

## A LINE OF LIGHT.

A WOMAN croons by her lonely fire,  
Watching her babe with its suffering cry,  
And her thoughts are far with its sailor sire,  
And the night is wild and the wind is high.  
"Oh, who can ever bring back again  
The glad, glad days that we had of old?  
Does every pleasure pass into pain?  
Oh, a frozen hope lies so bitter cold!"  
But the larks will be stirring by-and-by,  
And already there's light in the distant sky.

The ship lies wrecked on the wide west sea,  
And the fierce birds quarrel and scream  
above,  
With their savage laughter that seems to be  
A demon's scoff at the end of love:  
"Ha, ha! ha! ha! and it comes to this,  
Ye strong, brave men, now your day is  
done,  
Your corpses have but the kelpie's kiss,  
And your last hard struggle is known to  
none."

But the sun is still shining out of sight,  
And has left behind him a line of light.

There is summer once more upon the sea,  
And sunshine once more in the lonely  
home;  
The babe is gone from the woman's knee,  
And she knows her husband can never  
come;

But as she sits she is singing low:  
"The loves I have lost does my Father  
keep,  
And He bids me His happy secret know,  
Which is only seen by the eyes that weep."  
The sun is still shining, though out of sight,  
And the darkest day has its line of light.

—Harper's Weekly.

## FT. UNDERWOOD, OF CARTER.

An Amazing Story of a Family Feud  
in the Kentucky Mountains.

It is said that the cost to the State for the one item of sending a company of militia into the hills of Breathitt County last winter was over one hundred thousand dollars. A Judge had been shot and killed as he was about to open court to try one member of a Breathitt County family that had been at feud with another family of the same county. In the progress of this feud some fifteen or twenty persons—the exact number is not on the records—had been killed. To hold up the hands of the successor to this murdered Judge the State troops were sent into Breathitt, and they aided the Sheriff in making arrests, guarded the jail, Court House, jury and witnesses, and generally kept the peace until the murderer was finally convicted and sentenced to the Penitentiary for life. To convict him the State spent nearly the estimated cost of the proposed new Capitol building at Frankfort, and more money than it pays for interest on the State debt in three years.

What the Littles and Strongs are to Breathitt, the Holbrooks and Underwoods were to the neighboring county of Carter. The Underwoods are lately extinct, except a few women and children, and the feud with the Holbrooks may be considered over for the present. Carter is not more than a hundred miles from the fertile fields of the Blue-grass region, but between its dense woods and few, barren clearings and the great stock farms of Bourbon and Fayette the outlying spurs of the Cumberland intervene. It took the wagon trains that carried provisions from Mt. Sterling to the militia in Breathitt last winter nine days to make the seventy-two miles, or an average of eight miles a day. The six or seven counties in the eastern section of Kentucky are almost as foreign to the rest of the State as is Siberia to St. Petersburg. Once in a while a citizen of Breathitt, or Carter, or Magoffin, or Perry is brought down to Louisville to be tried before the United States Court for illicit distilling, and every winter their Representatives, dressed in butternut jeans, get to Frankfort, and make more money at five dollars a day than they had before in their lives; but otherwise the mountain people know as little of the civilization of the lower counties as do the lower counties know of them. Mat Adams, present Clerk of the House of Representatives in Washington, represented this section for years in Congress; but it used to be said that he was about the only man in three counties who could read fluently, and whose signature was easily legible. Besides these accomplishments, he was afraid of no man living. However, his popularity was based upon many other qualities that made him an excellent representative. When old man Butler, of Breathitt, was named as special Judge to try the case of the man who had murdered Judge Burnett, he said: "Well, it'll be a heavy load to pack, but I reckon I kin pack it." But the Governor appointed a good lawyer from Louisville, and the murderer was convicted.

In Carter especially, of these counties, few inroads have been made into the primeval forests. The dense woods are only intersected at long intervals by stealthy footways that lead to the log farmhouses, with a hundred half-cleared acres, enclosed by worm fences, surrounding them. Old George Underwood, an emigrant from Virginia, settled in this region forty years ago. He was a great hunter; and then the country was hardly less a wilderness than it was when Daniel Boone made his way through it nearly a century before. The ten sons who were born to him grew up not less stalwart than was their father. They, like him, were dead shots. They were more reckless than the Western frontiersman, for they were never brought in contact with civilization. It is, indeed, a wild country. When the Louisville boys went up to Breathitt last winter, two of them were quartered for one night in a farmer's cabin. When awakened in the early morning they looked about to open the shutters.

