

## THE EMIGRANT.

BY JOHN RUSSELL, OF BLUFFDALE, ILLINOIS.

Though rude his cabin, though his feast is small,  
 He sees his little lot the lot of all;  
 Sees no contiguous palace rear its head,  
 To shame the meanness of his humble shed.

GOLDSMITH.

ON the morning of a bright and cloudless day, in the early part of June, 1815, a collection of people was seen in front of a small, but neat, farm-house, in Mason county, Kentucky. In the centre of the group was a wagon, already harnessed, inside of which were boxes, beds, and bedding; while on the outside were fastened the most common and necessary implements of cookery. The house was evidently untenanted. Even a stranger, if acquainted with the migratory habits of our countrymen, would have needed no one to inform him that the late occupants of the deserted dwelling were on the point of leaving their home, in quest of a *new* one in some of the many promised lands in the far west; and the group was composed of their neighbors, who had come to bid them 'farewell.'

William Henderson, the man who was thus leaving the spot upon which he was born, to plunge with his family into the forest of a distant region, was about thirty-five years of age, intelligent, and possessed of a handsome patrimony. To the eye of philosophy, the pecuniary circumstances of Mr. Henderson were precisely those best calculated to insure happiness. He occupied that happy medium between wealth and want, which the poets of every age have so much lauded.

His farm was even *larger* than he could cultivate. Two slaves, a man and a woman, were all that he owned; but his own labor, and that of his man, was fully sufficient to procure all the comforts of life, and enable his little family to live in a style of independence. Labor he had been accustomed to from his boyhood, and so far from deeming it a hardship, was far more happy when employed. He loved his farm: he loved to cultivate it, and had no expectation of finding another home that would ever be as dear to him as this. By what motive, then, was he induced to abandon it forever, and go, he hardly knew whither? Was it political ambition; or avarice? Neither. In politics he felt little or no interest; and he knew well, that years of severe toil, and many privations, must be endured before he could make the heavily timbered land on the Missouri, resemble his highly cultivated farm, or place around him the neat buildings he was about to leave.

Much has been said by English tourists, of what they style the ‘*natural propensity*’ of our countrymen ‘*to emigrate.*’ We are represented as little less nomadic and migratory in our habits than the ‘*roving Tartars.*’ ‘*Avarice and restlessness of disposition,*’ are the cause and *moving* principle to which our migratory habits are most charitably ascribed. Neither of these is the true one. Our people, in general, remove to new and thinly settled regions, from motives which none but a generous mind and a high-spirited republican, can either *feel* or *appreciate*; and these motives induced the removal of our emigrant, William Henderson.

His farm of three hundred acres, and the labor of himself and his two slaves, we have already observed, were sufficient to support his family in a style of comfort: but, within his immediate vicinity were many whose wealth greatly exceeded his own; many, who were the owners of a hundred slaves. It is true, that his opulent neighbors, most of whom had been his playmates in early life, treated him with respect and attention; yet his two daughters, just emerging from childhood, often felt the chilling shade into which they were thrown by the comparative smallness of their father’s fortune. To this he attempted in vain to close his eyes. It was an attack upon his feelings in their most assailable and vulnerable point.

Reluctantly was the conviction admitted, that the daughters of a man who owned but two slaves, could hardly hope long to associate on terms of perfect equality with the daughters of planters, whose wealth so much exceeded his own. They would, indeed, be treated with attention, but the disparity of their style of life would still have a manifest influence upon their reception into society. Happily, the ‘*cringing*’ to gain admission into fashionable society, so common in the atmosphere of Almack’s, forms no trait of American character. Nothing connected with society is more revolting to our countrymen, their wives, and daughters, than that of associating with people who receive them with an air of condescension or patronage. When he finds himself situated as the Hendersons were, it is neither ‘*envy*’ nor ‘*avarice,*’ but the honorable feelings of a generous and high-spirited nature, that prompts the American to remove to other scenes,

‘Where no contiguous palace rears its head,  
To shame the meanness of his humble shed.’

