THIRTEEN

AUTHORS FIRST BOOK

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THIRTEEN

Stories of the Far West

BY

FORBES HEERMANS

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THIS VOLUME

IS

DEDICATED

TO THE ONE PERSON IN WHOSE LITERARY TASTE THE AUTHOR HAS ENTIRE CONFIDENCE

—— THE MAN WHO BUYS IT ——

BY WAY OF EXPLANATION.

So far as the author knows, this book has no particular 'mission'; it was not even written to 'fill a long felt want,' and if any reader should discover a want that it does fill, nicely, he will confer a favor on the author by notifying him to that effect—by mail.

As to the title—THIRTEEN—the author claims that its merit lies in its utter irrelevancy.

As to the stories themselves, he wishes to say that they are reports of actual experiences, written up from his note-book, with such changes in names, places and minor incidents as his personal safety seems to require. Some attempt has also been made to expurgate the language sufficiently to bring it within civilized limits, without wholly losing its idiomatic flavor.

The author awaits the verdict of the public with trepidation, but meekly submits his work—and starts at once for the Far East.

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I. SHINGLES.

There was no question about it, the mining camp at Clay's Gulch was wide awake. You might know that by looking at the door of the Oasis, the principal establishment in the place for the dissemination of liquids. Through this door, which stood wide open as if to let in a little of the pure air and sunshine, so plentiful without, so rare within, where the fumes of whiskey and tobacco hung thick and fetid, might be seen some of the residents of Clay's Gulch; men in rough dress, whose stern faces that bright morning in June seemed harder and sterner than ever. For the camp had been having a night of it, anyone could tell you that; and the consequences of that night had been unpleasant, even to those who were used to that sort of thing, as most of the men of the Gulch were.

Bob Stortles was lying dead in what he had called his house, and a little blue spot on his left temple indicated clearly the cause of his death. It needed no coroner's inquest to settle that; there wasn't a man in the camp who couldn't swear to what Bob had died of.

And that wasn't all! Mrs. Bob Stortles was lying dead in the same cabin, and the cause of her death was equally well known—consumption.

Bob was one of those men who failing to get along in the East had gone West to do better. That was

two years ago, and he had as regularly failed there as before. He left a young wife behind him to do the best she could and take care of the baby that was born a half year after. Bob couldn't help them any; he had all he could do to keep himself from starving, but when at last she wrote that she was dying, he borrowed the money and sent for her to come to him. Shingles was the man who lent it to him, and Shingles was Bob's partner. Not that Shingles was any richer than Bob, for he wasn't, but he had a few odd trinkets that he had managed to save through all his ups and downs and—well, Bob got some money, and Mrs. Bob came to Clay's Gulch.

"You see, old man," said Bob to Shingles after he had sent for his wife, "I look at it in this way; the atmosphere is A1 for Sally in course, an' the stirrin' round and me bein' with her'll brace her up. And there's the Kid! it'll do lot's for the Kid.'

Shingles assented to this with a nod. That was his way. He never had anything to *say*; a nod or a shake of the head was a whole paragraph with him. He had never been heard to utter a complete sentence but once and that was when he and Bob were working the "Ghostly Hole" claim, and found a nugget. Bob used to relate the story in the Oasis, telling how Shingles, taken by surprise had exclaimed:

"It's worth a thousand, Bob!"

It was worth a thousand but it was soon gone. Bob took it to the bank, sold it, and the same evening lost the money to Major Burke at poker.

"Who'd a thought the blamed fool held fours?" Bob said to Shingles next day, "why, he drew three!"

Shingles never complained; you really couldn't tell from the looks of him that he ever thought of the matter. But then, that was another of Shingle's peculiarities. He wasn't popular in the camp; he was hardly known, while Bob was everybody's friend. Shingles loved Bob in that silent, enduring way, the strong sometimes feel for the weak, and Bob accepted the homage thus paid him, and assumed to be Shingles's protector.

