

John A. Dix, William M. Evarts, Judge Shipman, ex-Judge Bosworth, Judge Blatchford, H. T. Morgan, Lucius Hopkins and George W. Lane. Among the many prominent persons present were Judge Rapallo, Judge Neilson, Judge Curtis, Judge Donohue, Judge Wallace, Judge Davis, Chief-Justice Daly, ex-Judge White, Nathaniel Jarvis, United States Commissioner Osborn, Commissioner Stillwell, Judge Ingraham, Erastus A. Benedict, John I. Davenport, John H. Shields, United States District-Attorney Bliss, Joel B. Erhardt, Assistant District-Attorney Tenny, United States Marshal Fisk, Truman G. Smith, Clarence Seward, Joseph H. Choate, Judge Lawrence, and Commissioner Wood of the Board of Education.

### LAVERDER.

HOW prone we are to hide and hoard  
Each little token love has stored,  
To tell of happy hours:  
We lay aside with tender care  
A tattered book, a curl of hair,  
A bunch of faded flowers.

When Death has led with pulseless hand  
Our darlings to the silent land,  
A while we sit bereft.  
But time goes on: anon we rise,  
Our dead being buried from our eyes,  
We gather what is left.

The books they loved, the songs they sang,  
The little flute whose music rang  
So cheerily of old:  
The pictures we have watched them paint,  
The last-plucked flower, with odor faint,  
That fell from fingers cold.

We smooth and fold with reverent care  
The robes they, living, used to wear;  
And painful pulses stir,  
As o'er the relics of our dead,  
With bitter rain of tears, we spread  
Pale purple lavender.

And when we come in after years,  
With only tender April tears  
On cheeks once white with care,  
To look at treasures put away  
Despairing on that far-off day,  
A subtle scent is there.

Dew-wet and fresh we gathered them,  
These fragrant flowers—now every stem  
Is bare of all its bloom.  
Tear-wet and sweet we strewed them here,  
To lend our relics sacred, dear,  
Their beautiful perfume.

That scent abides on book and lute,  
On curl and flower, and with its mute  
But eloquent appeal,  
It wins from us a deeper sob  
For our lost dead—a sharper throb  
Than we are wont to feel.

It whispers of the long ago,  
Its love, its loss, its aching woe,  
And buried sorrows stir;  
And tears like those we shed of old  
Roll down our cheeks as we behold  
Our faded lavender.

### IN MID AIR.

YOU'LL not get back to Chili that way, señor; not with a whole throat, that is. I'd sooner go from here across the Pampas, alone, in spite of the wild Indian horsemen and their fire-hardened spears, than I would try the smooth, broad pass of San Felipe, over the Cordilleras, here at hand. Five diligences and carrossas riddled in nine days! And not a soldier to protect the road! The saints be good to us, for the government of the Republic does little for us, here, to the west. Only, if I were you, Don Carlos Digby, I would not be in too great a hurry to make acquaintance with Diego and his band."

These were the facts of the case: I, the Charles Digby to whom my excellent friend, Don Miguel Lopez, storekeeper and alcalde of the pretty town of San Juan, had addressed the above well-intended warning, was simply a young Englishman, who had been long enough in South America to be fluent in Spanish speech, and to have learned something of the peculiarities of the country. I was—being by profession an engineer—superintendent or manager of the Great Hermandad Silver Mine, on the western or Chilean side of the southern chain of the Andes, and I had crossed the mountains to San Juan to arrange for the purchase and transport of provisions and stores.

