

eyelid, that she "hadn't seed him sence foah cokin cuttin time." She slipped away as quietly as she had come, and I regretted afterward that I did not place her on one of the empty saddles and hold her till we fell back to the Sequatchie.

About noon two bright men who had been in the advance came in with a prisoner from Armstrong's division of Wheeler's corps. He reported his command moving west, about five miles to the south, and as soon as I was assured, from our own observations, of the accuracy of his statement, I sent a messenger to Colonel McCook. Early the next morning the messenger returned on foot—his horse had been killed by a guerrilla about a mile back—with an order to follow up the Confederates as far as Bridgeport and to report if they deviated from that point.

On our way back we met old Ferguson near the creek on which we were encamped when I first met Saddle. The old man's brown, leathery face and the trembling of the long, lean fingers that clutched his staff showed that he was very much excited.

"Don't go down the crik to the Sequatch," he said. "Mart Hall and a gang is a layin fo' you uns."

"But how else am I to get to the Sequatchie?" I asked.

"You uns could git thar without criters by climbin ovah the mountains."

"But we would have to leave our horses!"

"Yaas, I reckon so," and he stroked his grizzled beard in a nervous, perplexed way.

"How many men has this Mart Hall with him?"

"Waal, thar's a right smart bunch, I reckon."

"As many as I have?"

"Mebbe not," he said, after a glance over the men.

"Very well, I am going to ride down the creek to the Sequatchie, and if Mart Hall or any one else tries to stop me he must take the consequences." Then I was reminded to ask, "Is this Mart Hall an officer?"

"No, sah; leastwise not ez any one ever heard on, and ef so he was, I reckon he'd a told Saddle," said the old man.

"Where did he get his men?"

"Mart sorter picked 'em up."

"Where?"

"Waal, all about in the hills."

"And they are not soldiers?"

"No, not edzactly."

"Then they are guerrillas?"

"Waal, streenger, I reckon you uns'd make no mistake if so be they was sot down 'bout that way," said the old man.

"Was Mart Hall at your place this morning?"

"Yaas."

"And he talked with Saddle?"

"He did, fo' shuah."

"Very well; thanks for the information, and goodbye."

As we rode down the narrow valley I became more and more convinced that there was a direct connection between Saddle Ferguson's visit to our camp and the killing of the three pickets, and yet my conscience pricked me for thinking so harshly of that surprisingly pretty girl.

About two miles below the point where we met the old man the creek ran from bank to bank between high limestone walls. Realizing that it would be a very bad place to be stopped, I dismounted thirty men and sent one-half up the precipitous rocks on either side, so as to clear the way, if need be, for the others to pass through with the horses.

I had just given the command to advance in this order, when a half dozen jets of unmistakable powder smoke shot out from a conical hill to the left, and Corporal Wilson, of the First United States regulars, fell dead from his horse. It was now evident that Mart Hall and his friends did not avail themselves of the canyon in order to attack.

Quicker than I can pen the briefest sentence that describes the adventure, number fours were holding the horses, and the others were speeding like deer-hounds for the hill. It was by no means our first experience of this kind, and the fierce faces of the men in blue told that they were in no mood to be tender with the guerrillas. The rule had been to shoot them down if they did not surrender and to hang them up if they did.

As we advanced, the men on the hill kept up an irregular fire from behind a natural barricade of rocks near the crest, but there was only a handful of them, and our sudden and no doubt unexpected attack demoralized them so that not one of our men was hit till we had surrounded the cone and were under the shelter of the acclivity. I went to the rear of the hill, where I saw signs that told me that was the way in which our assailants had ascended. Our men knew what to do without further orders, and as they crept up they fired at everything they saw moving in front. When we had come within about fifty yards of the top I took refuge behind a rock and called out:

"Hello there, Mart Hall!"

"Hello yersel!" came back the reply.

"There is no use in firing any more. I want you to surrender!"

"I'll see you uns d--d fust, and then I won't!" was the response.

"Yes, we uns 'll see you uns d--d fust!" rang out like an echo the unmistakable voice of Saddle Ferguson.

Like my men, I had been fever hot with indignation, but as soon as I realized that the girl was here I felt a cold chill for the moment; then I called out:

"Have you a woman with you up

there?"

"Yes," replied the man, "we uns hez got a lady up har, and she's my gal."

"If you are brave men you will send her down. We will do her no harm. Come, we have no time for fooling."

We could hear voices in discussion among the rocks. It was evident that Saddle's companions were anxious for her to leave, and equally evident that she was determined to stay. At length she decided the question by shouting out, in tones of resolute defiance:

"Mart Hall's my sweetheart, d--n you uns, and I'm a-gwine to stick by him till the ind. So my vice to you uns is to clar right out, and we uns 'll agree not to shoot any moah. That's honest Injun."

Despite this assurance, there was nothing left us but to push on, and that quickly, for we had no time to spare. My men were at once drawn to the rise of the crest to avoid firing on each other, and I could hear them saying, as they braced for the expected dash, "We must save the girl, boys, if we can."

I shouted again to send the woman out, so as to throw the fellows up the hill off their guard, then signaled the advance with my saber, while Saddle was shouting her defiance, and in an instant the men in blue were leaping over the intervening space like tigers.

A ten seconds' fusillade; curses, yells, a woman's shriek, and then the cheer of the victors, whose last volley from the repeating carbines had been delivered within ten feet.

There was no need of the rope that day. Except the tall, lithe young man I took to be Mart Hall, all the men were dressed in butternut and armed with hunting rifles. Lying across Hall's body was the girl dead. She still clutched a pistol in her little brown hand, and the red splotch on her forehead, with its purple, powder stained margin, told that her own hand had made the wound that took her from life with her desperate lover.

THE END.

Mahogany Sawing.

Mahogany of the first grain and marking is sawed up into veneer of half a dozen sawmills in this town. Mahogany sawing is a very pretty business, and a mahogany sawyer is a well paid man of great skill and long experience. He must know whether a log is suitable for veneer or slabs; must be able to guess whether its heart runs straight or "dips;" must see far enough into a log to decide whether it shall be cut transversely before being sawed lengthwise and whether it shall be quartered as oak is quartered or sawed straight through with the grain from end to end.—New York Sun.