

## THE TRAGEDY AT MOHAWK STATION,

BY JOSEPHINE CLIFFORD.

WE called it our noon-camp, though it was really not after ten o'clock in the morning. Ours was the only ambulance in the "out-fit," though there were some three or four officers besides the Captain. The Captain had been ordered to report at headquarters in San Francisco before going East, and was travelling through Arizona as fast as Uncle Sam's mules could carry him, in order to catch the steamer that was to leave the Pacific coast at the end of the month. It is just a year ago, and the Pacific Railroad was not yet completed; which accounts for the Captain's haste to reach the steamer.

When we made noon-camp at the Government forage-station called Stanwick's Ranch, we had already performed an ordinary day's march; but we were to accomplish twenty-five miles more before pitching our tent (literally) at Mohawk Station for the night. These "stations" are not settlements, but only stopping-places where Government teamsters draw forage for their mules, and where water is to be had;—the station-keepers sometimes seeing no one the whole year round except the Government and merchant trains passing along *en route* to Tucson or other military posts.

Lunch had been despatched, and I was lounging, with a book in my hand, on the seat of the ambulance—one of those uncomfortable affairs called "dead-carts," with two seats running the entire length of the vehicle,—when the Captain put his head in to say that there was an American woman at the station. White representatives of my sex are "few and far between" in Arizona, and I had made up my mind to go

into the house and speak to this one, even before the Captain had added:

"It is the woman from Mohawk Station."

The Captain assisted me out of the ambulance, and we walked toward the house together. The front room of the flat *adobe* building was bar-room, store, office, parlor; the back room was kitchen, dining-room, bedroom; and here we found "the woman of Mohawk Station." I entered the back room, at the polite invitation of the station-keeper, with whom the Captain fell into conversation in the store or bar-room.

The woman was young—not over twenty-five—and had been on the way from Texas to California, with her husband and an ox-team, when Mr. Hendricks, the man who kept the forage-station at Mohawk, found them camped near the house one day, and induced them to stop with him. The woman took charge of the household, and the man worked at cutting fire-wood on the Gila and hauling it up to the house with the station-keeper's two horses, or at any other job which Mr. Hendricks might require of him. She had been a healthy, hearty woman when they left Texas; but laboring through the hot sandy deserts, suffering often for water and sometimes for food, had considerably "shaken her," and she was glad and willing to stop here, where both she and her husband could earn money, and they wanted for neither water nor food—such as it is in Arizona. It was hard to believe she had ever been a robust, fearless woman, as she sat there cowering and shivering, and looking up at me with eyes that seemed ready to start from their sockets with terror.

"May I come in?" I asked, uncer-

tain whether to venture closer to the shrinking form.

"Yes, yes," she said, breathing hard, and speaking very slowly. "Come in. It'll do me good. You're the first woman I've seen since—since—"

"Tell me all about it," I said, sitting down on the edge of the bed, as familiarly as though I had been her intimate friend for years; "or will it agitate you and make you sick?"

"No," she made answer; "I am dying now, and I have often and often wished I could see some woman and tell her the whole story before I die. It almost chokes me sometimes because I can't speak about it; and yet I always, always, think about it. I have n't seen any one but my husband and the station-keeper these last three weeks—there is so little travel now.

"You see, one Saturday afternoon there were two Mexicans came up this way from Sonora, and stopped at Mohawk Station to camp for the night. It was a cold, rainy, blustering day, and the men tried to build their fire against the wall of the house. It was the only way they could shelter themselves from the wind and rain, as Mr. Hendricks would not allow them to come into the house. Pretty soon Mr. Hendricks drove them off, though they pleaded hard to stay; and Colonel B., who had arrived in the mean time, on his way to Tucson, told Mr. Hendricks that, if he knew anything about Mexicans, those two would come back to take revenge. Perhaps Mr. Hendricks himself was afraid of it, as he picketed his two horses out between the Colonel's tent and the house, for fear the Mexicans might come in the night to drive them off. But they did not return till Sunday afternoon, when, after considerable wrangling, Mr. Hendricks engaged them both to work for him. The Colonel had pulled up stakes and had gone on his way to Tucson Sunday morning, so that we were alone with the Mexicans during the night. But

they behaved themselves like sober, steady men; and the next morning they and my husband went down to the river, some three miles away, to cut wood, which they were to haul up with the team later in the day.—Have you been at Mohawk Station, and do you know how the house is built?" she asked, interrupting herself.

"We camped there on our way out," I said; "and I remember that an open corridor runs through the whole length of the house, and some two or three rooms open into each other on either side."