A removal to the new settlements on the Upper Missouri had become the frequent theme of his meditations. At the close of the late war with Great Britain, landed estate had risen to an exorbitant price, and he disposed of his farm to a neighbor for a

sum that he had never expected to obtain. It was June, an unusual time to emigrate, yet he made immediate preparations for removal. Most of their furniture and other articles which they chose to transport, together with their two slaves, were embarked at Maysville, on board of a keelboat, bound for Boonslick in the upper part of Missouri Territory. Steamboats were then unknown on our waters, and the vulgar, *brutal* character of too many of our river boatmen, would render a passage by water extremely unpleasant to his family. A light wagon, therefore, was procured, in which, in addition to his family, only a few light articles, indispensable on the road, were to be conveyed.

The morning of their departure at length arrived. It was an hour of trial. Their neighbors were gathered around, with every feeling forgotten, but that of kindness for the family from whom they were about to be separated—forever. The doors and windows of the house were closed, and an air of lonely stillness breathed around the premises. Never before did the emigrating family love the spot they were leaving, as they did now: never did they feel so warm an attachment to their neighbors as they did at this moment of separation. A thousand recollections of their kindness rushed to their hearts. Here were many whom they had known from infancy, to whom they were bound by ties of friendship and affection, the strength of which they little knew till this parting interview.

As the neighbors came up to give the Hendersons a farewell pressure of the hand, and the parting benediction of ‘*God bless you,*’ a tear quivered in many an eye. An old man whose locks were white as snow, stood a little distant from the group. His face was turned away, but the quivering of his lip, as he occasionally looked around towards the assemblage, betrayed the strong emotions that he strove to conceal. With the father of Henderson, when both were young, the old man came to that region. Often had they fought, side by side, against the Indians, in the fierce encounters of early times.

His own children died in infancy, and the affections of his warm and generous heart were transferred to the only child of his early friend. Henderson bore his name, and in childhood, had, a thousand times, climbed his knee, and been carried on the old man’s back. He knew the history of every scar on his bosom. They were now on the point of separating forever.

Last of all, the old man approached, and without uttering a word, his face averted, extended his hand, which was pressed in silence. Slowly, and with trembling steps, he bent his way

towards his own solitary home, without once venturing to cast a look back upon the scene.

The daughters, too, felt all the bitterness of parting. Removed at a little distance from the more elderly, they were bidding a tearful farewell to their associates.

'*Emigrant*' and '*Stranger*,' are terms too often used in reproach; but, alas! how many broken ties of affection are included in those two words.

With another glance at his late dwelling, and a wave of his hand towards his neighbors, Henderson sprang into his wagon and drove rapidly away. The little family were too much absorbed in their own private feelings, for conversation. Not a word was uttered for several miles. At length they crossed the Ohio, and entered upon a region which they had never before seen. As they journeyed on through that state, the novelty of the scene dispelled every gloomy sensation. The deep forest that once covered that portion of the country, had long since given place to well-cultivated fields. Farm-houses, of substantial structure, had risen up, and the rude log-cabin of the first settler stood, perhaps, in the centre of a field; its roof gone, its chimney of sticks fallen down, and the walls alone remained, an impressive memorial of early times.

As they approached the borders of Indiana, the country became thinly inhabited; and not long after they entered that territory, the region around them assumed the air of primitive wildness. The cabins of the few settlers, were passed at long intervals, and the '*blazed trees*,' were almost the only indication of a road.

As they approached the cabins on their way, the unusual sound of a wagon drew every tenant out, and our travelers were assailed with a flood of inquiries which might have been deemed impertinent in a populous region, but which all, cheerfully, answer in the bosom of the forest. Around these cabins, was a small field, in which Indian corn was planted among the '*deadened trees*.' From this field the settler obtained bread, and a few common vegetables, while the rest of his family's subsistence, and much of their clothing, was obtained by the aid of the rifle, whose sharp, quick crack, often startled our travelers. The sound of a bell on the neck of their only cow, was heard afar off in the woods.

Night often overtook our emigrants at a distance from any habitation. In such cases, they sought for a spring, or a running stream. Mr. Henderson then unharnessed his horses, '*hobbled*' them, to prevent their straying beyond the sound of their bells, and kindled a fire by the side of a dry log. At this fire, Mrs.

