

relentless, sparing neither man, woman, nor child. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that the country was *their* country, that they were fighting for a place in the sun, for their very existence, at a time when the doctrine of "self-determination" had never been heard of, and when possession was to the strongest.

Besides these we have the picture of the trapper, living in the fastnesses of the hills, friendly with the Indians, friendly with the railmakers, though he "hated that great, shining steel band of progress connecting East and West. Every ringing sledge-hammer blow had sung out the death-knell of the trapper's calling. What one group of greedy men had accomplished, others would imitate; and the grass of the plains would be burned, the forests blackened, the fountains dried up in the valleys, and the wild creatures of the mountains driven and hunted and exterminated. The end of the buffalo had come; the end of the Indian was in sight; and that of the fur-bearing animal and his hunter must follow soon with the hurrying years."

And following in the wake of the railroad were the camps—centres of wickedness, where the men spent their money in gambling, drink, and lust. Yet, even Beauty Stanton, the owner of a dancing saloon and brothel, in wicked Benton, had her moment of self-sacrifice; and the girl Ruby, who overwhelmed with remorse took her own life, absented herself from the dancing hall, and denied herself to all on that last night of her life.

Read the description of the arrival of the pay-train in Benton, when a mob of five thousand men congregated round the station. "The crowd of watching, waiting men, saw smoke rise over the horizon line, and a dark, flat, creeping object. Through the big throng ran a restless murmur. The train was in sight. It might have been a harbinger of evil, for a subtle change, nervous, impatient, brooding, visited that multitude. A slow movement closed up the disintegrated crowd, and a current of men worked forward to encounter resistance and opposing currents. They had begun to crowd for advantageous positions closer to the pay-car to be the first in line.

"The train arrived. Troops alighting preserved order near the pay car, and out of the dense mob a slow stream of men flowed into the car at one end and out again at the other.

"Bates, a giant digger and a bully, was the first man in the line, the first to get his little share of the fortunes in gold passing out of the car that day. Long before half of that mob had received its pay, Bates lay dead upon a sanded floor, killed in a drunken brawl."

When darkness fell Benton's streets were full of drunken men, staggering back along the road they marched in. "Under its cover soldiers slunk away sobered and ashamed, and murderous bandits waited in ambush, and brawny porters dragged men by the heels, and young gamblers in the flush of success hurried to new games, and broken wanderers sought some place to rest, and a long line of the vicious of mixed dialect, and of

different colours, filed down in the dark to the tents of lust."

The pity of it that such a place should afford the only means of recreation to the men laying the line—men filled with a great ideal, ready to lay down their lives for its accomplishment. Men like Casey who splendidly sacrificed his life to avert the destruction of the General's train by the Sioux. Men who died to preserve the innocence of a girl, men true to their "pard," loyal through and through. "Frank, he's my pard," protested one man. "I couldn't do no dirt to Frank."

They were rough, crude times, when life was held cheap and murder common. But, have we improved on them so much, after all? We do not slay with sword and gun, the law sees to that; but there are those who smile in the face of the "friend" they are out to destroy, and metaphorically stab him deliberately in the back without compunction, a contemptible method of warfare which would be scorned by the honest backwoodsman.

Running through this tale of adventure and splendid courage is the love-story of Warren Neale and Allie Lee, a story which, in spite of many misadventures, ended happily. They were married by the minister of God whose prayer had followed the joining of the rails, and to the old trapper fell the joy and the honour of giving the bride away, and of receiving her kiss as though he had been her father.

The last chapter shows us a band of Sioux Indians on a promontory of the Black Hills, watching upon the plain below a long, low, moving object, leaving a trail of smoke. It was a train on the railroad. It came from the East and it crept towards the West.

"The chief was old and wise, taught by sage and star and mountain and wind and the loneliness of the prairie-land. He recognised a superior race, but not a nobler one. White men would glut the treasures of water and earth. The Indian had been born to hunt his meat, to repel his red foes, to watch the clouds and serve his gods. But these white men would come like a great flight of grasshoppers to cover the length and breadth of the prairie land. The buffalo would roll away, like a dust cloud, in the distance, and never return. No meat for the Indian; no grass for his mustang; no place for his home! The Sioux must fight till he died or be driven back into waste places where grief and hardship would end him.

"Red and dusky the sun was setting beyond the desert. The old chief swept aloft his arm, and then in his acceptance of the inevitable bitterness, he stood in magnificent austerity, sombre as death, seeing in this railroad train creeping, fading into the ruddy sunset a symbol of the destiny of the Indian—vanishing—vanishing—vanishing."

P. G. Y.

A WORD FOR THE WEEK.

"The strong, the healthy wills in any life must determine to pursue the common good at any personal cost—at daily sacrifice."

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

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