"We don't have no windows up here," said their host. "In warm weather we keeps the doors open, and in winter the fires gives light enough—it and the cracks. But it was kinder dark in this room, and we sorter wanted a window, so I made this little 'un." The little 'un was a three-inch augur hole bored through one of the logs.

The first cabin built by old George Underwood was burned by guerrillas during the war, and the one put up in its place had no windows—only loopholes. George and all his grown sons belonged to the Home Guards, on the Union side, and to that organization also belonged 'Squire Holbrook and some of his sons. Just what began the feud between the Holbrooks and Underwoods is not exactly known. 'Squire Holbrook, before he was killed, always averred that he caught young Jesse Underwood trying to steal his horses, and shot him only to save the beasts. It is certain that when Jesse was wounded he was near 'Squire Holbrook's premises.

The first strictly personal trouble in which the Underwoods were engaged was in September, 1865, just after the war. Jesse and David Underwood, two of the old man's sons, went down into Bath County to attend a circus, and, on their return home, stopped at a wayside grocery. Somebody called for a "Jeff Davis straight." Jesse turned and inquired, "Who asked for that kind of liquor?"

Jesse Underwood was the pride of Carter County. The accusation that he or his kin were horse-stealers was always repudiated by them with scorn; they said that it was only a convenient excuse of the Holbrooks. Now the charge lies against them without protest, for they are all dead. Of Jesse an enthusiastic reporter of the Greenup Independent once wrote: "Of middle size, with black hair, mustache, and eyes, in which was an expression of absolute courage, a handsomer man I never saw." The reporter added that in the eyes was also a look of simple gentleness, but this may be doubted. "He wore a gray felt hat, a drab vest and pantaloons, whose legs were tucked in his boots. On his belt was a Smith & Wesson six-shooter, a cartridge and cap-pouch, and slung over his shoulder was a powder-flask. In his right hand was a double-barreled shotgun, held, walking-cane fashion, by the stock, the barrels downward."

Samuel Crane acknowledged that he was the man, "and," as it was described in the contemporary account of the affray—fuss, they call such difficulties in the mountain counties of Kentucky—"made for Jessie. David got between the two. Jesse raised an ale bottle to smash it over David's head, and Jesse cocked his pistol at Crane to save his brother's life; but one George Trumbo stepped in front of Sam Crane, and received the shot aimed at the latter, which killed him instantly."

The Underwoods escaped into the Carter woods, but Trumbo's relatives were well-to-do, and offered a reward for Jesse's capture. The Governor also issued his proclamation, offering the usual reward of five hundred dollars for his apprehension. On the application of the authorities of any county the Governor is obliged to offer this reward, and sometimes there will be a column of such brief proclamations in the newspaper officially designated to print them. A Sheriff's posse during five or six years made several attempts to capture Jesse. In two instances the invaders returned from the Underwood fort carrying back their dead. Every attempt resulted in the wounding of one or more of the posse. It was about this time that he was shot by 'Squire Holbrook. But this continued strife at last proved so annoying to Jesse and his brother Alfred that the former left one night for Iowa, where he remained four years; and the latter went to Texas. There, his old-time neighbors were assured, he obtained great note as the leader of a band of outlaws, and there he died in due time from a too accurate pistol shot.

