

A PATHETIC TALE.

These hundreds of miles of marsh and mud are tropical grasses; the desolation and solitude of the scene remind me of a singularly good story told me by some negroes in the cypress swamp, back from the river and gulf, up a bayou, where I had gone to live alone with the blacks and get at the bottom of their mode of life. And of all this, the coon hunts and so on, I shall write about later. But the story I refer to here is about the white man only. I never heard of it before. I do not know that any one else ever heard of it. I asked some white people about it in the city, but it was new to them. And yet we must remember that many things transpired during the war, many tragic and touching incidents that have no historian. And these people down here, the Mexican people, ignorant, too, at that time, as compared to the people of the Eastern States, never showed any like disposition to preserve their traditions and stories of the war. Maybe this was because they were so hopelessly and entirely vanquished. Certain it is, they would have cherished many stories of valor and daring that are now forgotten if they had found favor with the God of war.

But this, in brief, is the black men's story: In a pretty little village, since destroyed, on a bayou back from the river, a great number of very old men had been left by their sons and grandsons, in this place of comfort and security, while they went to the war. And these old men here, many of them veterans of former wars, formed themselves into a regiment, made for themselves uniforms, picked up old flint-lock guns, even mounted a rusty old cannon, and so prepared to go to battle if ever the war came within their reach.

Toward the close of the war some gun-boats came down the river, shelling the shore. The old men far back on the bayou heard the sound of cannon, and, gathering together, they set out with their old muskets and rusty old cannon to try and reach the river over the old and abandoned corduroy road through the cypress swamp.

The black men say they marched out right merrily that hot day, shouting and bantering to encourage each other, the dim fires of their old eyes burning with desire of battle, although not one of them was young enough or strong enough to stand erect. And they never came back any more.

Now, understand distinctly: I do not know whether there is a word of truth in this story or not. I give it just as I got it of the negroes. I tried to verify the story. I had them run me to the spot where the drowned-out village once stood. They even pointed me out the dim outline of the road through the cypress woods. But they refused to land and lead me over it. I had these old veterans down to history as—

THE LAST REGIMENT.

The dying land cried: they heard her death call; Gray, toothless old men stopped, listened intent. Then rusty old muskets came down from the wall;

Old squirrel guns gleamed in that regiment; Gray grandsires marched, old muskets in hand; The last men left in that whole sea land.

These gray grandsires, they were seen to reel, Their rusty old muskets a wearisome load; They marched, scarce tall as the cannon's wheel, Marched merrily on up the corduroy road; The gray old boys, all broken and bent, Marched out, the gallant last regiment.

But oh that march, and the memories. When zest and excitement had died away; That desolate march through the cypress trees, Arrayed in their desolate robes of gray; The gray grandsires so broken and bent; The gray moss manning that regiment.

The gray, bent men and the mosses gray! The dull, dead gray of the uniform! The dull, dead skies like to lead that day, Dull, dead, heavy, and so dentially warin! Oh, what meant more than the cypress meant, With its reaching moss, to that regiment?

That deathly march through the marshes deep! That sultry day and the deeds in vain! The lying down by the way to sleep! The sleeping never to rise again! The rust on the guns! The rust and the rent! That dying, desolate regiment!

The muskets left leaning against the trees! The cannon wheels clogged from the moss o'er-head!

The cypress trees kneeling on obstinate knees, As kneled gray men by the gray men dead! A lone bird rising, long-legged and gray, Slow rising and rising and drifting away!

The dank, dead levels gave back no sound, The drums lay silent as the drummers there; The sultry stillness it was so profound, You might have heard an unuttered prayer, And ever and ever and far away Kept drifting that desolate bird in gray.

The long gray veils of that cypress wood, Like veils that sweep where the gray nuns weed—

That cypress moss o'er the darkness deep; Why, the cypress roots they were running blood; And to right and to left lay a soldier dead— A mourning cypress set foot and head.

'Twas man hunting man in the wilderness there;

'Twas man hunting man and hunting to slay; But nothing was found there but death that day.

And possibly God, in that poisonous air; And possibly God—and that bird in gray Slow rising and rising and drifting away.

And never a sword was unsheathed that day, Nay, never a sword was unsheathed at all. But silent and patient men passed away All uncomplaining as the leaflets fall, And never a shot or shell was spent By the last, last, gallant old regiment.

