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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK DESERTED ***

DESERTED

By Edward Bellamy

1898

"What a glorious, all-satisfying country this Nevada desert would be, if one were only all eyes, and had no need of food, drink, and shelter! Would n't it, Miss Dwyer? Do you know, I 've no doubt that this is the true location of heaven. You see, the lack of water and vegetation would be no inconvenience to spirits, while the magnificent scenery and the cloudless sky would be just the thing to make them thrive."

"But what I can't get over," responded the young lady addressed, "is that these alkali plains, which have been described as so dreary and uninteresting, should prove to be in reality one of the most wonderfully impressive and beautiful regions in the world. What awful fibbers, or what awfully dull people, they must have been whose descriptions have so misled the public! It is perfectly unaccountable. Here I expected to doze all the way across the desert, while in fact I 've grudged my eyes time enough to wink ever since I left my berth this morning."

"The trouble is," replied her companion, "that persons in search of the picturesque, or with much eye for it, are rare travelers along this route. The people responsible for the descriptions you complain of are thrifty businessmen, with no idea that there can be any possible attraction in a country where crops can't be raised, timber cut, or ore dug up. For my part, I thank the Lord for the beautiful barrenness that has consecrated this great region to loneliness. Here there will always be a chance to get out of sight and sound of the swarming millions who have already left scarcely standing-room for a man in the East. I wouldn't give much for a country where there are no wildernesses left."

"But I really think it is rather hard to say in just what the beauty of the desert consists," said Miss Dwyer. "It is so simple. I scribbled two pages of description in my note-book this morning, but when I read them over, and then looked out of the window, I tore them up. I think the wonderfully fine, clear, brilliant air transfigures the landscape and makes it something that must be seen and can't be told. After seeing how this air makes the ugly sagebrush and the patches of alkali and brown earth a feast to the eye, one can understand how the light of heaven may make the ugliest faces beautiful."

The pretty talker is sitting next the window of palace-car No. 30 of the Central Pacific line, which has already been her flying home for two days. The gentleman who sits beside her professes to be sharing the view, but it is only fair I should tell the reader that under this pretense he is nefariously delighting in the rounded contour of his companion's half-averted face, as she, in unfeigned engrossment, scans the panorama unrolled before them by the swift motion of the car. How sweet and fresh is the bright tint of her cheek against the ghastly white background of the alkali-patches as they flit by! Still, it can't be said that he is n't enjoying the scenery too, for surely there is no such Claude-Lorraine glass to reflect and enhance the beauty of a landscape as the face of a *spirituelle* girl.

With a profound sigh, summing up both her admiration and that despair of attaining the perfect insight and sympathy imagined and longed for which is always a part of intense appreciation of natural beauty, Miss

Dwyer threw herself back in her seat, and fixed her eyes on the car-ceiling with an expression as if she were looking at something at least as far away as the moon.

"I 'm going to make a statue when I get home," she said,—“a statue which will personify Nevada, and represent the tameless, desolate, changeless, magnificent beauty and the self-sufficient loneliness of the desert. I can see it in my mind's eye now. It will probably be the finest statue in the world.”

"If you 'd as lief put your ideal into a painting, I will give you a suggestion that will be original if nothing else," he observed.

"What's that?"

"Why, having in view these white alkali-patches that chiefly characterize Nevada, paint her as a leper."

"That's horrid! You need n't talk to me any more," she exclaimed emphatically.

With this sort of chatter they had beguiled the time since leaving San Francisco the morning of the day before. Acquaintances are indeed made as rapidly on an overland train as on an ocean steamship, but theirs had dated from the preceding winter, during which they had often met in San Francisco. When Mr. Lombard heard that Miss Dwyer and Mrs. Eustis, her invalid sister, were going East in April, he discovered that he would have business to attend to in New York at about that time; and oddly enough,—that is, if you choose to take that view of it,—when the ladies came to go, it turned out that Lombard had taken his ticket for the selfsame train and identical sleeping-car. The result of which was that he had the privilege of handing Miss Dwyer in and out at the eating-stations, of bringing Mrs. Eustis her cup of tea in the car, and of sharing Miss Dwyer's seat and monopolizing her conversation when he had a mind to, which was most of the time. A bright and congenial companion has this advantage over a book, that he or she is an author whom you can make discourse on any subject you please, instead of being obliged to follow an arbitrary selection by another, as when you commune with the printed page.

