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# Letter, Richard Lovell to Sophia Starling Bennett, London, on the Death of John Sprockett

by Robert Cooperman

My Dear Madam,  
I fear to bear sad tidings,  
but rather than have you shocked  
by unscrupulous scribes of the press  
or the fabrications of dime novelists,  
my wife and I declared it our duty  
to inform you of the untimely,  
if not wholly unexpected, death  
of your late guide, John Sprockett.  
After an altercation in a saloon,  
he was waylaid in a stable,  
not, I'm sure, the conclusion  
he would have chosen for his career.

I won't soon forget Mr. Sprockett:  
our mountain cottage trembled  
when his boots stamped onto our porch;  
our barn shook as if a battle were raging  
within its walls for his tainted soul,  
and I feared my wife might succumb  
at the sight of the Luciferian scars  
he bore like medals from our beloved Majesty.

Again, I apologize for any inconvenience  
this news may have occasioned you,  
though the birth of your first child  
will more than offset any passing flutter  
you may have felt for Mr. Sprockett's demise.  
When I feared my own Emily would be lost,  
I took solace in the girl she gave me  
with what seemed her last strength.  
But the climate proved salubrious  
not only to myself, but to Emily as well.

I remain, Madam, your faithful servant.  
Should you ever travel the Rockies again,  
we would be honoured to once more receive you,  
the society of Englishmen denied us,  
fear of my consumptive relapse  
confining us to this magnificent prison.

