

LITERATURE.

LONG I LOVED HER.

I loved her when the sunny light
Of youth was on her brow,
And not a trace of care was seen,
Which shades so darkly now.
When wreathed around those rosy lips
Lay smiles in beauty rare,
It seemed that nought could ever harm
A loveliness so fair.

I loved her when, in after years,
A change came o'er my heart,
Yet knew that earth could never more
One ray of joy impart.
The rose upon that fading cheek,
I saw must soon decay,
'Twas marked by earth's corroding care
To early pass away.

I loved her when that marble brow
Lay cold in Death's embrace,
When the sweet smile could play no more
Upon her angel face.
I mourn for her, so early lost,
Yet still the hope is given,
That we shall meet in Heaven above,
Where friends no more are given.

OLD TIME.

Men call me feeble, old, and gray—
My strength and vigor passed away;
But strong and stalwart still am I,
Nor frail my step, nor dim mine eye.

What are a thousand years to me?
But as a drop to yonder sea!
I've not yet reached my manhood's prime,
And laugh to hear men say "Old Time."

Let centuries pass, and ages roll—
The year that my last knell shall toll
So far away in future lies,
That ne'er a tear hath wet mine eyes.

No! I am joyous, gay, and free!
Leading a life of mirth and glee;
But, Man! note we'll each passing chime—
Short is thy stay in the realms of Time!

A BEAR STORY,
OR UNCLE BILL'S LEAP FOR LIFE.

"You've heard of bear fights, boys? Now try, every fellow here, just hold your tempers, and hear your uncle say a word or two on that subject."

"Go it, Uncle Bill, and if it's first-rate, we'll treat," exclaimed half a dozen listeners, drawing their chairs closer to the old veteran who had proposed a "yarn."

We had often listened to the tales of the old settlers, and with our usual interest excited, took a seat. The bar-room was soon in a quiet state—even the bar-keeper leaning forward over the counter to hear the old settler's story.

Uncle Bill, as he was familiarly termed by all that had seen him more than once, was a curious specimen of human nature; no one had ever learned from whence he came, whether he had been married, or anything else personal. He would talk to you all day long about the "Injuns," and the days he had fought under Harrison; but if you asked further, his answer was so very evasive that you became convinced that it was none of your business, or he turned it off in a hearty joke, and a queer comical look out of his left eye (he lost his right in an Injun fight) which was equal to the words,—"Who'd you say was green?"

So much for the narrator; and pulling his old rabbit-skin cap tolerably well over his eyes, and by sundry twistings about in the chair, he proceeded to amuse the young men by telling them some little of his experience.

"When I was a small chap, say about the size of Jack Benson, there, my father lived near Wheeling. He was one of the early settlers of that region, having made, although the Injuns bothered him a heap, considerable improvements; that is, people thought them so, in them days. He had by the assistance of his boys (I was the likeliest of the family,) cleared about 20 acres, and put in crops. He had the neatest log-cabin—about two rooms below, and a loft where he stowed away all of the lumber in one corner, while the end, which had a window in the gable, was taken up for a sleeping-room for me and a younger brother.

"The old man always had an idea that I was cut out for an eternal hard kind of a chap, and kept me at work, as he said, to keep me out of mischief, but the old fellow wasn't smart enough for his son; for if there was to be a huskin', quilting-match, coon-hunt, or general spree among the young 'uns, I'd lay perfectly still till I thought the old man was asleep, and then—you understand—my brother was afraid to tell—he'd catch one of the awfullest lickings that any chap ever dreamt of.

"Well, one night, the widow Jackson, about three miles from our house, gave out that she'd have a quilting, and wanted all the young folks to come and help her out of a drag. They fixed them things in them days just as they do now. You see the young fellows had no idea of quilting, but the gals wanted some one to go home with them—just as if they had no big brothers that came with them. When supper was over, I picked up my cap and made for the door.

"Bill, said the old man, "Bill where are you a-going at this time of day?"

"To widow Jackson's quilting," said I, just as unconcerned as if I didn't care about it.

"You can't go, Bill; I don't want to be waked up in the night to let you in."

"Well, dad, I'll stay at home," for I saw I had got to play possum.

"The old 'uns went to bed with the impression that I was there also, and sound asleep. About the right time I was off, and soon reached the quilting. All the boys for four or five miles around was there. But what took my eye, was a chap named Tom Phelps, strutting about in all his glory. Half of the gals in the room was trying to get him to look at them. I knew there was something in the wind, so I walks up to him—says I—

"Tom how d'ye do?"