When Mrs. Bob and the baby came, matters did not improve, but rather grew worse. If it hadn't been for Shingles, more than once they would have starved. But all that he did and all that Bob tried to do, was of no avail, and three months after she arrived Mrs. Bob died. That night Bob went into the camp; he was in trouble, poor fellow, and he did what he'd often done before, drowned his care in rum. The story is short. Inflamed by the liquor, he quarreled with a stranger, and making a motion to draw his pistol, the next moment Bob was with his wife and the little blue spot on his temple told the story.

Then occurred an event which for a time caused some little talk in Clay's Gulch. The man who shot Bob was sent after him at just midnight. As Captain Fish, the proprieter of the Oasis, and the most influential man in the place, remarked, with grim humor:

"Taint the shootin' of him so much that we object to, but it's the shootin' of him *now*, his wife bein' dead an' him a havin' on his hands a little Kid. In this case I don't see ez we kin do less'n the complete thing."

And they did 'the complete thing,' and then there were three lying dead in the camp.

The question of a place of burial for Bob and his wife, being deemed of small importance, was left to Shingles to decide.

"You know'd him best, you know, bein' his pardner," said the Sheriff, who acted as Master of Ceremonies, "an' bein' familiar with his tastes, I reckon you can guess pretty close what he'd fancy for a shaft."

Shingles nodded and pointed to the claim he and Bob had worked for a time and then abandoned.

"There!" he said.

"What! the Ghostly Hole!" said the Sheriff.

Shingles nodded again.

"Well, I dunno but you're right," said the Sheriff after a thoughtful pause, "'taint good for nothin' else," and so Bob and his wife were buried there.

Then the question arose: "What'll we do with the Kid?" and a meeting of the Committee was called to settle it. Mrs. Bob had been the first woman in the camp, and this was the first baby, and the novelty of the situation made it a perplexing one. Promptly at two o'clock on the day after the funeral, the meeting came to order in the back room of the Oasis, Captain Fish in the chair. He opened the proceedings with a short speech.

"You know the situation, gen'lemen," he said; "here's a Kid less'n two year old, an orphan, gen'lemen *and* poor—" here the committee nodded as one man—"and I won't say how it become an orphan, for you all know." The committee nodded again. "I

reckon we'd better send it to the States, to some of its folks; it'll die here. What d'ye say?"

The plan seemed to the committee the only feasible one, and after due deliberation, Tom Redway rose and offered a resolution to that effect. He was interrupted by the entrance of Shingles. No one had thought of him before, though it was he who had been taking care of the baby since its mother's death. He slowly advanced to where the committee sat and said:

"Ex-*cuse me*, boys, but it ain't goin' east. It can't! It aint got no folks nor no money. It's Bob's Kid, boys, and "—here his voice shook a little—" I reckon to take care of it myself."

The committee was amazed; Shingles had never before said so much—they did'nt know he had it in him—and for a moment they were speechless. When they recovered they burst into a simultaneous cheer; they slapped him on the back; they punched him in the ribs; they invited him to drink and the way then most in vogue showed their approval of his course. By acclamation he was appointed guardian and the Committee adjourned, relieved to have the quesion so easily settled.

Then a new life began for Shingles and he had a hard struggle to get along. Little Bob, 'twas so he called the baby girl, though he always spoke of her to others as Miss Bob, while she was a tender care to him, troubled him greatly. He had to be with her constantly; he had but little time to work and earn the bread they both must eat, and often he went to bed hungry, though little Bob had enough, you may be sure. Shingles daily grew poorer, and if the boys

hadn't now and then helped him out on the sly, he and little Bob would have had a much harder time than they did, and that was very hard indeed. But through all his troubles Shingles never flinched; he had devoted his life to the child and he did his duty as he understood it—manfully.

The odd association of Shingles and Bob at first seemed very strange to the camp, but in a little while the two became an institution. No body ever saw Shingles without Bob or Bob without Shingles; they were always together. Yet still his luck held on the same. The only change noticed in him was that he talked more than formerly.