Henderson and her daughters prepared their evening meal, which was eaten under the clear, blue canopy of heaven. Never had they enjoyed that hour so well. Whether the novelty of the scene, the bright visions of hope, the beauty of the forest landscape, or all of these united, conspired to render them happy, certain it is, that the parents seemed to have resumed the buoyancy of youth, while the loud and joyous laugh of their daughters echoed through the woods, as they jested about the homeliness of their repast, or frolicked among the trees. The mother and daughters slept in the wagon, while the father, to shield himself from the heavy night dews of that climate, took his lodgings under it.

In the morning of the first of July, while their horses were leisurely drinking from a small stream that crossed the road, a few miles after they had entered the territory of Illinois, a man rode up from the opposite direction, and addressed them. The horse he rode was an elegant and high-spirited animal, and the air and manner and easy address of the stranger, assured the Hendersons, at a glance, that he belonged to a very different class of society from the settlers of that region. Refraining from asking the multitude of questions which the tenants of the cabins never failed to put, the stranger, after a few commonplace remarks about the badness of the roads and the pleasantness of the weather, observed that he must bid them adieu, as he was engaged in making preparations for setting out immediately for Boonslick in Missouri Territory. Nothing could so effectually have arrested the attention of our emigrants. Boonslick was the very place to which they, too, were bound. A few rapid inquiries were made of the stranger, and the family learned that he had often traveled the road and could aid them, materially, on the way; that he, too, was going there to purchase land, and to settle. Henderson and his wife were highly animated with the idea of traveling in company with so genteel a guide, and one so well acquainted with the route, and one, too, who would probably become their neighbor.

The stranger, who informed them that his name was Marvin, appeared no less gratified than they, and his flattering remarks about their appearance, were by no means unacceptable to the family.

Suddenly, Marvin became silent, and a cloud passed over his countenance. With a tone of deep regret he informed them that in the transport of finding so agreeable a family for the companions of the journey, he had entirely forgotten the business he was now on, which was no other than to ride about thirty miles in the very direction they had come, to obtain a sum of

money which he depended on to defray his expenses on the way. He lamented, exceedingly, that it would prevent his accompanying them. Henderson and his wife gazed upon each other, for a moment, with an air of inexpressible disappointment. At length, as if a sudden thought had struck him, Henderson anxiously inquired what was the amount of the sum he expected to receive. 'Thirty dollars, was the reply of Marvin. 'Only thirty dollars!' exclaimed Henderson and his wife, both in one breath. After a communicative glance from his wife, Henderson very eagerly informed him that, rather than lose the advantage of his society and guidance on the road, he would cheerfully give *twice* that sum, and begged him to accept the amount he was in quest of, as a present. Marvin politely and gratefully, but with evident sadness, declined the offer. He had previously dismounted from his horse, and the emigrants from their wagon. The stranger informed them that he had deposited in the land-office at Boonslick, funds sufficient to purchase his land, and the sum which he was in pursuit of, was all the cash he had remaining; he was aware, he said, that few emigrants could spare so large a sum, and he must thankfully decline their offer. This was assailing them through the weakest passion of our nature—vanity; the vanity of appearing rich. Mrs. Henderson quickly replied, that so small a sum as thirty dollars would not be felt by them, and again urged his acceptance. Let the man who finds himself, for the first time in his life, in possession of four thousand dollars in cash, say, if he can, that a similar ambition of appearing well in the eyes of a genteel stranger, who would become his neighbor, might not have inspired him. Marvin, now no longer declined their offer, but entered immediately into conversation with the emigrants on the subject of the journey. Henderson had learned before he set out, that the land sales at Boonslick took place in October, but Marvin informed him, that only one month intervened between that, and the day of sale. It was the most unwelcome intelligence to our emigrant, who was under the necessity of reaching the place of destination in one month, or of settling upon land too poor to tempt a purchase at the public sale. The road was excessively bad, and the weather hot. To reach that place in season, to select land, by the slow stages of a loaded wagon, was impossible. In this perplexity, Marvin suggested leaving the family in the next settlement, and returning for them in October, when the weather would be more agreeable, and when he, too, would accompany them. To this plan the Hendersons readily assented, as there was a family of the name of Corby, who lived in the next settlement,

a few miles onward, who had, many years before, removed from their own neighborhood, and who would gladly receive them. It was soon settled, that Mrs. Henderson and her daughters should remain at Corby's, and Henderson set out the next day in his wagon with Marvin for Missouri.