"Very well; you remember the kitchen is the last room on the left of the corridor, while the store-room and bar is the first room to the right. Back of this is the little room in which Mr. Hendricks's bed stood, just under the window; and opposite to this room, next to the kitchen, is the dining-room.

"It was still early in the day, and I was busy in the kitchen, when I heard a shot fired in the front part of the house; but as it was nothing unusual for Mr. Hendricks to fire at rabbits or *coyotes* from the door of the bar-room, I thought nothing of it, till I saw the two Mexicans, some time after, mounted on Mr. Hendricks's horses, riding off over toward the mountains. When I first saw them, I thought they might be going to take the horses down to the river; but then, I said to myself, the Gila do n't run along by the mountains. All at once a dreadful thought flashed through my head, and I began to tremble so that I could hardly stand on my feet. I crept into the corridor on tip-toe, and went into the bar-room from the outside. From the bar-room I could look on Mr. Hendricks's bed. He was lying across the bed, with his head just under the window. I wanted to wake him up, to tell him that the Mexicans were making off with his horses, but somehow I was afraid to call out or to go up to him; so I crept around to the outside of the house till

I got to the window, and then looked in. Oh dear! oh dear! I can't forget the dreadful, stony eyes that glared at me from the bruised and blood-stained face; and after one look, I turned and ran as fast as I could. Perhaps I ought to have gone into the house, to see if he were really dead, or if I could help him or do anything for him; but I could not. I ran and ran, always in the direction my husband had taken in the morning. At one time I thought I heard some one running behind me, and when I turned to look, the slippery sand under foot gave way, and I fell headlong into a bed of cactus, tearing and scratching my face and hands and arms; and when I got up again I thought some one was jumping out from the verde-bushes, but it was only a rabbit running along. Before I got many steps farther I slipped again, and something rattled and wriggled right close by me. It was a rattlesnake, on which I had stepped in my blindness. I ran on till I could not get my breath any more, and staggered at every step; and just when I thought I must fall down and die, I saw my husband coming toward me. He was coming here to see what was keeping the Mexicans so long in bringing the horses down to the river; and when I could get my breath, I told him what had happened. We went back together, but I would not go into the house with him; so he hid me in a thick verde-bush, behind some prickly-pears, and went in alone. Directly he came back to me. He had found the corpse just as I had described it. To all appearances, Mr. Hendricks had thrown himself on the bed for a short nap, as the morning was very warm. The Mexicans must have crept in on him, shot him with his own revolver, and then beaten him over the head and face with a short, heavy club that was found on the bed beside him, all smeared with blood.

"Then my husband said to me: 'Mary, you've got to stay here till I

go to Antelope Peak and bring up Johnson, the station-keeper. You can't go with me, because it's full twenty-five miles, if not more, and you can't walk twenty-five steps. But those Mexicans are going to come back while I am gone—I know they are, because they have n't taken any plunder with them yet. They'll hide the horses in the mountains, most likely, and then go down to the river to look for me; and after that they'll come back here, and they'll look for us high and low.'

"I knew that what he said was true, every word of it; and the only thing he could do was to find me a good hiding-place a good ways off from the house, but still near enough for me to see the house, and the window where the dead man lay. Well, first I watched David till out of sight, and then I watched the window, and then I watched and peered and looked on every side of me, till my eyes grew blind from the glaring sun and the shining sand.

"All at once I heard some voices; and I almost went into a fit when I heard footsteps crunching nearer and nearer in the sand. They were the Mexicans, sure enough, coming up from the river, and passing within a few steps of my hiding-place. Both carried heavy cudgels, which they had brought with them from where they had been cutting wood in the morning. When they got near the house they stopped talking, and I saw them sneak up to it, and then vanish around the corner, as though to visit the kitchen first. A few minutes later I saw them come out of the bar-room, and, oh, heavens! I saw they were trying to follow my husband's foot-prints, that led directly to the verde-bush behind which I was hiding; but the wind had been blowing, and it seemed hard for them to follow the trail. Still they came nearer; and the terror and suspense, and the sickening fear that came over me, when I saw them brandishing their clubs and bringing

them down occasionally on a clump of verde-bushes, well nigh took what little sense and breath I had left, and I verily believe I should have screamed out in very horror, and so brought their murderous clubs on my head at once, to make an end of my misery, if I had had strength enough left to raise my voice. But I could neither move nor utter a sound; I could only strain my eyes to look. After a while they got tired of searching, and went back to the house, where they stood at the window a moment to look in on the dead man, as though to see if he had stirred; then they went in at the bar-room, and came out directly, loaded with plunder.