"What's come over you, Shingles?" Jack Farmer asked him one day; "You talk so much; didn't use to!"

"It's along of Miss Bob," Shingles answered, "somebody's got to learn her to talk so I just thought I would."

Jack told with great effect, every night for a week, to a never tiring audience in the Oasis, of a little adventure he had met with, "up to Shingleses!"

"Yes siree! you'd orter been there," he used to say. "I'm a married man myself, m'wife bein' in the States, an' I know what's what. I just looked in th' door an' I'll be jiggered if there wa'nt old Shingles down on his knees before the fire a washin' that baby like he was its mother." [Here Jack was always interrupted by murmurs of approval.] "It was as funny as four kings. An' there was the Kid a laughin' and a carryin' on, an' old Shingles talkin' to it an' bein so soft an' smooth—and every now 'an then sir, that Kid would just splash a lot of water up

into old Shing's face an' laugh, an' then he'd laugh too an'—well it beat me, that's all—it beat me, clean."

The prosperity of Clay's Gulch meanwhile steadily increased; it was mentioned in the Denver papers as a remarkable example of a prosperous mining camp; people flocked to it from all parts, and by the time Little Bob was four years old the place had undergone great changes. And with the changes in the place had come changes in Bob. She had learned to walk, to talk, and to think in a childish way. She had never been sick a day, and the out-door life she led made her hardy and strong. By degrees Shingles began to get ahead a little and prosper, for now that Bob could take care of herself he devoted more time to his work. But still he kept her closely by him; he seemed unhappy when at rare and short intervals she was out of his sight. The two were the most popular persons in camp; he because of his wonderful care and tender love for the child and she because—well, because she was Little Bob. She had a free, off-hand way with her that hit the fancy of the men and contrasted oddly with Shingles' taciturnity. She always called him Shingles, he had taught her to do so. She was not afraid of anyone, and she used the slang of the camp in an easy way that sounded odd yet attractive, while her grammar was that of Shingles. It got to be a regular thing for the men to stroll out to call on Bob and Shingles every pleasant Sunday afternoon, to inquire how they were getting along. Shingles received them gravely; he realized that he was of minor importance, and he made no effort to entertain the guests, but let Bob play the important part.

"Me an' Shin'les," she would tell her admirers, "dot a dood mine, but we need some more tapital, doesn't we Shin'les?"

And he would nod his head slowly, while the visitors would roar with laughter and slap their legs resoundingly, to express their amusement.

As Shingles began to get ahead, though it was very slowly at first, he became extravagant in the direction of Bob. No one ever went to Denver from the camp without having some little commission to execute for him. In this way Bob became the owner, among many other things, of a gold watch, massive cameo ear-rings and brooch, and a pug dog, the last her greatest treasure. Once when Colonel Moody went east, "for the purpose of enlisting idle capital in developing the vast mineral resources of the country," Shingles asked him to buy Bob a suit of clothes. "An' it ought to be the *la*-test thing for style," he added. He had always dressed Bob as a boy, because he had once heard her express profound contempt for girls in general. The Colonel willingly accepted the commission and brought back with him four suits of boy's clothing, of different sizes and of the most elaborate patterns imaginable.

"I reckoned Bob would grow some, you know," he said half apologetically, as he handed the bundle to Shingles, "they most generally do, so I just allowed for it. There aint nothin' to pay," and off he walked, leaving Shingles his firm friend from that day.

As the camp grew and prospered, its appearance underwent a change; it began to wear a settled look; permanent buildings replaced the old wooden struc-

tures; a railroad at last reached there and Clay's Gulch became a town of importance. With these changes came women, and among them Jack Farmer's wife who, when she heard from Jack the story of Shingles and Little Bob went straight to see them. She pitied Little Bob, and she pitied poor Shingles too, and she urged him to send Bob to her, to live with her children. She was one of the kind you sometimes find in just such places; a woman you could trust your soul with and have no fear.