Job Corby and his wife, were plain and poor people, and had received very little attention from the family that now, fatigued with traveling, were glad to accept their well-known hospitality. Marvin, with a hearty laugh at the faintheartedness of honest Job, as he called him, told them not to be frightened with his story of robbers—that, if they would believe Job, they were in imminent danger of robbers in this region, where few people had any thing but their *skin to lose*. All joined in the laugh, for they entertained no very exalted opinion, either of the courage, or the penetration of Corby. After all, said Marvin, with a goodnatured smile, we ought not to laugh at Job Corby, for he is really a kindhearted, honest man, notwithstanding his simplicity.

Marvin left them, to arrange his affairs at his residence, and the wagon, with the emigrants, pursued its way to Job Corby's.

To the inhabitants of old and populous states, who travel two hundred miles in the same stage or steamboat, without exchanging a word, the acquaintance of these strangers will seem unnaturally rapid. Let them meet a human being in the depths of the forest, or on the vast expanse of a western prairie, and they will forget the cold forms of introduction, and cease to wonder at the sudden acquaintance of Marvin and the Hendersons.

The family were kindly received at Corby's, and the proposition to remain there, cheerfully assented to. But when Henderson detailed the arrangements he had made with Marvin, Job stared with surprise and astonishment, and expressed strong fears that he would be *robbed*. The emigrants had been already prepared to hear Corby talk of robbers, and only smiled at his credulity and folly.

The family of Job Corby and a few others scattered around in the forest, at the distance of a mile or so from each other, formed the last settlement on the east side of the **BIG PRAIRIE**. It was three miles from Corby's, in the direction of Boonslick, and thirty-five across it, with nothing but a blind '*trail*' to guide the traveler. The tide of emigration to that region had not yet set in, and few, and far between, were the travelers across it. A pilot was necessary to guide a stranger over this wide plain of verdure, on which was neither tree, nor shrub, nor land-mark, to direct his course.

Contemptuously as Marvin treated the idea of robbers, the fears of Corby were not altogether groundless. Strangers had been seen lurking in that region, and more than one traveler, within the last few weeks, had unaccountably disappeared. A deserted cabin which stood many miles down the prairie, in a lonely and unfrequented spot, was suspected to be their place of rendezvous. This cabin had not been inhabited for many years, but, recently, some of the settlers who had chanced to be out at a late hour of the night, had seen a light from it. These suspicions, in a region over which the strong arm of the law extended, would have instantly awakened the attention of the officers of justice. But no courts existed within the distance of a hundred miles, and the settlers, thinly scattered over this section, were compelled 'to be a law unto themselves.' Like other portions of the West, remote from the seats of justice, the people here had banded together, for mutual protection, and the punishment of crimes, under the name of 'REGULATORS.' The proceedings of these selfconstituted tribunals, were rather summary. Generally unlettered, the Regulators conducted the brief trial which they gave to all who fell into their hands, according to the dictates of plain sense, rather than the technicalities of the law. In some cases, death was inflicted, but the most frequent punishment, was the '*application of the timber,*' and banishment from that section of country.

At the period of our narrative, the war with Great Britain had but recently closed, and large bodies of soldiers been disbanded, to obtain as they might, the means of subsistence. Among those who were thus 'whistled down the wind,' by our country, were many, both officers and men, who had fought bravely during the whole period of the war, and were now turned adrift, penniless, and worn out with hardships and suffering. It is not surprising, that some few of these, whose long term of service had unfitted them for other pursuits, and disqualified them for obtaining their daily bread by common labor, should feel that their country was ungrateful. By whatever train of reasoning they silenced the voice of conscience, certain it is, that a few of them, instead of 'begging bitter bread through realms their valor saved,' like Bellisarius, they resorted to crime.

In the afternoon of the day after their arrival at Job Corby's, Marvin called at the house, in company with another man. Business compelled him, he said, to go to the place where he staid, on the opposite side of the prairie, by a route different from the one traveled in wagons, and he had brought with him a steady young man as a pilot for Henderson. His guide, who

was to drive the wagon, was dressed in a leather huntingshirt, and the honest, goodnatured smile on his sunburnt face, and his drawling tone, sufficiently indicated his character. He appeared to possess great simplicity and rustic goodhumor. Marvin left the house to rejoin them on the other side of the prairie.