"First-rate," says he, "only I'm mighty tired; he was a hard fellow to upset, but I done it for him."

"Who do you mean?" says I, for I didn't understand him.

"You didn't hear of the bear, then, that I killed to-day?" And so he sets down and tells me all about it. You see he was out hunting, and came across a bear. As good luck would have it, he took first rate aim, and upset the black varmint at one shot. He skinned the old feller, and now he calculated that he was one notch ahead of any chap in the settlement. And that was what all the fuss was about. He'd killed a bear, and every gal in the room thought him a real snorter.

"Just to please him, I acknowledged the corn. I could whip any boy about—but I had not killed a bear. But thinks I to myself, without saying anything, if—I don't kill a bear fore a week, then I'm switched, or else there aint none about.

"I didn't sleep much that night, when I went home, for I was thinking of glory, and shining among the gals.

"Two or three days after, there was a general understanding that there was bears about the neighborhood, and the neighbors set upon a day to turn out and give them a chase. The day before, I cleaned out my rifle, and prepared myself in all respects. We were to start off at daybreak. Setting my rifle by my bed-side, I hopped into bed, but found it hard work to sleep for a long time, and hardly got into a sound snooze when I heard a low, savage growl not far off. I was up and dressed before you could wink—out and ready to show fight. The moon was shining as bright as day, and not far from the house I saw the old feller making tracks for the woods.

"Not so fast!" says I, old feller, I've a word to say to you. I would like to know where all your friends are!"

But he didn't stop; and I after him as fast as my heels could carry me. I guess I chased him about a mile, when the old feller wheeled about, and seemed disposed, as the Injuns say, to have a talk. He reared himself upon his hind feet, and showing his teeth, seemed to say—Come on!"

"Drawing up my rifle, I took aim, with a rather unsteady hand, and cracked away. The old feller gave a most tremendous growl, and started towards me, limping a little, and showing his teeth and tongue in a manner that would have scared the best of you. I commenced a retreat in a slow manner, and felt for my powder-horn, but in my hurry when dressing, I had forgotten it, and then I was in a trying situation. Boys, if you only could have felt for about two minutes as I felt just about that time, you'd have the fever and ague shakes as long as you lived, and could recollect nothing about it; but you know in such times a feller don't stop to think of anything but which is the best track home, and how to get clear of the bear. The long chase had made me tired, but I took to my heels as the last resource in time of danger, bracing every nerve. Logs were no obstructions and gulleys which had looked rather broad at other times I got over as easily as you would hop over a twig, and and close after, growling in a hungry tone, came the bear. The sweat poured down my face, although it was winter, and cold enough. I could hear the steps of the bear close behind me, but had not courage enough to look back, for that wasn't the object with me; I was trying to get over the ground ahead as fast as I could. I heard his steps closer and closer, till it seemed to me that he trod almost on my heels. I felt like dropping down and giving up at once, but then I thought that dad would grieve himself to death, to think what had become of me, for I had hooked out.

"At last I felt his fore paw brush against my foot. I felt like saying my prayers; but raising all of my courage at one lick, I turned suddenly round and gave him a thundering blow over the head with my rifle, which slipped from my hand in the action. It didn't hurt the old feller much, though, for he after me again, but I had gained fifteen feet on him, which was considerable in such a fix as I was.

We were both tired, and moving along slowly, but doing our best licks. I was now within a quarter of a mile of the house, three or four times I yelled as loud as I could, but it did no good, and the varmint was gaining on me slowly. The blow which he got raised his spunk, and he yelled twice as loud as he had before. I could hear him gritting his teeth, and the flesh trembled on my bones. How I wished for my rifle again to hit him another lick over the head, or a knife, for then I might have closed in with, and put an end to the matter; but there was no assistance at my hand. You may think it strange that a feller could think of such things, but it's so. Why, I recollected every time I had looked out of the gable window, every orchard and water-melon patch I had helped to rob when a little shaver; and if you believe me, boys, I even thought of what Tom Benson and the other chaps would say, when they found out that a bear had come the giraffe over me.

Again I had the old varmint close upon me, and I tried to redouble my speed, and even then I thought we were a long time running a quarter of a mile. It seemed as long as a year to me. But one hope still remained; I was now about thirty yards from the fence around the cleared field, and I knew if I got over that all was safe. But it was very high, and my only salvation could be gained by clearing it at one jump. I didn't believe I

could do it, but I was bound to try at all events. The bear was close to me, and still gaining—the fence was high—was there no other way! I looked round to see if a rail was down in any place; twice I screamed aloud hoping to wake up the dog. I looked one way and another—the fence was thundering high, and if I should fail and fall, all hope was passed. When within three feet of it, I felt it was the last and only chance, so heaving myself till it seemed to me that my sinews would crack, I gave a desponding shriek and sprang into the air."