By way of peace-offering for his blasphemy in calling the Nevada desert a leper, Lombard had embezzled a couple of chairs from the smoking-room and carried them to the rear platform of the car, which happened to be the last of the train, and invited Miss Dwyer to come thither and see the scenery. Whether she had wanted to pardon him or not, he knew very well that this was a temptation which she could not resist, for the rear platform was the best spot for observation on the entire train, unless it were the cowcatcher of the locomotive.

The April sun mingled with the frosty air like whiskey with ice-water, producing an effect cool but exhilarating. As she sat in the door of the little passage leading to the platform, she scarcely needed the shawl which he wrapped about her with absurdly exaggerated solicitude. One of the most unmistakable symptoms of the lover is the absorbing and superfluous care with which he adjusts the wraps about the object of his affections whether the weather be warm or cold: it is as if he thought he could thus artificially warm her heart toward him. But Miss Dwyer did not appear vexed, pretending indeed to be oblivious of everything else in admiration of the spectacle before her.

The country stretched flat and bare as a table for fifty miles on either side the track,—a distance looking in the clear air not over one fifth as great. On every side this great plain was circled by mountains, the reddish-brown sides of some of them bare to the summits, while others were robed in folds of glistening snow and looked like white curtains drawn part way up the sky. The whitey-gray of the alkali-patches, the brown of the dry earth, and the rusty green of the sagebrush filled the foreground, melting in the distance into a purple-gray. The wondrous dryness and clearness of the air lent to these modest tints a tone and dazzling brilliance that surprised the eye with a revelation of possibilities never before suspected in them. But the mountains were the greatest wonder. It was as if the skies, taking pity on their nakedness, had draped their majestic shoulders in imperial purple, while at this hour the westering sun tipped their pinnacles with gilt. In the distance half a dozen sand-spouts, swiftly-moving white pillars, looking like desert genii with too much "tanglefoot" aboard, were careering about in every direction.

But as Lombard pointed out the various features of the scene to his companion, I fear that his chief motive was less an admiration of Nature that sought sympathy than a selfish delight in making her eyes flash, seeing the color come and go in her cheeks, and hearing her charming unstudied exclamations of pleasure,—a delight not unmingled with complacency in associating himself in her mind with emotions of delight and admiration. It is appalling, the extent to which spoony young people make the admiration of Nature in her grandest forms a mere sauce to their love-making. The roar of Niagara has been notoriously utilized as a cover to unlimited osculation, and Adolphus looks up at the sky-cleaving peak of Mont Blanc only to look down at Angelina's countenance with a more vivid appreciation of its superior attractions.

It was delicious, Lombard thought, sitting there with her on the rear platform, out of sight and sound of everybody. He had such a pleasant sense of proprietorship in her! How agreeable—flatteringly so, in fact—she had been all day! There was nothing like traveling together to make people intimate. It was clear that she understood his intentions very well: indeed, how could she help it? He had always said that a fellow had shown himself a bungler at love-making if he were not practically assured of the result before he came to the point of the declaration. The sensation of leaving everything else so rapidly behind that people have when sitting on the rear platform of a train of cars makes them feel, by force of contrast, nearer to each other and more identified. How pretty she looked sitting there in the doorway, her eyes bent so pensively on the track behind as the car-wheels so swiftly reeled it off! He had tucked her in comfortably. No cold could get to the sweet little girl, and none ever should so long as he lived to make her comfort his care.

One small gloved hand lay on her lap outside the shawl. What a jolly little hand it was! He reached out his own and took it, but, without even a moment's hesitation for him to extract a flattering inference from, she withdrew it. Perhaps something in his matter-of-course way displeased her.