It was now the month of July, when the '*prairie fly*,' an insect peculiar to these immense plains of the west, is most troublesome. To travel with horses, except by night, was nearly impossible. In the day time, these insects attack horses in swarms, and their sharp bite drives the maddened animal to desperation. Instances yet occur, in which the horse falls the victim of the prairie fly, and his bones are left to bleach on the prairie, a monument of his owner's imprudence.

It was agreed that Henderson should set out at sunset, with his wagon, guided by Bunce, the huntingshirt pilot, and cross the prairie during the night, to the place where Marvin was staying, a distance of thirty-five miles.

During the whole afternoon, Corby was unaccountably absent; and even at sunset, when Henderson and Bunce set out, he had not yet returned.

When they reached the Big Prairie, a landscape was presented to the eye of Henderson that drew forth an exclamation of wonder and delight. He had never before seen a prairie, and now learnt how incompetent is the most vivid imagination to conceive an adequate idea of the reality. It was a scene of loveliness and grandeur. The broad, red disk of the sun was slowly sinking below the level horizon, apparently into the bosom of this ocean of verdure. All around, far as vision could extend, except on the point where they entered, was one wide, unbroken plain, stretching away off till it faded into the haze of distance. As they advanced onward, the soft, cool breeze of twilight arose, and gently waved the tall grass of the prairie. The attempts of the driver to lead him into conversation were ineffectual. At any other time, the remarks of the simple, illiterate guide, would have highly amused him, but now they grated harshly on his ear, and after awhile, they passed on in silence. By degrees, the shades of night grew deeper, and star after star appeared, till the whole heavens were lighted up. In every direction, innumerable fireflies were sailing through the air, diffusing their long train of light, till the earth appeared as radiant as the firmament. The deep silence that rested upon the scene, was scarcely interrupted by the wagon, as it rolled almost without sound, over the soft grass. The chest containing the clothes and money of Henderson, and

a bed, was the only freight he took with him. As he partly reclined on the bed which he had laid on the bottom of the wagon, he gazed upon the dark outline of the receding forest, and into the heavens, with emotions new and indefinable. Who has ever passed a night on the lonely bosom of a prairie, and gazed hour after hour, into the deep, blue sky, without feeling that he was *immortal*—without feeling that he was connected, by some invisible link, with the Power that governs these rolling orbs.

The night had considerably advanced, and the dew was falling heavily, when the guide stopped to rest the horses. After commenting, in the frontier dialect, upon the unhealthiness of the night air, especially to those who are unaccustomed to the climate, he drew from his pocket a green flask, in which, he informed Henderson, was some 'royal old Monongaheel, with yarbs steeped in it, mighty good to keep off the *agur*;' and assured him that all the people in the new settlements used it for health. With this eulogium of its contents, the pilot drew the cob stopper from the flask, and applying it to his mouth, held it a long time poised in air. When he had satisfied his own thirst, with a few '*hems*,' indicative that his draught had been an agreeable, as well as a long one, Bunce extended the bottle to Henderson, who accepted the offer, and drank, more to gratify his kindhearted and simple guide, than from any fears of the ague, and returned it to him again. The pilot drove on. It was not long before an overpowering inclination to sleep began to steal over Henderson, and he settled himself for repose on the bed. The driver uttered not a word, but his head was frequently turned in that direction, a circumstance which Henderson had not before noticed.

In a short time, our emigrant was buried in the most profound sleep. The cold air that fanned the prairie, and the noiseless motion of the wagon, were well calculated to afford him the luxury of a pleasant and peaceful repose. Instead of this, visions of the most terrific kind, haunted his sleeping fancy. At one time, he was floating, at midnight, on a vast ocean, thousands of miles from any human being. As he lay bound and helpless on the bottom of a canoe, monsters of the most frightful form glared on him from the deep. Sometimes their features would change into human shape, and utter a peal of malignant laughter at his sufferings, in tones that thrilled upon his heart, like the spirit of an iceberg.

