

Poetry.

STANZAS.

BY J. H.

The young, the young! that must be old!
How little of such wreck they dream,
When launched on life's delusive stream,
Or that the wing shall ever fold
On which they soar so blithely now,
Or the glad spirit ever bow
Beneath a doom so cold!

The wayworn, aged one they see,
Nor linger in the race
To think that like that withered face
Their own shall one day be!
And left, of all youth's laughing hours,
Its fairy wreath of gems and flowers,
Nought—save their memory!

The old, the old! that have been young!
Strangely such memories must awake,
Even as though buried voices spake,
Or spirit hand were flung
At dead of night o'er chords that long
Unused have been to touch or song,
Neglected and unstrung!

Steals the dim vision slowly on
The things that were—the days of yore,
The lost, earth never shall restore.
Lo! as they gaze, 'tis gone!
And Memory drops her head again,
Shrinks from the throbbing waking pain;
She sleeps—the spell is done.

—Chambers's Journal.

Select Tale.

SHOT IN THE THROAT.

A TALE OF FRONTIER LIFE.

BY ANSON P. CLIFFORD.

Many years ago, when Kentucky was one great wilderness, and the red man roamed freely over its rich lands, and hunted by the margins of its many rivers, Daniel Boone left his home in Maryland, and plunged alone into the deep wilds of that region. A while he lived all alone in the forests; then his brother went with him, and together they explored the country as far as Cumberland River; then more men came, and finally the old pioneer had a noble band at his back. With bold and fearless steps, Daniel Boone cleared his way through the opposing hosts of red men, only once a prisoner, and then escaping as no other man could escape—travelling one hundred and sixty miles through the dense forest in four days, all alone, and only eating one meal during all that time! But at length the population became too thick for the adventurous pioneer; he could not live where he could smell the smoke of a neighbor's cabin; and when his hair was gray, he shouldered his faithful rifle and struck off for the deeper wilds and solitudes of the Missouri, where he lived alone among the great trees.

"We saw him," says an eminent traveller, "on those banks, with thin gray hair, a fine forehead, a cheerful expression, a singularly bold conformation of countenance and breast, and a sharp commanding voice. He appeared to us the same Daniel Boone, if we may use the expression, jerked, and dried to a high preservation, that we had figured as the wanderer in the woods, and the slayer of Bears and Indians."

Early one spring, Daniel Boone, in company with five others, passed on near to where the town of Greensburg now stands, and there, finding a fertile spot upon the banks of the Green River, they determined to encamp for the season. They knew that the Indians were all about them, so their first work was to build a stout log cabin. They made it of Elm logs, and left two loop holes upon each side and end, which would not only serve to admit light in the daytime, but also for shooting purposes when besieged by the red men. When this was done, they prepared a small lot of land for corn, and having planted it, they turned their attention to the wild beasts, of which there were plenty in the neighborhood.

The youngest man in the party was Lyman Markham. He was only five and twenty, and this was his first season in the forest. He was a native of Virginia, of a good family, and naturally of a warm, adventurous temperament. His highest ambition for several years, had been to follow the lead of Daniel Boone. Greg Lottel was also in the party. He had often been asked if his name was not Gregory, but he spurned the insinuation. His parents, he said, were not such fools as to give him so long a name. Greg was five-and-forty; a warm-hearted, impulsive, generous man—rough in manners, and stout and powerful in frame. He had spent most of his life in the woods, and could feel at home nowhere else.

One day, the party were out after an old bear, which had been doing mischief about their cabin. They had been out after the same bear twice before, but the brute had managed to escape them. A dozen times had Lyman Markham said that he would give a good bear for just one shot at the fellow. This time, they came in sight of Bruin not half a mile from the camp, and the foolish fellow knew no better than to climb up into a tree.

"Stand back! stand back!" cried Lyman.—"That bear's mine—mine to shoot."

So they all stood back, and Lyman crept up to the tree. He waited till he could get fair sight at the fellow's head, and then he raised his heavy rifle. Of course, the lookers on were sure that the game was just as good as dead. Presently, the youth fired, and as the sharp report rang out upon the air, the bear leaped down from the tree and fled into the woods. Poor Lyman stood like one petrified. But a cry of pursuit from Boone started him to his senses. The party passed on after the fugitive, and ere long they came up to him again. This time Greg Lottel fired, and the bear dropped. They found that Lyman's ball had struck the fore shoulder and glanced off, lacking only one inch of the mortal point.

"Never mind," said Boone, laying his hand upon Lyman's shoulder, "I've made worse shots than that myself, when I've been too sure."

"That's it," cried the youth. "If I hadn't been so sure, I shouldn't have missed him."

"Pooh!" uttered Greg, lightly.

That was all he said, but it cut Lyman to the quick. Greg was an old hunter, and of such the youth wanted their praise. He didn't stop to think that the simple word might have been spoken in fun—he felt it as a slur upon his skill as a marksman. However, nothing was further said at the time.

