THE MAID'S REPLY.

The wind was damp with coming wet
When James and Bine eyed Lizz e met;
He held a gingham o'er his hat,
And so the maiden thus he said:
"O! lovely maid, my heart's a fire
With love's auspicious beacon dearer"
The maid in accents sweet replied:
"Jim, hold the umbrella mor- my side;
My frock, your bonnet's quite big wet—
I'll marry yer, yer needn't fret."

THE BETROTHAL IN THE PASS:

A STORY FOUNDED ON FACT.

The prairie schooner went slowly through the deep sand, drawn by its mules. By their side the trudged the driver wearily, pausing now and then to wipe away the drops of perspiration from his forehead and to glance behind him over the long track cut by the wheels in the snow white, alkali-covered desert. Far away to the west the great mountains lifted their heads in the clear sky, standing like sentinels guarding the approach to a prized land. Seated on the front seat of the wagon was a girl about twenty, dressed in a cotton gown, with a great sun bonnet on her head. Despite the plainness of her surroundings and her apparel could not disguise her beauty, and in spite of her long ride through clouds of alkali dust, she somehow continued to look fresh.

"Allie," said the man at last, "we'll get there 'bout five, I reckon."

"I hope so, father, 'cause those animals are 'bout worn out, an' I expect you ain't so pert as you might be."

"Yes, I reckon I'm pretty tuckered, but the plainness of her surroundings and her apparel could not disguise her beauty, and in spite of her long ride through clouds of alkali dust, she somehow continued to look fresh.

"Allie," said the man at last, "we'll get there 'bout five, I reckon."

"I hope so, father, 'cause those animals are 'bout worn out, an' I expect you ain't so pert as you might be."

"Yes, I reckon I'm pretty tuckered, but I'm as sound as a dollar, gal, and I'll jump out an' walk a little ways to git the stiffness out of my joints."

"What's the matter, Jim?" asked Duncan, in a whisper.

"We kin see about him from here; they'll be in range in a minute or two; an we can go back an' hide, an' trust to luck. They may not see us."

"Guess we better shoot. There's Allie, you know."

"I know; but they may pass an' not see us."

"All right. We'll hide then."

No sooner said than the two men went back behind the wagon. Still they were away, Alice had put out the sticks from the fire. The wagon had been drawn up close to the rock, and, was in the shadow of the deep shadow. As is always the case with moonlight in the mountains, the shadows are as deep as the blackest night. Jim drove the team and his horse into a little rift in the rocks in which there was room and then placing Alice behind a bowlder, he took his station at one end of the wagon while Duncan stood at the other. The waiting was painful. What were the Mexicans coming up the trail, one at them singing a Spanish love song, they rounded the corner from which Jim had come, and Jim drew back himself for the expected shot. Nearer and nearer came those, riding in front, and the two men in the shadow fairly held their breath as he passed. For a long time after they had gone Jim leaned out from his ambush, listening, and never came close, riding in front, and the two men in the shadow fairly held their breath as he passed. For a long time after they had gone Jim leaned out from his ambush, listening, and never came close, riding in front, and the two men in the shadow fairly held their breath as he passed. For a long time after they had gone Jim leaned out from his ambush, listening, and never came close, riding in front, and the two men in the shadow fairly held their breath as he passed. For a long time after they had gone Jim leaned out from his ambush, listening, and

"Jim John Duncan, take of Pike county, an' bound for California. This yer's my daughter Allie."

Burton bowed so awkwardly in response to the blunt introduction, and Alice thought that the man's ride into the hollow of his arm, rode forward. Strangers, when you are once assured of their good faith, are far less seldom met with in the desert to permit of all parties being anything but cordial. In half an hour after Burton had joined old Duncan and his daughter, to hear them, both one would have supposed they were old friends. An eager interchange of news between them resulted, by the time they reached the water hole, in making each one acquainted with the whole history of the other. When they camped for the night the young man insisted the elder in releasing the mules from their heavy harness, and, after gathering the miscantly greasewood bushes for the fire. He cut the bacon in slices for Alice to fry, and contributed as his share of the supper a big venison ham he had hanging from his saddle, having shot the animal to which it had belonged, as he told the girl, the day before, in the park, as all small valleys were called in the mountains are called in the west. After supper the two men sat by the fire, smoking and talking, and when the girl climbed into her bed in the wagon, and the men had rolled themselves up in their blankets and lain on the ground, she could hear the hum of their voices until she fell asleep.