The scene changed. He was now wandering in one of the loneliest regions among the Andes. He entered a cavern in search of gold. An irresistible impulse led him onward. He

penetrated, for miles, into this rock-ribbed vault, till he was far from the sound of life, and the light of heaven. The air became thick and heavy. He breathed with difficulty, and was about to return, when an earthquake shook the globe to its centre. He felt the cave sink, down, down, down, till it reached the very core of the earth. Days, months, years, and ages, rolled by, and he was still a prisoner. He prayed for death, but his body was undying as the spirit within him. A thousand generations had passed away since he entered the cavern; the world had lost every vestige of its former appearance, and he was yet a prisoner. At length, a miner visited the region above him, in search of ore. As he sunk his mining shaft deeper and deeper, the sound became nearer and more audible. At last, a faint ray of light streamed into the vault, but just at that moment, the miner, discouraged with his fruitless efforts, turned away to abandon the undertaking. The last opportunity of release was on the point of being lost forever. He attempted to cry out, but his voice died away in low and feeble murmurs along the vault. It was his last chance of release. Summoning all his power into one mighty effort, he uttered a loud and piercing yell. The sound awoke him. A burning fever raged in his veins, and his head was racked with the most excruciating pain. It was some time before he could recollect where he was—that he was crossing the Big Prairie in a wagon, at night. He attempted to press his hand to his throbbing temples, when he discovered, to his astonishment, that his hands were bound. Rising up, he perceived that the wagon was standing, and the horses taken away. Henderson next applied his hands to the lid of his chest, and found that it had been broken open and rifled of its contents. Dizzy and confused as he was, he had still the presence of mind, to know that his life was in the most imminent peril. Before he had time to leap from the wagon, two men, engaged in conversation, one of which he recognized as Marvin, came up and seized him. On turning his head, Henderson beheld a sight that deprived him at once of all hope of life. Instead of being on the open prairie, as he still supposed they were, he saw that they were near a forest, that bounded one side of it, and within a few feet of an open, ‘*unchinked*’ cabin, between the logs of which streamed a bright light. Into this cabin he was dragged by Marvin and his comrade. On entering, he saw two men, one of whom was his late guide, busily engaged in counting over his money and examining his clothes. The simplicity of the pilot had only been assumed. Throwing aside his frontier dialect, he gloried in displaying to Henderson, his deep villany.

Turning to him, he accosted his victim with a coarse laugh, and said 'how do relish the flavor of my *royal* old Monongaheel? Do you think my *yarbs* will keep off the *agur*?' and added, in his natural tone, 'had not your head been stronger than mine, the draught you took would have saved us the expense of a charge of gunpowder.'

While the two men without were engaged in hauling the wagon to the door of the cabin, the guide, with a refinement of cruelty, exultingly detailed all the particulars of the stratagem they had laid, and into which their victim had so easily fallen. He concluded, by informing our emigrant, that his last hour had come. Of this, from the moment he entered the cabin, Henderson had not entertained a doubt. That building was about eighteen feet square, laid up with unhewed logs, and without a floor. In the centre was a fresh dug grave. For whom it was designed, Henderson had not a doubt. Half stupified with the effects of the poisonous drugs in the villain's flask, the horror of the scene completely unmanned him, and he sunk down upon the earth floor. The villains, indifferent whether he heard or not, talked over their plan of operation. The horses, money, and clothes of the emigrant, were to be equally divided among them. After killing Henderson and burying him in the grave which they had dug for that purpose in the cabin, the wagon, harness, and chest, were to be brought into that building, which they would then burn down, and thus effectually conceal every proof of their guilt. Immediately after this was effected, they would leave that part of the country, where they began to be suspected, and bend their course, by different routes, to Arkansas.

And now, every arrangement for the execution of the remaining part of their plan had been made, and Henderson was brought to the mouth of the grave. Kneeling wildly down upon the pile of fresh earth that had been thrown up in the digging, he cast a frenzied look down into the pit, and then, for the first time, his voice found utterance in a wild and fearful cry for 'mercy! mercy! mercy!' The villains answered his heartrending supplication with a sneering laugh. 'No, no: we are not such fools as to let you escape and set the bloodhounds upon us. If you have any *prayers* to make, to insure you good picking in kingdom come, say them quickly, for day advances, and we cannot wait.' The ruffian, whom we have designated by the name of Marvin, said, 'my good friend, if you wish any priestly aid to prepare you for what fools and old women call heaven, just to oblige you, I will give you mine. I am no fool at whining, as these fine fellows can attest, for they have heard me *hold forth*

at a campmeeting, much to the edification of the saints, whose horses we helped ourselves to at night, by way of supporting the gospel.'