"It seems to me, Mr. Shingles," she said, "the little girl would be better away from the—that is, if she could be with children of her own age," and as she spoke her kindly blue eyes filled with tears as she thought of the child's unhappy lot. She didn't know Shingles then.

Poor Shingles was upset; he had never been called *Mr.* Shingles before, and the thought of parting with Bob quite unmanned him. His life had been a lonely one until she came; he had never loved or been loved before, and as he sat there, Little Bob quietly perched on his knee and quite unconscious of what was going on, two big tears rolled down his rough cheeks. Then he seized her in his arms and clasping her tight to his breast, kissed her silently.

She looked up in surprise,

"What oo tryin' for, Shingles?" she asked.

Shingles shook his head; he couldn't speak.

"Oh! oo is; I seed oo!"

"Bob;" said Shingles, at length; "this lady wants to take you with her to play with her little girls. Will you go?"

"To teep me always?" she said, her eyes staring large and round at Shingles.

"Yes—always. Will you go?"

"No-o-!" cried Bob, and the next instant she was sobbing on his shoulder. He didn't attempt to console her; indeed, he didn't know how to. He had never seen her cry like that before; it troubled him and almost before he knew it he and Bob were in tears together. Mrs. Farmer, not knowing what else to do, left them there, thinking the time had not yet came to part them.

And then another change was noticed in Shingles. From being careless in his dress he became noted for his fine attire. No one who knew him ever intimated that this was remarked. It was generally understood that it was on little Bob's account.

But Brown, the new proprietor of the Oasis—and successor to Captain Fish, (who departed this life through holding three aces and two kings against his opponent's three kings and two aces and being a little slow with his pistol), rallied Shingles a little.

"What's up, boy?" he said, "goin' courtin'? Where does she live?"

Shingles did not take this in the wildly humorous way Brown meant it—he never did take things in a humorous way—and passed on without a nod.

That night Brown told the story in the Oasis, giving it all the droll emphasis he was capable of, but it fell flat.

"I'll tell you why he looked like a gentleman; growled Tom Redway. "Little Bob was five years old last week; remember that!"

Every Sunday Shingles might be seen, clean shaven and dressed in his finest suit of checkered clothes, seated in a front pew of the largest church in Clay's Gulch, and little Bob was always with him. If the weather was bad he carried her all the way in his arms, or as she much preferred to ride, on his back.

"I didn't think a little gospel'd do Miss Bob any harm," he said, apologetically, to the minister who called on him one day. As if to develop this theory he every Sunday afternoon read to Bob parts of the Bible, spelling the words slowly out and expounding their meaning in a manner suited, as he thought, to her youthful intelligence.

Captain Peters, a deputy sheriff, and popularly known as "Little Casino," related with great glee at the Oasis one Sunday evening, (at which time, in deference to public opinion no liquor was sold between seven and half-past, and no game allowed but poker), how he had that day called on Bob.

"There was old Shing, with the kid in his arms, an' her fast asleep. There he was, sawin' away about Moses and 'Li-jah, and his hull congregation asleep. I most bust when I looked but I didn't dare laugh fear I'd wake Bob, so I just came away silent."

All this time Shingles kept pegging along in his mine, not making much, but still making a little. If he hadn't been Shingles, everyone would have laughed at him for persisting in working a claim that had never been a good one and could not, by any possibility, improve.

"What you wastin' your time over that hole for?" asked the sheriff, himself known as "Big Casino";

"there's lots better ore all round ye. Give it up, man, and stake out a new claim."

But Shingles shook his head.

"Can't do it Sherf; this claim belonged to Old Bob an' now its Miss Bob's, an' I, bein' her trus-tee, got to work it fer her."

So he kept on, sometimes doing well, sometimes poorly; working hard in the tunnel all day and sitting up half the night over his books. He had taught Bob her letters and she was almost through words of one syllable. He found it necessary to study hard, lest she should get ahead of him. Still he persevered, for he couldn't bear to think of her going away to school yet awhile.