The dead bear was carried to the camp, and after the skin had been taken off, and the best meat selected, the rest was given to the dogs. Three days after this, while Boone and one other of the party were out, Lyman Markham made allusion to his shot at the bear.

"'Twas too bad," he uttered. "If I hadn't been so mighty sure, I might have hit him right."

"Pooh, youngster," said Greg, with a smile, "you're only a beginner yet. But you'll come to it by-and-by."

"Only a beginner yet!" echoed the hot-blooded youth. "By the crack of powder I can shoot as well as you."

"Not quite. You never saw me miss a bear."

"Nor you never saw me miss before."

"Cause I never seed you shoot afore."

At this, the other two laughed heartily.

"By heavens, Greg Lottel, I can shoot as well as you!" the youth cried. The loud laugh had grated harshly upon his already discordant feelings, and he was growing angry.

But Greg only laughed boisterously at his assertion, and this added fuel to the flame already burning in Lyman's bosom.

"Greg Lottel," he cried, "you're a braggart!"

"Am I?" uttered the elder hunter, catching the spark in his turn.

"You are just that, and if you know what's healthy you'll keep your tongue off me."

"Eh, youngster—you're getting a bit riled; but you may be fetched to your trumps one of these days. What would you do if a dozen Indians was yellin' about ye?"

"Just as I'd do if a dozen such fellows as you were doing the same thing."

"Eh!"

"Perhaps you'd like to try it," said Lyman.

"Look here, my boy," returned Greg, beginning to get about as full as he could hold; "if you're wise you'll keep that tongue of yours a bit more quiet."

"Don't blow, Greg Lottel. You've insulted me when you had no cause, and I'm not fond of it.—If you are such a shot I can give you a mark. Just step out to the river's bank and pace off your own distance, and I'm your man. We'll take shot for shot."

"You mean a kind of a duel, eh?"

"Yes—just so."

"Well, boy—I shan't do it."

"Then you're a coward as well as a braggart!" uttered Lyman.

The youth had now become utterly mad. He believed that Greg was making sport of him, and trying to lower him in the estimation of the others. The very fact of his having missed the bear was galling, and this other matter was unbearable.

The old hunter instantly started to his feet, and seized his rifle. Those were words he could not stand.

"Come on!" he whispered. "You shall have your own way for once. Greg Lottel is not a coward, though he might wish to spare the life of an inexperienced boy. But come."

"Hullo! What's all this?" cried Boone, coming in just at this moment. "What's to pay now?"

"Never mind," returned Greg, attempting to pass out.

"But hold! You're mad. What is it? Banks what is this?"

The man thus appealed to, who was a veteran hunter, gave his leader a full account of the whole affair. Boone looked first upon Greg, and then upon Lyman, and finally he said:

"Now look here, boys—this is just nothin' but a piece of nonsense. But keep your tempers, for you'll have a chance to try them before long. The red-skins are close here. Mind that."

"Are the injuns here?" asked Greg quickly.

"They be, close upon us," answered Boone. "I saw their tracks to-day, and you may be sure they'll show 'emselves before long. So now put up your rifles, and let 'em rest till you want them for some better purpose."

Greg Lottel put his weapon up without a word, for he had been too long with the old pioneer to disobey him,—not from fear was this feeling, but more from a deep worshipful respect for his dauntless leader. But Lyman Markham gave up not so easily. He took another step towards the door, and grasped his rifle more firmly. Boone could read every thought of the youth, and for an instant his sharp eye flashed; but the spark went quickly out, and then, while a strange smile passed over his face, he said:

"Looky'e, Lyman. I know how hot your blood is, but you'd better keep your heart for the hour when you'll need it; and just let me tell ye, if ye stay in the woods as long I have, you'll find not much temper left to throw away. Now, put up your rifle. Put it up, I say."

Slowly and reluctantly the youth obeyed. His eyes were downcast, not because he had been thus spoken to by his leader, but because he began to feel ashamed of the part he had been acting.

"Now," resumed Boone, "let me make you a proposition. As sure as fate the redskins will soon come upon us. You shall each choose your own mark upon the red varmints, and we'll see who shoots the best. Mind, now—I shall be the judge."

This was deemed satisfactory, and the youth stepped towards Greg and extended his hand.

"All right," the old hunter exclaimed; and in a few minutes more a visitor could not have told that anything unpleasant had happened.

Towards the middle of the forenoon, on the following day, Boone came to the cabin, and bade his men get ready their rifles and ammunition.

"Are the Injuns comin'?" asked Greg.

"They are, sartin," responded Boone. "Just now I saw a fox cross the path close by the river, and he had an arrow in him. Then I put my ear to the ground, and I could hear the redskins' tramp as plain as sunlight."

Without further remark, the men got down their rifles and cleaned them where they needed cleaning. Boone had four rifles, Greg three, and the others two each. They were all carefully loaded; and then the ammunition was placed where it could be handy in case any of them got out, though that was not probable, as each man could carry nearly a hundred pounds. The heavy door of the lodge was closed and barred, and then they awaited the coming of the enemy.