Now down in the swamp where the gray men fell The fire-flies valley and valley at night; And black men beated are heard to tell Of the ghosts in gray in a mimic light— Of the ghosts of the gallant old men in gray Who silently died in the swamp that day.

JOAQUIN MILLER.

WHEN THE COWS COME HOME.

[By Mrs. Agnes E. Mitchell.]

With klinge, klinge, klinge,
Way down the dusty dingle,
The cows are coming home;
Now sweet and clear, and faint and low
The airy tinklings come and go.
Like chimings from some far-off tower,
Or pattering of an April shower
That makes the daisies grow;
Ko-king, ka-king, kokingleingle,
Way down the darkening dingle
The cows come slowly home;
And old-time friends, and twilight plays,
And starr nights, and sunny days,
Come trooping up the misty ways
When the cows come home.

With jingle, jangle, jingle,
Soft sounds that sweetly mingle,
The cows are coming home;
Malvine, and Pearl, and Florimel,
De Kamp, Red Rose, and Gretchen Schell,
Queen Bess, and Sylph, and Spangle Sue—
Across the fields I hear her loo-oo,
And clang her silver bell;
Go-ling, go-lang, golvingleingle;
With faint, far sounds that mingle,
The cows come slowly home;
And mother-songs of long gone years,
And baby joys and childish tears,
And youthful hopes, and youthful fears,
When the cows come home.

With the ringle, rangle, ringle,
By twos and threes and single,
The cows are coming home;
Through the violet air we see the town,
And the summer sun a-slipping down;
The maple in the hazel glade
Throws down the path a longer shade,
And the hues are growing brown:
To-ring, to-rang, toringleingle,
By threes and fours and single
The cows come slowly home;
The same sweet sound of wordless psalm,
The same sweet June-day rest and calm,
The same sweet scent of bud and balm,
When the cows come home.

With a tinkle, tangle, tinkle,
Through fern and periwinkle,
The cows are coming home;
A-loitering in the chequered stream,
Where the sunrays glance and gleam,
Starine, Peachbloom and Phoebe Phyllis
Stand knee-deep in the creamy lilies
In a drowsy dream;
To-link, to-link, tolinkleinkle,
O'er banks with buttercups a-twinkle
The cows come slowly home;
And up through memory's deep ravine
Come the brook's old song and its old-time sheen
And the crescent of the silver queen,
When the cows come home.

With a klinge, klinge, klinge,
With a loo-oo, and moo-oo, and jingle,
The cows are coming home;
And over there on Merlin hill,
Hear the plaintive cry of the whip-poor-will;
The dew-drops lie on the tangled vines,
And over the poplars Venus shines,
And over the silent mill;
Ko-ling, ko-lang, kolvingleingle,
With ting-a-ling, and jingle
The cows come slowly home;
Let down the bars: let in the train
Of long-gone songs and flowers and rain,
For dear old times come back again,
When the cows come home.

HOPKINSVILLE, KY. A. M. N. T.

GUILTY, OR NOT GUILTY?

She stood at the bar of justice,
A creature wan and wild;
In form too small for a woman,
In features too old for a child,
For a look so worn and pathetic
Was stamped on her pale young face,
It seemed long years of suffering
Must have left that silent trace.

"Your name," said the Judge, as he eyed her
With kindly look, yet keen;

"Is Mary McGuire, if you please, sir."
"And your age?" "I am turned fifteen."

"Well, Mary," and then from a paper
He slowly and gravely read,

"You are charged here—I'm sorry to say it—
With stealing three loaves of bread.

"You look not like an offender,
And I hope that you can show
The charge to be false. Now, tell me,
Are you guilty of this, or no?"
A passionate burst of weeping
Was at first her sole reply,
But she dried her eyes in a moment
And looked in the Judge's eye.

"I will tell you just how it was, sir,
My father and mother are dead,
And my little brother and sisters
Were hungry and asked me for bread.
At first I earned it for them
By working hard all day,
But somehow times were bad, sir,
And the work all fell away.

"I could get no more employment:
The weather was bitter cold,
The dear ones cried and shivered—
Little Johnny's but four years old—
So, what was I to do, sir?
I am guilty, but do not condemn,
I took—oh, was it stealing?—
The bread to give to them."

Every man in the court-room—
Gray-beard and thoughtless youth—
Knew, as he looked upon her,
That the prisoner spoke the truth.
Out from their pockets came kerchiefs,
Out from their eyes sprang tears,
And out from old, faded wallets,
Treasures hoarded for years.