But the homeward road had suddenly become dangerous and difficult. A band of robbers—headed by a noted leader called Diego, who had once, I was told, been a captain in the army of the Banda Oriental, but had rebelled, or refused to join in a military *pronunciamiento*, I forget which—were committing great cruelties on the ordinary road that led across the mountains. In little more than a week they had murdered above a hundred travelers, had robbed all, stopped several, and put a few, who had offered resistance or were suspected of possessing hoarded money, to the torture. Such episodes of life in New Spain were too common to excite much surprise. Captain Diego was merely endeavoring, by the vigor of his early atrocities, to invest his name with a wholesome halo of terror, immediately profitable in the form of plunder and ransom, and which might not be so easily bought off on their own terms, and taken into government employment as deputy-corregidores and police officials; but, in the interval, the little town of San Juan was crowded with travelers, unwilling to incur the risk of proceeding on their journey.

Among those thus detained was a young English lady, who, with her parents and her young brother, were on their way to Chili from Buenos Ayres, where they resided. She was a very beautiful girl, whose golden hair and bright complexion looked all the lovelier because the style of her beauty contrasted so forcibly with the raven locks, dark flashing eyes and sallow tint of the olive-skinned Spanish señoras. I met with her more than once during my strolls through the streets and the plaza, but we were not acquainted, and it was by the merest accident that I learned that the name of the family was Trevor.

At last I lost all patience, and, chafing at the delay, yet unwilling to run into the lion's mouth by attempting the Felipe Pass, I hired a mule and a guide, and, leaving the stores I had bought to follow me at leisure, I set off for the more rugged and rarely frequented passage called Las Nevadas, or The Snows, an especially toilsome route, leading the pilgrim over some of the highest ground in the Southern Andes, but which was reasonably secure from brigands.

The first day's march was easy and uneventful. The pueblo, or cultivated plain, was crossed, and

then came the gradual ascent of the spurs of the mountain-range, dotted as they were with hamlets, fields, and here and there the silent shaft and heaps of dross and scoria that indicated the situation of some abandoned mine.

"It's to-morrow, Señor Ingles," said Antonio, the guide, a young Indian from the highlands above us, "that our real work will begin. This is a mere promenade, but we must trudge hard and long to clear the distance, from the halting-place to Hermandad, betwixt dawn and dark."

We slept at a farmhouse, and, before noon on the ensuing day, I had reason to agree that Antonio had not overrated the labors of the ascent. The path was steep, rugged, and broken, and it led amidst the most savage ravines and inaccessible heights of the stony Cordillera. No four-footed creature less surefooted than a mule could safely have ventured to carry a load up so narrow and perilous a track as that, which would like a white snake among the beetling precipices and yawning gulfs which make up the most characteristic features of the scenery of the higher Andes. Above us there soared volcanic peaks, crested with unsullied snow, and with flanks seamed and scarred by the lava-floods of ages ago; while here and there would open out some darkling glen, choked by such a mass of tangled vegetation as to render it all but impenetrable to man or beast. There was but little sign of life, save that here and there some huge bird of prey, perched on a towering rock, seemed to survey tableland and valley as if to espy its destined spoil. The few villagers whom we met—miners, for the most part—were melancholy-eyed Indians, clad in garments of undyed wool, and wearing sandals of a quaint pattern, who returned my greetings civilly enough.

We made brave progress, and, after many a scramble in places where a fall or a false step might have entailed a drop of several hundred feet upon sharp stones or thorny shrubs, found ourselves, earlier than Antonio had anticipated, near the summit of the wild pass. Early as we were, however, we found ourselves preceded by another party of travelers, whose forms we could see on the narrow road that wound in irregular curves overhead.

"A had bit that, English sir!" said my guide, as he made me remark how slow was now the progress of the group in our front, and how broken and steep the track.

"They are just coming to the Paso del Diablo, the worst arrow-flight of the whole road. Look, if it isn't just like a bookshelf in the curia's parlor, yonder in my village: only the books have the best of it. They rest safely there; whereas, on the Paso del Diablo, a stumble or a gust of wind may send you—see!" And he tossed over the edge of the precipice a large pebble, which awoke the slumbering echoes of the hills as it leaped from crag to crag into the giddy depths, too far for the eye to follow.