The next day they started out bright and early, and by night had reached the foot of the long ascent which led to the pass through the mountains. The day following they thought they should had got into the pass itself. Here, at the base of an enormous peak, they camped. By this time young Burton and Alice seemed had become very intimate. He thought her one of the most delightful and fascinating girls he ever saw, and she had come to the conclusion that she had never met quite so splendid a man. That evening after supper the old man announced that he was very tired and proposed to turn in at once.

Burton and the girl made up their minds to sit up for a while and talk. Soon the long-drawn snores of the sleeper told them that they were practically alone, and the conversation between them became interspersed with longer and longer pauses.

"Allie,' said Jim; and paused.

"Yes, said Alice, timidly.

"It seems as hard as hard—at least I mean that—Do you know—it's pesky hard climbin' thro' this yer pass."

"Is it?' said Alice in a singularly embarrassed tone.

"Yes," continued Jim. "It's kinder tough. An' it's a heap more dangerous, too. Road-agents round here, you know."

There was a pause, and then Alice said.

"Oh!"

Jim cleared his throat vigorously.

"Don't you kinder think I could sorter, as it were—well, you know what I mean."

"Not very well, Mr. Burton.'

"No? Well, I don't wonder much. What I mean is: Don't you think—at least couldn't I—Alice, I love you" he broke out in desperation. "Will you love me?"

The question was asked at last, and as Jim turned eagerly toward the girl to hear her answer, he got one look in her eyes by the light of the moonlight. Whatever he saw there, it was sufficient to tell him all he wanted to know without any words. He took her hand and drew her towards him.

Just at that moment the deep growl from the great yellow dog belonging to old man Duncan startled the lovers. Jim hastily kissed the girl, and then releasing her, stretched his hand out for his ride.

"What is it, Alice?" he asked, in a low tone.

"I don't know. Rose sees or scents something."

The dog had risen and walked to the end of the wagon, where he stood looking down the trail.

"Hadn't you better wake your father, Allie?' said Jim.

"No. If it's anything, Rose will do that."

As she spoke the dog turned to where Duncan was lying, and seizing his shoulder, shook him. The old man sat up in a moment.

"What is it, Burton?' he asked.

"I don't know yet,' responded Jim. 'The dog sees something, but I have not myself seen or heard—"

"Sh! Listen" whispered Alice.

"Horses,' said Jim, after a pause. 'An' shod, too,' he added, as a clink of metal upon stone struck into his ear.

Duncan got up hastily and took his rifle. With a movement of his foot he scattered the fire, and the two men then crept forward a few yards to where the trail took a sharp curve. Here, looking around the edge of the rock, they saw a party of five men riding slowly up toward them. The wide sombreros, the big spurs, the big silver buttons down the sides, the short jackets with the glistening gold ones in place of buttons, told the westerners that the party of Mexicans were before them. Duncan gazed long at the leader, or rather at the horse he rode. The moonlight was bright enough to enable him to see as well as were day, and he watched the horse and rider with a white star on the forehead and our white feet he called to Burton and said: "Look! look! Jose Gonzalez."

"Not a horse and rider like that. While in these days but what had heard of Jose Gonzalez, the Mexican bandit. A man who should be red in bloodshed and crime, who should have killed his fellow men, who should have committed murders than he was months old; for whose head there were rewards offered in four or five places, from Texas, Sonora, Chihuahua, in Northern Mexico, being one.

When Jim recognized him, or rather his famous horse, he felt that thrill which all brave men feel when brought face to face before a great danger.

"What'll we do, Jim?' asked Duncan, in a whisper.

"We kin shoot him from here; they'll be in range in a minute or two; an we can go back an' hide, an' trust to luck. They may not see us."

"Guess we better shoot. There's Allie, you know."

"I know; but they may pass an' not see us."

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"Jim!" he whispered.

"Hush!" he answered, in a low tone. "Don't talk. Lie still."

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