you for Rose."

"Air you a member of the Legislature, or a circuit rider?" asked Jim, with rude but biting sarcasm.

"Wall, not thet eny one knows on," was the angry reply. "But I'm the durnest best