To know when it is best to submit to a partial rebuff, rather than make a bad matter worse by trying to save one's pride, is a rare wisdom. Still, Lombard might have exercised it at another time. But there are days when the magnetisms are all wrong, and a person not ordinarily deficient in tact, having begun wrong, goes on blundering like a schoolboy. Piqued at the sudden shock to the pleasant day-dream, in which he had fancied himself already virtually assured of this young lady,—a day-dream which she was not really accountable for

spoiling, since she had not been privy to it,—what should he do but find expression for his mingled vexation and wounded affection by reminding her of a previous occasion on which she had allowed him the liberty she now denied? Doubtless helping to account for this lack of tact was the idea that he should thus justify himself for so far presuming just now. Not, of course, that there is really any excuse for a young man's forgetting that ladies have one advantage over Omniscience, in that not only are they privileged to remember what they please, but also to ignore what they see fit to forget.

"You have forgotten that evening at the California Theatre," was what this devoted youth said.

"I 'm sure I don't know to what you refer, sir," she replied freezingly.

He was terrified at the distant accent of her voice. It appeared to come from somewhere beyond the fixed stars, and brought the chill of the interstellar spaces with it. He forgot in an instant all about his pique, vexation, and wounded pride, and was in a panic of anxiety to bring her back. In a moment more he knew that she would rise from her chair and remark that it was getting cold and she must go in. If he allowed her to depart in that mood, he might lose her forever. He could think of but one way of convincing her instantaneously of his devotion; and so what should he do but take the most inopportune occasion in the entire course of their acquaintance to make his declaration. He was like a general whose plan of battle has been completely deranged by an utterly unexpected repulse in a preliminary movement, compelling him to hurry forward his last reserves in a desperate attempt to restore the battle.

"What have I done, Miss Dwyer? Don't you know that I love you? Won't you be my wife?"

"No, sir," she said flatly, her taste outraged and her sensibilities set on edge by the stupid, blundering, hammer-and-tongs onset which from first to last he had made. She loved him, and had meant to accept him, but if she had loved him ten times as much she couldn't have helped refusing him just then, under those circumstances,—not if she died for it. As she spoke, she rose and disappeared within the car. It is certainly to be hoped that the noise of the wheels, which out on the platform was considerable, prevented the recording angel from getting the full force of Lombard's ejaculation.

It is bad enough to be refused when the delicacy and respectfulness of the lady's manner make "No" sound so much like "Yes" that the rejected lover can almost persuade himself that his ears have deceived him. It is bad enough to be refused when she does it so timidly and shrinkingly and deprecatingly that it might be supposed she were the rejected party. It is bad enough to be refused when she expresses the hope that you will always be friends, and shows a disposition to make profuse amends in general agreeableness for the consummate favor which she is forced to decline you. Not to put too fine a point upon it, it is bad enough to be refused anyhow you can arrange the circumstances, but to be refused as Lombard had been, with a petulance as wounding to his dignity as was the refusal itself to his affections, is to take a bitter pill with an asafotida coating.

In the limp and demoralized condition in which he was left, the only clear sentiment in his mind was that he did not want to meet her again just at present. So he sat for an hour or more longer out on the platform, and had become as thoroughly chilled without as he was within when at dusk the train stopped at a little three-house station for supper. Then he went into one of the forward day-cars, not intending to return to the sleeping-car till Miss Dwyer should have retired. When the train reached Ogden the next morning, instead of going on East he would take the same train back to San Francisco, and that would be the end of his romance. His engagement in New York had been a myth, and with Miss Dwyer's "No, sir," the only business with the East that had brought him on this trip was at an end.

About an hour after leaving the supper-station, the train suddenly stopped in the midst of the desert. Something about the engine had become disarranged, which it would take some time to put right. Glad to improve an opportunity to stretch their legs, many of the passengers left the cars and were strolling about, curiously examining the sagebrush and the alkali, and admiring the ghostly plain as it spread, bare, level, and white as an icebound polar sea, to the feet of the far-off mountains.

Lombard had also left the car, and was walking about, his hands in his overcoat pockets, trying to clear his mind of the wreckage that obstructed its working; for Miss Dwyer's refusal had come upon him as a sudden squall that carries away the masts and sails of a vessel and transforms it in a moment from a gallant bounding ship to a mere hulk drifting in an entangled mass of débris. Of course she had a perfect right to suit herself about the kind of a man she took for a husband, but he certainly had not thought she was such an utter coquette. If ever a woman gave a man reason to think himself as good as engaged, she had given him that reason, and yet she refused him as coolly as she would have declined a second plate of soup. There must be some truth, after all, in the rant of the poets about the heartlessness and fickleness of women, although he had always been used to consider it the merest bosh. Suddenly he heard the train moving. He was perhaps fifty yards off, and, grumbling anathemas at the stupidity of the conductor, started to run for the last car. He was not quite desperate enough to fancy being left alone on the Nevada desert with night coming on. He would have caught the train without difficulty, if his foot had not happened to catch in a tough clump of sage, throwing him violently to the ground. As he gathered himself up, the train was a hundred yards off, and moving rapidly. To overtake it was out of the question.