The Paso had really some fanciful resemblance to a bookshelf, being simply a ledge of bare stone, running along the face of a tall, gaunt rock, while the road, being narrow and utterly unprovided with rail, or bank, or parapet, overlooked the awful abyss below, at the bottom of which, faintly visible, a torrent gurgled among its boulders of water-worn stone. An uglier place of passage, or one more calculated to shake weak nerves, I had never seen, and I could well imagine that, in time of snow or storm, to attempt it would have been a foolhardy exploit. In fine weather and broad daylight, however, it could, no doubt, be traversed in tolerable security.

I looked forward; my eye caught the flutter of ladies' dresses and the outline of several figures, most of them being mounted on mules. Now, a mule is very wary and sure of foot, and partially deserves the eloquent praise which, in prose and poetry, has been bestowed on that obstinate animal. But when you are quick of eye and lithe of limb, you, as a man, are by far fitter for safely treading an awkward path than any beast less agile than the hill-fox or the ibex can be. Accordingly, I preferred walking where the track was slippery and the risk of stumbling considerable, and had dismounted before approaching my friend Antonio's "bookshelf." The travelers in front were all mounted, and pushed on, as the width of the path dictated, in Indian file. First of all rode, as I judged, a girl, whose plumed hat danced gayly in the yellow sunlight; then came a stripling on a mule; and after these followed five other persons, two mounted, three on foot. Those on foot were talking loudly and gesticulating vehemently. Their harsh laughter came faintly back to us as we advanced.

"They have given drink to their guides, the imprudent ones!" muttered Antonio, shaking his head. "Lucky for them that it is fine weather, and a peon from the poblas, who knew the road, could—Ay de mí!" And he dropped on his knees, and began to tell the beads of his rosary with a passionate fervor, which would have astonished me more had not my business brought me much into contact with the strange, impressionable race to which he belonged. I knew that there must be a cause for this sudden outbreak of religious zeal.

"What is it?" I asked, impatiently. "Leave off, man, mumbling out the names of the saints, for one minute, and give me a plain answer. What is wrong?"

Antonio jerked his elbow toward the suddenly overcast sky. Around the peak of the giant volcano, to northward, heavy clouds had gathered; while, elsewhere, a thin white film, like flax from the spindles of the Fates, spanned the turquoise blue of the southern heaven.

"What is it?" I asked again, as I noticed that the mule, snorting, and evidently frightened, seemed trying to squeeze itself against the rocky wall.

"It is coming—coming!" cried Antonio, hoarsely.

"What is coming?" I exclaimed angrily. "Tell me, scoundrel, or—"

"You'll know soon enough. El Vento del Muerte—the Wind of Death—Great Gregory, Rose of Lima, my patron, save us now!" replied the guide, as a lurid flash of lightning illumined the whole mountain panorama, and, mingling with the diapason of the thunder, came a shriek, as of an imprisoned spirit let loose, and a rush of bitterly cold wind fairly hurled me against the rock, to which I clung for support, while the mule, sobbing and panting, cowered down upon its knees. For some four or five minutes this resistless blast endured, and, when it relaxed its fury, my first thought was to creep forward on hands and knees and to look upwards, so as to ascertain what had happened to the travelers on the rocky ledge above. To my horror, the shelf of stone was empty. No; on it there remained, pressed against the rock, one slender figure in female garb; while near her, crouched down like a terrified dog, stood the mule from which she had dismounted. The rest were gone!

So sudden, so dreadful, was the catastrophe that had occurred, almost before my eyes, that for some moments I remained as though incredulous of the full horror of the scene. The voice of my guide I heard, as he moaned out:

"May they find mercy, whoever they were.

Pray for those who are dead. Pray, too, for her who is about to die! Pobra Nina!"

The Indian's quick eyes were not at fault. It was a woman—a girl—and by her dress probably a lady, who was in mortal peril within a few yards of me.