During Jesse's absence things went on quietly in the Underwood neighborhood, barring an occasional charge against the old man and his sons of horse stealing; but no blood was shed. It was not until the spring of 1877 that Jack Tabor and John Martin were arrested for horse stealing. Old George Underwood went their bail, they were released, and settled on a clearing near Fort Underwood. 'Squire Holbrook and others notified them to leave, which they did not do; but one night in June they stopped at Alex. Penlam's and the next day Alex. was waylaid and badly wounded. Old George was on his way to Penlam's house with a doctor when two shots fired from an ambush struck him. One put out his eye. The next day Penlam got out of bed as far as the door, seeking fresh air, and a shot fired from the opposite hillside laid him dead across his doorsill. The feud of the Holbrooks and Underwoods was in full strength again, for it was only the day after the assassination of Penlam that Robert Glover of the Holbrook clan was shot through the heart as he was at work in the fields; and on the 22d of June Lewis Underwood, while gathering firewood, was pierced by a rifle ball. He was shot in the stomach, and lingered for two years. The case was an interesting one in a medical point of view. Through the wound the process of digestion might be often witnessed.

Perhaps it was the fault of their training that these people acted so often like brutes, but there were sometimes bright points in their natures; at any rate it is said that young Jesse loved this brother Lewis, and came all the way back from Iowa to see him before he died, and incidentally to revenge his death. But before his arrival Isaiah Masters, another of the Holbrooks, was ambushed and shot dead, and divers partisans of both sides were variously wounded. Neighbors abandoned their clearings and stayed closely in their cabins, and it was given out that any doctor who attended any of the injured did so at his peril, as did any storekeeper who furnished burial clothes for the dead. This state of affairs culminated in a regular siege by the Holbrooks, of Fort Underwood, a large double cabin, into which all the Underwoods, men, women, and children, had been hustled. For nineteen days the siege lasted, inmates and assailants occasionally exchanging rounds; and during this time the door of the fort was never once opened except for a few minutes at a time, under cover of the night, to admit a breath of fresh air. The county authorities twice demanded a surrender, but old George answered that the law was not strong enough to protect him, did he abandon his stronghold. The Governor at last ordered out the militia—a company from Covington—and to them old George submitted without resistance. He and his sons were brought before justices of the peace, but no charge was made against them. Nor does it appear that the Holbrooks were molested by the law; indeed they pleaded that they were only trying to break up a den of horse thieves.

It was at this time that Jesse reappeared. He partly sued for, partly commanded a peace; and as he was a particularly accurate shot, his request was heeded. Besides, he fell in love with the daughter of a neighbor, and during his courtship it would have been considered ill breeding to shoot him.

The people of these mountain counties of Kentucky are peculiar. It is an unquestionable fact that you can travel from Cumberland Gap to the Ohio, and that everywhere you will be hospitably received. You can carry a large sum of money with you, and you will never be harmed. "I reckon we kin keep you," the householder says, as you rap with your waip-stalk at his cabin door; and his "brile and bread," coffee with-out sugar, and buttermilk, he will share with you without expectation or hope of fee. In fact, your person is as perfectly safe in any part of these mountains as in Broadway, if you do not happen to get mixed up in a family quarrel. There are no murders for gain or lust; it is a pure question of give and take, and they do not understand why outsiders should concern themselves about it.

"The world has been hard upon me," he said. "I don't like to fight; I want peace. Bushwhacking is so dreadful barbarous that I hate it."

Old George promised Jesse that he would sell out and move to Iowa, and Jesse again started for the West, taking a young wife with him. Traveling overland to a point on the Ohio, where he intended to take a steamboat, he was followed by the Sheriff of Lewis County—the old rewards for the killing of Trumbo, twelve years before, were thought to be still outstanding. They ambushed in the path of the bridal couple late one night, and as they passed opened fire on them, badly wounding Jesse at the first shot. But he fought desperately, killed one of the posse outright, and wounded two others before he fell, bleeding from half a dozen shots. He was taken to the Bath County jail, a new indictment for the murder of Trumbo was framed, and he was in jail awaiting trial when, in the spring of 1878, he escaped and made his way back to Carter. His wife was dead, meanwhile, but his brother Lewis was still lingering from the wound of a year before.

Jesse only left the fort thereafter to attend church meetings, but with the precaution of two revolvers and his shotgun. The hatchet was buried for nearly a year. It was on the 20th of May last that it was dug up, and the complete wiping out of the adult Underwoods was the result. On that day Elverton Underwood was shot while surrounded by his children. Two bullets passed through his body. They were fired from ambush. Jesse claimed that he traced the assassins to 'Squire Holbrook's and that the tracks of one of them were those of the old 'Squire himself. But his brother Lewis was dying, and Jesse did nothing until in September death released the boy from two years of great suffering. Then the bloody work was renewed.