"Stop! ho! stop!" he yelled at the top of his lungs. But there was no one on the rear platform to see him, and the closed windows and the rattle of the wheels were sufficient to render a much louder noise than he could make inaudible to the dozing passengers. And now the engineer pulled out the throttle-valve to make up for lost time, and the clatter of the train faded into a distant roar, and its lights began to twinkle into indistinctness.

"Damnation!"

A voice fell like a falling star: "Gentlemen do not use profane language in ladies' company."

He first looked up in the air, as on the whole the likeliest quarter for a voice to come from in this desert, then around. Just on the other side of the track stood Miss Dwyer, smiling, with a somewhat constrained attempt at self-possession. Lombard was a good deal taken aback, but in his surprise he did not forget that this was the young lady who had refused him that afternoon.

"I beg your pardon," he replied, with a stiff bow; "I did not suppose that there were any ladies within

hearing."

"I got out of the car supposing there was plenty of time to get a specimen of sagebrush to carry home," she explained; "but when the cars started, although I was but a little way off, I could not regain the platform," which, considering that she wore a tie-back of the then prevalent fashion, was not surprising.

"Indeed!" replied Lombard, with the same formal manner.

"But won't the train come back for us?" she asked, in a more anxious voice.

"That will depend on whether we are missed. Nobody will miss me. Mrs. Eustis, if she hasn't gone to bed, may miss you."

"But she has. She went to bed before I left the car, and is asleep by this time."

"That 's unfortunate," was his brief reply, as he lit a cigar and began to smoke and contemplate the stars.

His services, so far as he could do anything for her, she should, as a lady, command, but if she thought that he was going to do the agreeable after what had happened a few hours ago, she was mightily mistaken.

There was a silence, and then she said, hesitatingly, "What are we going to do?"

He glanced at her. Her attitude and the troubled expression of her face, as well as her voice, indicated that the logic of the situation was overthrowing the jaunty self-possession which she had at first affected. The desert was staring her out of countenance. How his heart yearned toward her! If she had only given him a right to take care of her, how he would comfort her! what prodigies would he be capable of to succor her! But this rising impulse of tenderness was turned to choking bitterness by the memory of that scornful "No, sir." So he replied coldly, "I 'm not in the habit of being left behind in deserts, and I don't know what it is customary to do in such cases. I see nothing except to wait for the next train, which will come along some time within twenty-four hours."

There was another long silence, after which she said in a timid voice, "Had n't we better walk to the next station?"

At the suggestion of walking he glanced at her close-fitting dress, and a sardonic grin slightly twitched the corners of his mouth as he dryly answered, "It is thirty miles one way and twenty the other to the first station."

Several minutes passed before she spoke again, and then she said, with an accent almost like that of a child in trouble and about to cry, "I 'm cold."

The strong, unceasing wind, blowing from snowy mountain-caverns across a plain on which there was not the slightest barrier of hill or tree to check its violence, was indeed bitterly cold, and Lombard himself felt chilled to the marrow of his bones. He took off his overcoat and offered it to her.

"No," said she, "you are as cold as I am."

"You will please take it," he replied, in a peremptory manner; and she took it.

"At this rate we shall freeze to death before midnight," he added, as if in soliloquy. "I must see if I can't contrive to make some sort of a shelter with this sagebrush."

He began by tearing up a large number of bushes by the roots. Seeing what he was doing, Miss Dwyer was glad to warm her stiffened muscles by taking hold and helping; which she did with a vigor that shortly reduced her gloves to shreds and filled her fingers with scratches from the rough twigs. Lombard next chose an unusually high and thick clump of brush, and cleared a small space three feet across in the centre of it, scattering twigs on the uncovered earth to keep off its chill.