And now occurred an event which Clay's Gulch remembered for many a day. Bob was a little more than six years old and Shingles—well, never mind how old he was, no one ever knew, not even Shingles himself. It was a warm, clear day in May; matters had not been going very well with Shingles for some time, in fact they had been going very badly. Once or twice he had almost lost courage and in his heart he believed the Sheriff was right and his mine—Bob's mine—was played out. Each night for a month past, as he left the tunnel, he felt low spirited, and each night as he caught sight of Bob he forgot his trouble and answered her question:

"How's our mine, Shingles?" with a cheerful: "All right, little Bob."

On this particular morning he felt unusually down hearted, but he didn't pause for that and entered the tunnel. He did not appear at noon, and Bob went to

look for him. Such a thing as his being late had never occurred before and she was surprised and troubled.

"Shin—gles!" she called at the mouth of the tunnel, and "Shin—gles!" was echoed out to her again, but that was all. No cheery "Ay! ay! little Bob!" but only "Shin—gles" thrice repeated by the lonesome echoes of the rocks. Bob was troubled; she was quite old enough to think for herself, yet she couldn't understand it. She ventured a little way into the tunnel, cold and damp, and called again: "Shingles!" and still the echoes only answered. Her heart beat fast. She knew he must be in the tunnel, and again she advanced a few steps and called, and again she heard no answer but her own voice. Frightened now, she fancied she saw in the darkness ahead of her all sorts of fearful things; goblins, ghosts and demons; the stories of elves and sprites she used to delight in now came back to her mind and she shuddered in terror. The slow trickle of the water down the sides of the tunnel seemed like the hiss of snakes, and a piece of earth, falling from the roof, sounded like the flutter of invisible wings. Still she kept on; Shingles was in the tunnel somewhere and she must find him; and she went on till she could go on no further. Across her path lay a pile of rock; the tunnel ended and yet—where was he? She called again and waited for an answer, and again the hollow echoes mocked her. But in another instant she heard a sound that made her heart bound with fear; she started for the light, yet paused again to listen. This time the sound was plainer—it was Shingles' voice:

"Bob, you there?" she heard, hollow and strange.

"Oh Shingles!" cried Bob, "where are you?"

"In here," said Shingles, "I'm--ketched—Bob, run fur—the boys," and almost before he had spoken Bob was gone. Like a flash she darted from the tunnel's mouth, past the goblins, past the elves, out into the blessed sunlight and then—where? The nearest mine was a mile away, but Bob didn't think of the distance. "Shingles was ketched!" that was enough and away she dashed down the rough path. It was well for Bob now that her life had been spent in the mountains, and it was well for Shingles too. On she ran, never pausing, never heeding, scarcely seeing where she went, yet never stumbling nor falling—she couldn't fall; wasn't Shingles ketched, and musn't she get him out? In an incredibly short time she reached the other mine—it was Jack Farmer's—gasping and sobbing, her cheeks lined with tears. Jack saw her coming; he knew something was wrong and he ran to meet her.

"Hullo! Bob! What's up?" he cried.

"Shingles—ketched!" was all she could say as she dropped down crying as if her heart would break. But Jack didn't need to be told any more. With a shout he summoned his three companions, and pointing to Bob, silently explained it all. Then, picking her up in his great, strong arms, he started on a run for Shingles' mine, followed by his men.

"There! there Bob!" he said consolingly, "it's all right; we'll have him out; everybody gits ketched now an' then."

He couldn't talk very much; he was running too fast, and Bob cried herself out on his kindly shoulder.

At last they found Shingles, or what was left of him, and carried him out into the daylight. He was badly hurt; the doctor who had been summoned from the town shook his head when he saw him, and whispered something to Jack. He nodded grimly; he knew as well as the doctor it was all up with Shingles; he had seen that sort of thing before. Shingles watched their faces with that hungry look he had so often worn before little Bob had come into his life. Then he spoke —slowly and painfully.

"I reckon—I und'stand ye—I'm ketched—in earnest," he said.