The boy died September 1. September 5 'Squire Holbrook and his son Millard were shot at as they were catching a horse in the pasture adjoining their house. A rifle ball passed through the old 'Squire's brain, and he fell dead. The son escaped. September 8 William Underwood was shot through the heart while at work. September 12 David Wilson of the Holbrooks was shot at from ambush and his left arm shattered. September 15 as old George Underwood was stepping out of the door of the fort, sixteen shots were fired from behind the trees opposite. He was badly wounded in the arm and shoulder, and the women dragged him in and sent for Jesse.

Jesse was out in the forests and at once hastened home. Just as he was entering the door one of three shots from the brush-covered hillside opposite struck him in the shoulder, and passing through his left lung, came out on the other side of his body. He fell across the doorsill, but the ready hands of the women dragged him in before another shot could finish him. Then began a drama unparalleled even in the history of these mountain outrages. The Holbrook faction rose from their ambush, and rushed yelling to the door. Inside there were huddled a dozen women and children, and on two corn-husk pallets the father and son were lying mortally wounded. There was little to eat or to drink in the house. Around it the Holbrooks established a cordon of sentries, and for seventeen days the door was never opened, except that a shot warned the women to close it speedily. On Sunday, four days after Jesse was shot, the walls of the women inside gave notice that the man was dead; but, as they had before refused to allow any doctor to go to the relief of the wounded men, so now the besieging party gave notice that any man or woman, either in the house or outside, who attempted to bury the dead man, would need to arrange for his or her own funeral.

In this stress old George Underwood did manage to get a message to the County Judge at Grayson, nineteen miles distant, asking him for protection. That official ordered the Sheriff to take a posse, bury the dead, and bring to Grayson the women, children and the one living survivor; but so great was the terrorism that the Sheriff could induce not a single man in the county to accompany him. Then the Governor was telegraphed to for a company of militia, but without success.

On Sunday, October 12, the four women, a daughter, two nieces, and the sister-in-law of the old man, were keeping watch beside his pallet. At a knock at the door the women peered out through a loophole and saw a group of some twenty men with blackened faces in the yard. They demanded admittance, averring that Caleb White and John Martin had been seen to enter the house. They promised safety to the old man and the women if they were allowed to enter. The old man consented, and they searched the house without finding the men, but they seized old George's arsenal. It consisted of six guns, five pistols, three bowie knives, and a sword. They laughed as they uncovered Jesse's corpse, and then asked the old man to show his wounds.

Old George stooped over to take off the bandage. "Let's bring this meeting to a close," said the leader, as he raised his gun and emptied a load of buckshot into the old man's body. Another at the same moment shot him through the head, and he fell forward on his face dead. Through the wound in his body a man's fist might be thrust. Then the band went away.

The father of the Underwoods had, in some time past, befriended Frank McFerran of Olive Hill. The morning after the murder Agnes McFerran went about among the neighbors begging for assistance to bury the dead at Fort Underwood, but no one would venture. Then the girl and her father started for the house alone. They expected nothing short of death, but happily found that the besieging party, having finished their work, had disappeared. The scene inside the cabin cannot be described, but with the help of the Underwood women, the two bodies were given a decent burial, the cries of the mourners echoing through the stillness of the forest.

When a local Judge was asked to quash indictments against the Littles and Strongs in Breathitt, four or five years ago, he promptly consented. The explanation given at the time was simple:

"Why shouldn't they be allowed to fight it out? If witnesses testify against either party they will be killed and so the feud will widen. If the principals kill each other, that will be the end of it, and justice will be done."—*Mt. Starling (Ky.) Cor. N. Y. Sun.*

—I think there is no way of cooking beefsteak like the following: Pound it, if you choose, but it is not necessary. Place it in a frying-pan over not too hot a fire, and let it steam, having it covered closely. Do not add any water. After half an hour, or more, remove the cover, salt; add a good lump of butter, and fry until done. Care must be taken not to burn it while frying.—*Cor. Rural New Yorker.*