Shocked at the revolting impiety of this hardened wretch, Henderson paused for a moment, and then renewed his supplication for life. All that he possessed on earth he would freely give, and bind himself with the most solemn oath, never to betray them. Entreaty was useless. Henderson was ordered to prepare for death. The last, the final hour, over which nature has thrown a mysterious dread, had now come. His wife and daughters rushed to his mind. These beings, dear to him as existence, he should behold no more. Could he die in their presence, and feel their tears drop upon his cheeks as their low-breathed prayers for him ascended to heaven, the struggle would be divested of its horrors. To die by the hand of ruffians, none would know how or where, and to leave his wife and children in poverty, doubled the pangs of death. These thoughts passed rapidly through his brain, and were no less rapidly succeeded by others. Dispelling, as far as he was able, every earthly feeling, he now implored mercy from the only source from which it could flow. After a few brief moments of silent preparation, he waved his hand in token he was *ready*. The pilot acted as executioner, and stood near him with a loaded pistol. Another held in his hand a spade, to fill up the grave the moment Henderson had rolled into it. The signal was given by Marvin. The pistol of the ruffian was levelled with deliberate aim, and his finger already on the trigger, when, just at the instant, a ball entered the heart of the executioner himself—the warwhoop was sounded, and armed men rushed into the cabin. Before the robbers had time to recover from their sudden surprise, they were seized and bound; all but the pilot, who lay at the bottom of the grave with every pulse of life extinct. Marvin and the other two survivors saw that resistance was impossible, that no hope of life was left them, and they stood silent and sullen. Henderson was raised up and unbound. When he realized that he was safe; that he had been rescued from death, on the very brink of the grave, he threw himself upon his knees, and poured forth the overflowings of his gratitude to the Power that had shielded him.

Among the band that came to his aid, was Job Corby. When Henderson informed him of his interview and arrangements with Marvin, he saw at a glance that his friend had encountered one of the villains that had been for so many weeks prowling over the Big Prairie. When Corby found it in vain to endeavor to convince him of the danger that threatened him, he set out

in quest of his neighbors, who had banded together for the punishment of crimes, under the name of the Regulators of the Big Prairie. He was engaged in that errand when Henderson and the pretended guide sat out on the journey. Happily, not one of these neighbors had a moment's doubt of the character and designs of Marvin and his gang. They promptly offered their aid to protect Henderson. Ten boldhearted men, armed with rifles, sallied forth a little after sunset, on horseback, for that purpose. Suspecting that the cabin would be their place of rendezvous, they directed their course thither, and arrived just at the critical instant. Not a moment was lost. Hastily fastening their horses in the shadow of the woods, they approached the front of the cabin. Henderson was kneeling at the mouth of the grave, and the executioner stood ready. Their plan was instantly concerted. The pilot leveled his pistol, and quick as thought, the rifle of the regulator sent a ball to his heart—the war cry of the Indians rung quick and shrill, and a rush was made upon the robbers, as we have just related.

Time having been given for the powerful emotions which all had felt, in some measure to subside, the regulators proceeded to the trial of the three surviving robbers. No proof, and little ceremony, were needed. Corby, who acted as foreman of the jury, made a few remarks about the crime of the culprits, and then called on them for their defence. They were all silent and sullen. After consulting with the other regulators in a whisper, Mr. Corby proceeded, in a firm but solemn tone, to pass sentence upon the prisoners, which was, that they should all three be shot, without delay, and buried in the grave they had dug for Henderson. It was now about the hour of three in the morning. The waning moon had just risen, red with the vapors that filled the atmosphere. The dim light of her crescent cast a wild and solemn air over the face of nature. The regulators felt awed, but firm to their purpose. Some of them were professors of religion, and deeply felt the importance of the few remaining moments of existence to these men of guilt. Robbery had before been committed, and they deemed it treachery to permit them again to rob and murder the unsuspecting traveler. *Die they must.*

Corby was a man of strong feelings, and deeply imbued with religious sentiments. He earnestly exhorted the criminals to repent, and call upon Heaven for mercy. His entreaties were of no avail, and were even answered with sneers of contempt, by all but one. The only criminal who appeared to regard the entreaties of Corby, was a young man of a fine form and manly countenance, apparently about twenty-three years of age. He

uttered no supplication, made no appeals for mercy, but when Corby addressed himself particularly to him, he seemed struggling with some emotion that shook his whole frame, and burying his face in his hands, burst into a loud and irrepressible sob.