"Come, Antonio!" I cried, staggering as I rose to my feet: "on, and we may yet be in time to save one life at least. Twenty dollars, man, if we save her!" I added, impatiently, as my dusky follower remained motionless.

"Not all the silver in Chili, cavalier, would profit the wretch who should venture to cross the Paso, there, when Elborazo wears his cap of clouds, and the death-wind is blowing. I'm no coward, señor; but I'll not risk life on such a cast."

"If you won't, I will; and alone, too!" I answered, hotly; and without paying any attention to the warnings which the Indian shouted after me, I scrambled up the steep and winding road, and stood upon the Paso del Diablo itself, being careful to keep as close as possible to the bare rock-wall, and away from the precipice.

Most fortunately, the force of the furious wind had slackened since the first terrible gust had exacted its early toll of human victims, or, otherwise, I doubt if the hardest mountaineer could have traversed that place of peril. As it was, it cost me a desperate struggle to keep my foothold and advance towards where the girl stood, partly screened by a large stone that must, years before, have fallen from above, and which was overgrown with moss and lichen. Near her was the mule, its feet firmly planted on the rock, and its heaving flank all but flattened against the flinty wall, while its eyes, stony with terror, seemed to stare at the narrow platform on which we stood. I took in, I scarcely know how, all these details, as it became incumbent on me to creep past the mule, which partly obstructed the path, and, in doing so, to skirt the perilous verge of the abyss. I had now lost my grasp of the overhanging wall, to which I had hitherto clung with an eager clutch, and began to fear that the rushing wind would bear me away over the edge of the rock; but, though I reeled under the force of the blast, I kept my feet, and reached the spot where the girl was kneeling, with clasped hands and averted face.

Before I could speak, the mule, in the agony of its alarm, set up the screaming cry which its species utter under the influence of pain or rage, and the girl turned her head, and, for the first time, saw me. My recognition of her was immediate. Well did I remember that golden hair; those blue eyes, dilated as they now were, and expressive only of grief and fear; that fair, pure face! It was the beautiful English girl I had seen at San Juan, and, doubtless, her late companions had been her own family, of which she was, alas! the sole survivor.

"Save them! oh, save them!" she exclaimed in Spanish. "Go to their help, sir, for the love of heaven! My poor father—my dear mother—my brother—All! all!"

She wrung her hands, pointing with a piteous gesture to the edge of the cliff.

"I fear, Miss Trevor—" I began, speaking in our own language, when the girl gave a little start, and uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"You know me?" she said; "yet—" and she paused for a moment, looking wonderingly at me, and then slowly murmured, "Ah! yes—I recollect—in San Juan, yonder!"

And even at that terrible time a faint blush rose to her cheek, as she possibly recognized in me the strange Englishman whose eyes had, perhaps too openly, expressed the admiration that he felt for beauty such as hers.

This, however, was no time, nor was the Paso del Diablo a fitting place, for fine speeches, or elaborate apologies.

"Miss Trevor," said I, earnestly, "I am here to save you if I can. Every minute that we linger here adds to the chance that a fresh squall may set in, and, should it do so, it may be beyond human strength to get clear of this perilous ledge. Twenty yards off, as you see, is an angle, in the path, by turning which, as I judge, we shall be comparatively safe. I will endeavor to support you if you will—"

She interrupted me with an earnest prayer that I would leave her where she was, and go to the rescue of her parents and brother. Their need, she said, was greater than hers. I was, of course, but too well aware that these unfortunate persons must be beyond the reach of any earthly aid, but to say so would have been gratuitously cruel, and I therefore urged on her the necessity for accepting my escort so far as the nearest hamlet or cluster of miners' huts, promising to return with ropes and men, and to undertake a search for her lost relatives, which, alone, I could not hope to carry out. She was very gentle and confiding, as a child might have been, and rose up from her knees, expressing her willingness to follow me. And just then some flakes of snow came whirling down, whitening the rocky platform.