"Now, Miss Dwyer, if you will step inside this spot, I think I can build up the bushes around us so as to make a sort of booth which may save us from freezing."

She silently did as he directed, and he proceeded to pile the brush which they had torn up on the tops of the bushes left standing around the spot where they were, thus making a circular wall about three feet high. Over the top he managed to draw together two or three bushes, and the improvised wigwam was complete.

The moonlight penetrated the loose roof sufficiently to reveal to each other the faces and figures of the two occupants as they sat in opposite corners, as far apart as possible, she cold and miserable, he cold and sulky, and both silent. And, as if to mock him, the idea kept recurring to his mind how romantic and delightful, in spite of the cold and discomfort, the situation would be if she had only said Yes, instead of No, that afternoon. People have odd notions sometimes, and it actually seemed to him that his vexation with her for destroying the pleasure of the present occasion was something quite apart from, and in addition to, his main grievance against her. It might have been so jolly, and now she had spoiled it. He could have boxed her pretty little ears.

She wondered why he did not try to light a fire, but she wouldn't ask him another thing, if she died. In point of fact, he knew the sagebrush would not burn. Suddenly the wind blew fiercer, there came a rushing sound, and the top and walls of the wigwam were whisked off like a flash, and as they staggered to their feet, buffeted by the whirling bushes, a cloud of fine alkali-dust enveloped them, blinding their eyes, penetrating their ears and noses, and setting them gasping, sneezing, and coughing spasmodically. Then, like a puff of smoke, the suffocating storm was dissipated, and when they opened their smarting eyes there was nothing but the silent, glorious desolation of the ghostly desert around them, with the snow-peaks in the distance glittering beneath the moon. A sand-spout had struck them, that was all,—one of the whirling dust-columns which they had admired all day from the car-windows.

Wretched enough before, both for physical and sentimental reasons, this last experience quite demoralized Miss Dwyer, and she sat down and cried. Now, a few tears, regarded from a practical, middle-aged point of view, would not appear to have greatly complicated the situation, but they threw Lombard into a panic. If she was going to cry, something must be done. Whether anything could be done or not, something *must* be done.

"Don't leave me," she cried hysterically, as he rushed off to reconnoitre the vicinity.

"I 'll return presently," he called back.

But five minutes, ten minutes, fifteen minutes passed, and he did not come back. Terror dried her tears,

and her heart almost stopped beating. She had quite given him up for lost, and herself too, when with inexpressible relief she heard him call to her. She replied, and in a moment more he was at her side, breathless with running.

"I lost my bearings," he said. "If you had not answered me, I could not have found you."

"Don't leave me again," she sobbed, clinging to his arm.

He put his arms round her and kissed her. It was mean, base, contemptible, to take advantage of her agitation in that way, but she did not resist, and he did it again and again,—I forbear to say how many times.

"Is n't it a perfectly beautiful night?" he exclaimed, with a fine gush of enthusiasm.

"Is n't it exquisite?" she echoed, with a rush of sympathetic feeling.

"See those stars: they look as if they had just been polished," he cried.

"What a droll idea!" she exclaimed gleefully. "But do see that lovely mountain."

Holding her with a firmer clasp, and speaking with what might be styled a fierce tenderness, he demanded, "What did you mean, miss, by refusing me this afternoon?"

"What did you go at me so stupidly for? I had to refuse," she retorted smilingly.

"Will you be my wife?"

"Yes, sir; I meant to be all the time."

The contract having been properly sealed, Lombard said, with a countenance curiously divided between a tragical expression and a smile of fatuous complacency, "There was a clear case of poetical justice in your being left behind in the desert to-night. To see the lights of the train disappearing, leaving you alone in the midst of desolation, gave you a touch of my feeling on being rejected this afternoon. Of all leavings behind, there's none so miserable as the experience of the rejected lover."

"Poor fellow! so he should n't be left behind. He shall be conductor of the train," she said, with a bewitching laugh. His response was not verbal.

"How cold the wind is!" she said.

"Shall I build you another wigwam?"

"No; let us exercise a little. You whistle 'The Beautiful Blue Danube,' and we'll waltz. This desert is the biggest, jolliest ball-room floor that ever was, and I dare say we shall be the first to waltz on it since the creation of the world. That will be something to boast of when we get home. Come, let's dedicate the Great American Desert to Terpsichore."