"One of the men carried both Mr. Hendricks's and my husband's rifle, and the other had buckled on Mr. Hendricks's revolver. They had thrown aside their *ponchos*, and one had on my husband's best coat, while the other wore Mr. Hendricks's soldier-overcoat. Even the hat off the dead man's head they had taken, and also, as was afterwards found, the black silk handkerchief he had on his neck when they killed him. Again they took their way over toward the mountains, and then everything around me was deadly still. Oh, how I wished for a living, breathing thing to speak to, then! I should not be the poor, half-demented creature that I am to-day, if only a dog could have looked up at me, with kind, affectionate gaze. But the half-open eyes of the man seemed staring at me from the window, and I kept watching it, half thinking that the dreadful, mangled face would thrust itself out.

"By and by the *coyotes*, scenting the dead body in the house, came stealthily from all sides, surrounding the house, and howling louder and louder when they found that they were not received with their usual greeting—a dose of powder and ball. At last one of them, bolder or hungrier than the rest, made a leap to

get up to the window; but just as his fore-paw touched the window-sill something was hurled from the window, which struck the wolf on the head and stampeded the whole yelping pack. This was too much; and I must have fainted dead away, for my husband said that when they found me I was as stiff and cold as the corpse in the house. What I thought had been hurled from the window was only a piece of a cracker-box, used as target, and put out of the way on the broad *adobe* window-sill, where the paw of the *coyote* had touched it and pulled it down over him. I would not go into the house, and as Mr. Johnson thought it best to give information of what had happened at Stanwick's Ranch, we all came down here together, and I have been here ever since. My husband is waiting for a chance to go back to Texas. I wish we could get back; for I do n't want to be buried out here in the sand, among the *coyotes* and rattlesnakes, like poor Mr. Hendricks."

The ambulance had been waiting at the door for me quite a while; so I thanked the woman for "telling me all about it," and tried to say something cheering to her. When I turned to leave the room she clutched at my dress.

"Stop," she said, nervously; "don't leave me here in the room alone;—I can't bear to stay alone!"

She followed me slowly into the bar-room, and when the man there went to the ambulance to speak to the Captain, she crept out after him and stood in the sun till he returned.

"The poor woman," said I, compassionately; "how I pity her!"

"The poor woman," echoed the station-keeper; "those two Greasers have killed her just as dead as if they had beaten her brains out on the spot."

The shades of night were already falling around Mohawk Station when we reached it. It was quite a pre-

boasting of but one story, of course; but it is not every one in Arizona who can build a house with four rooms,—if the doors *do* consist of old blankets, and the floor and ceiling, like the walls, of mud.

A discharged soldier kept the station now—a large yellow dog his sole companion. The man slept on the same bed that had borne Hendricks's corpse, and the cudgel, with the murdered man's blood dried on it, was lying at the foot of it.

"And where is his grave?" I

asked, as we stood in front of the house.

The man's eye travelled slowly over the desolate landscape before us. There were sand, verde, and cactus on one side of us, and there were sand, verde, and cactus on the other.

"Well, really now, I could n't tell. You see, I was n't here when they put him in the ground, and I have n't thought of his grave since I come. Fact is, I've got to keep my eyes open for live Greasers and Pache-Indians, and do n't get much time to hunt up dead folks's graves!"

## CADENABBIA.

95735

BY H. D. JENKINS.

**H**OTEL BELLE VUE, *May 22.*— I have been sitting at my window to-night, half living in the present, half wandering in dreams. The lake stretches out black before me; beyond this the black hills shut out the farther world; and the scarcely less black clouds hide the heavens. From the opposite shore, where the few lights of Bellagio alone relieve the darkness, the music of a band is wafted across the waters of Como. Now the strain is no louder than the voice of the spring in a lone pine—now it throbs and pulsates and whirls until I feel it in all my blood. When the wind is favorable I catch the faint rhythm of distant feet, the sound of "dancers dancing in tune." So we live and love,—the black earth and waves, the hidden heaven,—in the centre an hour of music and of dancing;—a short joy that wearies and palls, a darkness measureless and impenetrable.

As I look up there are two stars that have broken through the clouds. Is

not that enough? Not the whole marshalling of the nightly host could give surer tokens of a bending over all. The mystery of misery, the burden of sin, a little mirth, two lights dimly twinkling above,—that is the picture, and under it we will write "The World."

I hear the bells ringing from unseen bell-towers along the shore and up among the hills. They are calling us to midnight prayers;—that is a good use to make of midnight, a midnight with two stars!

The bells have ceased, the lights are out, and the music is hushed at Bellagio; but the stars shine upon the sleep of the world, as they shone upon its dancing and its praying.

*May 23.*—I was busy in my room all the fore part of the day, to-day, but toward evening I walked out with a friend along the western shore. (Cadenabbia is on the west of Como, about mid-way of its entire length.) We must have walked several miles