There were, as I have said, some twenty yards to traverse before reaching a corner, by rounding which, as I conjectured, we should have quitted the ledge of rock and gained the wider road beyond. But twenty yards, in some cases, may give cause for more anxiety than leagues of ordinary wayfaring. I had need of all my strength to support Miss Trevor's uncertain steps as she advanced, and, when we drew near to the angle in the path, I perceived, with no slight trepidation, that she was trembling like an aspen leaf, as her eyes were turned towards the tremendous gulf below.

"Hold me back! Pray hold me!" she exclaimed, almost wildly. "It draws me to it—it will—"

I understood her, luckily. I am one of those men who can remain cool and steady on the dizzy verge of a precipice. That is a mere question of constitutional temperament, for I have known the bravest, who have faced death on the battle-field without flinching, utterly unnerved by the terrible fascination which a yawning depth below the gazer's feet can exert upon him. The dread desire to plunge and end life and fear at once I could well appreciate; and I saw that Miss Trevor would never get round the sharp angle of the rock, where the path narrowed to a width of some eighteen inches at most.

By a sudden impulse, I caught up the girl in my arms, and by a mighty effort succeeded in rounding that dangerous point, and in reaching, as I had expected, the broader road beyond. The snow was falling fast, while still the thunder rolled, and the ice-cold wind swept howling past. Already the road was white with fallen flakes. Far across the deep valley, on an opposite table-land, I descried the walls of a convent nesting amidst trees, and with farm buildings and Indian cottages around it. Only we but reach it we should be safe, but the only way to gain it speedily was evidently by crossing one of those suspension bridges of native construction, which spanned the ravine from side to side. And this, in rough weather such as we were experiencing, presented no trifling risk. These bridges—which moved the wonder and admiration of the Spanish conquerors, and which still afford the only means of crossing some of the ghastly chasms that seam the mountain-range—are appa-

rently frail constructions of grass-rope, twisted by Indian hands; the floor, a strip of matting; the hand-rail, a cord of grass; while, even with a light weight to carry, the passage is, to a novice, more exciting than agreeable.

With these remarkable bridges I was tolerably familiar, although I had never before seen one which spanned so wide and profound a gulf as that which now yawned beneath us, as I led Miss Trevor across the seemingly fragile construction, which rocked in the wind as a hammock on a ship might do.

We had traversed some two-thirds of the distance, when a fresh and more violent gust came howling through the pass, and it was all that I could do to prevent Miss Trevor from being dashed from the quivering bridge, on the floor of which we were both compelled to crouch, while the plant matting that supported us swayed to and fro like a swing in a playground, and the snow and hail flew around us.

The snapping of a rope, the giving way of a few strands of the plaited grass that bore us up, meant death, instant and inevitable. And, even should the tough grass cords endure the strain upon them, we were in no slight danger of losing our hold from sheer exhaustion, and of being jerked from the bridge as a stone is propelled from a sling. Once I made a resolute effort to lead the way to firm ground, but the violence of the vibration, as we neared the steeply sloping extremity of the bridge, and we were thankful to regain the middle of the narrow web with which we swayed, backwards and forwards, as we may see a spider swinging on a single thread.

What was that scream, so loud and so near, in its harsh shrillness? Instinctively we both looked up, to see, flapping its huge dark wings over our heads, a very large bird, which, by its curved beak, fierce red eye, and breast-feathers of ashen-gray, I knew to be a condor. Three or four times it circled round us, as if to mark us for its prey, and then, with complaining cry, dived far down into the ravine below us.