They stepped out from among the ruins of their sagebrush booth upon a patch of hard, bare earth close to the railroad track. Lombard puckered his lips and struck up the air, and off they went with as much enthusiasm as if inspired by a first-class orchestra. Round and round, to and fro, they swept until, laughing, flushed, and panting, they came to a stop.

It was then that they first perceived that they were not without a circle of appreciative spectators. Sitting like statues on their sniffing, pawing ponies, a dozen Piute Indians encircled them. Engrossed with the dance and with each other, they had not noticed them as they rode up, attracted from their route by this marvelous spectacle of a pale-face squaw and brave engaged in a solitary war dance in the midst of the desert.

At sight of the grim circle of centaurs around them Miss Dwyer would have fainted but for Lombard's firm hold.

"Pretend not to see them; keep on dancing," he hissed in her ear. He had no distinct plan in what he said, but spoke merely from an instinct of self-preservation, which told him that when they stopped, the Indians would be upon them. But as she mechanically, and really more dead than alive, obeyed his direction and resumed the dance, and he in his excitement was treading on her feet at every step, the thought flashed upon him that there was a bare chance of escaping violence, if they could keep the Indians interested without appearing to notice their presence. In successive whispers he communicated his idea to Miss Dyer: "Don't act as if you saw them at all, but do everything as if we were alone. That will puzzle them, and make them think us supernatural beings, or perhaps crazy: Indians have great respect for crazy people. It's our only chance. We will stop dancing now, and sing awhile. Give them a burlesque of opera. I'll give you the cues and show you how. Don't be frightened. I don't believe they'll touch us so long as we act as if we did n't see them. Do you understand? Can you do your part?"

"I understand; I'll try," she whispered.

"Now," he said, and as they separated, he threw his hat on the ground, and, assuming an extravagantly languishing attitude, burst forth in a most poignant burlesque of a lovelorn tenor's part, rolling his eyes, clapping his hands, striking his breast, and gyrating about Miss Dwyer in the most approved operatic style. He had a fine voice and knew a good deal of music; so that, barring a certain nervousness in the performer, the exhibition was really not bad. In his singing he had used a meaningless gibberish varied with the syllables of the scale, but he closed by singing the words, "Are you ready now? Go ahead, then."

With that she took it up, and rendered the prima donna quite as effectively, interjecting "The Last Rose of Summer" as an aria in a manner that would have been encored in San Francisco. He responded with a few staccato notes, and the scene ended by their rushing into each other's arms and waltzing down the stage with abandon.

The Indians sat motionless on their horses, not even exchanging comments among themselves. They were evidently too utterly astonished by the goings on before them to have any other sentiment as yet beyond pure amazement. Here were two richly-dressed pale-faces, such as only lived in cities, out in the middle of an uninhabitable desert, in the freezing midnight, having a variety and minstrel show all to themselves, and, to make the exhibition the more unaccountable, without apparently seeing their auditors at all. Had they started up the show after being captured, Indian cunning would have recognized in it a device to save their lives, but the two had been at it before the party rode up,— had, in fact, first attracted attention by their gyrations, which were visible for miles out on the moony plain.

Lombard, without ever letting his eyes rest a moment on the Indians so as to indicate that he saw them, had still managed by looks askance and sweeping glances to keep close watch upon their demeanor, and noted with prodigious relief that his wild scheme was succeeding better than he had dared to hope. Without any break in the entertainment he communicated his reassurance to Miss Dwyer by singing, to the tune of "My Country, 'tis of Thee," the following original hymn:—

*"We 're doing admir'blee—
They 're heap much tickledee:
Only keep on."*

To which she responded, to the lugubrious air of "John Brown's Body:"—

*"Oh, what do you s'pose they 'll go for to do,
Oh, what do you s'pose they 'll go for to do,
Oh, what do you s'pose they 'll go for to do,
When we can sing no more?"*

A thing may be ridiculous without being amusing, and neither of these two felt the least inclination to smile at each other's poetry. After duly joining in the chorus of "Glory, Hallelujah!" Lombard endeavored to cheer his companion by words adapted to the inspiriting air of "Rally Bound the Flag, Boys." This was followed by a series of popular airs, with solos, duets, and choruses.

