

Special Excursion to Hammond, Louisiana.

The Illinois Central R. R. will run an excursion to Hammond, Louisiana, leaving La Salle at 1:05 p.m., June 22, 1885. Fare for the round trip only \$16.45.

These were my thoughts for days and nights. They were my company—a numerous and busy crowd. They were kept alive by the frequent sight of Blanche about Pratt's cabin.

Why did I not seek an interview with Blanche and endeavor to justify myself? I did make the attempt, or rather just the way for one. I owed her three hundred dollars.

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despair as this last prop was thus so suddenly taken from me. Everything solid seemed to have tumbled from under me. I was alone and friendless amid suspicion, growing prophetic, averted faces, whispered lies, and back of all these stood the being on earth I most loved, transformed at once from an angel of mercy into an un pitying and mistaken judge.

These were my thoughts for days and nights. They were my company—a numerous and busy crowd. They were kept alive by the frequent sight of Blanche about Pratt's cabin.

The crowd was absolutely hungry to do something for Miss Sefton. The area on which her cloth-covered house was erected, alongside of Pratt's, was leveled as if by magic.

Fifty men with picks and shovels cleared the trail leading from her residence to the store of intercepting bushes and impeding bowlders.

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I did not trust the sacredness of a sealed note to all in Bull Bar.

CHAPTER XVII. I was roughly shaken by the shoulder and ordered to get up. They had stolen into the house in the dead of night.



Louis ordered to get up.

In two minutes I was outside the house in the hands of my captors. They took me to a deeply shaded hollow in the hills about half a mile distant from the store.

That portion of Bull Bar represented by my six midnight judges and jurors were hungry for a "little fun." A man had been called, if not mad, dangerous. They were about the good work of relieving their community of the terror.

How! by an outrage and disgrace, they proposed putting on me, worse than death itself.

Their first act on arriving at the hollow was to handcuff me. The effect of the glare on rock, brush and naked men was decidedly dramatic.

"I would prefer not to see you under the present circumstances." "BLANCHE SEFTON."

So matters went on, for eight or ten days Broener continued absent. Did I find any consolation in the thought that he might be miserable in not finding Blanche at Marys' villa?

I could not visit this store. That was no place for me. My work at the "Bank" was quite done. I kept at work on the river claim, making six or eight dollars per day to which I was perfectly indifferent.

Why not write her? I did write her—page on page, telling the whole story, detailing all the misery of my situation, upbraiding her for her injustice and cruelty, and beseeching her for a personal interview.

I said: "Now, men, if you do me what I first, for as sure as you disagree me in that way, and leave me alive, just so sure will I spend the rest of my life in getting even with you." "Maybe I don't know you, but I'll try and find out, and if I do I'll have your heart's blood, every one of you. Now be careful, for it's not such a light matter to start a man out for life with blood on his brain, as you'll start me if you do this thing to me."

There was but one reply from the evasive master of ceremonies. That was, "Get it." A wand of cloth was thrust in my mouth. I gazed at the leader, from his height, despite an assumed bend of the shoulders, I took him for "Long Mac."

The party then ranged themselves in line, fronting me, and, in a thick murmuring voice, proceeded to inform me that "The Committee of Mighty High Binders had thought it best for the good of Bull Bar to start John Holder out of it and also that for the young man's good, and as a token of remembrance, the committee, in behalf of the Bar, would present the aforesaid John Holder with an entire new suit, which they trusted he would long wear."

"No more to be!" cried all, simultaneously. "Refreshments!" And the denjolin again traveled along the line.

The next word was "Business!" I was ordered to take off my clothes. "What are you going to do with that man?" The voice was that of a woman. It came from the top of the cliff opposite the fire.

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forgotten his assumed voice. It was Bull Sefton.

"No matter who I am, now, Mr. Sefton, I demand your release of that man," was the reply.

"It's the gal at Pratt's!" said a voice, which I recognized as Long Mac's.

"That's a lie!" came from Blanche's lips with a vigor which savored of her piratical uncle.

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