Uncle Bill seemed overcome with emotion, and he buried his head in his hand. I heard a suppressed sigh break from him. The stillness was broken at last, by all of us inquiring, in a low tone, what was the result of the leap. He raised up his head and drawing off his cap, brushed back his grey hair and said slowly—

"Do you see that scar?" pointing to what had had evidently been a deep gash. "I shall carry that," he continued, with me to the grave. With that mark I was kept in bed with a brain fever, and it was some time before I went again to hunt bears.

"But how did you escape?" said I.

"I'll explain; you know that we put up rough pine boards for rafters in our log-cabins?"

"But what has that to do with the story?"

"Keep cool, my young friend; you understand what I said. My bed was close to the low roof. When the bear was after me, you must be certain I wasn't thinking of anything except jumping. I leaped at least three feet from the bed, and found myself lying on my back."

"But what was you doing in bed?"

"Dreaming of bears, and you see like a fool I jumped up, and came near butting my brains out against the rafters."

"Now Bill!"

"It's a fact by hokey! Don't you believe it? Ask my mother," said he, putting on his queer comical look.

We treated.

DREAMING ON WEDDING CAKE.

A bachelor editor out west, who had received from the fair hand of the bride a piece of elegant wedding cake to dream on, this gives the result of his experience:

We put it under our pillow, shut our eyes sweetly as an infant, and, blessed with an easy conscience, soon snored prodigiously. The God of dreams gently touched us, and lo! in fancy we were married! Never was an editor so happy. It was "my love," "dearest," "sweetest," ringing in our ears every moment. Oh! that the dream had broken off here. But no! some evil genius put it into the head of our ducky to have pudding for dinner. Well, the pudding moment arrived, and a huge slice almost obscured from sight the plate before us.

"My dear," said we, fondly, "did you make this?"

"Yes, love—ain't it nice?"

"Glorious—the best bread pudding I ever tasted in my life."

"Plum pudding, ducky," suggested my wife.

"O, no, dearest, bread pudding; I always was fond of 'em."

"Call that bread pudding!" exclaimed my wife, while her pretty lips curled slightly with contempt.

"Certainly, my dear—reckon I've had enough at the Sherwood House, to know bread pudding, my love, by all means."

"Husband, this is really too bad. Plum pudding is twice as hard to make as bread pudding, more expensive, and is a great deal better. I say this is plum pudding, and my pretty wife's brow flushed with excitement."

"My love, my sweet, my dear love," exclaimed we, soothingly, "do not get angry; I'm sure it's very good, if it is bread pudding."

"But, sir, I say it ain't bread pudding."

"And, madam, I say it is bread pudding."

"You mean, low wretch!" fondly replied my wife in a high tone, "you know that it is plum pudding!"

"Then ma'am, it is so meanly put together, and so badly burned that the 'old one' himself wouldn't know it. I tell you, madam, most distinctly and emphatically that I will not be contradicted; that it is bread pudding, and the meanest kind at that."

"It is plum pudding," shrieked my wife as she hurled a glass of claret in my face, the glass itself tapping the claret from my nose.

"Bread pudding!" gasped we, pluck to the last, and grasping a roasted chicken by the left leg.

"Plum pudding!" rose above the din, as I had a distinctive preception of feeling two plates smash across my head.

"Bread pudding!" we groaned in a great rage, as the chicken left our hand, and flying with a swift wing across the table, landed in madam's bosom.

"Plum pudding!" resounded the war-cry from the enemy, as the gravy dish took us where we had been depositing the first part of our dinner, and a plate of beets landed upon our white vest.

"Bread pudding, for ever!" shouted we in defiance, dodging the soup tureen, and falling beneath its contents.

"Plum pudding!" yelled the amiable spouse, as noticing our misfortune, she determined to keep us down by piling upon our head the dishes with no very gentle hand. Then in rapid succession followed the warcries. "Plum pudding!" shrieked she with every dish.

"Bread pudding!" in smothered tones, came up from the pile in reply. Then it was "plum pudding," in rapid succession, the last cry growing feebler, till, just as I can distinctly recollect, it had grown to a whisper.

"Plum pudding!" resounded like thunder, followed by a tremendous crash, as my wife leaped upon the pile with her delicate feet, and commenced jumping up and down, when, thank heaven, we awoke and thus saved our life. We shall never dream on wedding cake again—that's the moral!