But this sort of thing could not go on forever. Lombard was becoming exhausted in voice and legs, and as for Miss Dwyer, he was expecting to see her drop from moment to moment: Indeed, to the air of "Way down upon the Swanee River" she now began to sing:—

*"Oh, dear! I can't bear up much longer:
I 'm tired to death;
My voice's gone all to pie-ee-ee-ces,
My throat is very sore."*

They must inevitably give out in a few minutes, and then he—and, terribly worse, she—would be at the mercy of these bestial savages, and this seeming farce would turn into most revolting tragedy. With this sickening conviction coming over him, Lombard cast a despairing look around the horizon to see if there were no help in their bitter extremity. Suddenly he burst forth, to the tune of "The Star-Spangled Banner: "—

*"Oh, say can you see,
Far away to the east,
A bright star that doth grow
Momentarily brighter?
'Tis the far-flashing headlight
Of a railroad-train:
Ten minutes from now
We shall be safe and sound."*

What they did in those ten minutes neither could tell afterward. The same idea was in both their minds,—that unless the attention of the Indians could be held until the train arrived, its approach would only precipitate their own fate by impelling the savages to carry out whatever designs of murder, insult, or capture they might have. Under the influence of the intense excitement of this critical interval it is to be feared that the performance degenerated from a high-toned concert and variety show into something very like a Howling-Dervish exhibition. But, at any rate, it answered its purpose until, after a period that seemed like a dozen eternities, the West-bound overland express with a tremendous roar and rattle drew up beside them, in response to the waving of Miss Dwyer's handkerchief and to Lombard's shouts.

Even had the Indians contemplated hostile intentions,—which they were doubtless in a condition of too great general stupefaction to do,—the alacrity with which the two performers clambered aboard the cars would probably have foiled their designs. But as the train gathered headway once more, Lombard could not resist the temptation of venting his feelings by shaking his fist ferociously at the audience which he had been so conscientiously trying to please up to that moment. It was a gratification which had like to have cost him dear. There was a quick motion on the part of one of the Indians, and the conductor dragged Lombard within the car just as an arrow struck the door.

Mrs. Eustis had slept sweetly all night, and was awakened the next morning an hour before the train reached Ogden by the sleeping-car porter, who gave her a telegram which had overtaken the train at the last station. It read:—

*Am safe and sound. Was left behind by your train last night,
and picked up by West-bound express. Will join you at Ogden
to-morrow morning.*

Jennie Dwyer.

Mrs. Eustis read the telegram through twice without getting the least idea from it. Then she leaned over and looked down into Jennie's berth. It had not been slept in. Then she began to understand. Heroically resisting a tendency to scream, she thus secured space for second thought, and, being a shrewd woman of the world, ended by making up her mind to tell no one about the matter. Evidently, Jennie had been having some decidedly unconventional experience, and the less publicity given to all such passages in young ladies' lives, the better for their prospects. It so happened that in the bustle attending the approach to the terminus and the prospective change of cars everybody was too busy to notice that any passengers were missing. At Ogden Mrs. Eustis left the train and went to a hotel. The following morning, a few minutes after the arrival of the Central Pacific train, Jennie Dwyer walked into her room, Lombard having stopped at the office to secure berths for the three to Omaha by the Union Pacific. After Jennie had given an outline account of her experiences, and Mrs. Eustis's equilibrium had been measurably restored by proper use of the smelling-salts,

the latter lady remarked, "And so Mr. Lombard was alone with you there all night? It's very unfortunate that it should have happened so."

"Why, I was thinking it very fortunate," replied Jennie, with her most childlike expression. "If Mr. Lombard had not been there, I should either have frozen to death, or by this time been celebrating my honeymoon as bride of a Piute chief."

"Nonsense, child! You know what I mean. People will talk; such unpleasant things will be said! I would n't have had it happen for anything. And when you were under my charge, too! Do hand me my salts."

"If people are going to say unpleasant things because I am out of an evening alone with Mr. Lombard," remarked Jennie, with a mischievous smile, "you must prepare yourself to hear a good deal said, my dear, for I presume this won't be the last time it will happen. We're engaged to be married."

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