"Yes," said the doctor, gravely, "I think I ought to tell you you cannot get well."

Just then one of the men who had rescued Shingles whispered something to Jack. He started and entered the tunnel.

"You had better make your will," continued the doctor, "If you haven't done so,"

"It's all right," said Shingles, the cold sweat standing on his forehead; "I done it —long ago—I give—and—bequeath to—my beloved ward—Miss Bob—Stortles—the hull of—my worldly goods—wherever found—and—may—God— have mercy—on my soul—Amen—taint much—I'm leavin'—ye Bob—don't cry Bob—we all—got to go—sometime—I done my—duty by ye Bob—'cordin' as—I seen it—'taint much but its—all yourn—an' "——

Just then Jack returned, greatly excited. "Shingles!" he cried, "do you know what that cave did for you?"

Shingles shook his head; he knew well enough; it

had done him to death, but he didn't want to say so before Bob.

"It has made you rich," said Jack; "it has showed up the vein, at last, and you're a millionaire."

A happy smile lit up Shingle's pale face. "'Taint fur me—its fur Bob," he said. "She's the—millionaire—I'm dyin'—Jack—but it's—all right—Bob's rich—I've made you an' your wife—guardeens, Jack—you'll be kind to—Bob, won't you? I'm happy—now." Bob was sobbing like a child. "Kiss me—Bob dear—an' I give—an' bequeath to my—beloved ward—Miss—Bob—Stortles the—hull of—my worldly—goods—wherever—found—and may—God—have—mercy on—my—" and Shingles was dead.

That night Jack told the story to the men who went to his house. Everyone in the camp wanted to hear of it and before he had gotten half through the rough men were blinking their eyes and rubbing their coat sleeves across their faces.

"There was them two," said Jack, his voice growing a little husky as he went on, "him—old Shingles—lying there dead, an' little Bob kneelin' by his side an' sayin' the prayers he had taught her. It was mor'n I could stand," and he buried his face in his hands and cried like a child.

II. THE WIDOW OF THE LATE SMITH.

There were five of us in the coach, a huge, solid affair, resembling an immense box. It rested on enormous leather straps that allowed it to swing with a motion that is best described by saying it was diagonal, though in fact it was not diagonal at all. One moment we found ourselves sliding toward the foremost corner on the left, as the wheel on that side dropped heavily into some almost bottomless hole; the next instant we would be flying with pleasant unanimity through the rear window on the right, and again, seeking to force an outlet through the roof or floor. But the resultant of these motions, put together, added and divided, is most nearly described by the word diagonal and so—diagonal it is.

All five of the passengers were riding inside, for it was a day in November—cold and cloudy, and a light snow was spasmodically falling, as if really uncertain whether to stop or go on, but on the whole, rather in favor of going on, it being a characteristic of western habits never to give up anything for any cause whatever, once it was began. So, while a seat outside just at that time was better than no seat at all, it was by no means so desirable as a seat inside, which is coming it pretty strong against the outside, certainly.

The road we were to traverse led through the mountains of Colorado, from the mining camp of Greenwood (though why Greenwood none can say—it was way above timber line) to Leadville. It was fairly good wheeling, as that word is understood in the Rockies, but six stout mules had all they could do to manage the coach. One moment they were groaning and straining up some steep incline; the next fairly lifted from their feet as we dashed furiously down a hill, our speed only partially checked by the brake, which Tommy the driver would frantically apply.

Everyone in the west has a title of some sort, no matter whether he has a right to it or not, and the five men in the coach were known as the Colonel, the Major, the Judge, the Doctor and the Professor. It is surprising how soon one becomes acquainted with his companions in such a place. Whether this is due to the commonalty of sensations that govern the passengers, as the vehicle lurches to the right or left, or the sociability of the men themselves, I can't say. The fact remains however, and in less than half an hour after we had started, I was on familiar terms with the past history, present occupation, size of pile, and name of each of my fellow travelers.