The Judge's face was a study—
The strogest you ever saw,
As he cleared his throat and murmured
Something about the law.
For one so learned in such matters,
So wise in dealing with men,
He seemed, on a simple question,
Sorely puzzled just then.

But no one blamed him or wondered,
When at last these words they heard:
"The sentence of this young prisoner
Is, for the present, deferred."
And no one blamed him or wondered,
When he went to her and smiled,
And tenderly led from the court-room
Himself the "guilty" child.

MOCK DIAMONDS.

Yes, Alfred, the wild blush roses
Have bloomed in my cheek I know,
Whenever his name was whispered—
But, then, it was long ago.

And now, there is a sea between us,
All haunted with mists and moan;
Oh! the darkness is darkness forever
On the shore where he stands—alone.

And under the shadowy veiling
Of the brown curls on his brow,
He has fastened a ghastly sorrow—
If you will listen I'll tell you how.

I was climbing the golden stairway
Of my girl-time's goldenest day,
Towards a night of summery purple
And I met him on the way.

And we went on that night together,
And I crossed its threshold dim,
Where a beautiful sleep was holding
A beautiful dream of him.

At morning we went from the seaside
To the wilds not far away,
Where the winds were strung with bird-songs,
And the trees hung full of May.

And he twined the spray of some mosses
With cliff-buds, crimson and white,
And kissed them and whispered: "Wear them
For the sake of my love to-night."

We were back by the crowded seaside,
And the lamps were all aglare,
And the band played in the ball-room,
And I saw a stranger there.

Then I heard his mother whisper—
"You must know her—she came to-day;
She's an heiress—the men are crazy,
You were foolish to be away."

Well, he joined the dance with the heiress,
I remember as night declined,
And I passed and he could not see me,
For her diamonds had flashed him blind.

I tore them away from by bosom—
The blossoms so wild and sweet—
I flung down his kisses in them,
And crushed them under my feet.

We met once more by the sea-side,
'Twas under the dim night skies—
But I saw by the pallid moonlight,
The glamour had dropped from his eyes.

He could see me and think of the blossoms,
He kissed in the days of old—
Of the sweatness he made so bitter—
Of the summer he made so cold.

For he clinched my arm like a madman,
And laughed as he saw me shrink,
And muttered, "She wore mock diamonds!"—
Well, so does the world, I think.

ABOUT WOMEN.

The Educated Miss.

[Life.]

She's a dainty little maiden
With artistic graces laden,
Quite aware of her attractions and rejoicing in
her teens;
She parades with ostentation
All her Vassar education,
With a reminiscent flavoring of culture and of
beans.

With suggestions by the legion
She can scale the airy region
Where the transcendental fantasies in gay dis-
order float;
With a languor rare and queenly
She can voyage most serenely
Through the hazy sublimation of the misty
and remote.

She can read the rocky pages
Of the geologic ages
When the mighty megatherium was sleeping in
his lair;
With features bright and smiling
She is often most beguiling
With medieval narratives of knight and "ladye
faire."

She is often entertaining
When most learnedly explaining
How the philosophic systems in a measure dis-
agree.
She is posted in quadratics
And the higher mathematics,
And can ask you for the butter in the language
of "Paree."

She's an educated daisy,
And could run a fellow crazy
With a stock of information too enormous to re-
hearse;
She brought a way from college
Such immeasurable knowledge
Of the correlated members of the whizzing uni-
verse.

Still, I hope this gentle maiden,
With such erudition laden
And so eminently fitted with philosophers to
cope,
Yet may manage to discover
Something worthy in a lover
All intent upon the making of a merchantable
soap.

NEVER, MY LOVED ONE, NEVER.

A Song.

[New Orleans Times-Democrat.]

Never, my loved one, never!
Never my head shall lie
At peace, at rest
On thy sweet breast;
Sorrowful life have I.

Never, my loved one, never!
My heart shall cease to sigh;
Vain is my prayer
As the empty air;
Sorrowful heart have I.

Never, my loved one, never!
Never my soul's sad cry
Thy dream shall break,
And my eyelids wake
To find thee asleep near by.

Never! my loved one, never!
Closed are the gates on high;
No hope, no sign,
And the cold stars shine
In the mocking midnight sky.

FRANKFORT, KY. ROBERT BRUNS W. SC.