Still undiscouraged with his ill success, Mr. Corby again implored each to prepare for death. Large drops of perspiration rolled down his forehead, so intense was his anxiety and exertion for their repentance. Two of them preserved a contemptuous silence, but the young man, although he spoke not, seemed much affected.

Daylight was near, and all further delay was deemed useless by a majority of the regulators. The rifles were loaded, and every thing ready for the signal of death to be given. At that moment, the young man, bound as he was, sprang forward, and throwing himself at the feet of Corby, cried, '*O father, father, forgive me, before I die!*'

The voice of his son thrilled on every nerve of his heart, and Corby 'threw himself upon his neck and wept aloud.' Every one present, even the robbers, were deeply affected. The regulators all knew the history of Corby. He had not always been the mild, good man he now was; but idle, reckless, and dissipated in his habits. The example he set before his son, rendered him wild and unmanageable, till at length, breaking through all restraint and parental control, he ran away, and enlisted into the army. Disobedient and ungrateful as this boy had been, he was still dear to his parents. He was their only son, their only child, and bitter were the feelings of Corby when he reflected that his own conduct had led on to the ruin of their boy. Years had passed away without their once hearing from him, but he was not forgotten. Often in the dead hour of night, Corby and his wife were awake, thinking, in bitter anguish of their lost son. The neighbors never mentioned his name in the presence of his parents, or made the most distant allusions to the source of their grief, yet it was evident to all, that sorrow was slowly wasting them away.

When Job Corby disengaged himself from his son, and arose from the ground, he turned towards the regulators and implored mercy for his child, his only child. Deeply touched with the scene, with one voice they pronounced his pardon, and pledged themselves, on condition of his returning home with his father, never to disclose to any one the part he had acted in the affairs of that night. Young Corby had not yet been guilty of robbery, for this was his first attempt at the commission of crime. He gratefully accepted the proposition to return with his father, and interceded for his comrades so powerfully, that he obtained

their pardon, on condition of their instantly quitting the country forever.

Henderson was conducted, in his wagon, to Corby's, where he was immediately seized with a fever, the effects of the poison he had drank, and the excitement of his mind. On his recovery, he proceeded to Boonslick, where his negroes and other property sent by the keel, had already safely arrived.

He found that Marvin had deceived him about the time of the land sales, which did not, in fact, take place till October. He had sufficient time to make a good selection, and purchased a large and most valuable tract, at the lowest government price.

Last winter, at his own fireside, surrounded with abundance, and universally respected, he related to me the story of his adventures on the Big Prairie.

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#### SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF GENERAL HARRISON.

THE lives of public men, who have participated largely in affairs of general interest, form a part of the history of their country, and should be recorded with care, for the instruction of posterity. Of no one is this remark more true, than of the distinguished individual whose name we have placed at the head of this article, and who has been an efficient actor in many of the most important events which have occurred in our country since the revolution. He is one of the very few remaining among us, the commencement of whose career is dated back to the first days of the republic, who have grown up with our political character, and our public institutions, and who form the connecting link between the generation which secured our liberty and that which enjoys its fruits.

William Henry Harrison was born in Virginia in the year 1773, and numbers among his relations some of the most distinguished men in that state. His father was Benjamin Harrison, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, to whose ardent zeal and intrepidity that body of patriots was greatly indebted for their harmonious organization. Some of our historians assert that a large portion of the members of the first congress, as a compliment to Virginia, wished to call him to the chair, as the successor of his brother-in-law, Peyton Randolph; but that, with noble selfdenial, and admirable judgment, he declined in favor of John Hancock, and insisted upon his taking the post of honor. Benjamin Harrison afterwards filled the ex-