"Now, boys, choose your marks," said the pioneer.

"I'll put every ball I send into the victim's throat," said Lyman, with a proudly flashing eye.

"Every Indian I shoot shall be found with a ball in his throat, and so directed that it shall cut the spine of the neck. This day I'll prove my rifle good, or I'll never lay claim to be a markman again."

"And you, Greg—where'll you take 'em?"

"Right in the temple—either the right or the left."

"Then the rest of us will pull for their hearts," replied the leader.

Nearly an hour passed after this ere a sound was heard, and Boone said that the Indians were waiting till they supposed the whites would be at dinner. But they came, at length, and they came in a host. At first, only one or two were seen peeping out from the woods, but ere long, they all showed themselves, and there were certainly two hundred of them. They came up on all sides, completely surrounding the cabin, and yelling like so many raving fiends.

The cabin was about twenty feet square, the walls made of logs over a foot thick, and ten feet high. No bullet could penetrate here. The loop holes were eight inches square, and about four and a half feet from the ground.

"Now, boys," uttered Boone, "let every shot count a dead man. The varmints think they have

an easy job, but I've been in worse odds than this, and seen the scamps go off second best too.—Don't stand in front of the holes if you can help it. Now up with your mummies, and then at them!"

Those "mummies" were simply eight sticks stuck up, one at each loophole, with a firmly twisted ball of stripped hide upon the head of each. These balls were about the size of a man's head, and the hunters placed their hats and caps upon them, and as they came just even with the apertures, the Indians would naturally enough take them for men. They were so arranged that they could be put out of sight at will.

The first shot fired was by Lyman, and an Indian staggered and fell. In an instant more four more shots followed, and four more Indians bit the dust. Not more than twenty of them had fire arms, and they at once commenced firing at the objects which they supposed to be men, through the loop-holes. These fellows with rifles were first picked off, and then attention was turned to the others. But as those who had the fire arms dropped, the weapons were seized by the live ones. The hunters took their aim obliquely through the loop-holes, and thus avoided all direct shots from without. A dozen savages rushed upon the door with their tomahawks, but the stout fabric was not in much danger; and besides, from the further loop-hole on that side, they could be picked off from about the door as fast as a rifle could be loaded and fired.

Lyman Markham seemed to know but one thing, and that was, that as fast as he could load his piece an Indian throat was pierced. Not a nerve in his body quivered, nor did a muscle relax. With a quick, intuitive wit, he avoided all shots from the enemy, and aimed his own weapon under cover of the mummy. Thrice had he changed rifles, as one became so hot he could not use it, and thrice had he simply stopped to wipe the streaming sweat from his brow.

"My salvation of my soul!" uttered Boone, clapping his hand upon the youth's back, "how do you load your rifle?"

"By Inver-power," returned Lyman, as with one powerful sweep he rammed home a ball. "Aren't they thinnin'?"

"Droffully," answered the old pioneer, at the same instant clapping his rifle to his shoulder and shooting down an Indian, who had just raised his head to the nearest loophole.

Now six smart men, who are shooting a man at each fire, and loading and firing as fast as they can, will soon dispose of a hundred men. Suppose they load and fire, each man, twice a minute—which an experienced hunter can do with great ease, and follow it up—then we have twelve men falling each minute, and in fifteen minutes we should have one hundred and eighty. But allow that only half these shots kill, and even then we have a fatal work going on. Some people have hardly been prepared to give credence to the stories which have been told of Daniel Boone and his companions; but, in sober truth, an eye-witness would not dare tell half the actual occurrences, so wondrous were they of physical prowess.

Boone received an arrow in his left shoulder, toward the middle of the action, but he took no other notice of it than to pull the arrow out.

Finally the savages moved off to consult, and then the hunters sat down to rest. They might have fired with deadly effect still, but they were fatigued. Boone counted those who thus met in council, and he could make but twenty eight of them. Several times, during the engagement, the Indians had tried to procure something combustible, with which to set the lodge on fire, but they had not succeeded.

"Let's at 'em once more," said Boone, at the end of some five minutes: and hardly had he spoken, when Lyman's rifle again spoke its death-note.

The savages waited for five shots, and then with an unearthly yell, they fled from the place. In half an hour more, the hunters went forth, to view the result.

It was a ghastly sight upon which they gazed, but they looked upon the corpses of the redskins about the same as they would have looked upon so many dead bears or wolves. They were counted, and one hundred and forty-one savages lay dead upon the greensward, and upon the corn patch!—The engagement had lasted very near an hour; and the only supposition upon which the savages could have so long remained exposed to so murderous a fire was that they imagined there were a great number of men in the lodge, and every time those "mummies" were bent down out of sight, they supposed so many men were shot, and that the re-appearing of the cheat was the coming of a fresh man.

With anxious, nervous movements, Lyman Markham helped turn over the corpses, and as one after another came up with a shot in the throat, a