I involuntarily shuddered to think whose were the helpless limbs that probably allured the gigantic vulture to his foul repast in the gorge below, but our own situation was one which left but little time to spend in regrets for those whose fate might at any moment be ours. Then, too, the intense cold—which, as often happens in the Andes, seemed the more intolerable on account of the heat of the morning—so benumbed the delicate frame of my fair companion, that I constantly feared that before the storm should cease she would have sunk into that fatal lethargy that knows no waking. By chafing her cold hands, and, in spite of remonstrances, wrapping her in the loose coat I wore, which was fortunately a woollen one, I saved her, at any rate for the time, from frost-bite or stupor, although the snow and frozen hailstones whitened our garments, as we crouched waiting, rather than hoping, for deliverance.

We talked together—to have kept silence in such a spot and at such a time would have been madness—and it was touching to hear how Miss Trevor took blame to herself for my present peril, all incurred, as she said, through the generous impulse which had led me, at my own imminent risk, to succor her, a stranger. She laid such stress on this, that I could not forbear saying that I should, I hoped, have done as much for any one in peril; but that if I could save her, whose sweet face had haunted me in my dreams since first I beheld her—

Here I came to an awkward pause, and then felt as though I could have bitten my own tongue for what I had said, for might it not seem as if I were presuming on the position in which accident had placed me, and on the service which I had rendered? I do not think, however, that Miss Trevor understood the purport of my clumsy compliment, for she continued to converse quite simply, as a child might have done, often expressing her natural eagerness to procure help for her ill-fated relatives, of whom she made mention as though they must still be alive, though perhaps sorely hurt, in the valley below. I had not the heart to contradict her, knowing, as I did, that nothing short of a miracle could have preserved the lives of those who had fallen over the edge of the Paso del Diablo.

Hours elapsed, and the wind abated, but I began to despair. No traveler might come that way for days, while I could not anticipate that Miss Trevor could endure the keen frost of the coming night in that exposed situation. Yet, how was it possible for me, in her exhausted state, to—What was that sound? This time it was not the boding scream of the vulture, but a loud halloo from human, and, as it seemed, friendly voices, and instantly I replied to the hail. Then there came, creeping towards us over the plaited floor, a little figure, followed by another, while the voices of those on the bank were raised in a cheer of encouragement.

"Safe and sound, Caballero! St. Nicholas and the Virgin be praised for that! Ay, and the señorita, too!" said the well-known voice of Antonio, my guide, for he it was who headed the party.

"Why, then, I'll say it all my days, that you bear a charmed life. Few who cross the Paso—" But I did not hear the rest of the Indian's speech, for now, for the first time, I too grew faint and giddy, and realized the terrible strain on mind and body which the excitement of peril had enabled me to maintain, and, though I aided in lifting Miss Trevor's almost insensible form from the snow, I can remember nothing more until I found myself lying on the bed in a guest-chamber of the convent, while a bearded monk, in brown robe and rope girdle was marking something in a pipkin over a brazier of glowing charcoal.

"Drink this, Englishman!" said the good-natured Capuchin, as he poured the hot wine into a large silver cup, emblazoned with the armorial bearings of some Spanish Viceroy of long ago; "drink this, and then get to sleep again, if you can. Nothing like it when once you are warm and sheltered. Yes, yes," he added, with a smile, as he anticipated my question, "the young lady, too, is well, and asleep, too, I dare say. Heretics or not, you and she are welcome here, cavalier!"

I have little more to relate. Of the remains of the unfortunate persons who fell over the rock of El Paso, no trace was ever found, although at Miss Trevor's urgent entreaty, a long and painful search was instituted among the glens below. But so wild and broken was the ground, and so intersected by snow-drifts, torrents and thorny thickets, that from the first the Indian miners and herdsmen despaired of success, and, as I have said, the bodies were never recovered.

So soon as my beautiful, my loved charge had regained strength enough to enable her to travel, I accompanied her to the city of Santiago, where her father's sister resided, and there, beneath her aunt's roof, I left her to mourn for her dear ones whom she was never more to behold. But our parting was not for long. I became a frequent visitor to Santiago, and was a frequent guest in the house of Ellen Trevor's aunt. There, after a while, I told her my love, and thence I led my bride to