On the coach was an Express box, said to contain $30,000 in bullion, the product of the Greenwood mines. In a rack near the driver's feet hung two Colt's revolvers and a Winchester rifle. The road was considered safe enough, for no robbery had occurred there since the camp had been in existence, still the stage company preferred to take reasonable precautions. Hence the weapons.

After we had exchanged our names and such parts of our personal history as we felt free to give, we relapsed into silence. The Westerner, although a sociable, is not a talkative animal; he converses in heats. For a time our quiet was unbroken, save by the groaning and creaking of the coach, the cracking of the driver's whip and his rapidly uttered oaths.

Perhaps it is well that justice can never be done—in print—to the profanity of the western mule driver. It is as impossible to describe as the singing of some beautiful aria by some sweet voiced singer. Not that the two can be compared in any way; I merely wished to illustrate the utter inadequacy of words in type to represent the sounds.

It was at the end of one of Tommy's flowery periods, (which came to our rescue when the coach, stuck fast at the foot of a veritable Hill of Difficulty, had at last been dragged up by the mules, inspired by the out-pouring) that the gentlemen occupying the middle seat—left, broke the silence. We knew him as Professor Blood, "the hull owner of the Blackeye mine of Greenwood, an' several others." It was at the close of Tommy's exhortation I say, which began softly and slowly, then gradually increased in volume, speed and power, until the flow was simply overwhelming, that the 'Professor' remarked pleasantly:

"Tommy seems to swear tol'able easy, I'm thinkin'. 'Tis a great gift; wonderful what 'twill do sometimes. When I was a teamin' it up to Leadville, I would a bet willin' I could cuss a dead mule up a six hundred foot grade, *with* a load, and all by the parts o' speech. It's just like anythin' else though, takes practice."

"Those was great days," he went on with a retrospective sigh, "great days. We was gettin' twenty and thirty cents a pound fur stuff, an' makin' slathers o' money: an' losin' it too," he added with a laugh.

"I 'member comin' down over the divide one night alone, with three thousan' dollars in my pocket, when a d—d road agent held me up an' cleaned me out. I was pretty blamed mad but I had to ante."

"I'd like to know," said the Doctor, "how one or two men can stop and rob a dozen, all well armed. It looks as if they had no nerve. I don't think I'd stand it."

The Judge whistled softly at this remark; the Major smiled and made a pretence of wiping the window with his coat sleeve and looking out; the Colonel expectorated mournfully. The Professor alone was calm.

"Pardner," said he looking the Doctor in the eye, and tapping him gently on the knee as he spoke, "was you ever held up?"

The Doctor shook his head.

"I thought likely," said the Professor significantly. "Just look here: when you *are* stopped you ante quietly and perlitely. It's runnin' too much of a risk to object. If any man is lookin' fur a chance to climb the golden stairs, through barin' of his buzzum for his fellow creatures—*without* compensation—let him. It aint in my line, I'm pretty sure, an' so I say, if ever you're held up you jest fork without any back talk—it's really the cheapest, and a long way the safest."

These sentiments seemed to meet with universal approval from the other occupants of the coach, and

the Doctor, quite crushed by the weight of opinion against him relapsed into silence.

After this the conversation became desultory. Now and then a passenger would volunteer a remark which sometimes elicited a reply and sometimes did not. Often, as the road led up some steep incline, we would get out and walk, to restore, by exercise, the circulation in our benumbed limbs. Twice the coach stopped at relay stations, where fresh mules were harnessed in the place of the tired out animals. The stations were nothing more than rough log stables, with accomodations for the men who fed and cared for the mules.

The snow had been falling all the afternoon in fine flakes, and had spread over the earth a thin white cover that partially hid the roughness of the mountains and whitened the light that came through the clouds, into which we sometimes drove. The road was becoming very heavy and our progress slow, when to our relief the coach, about four o'clock, entered a small park of a few hundred acres and pulled up in front of Sampson's—twelve miles from Leadville. While fresh mules were being harnessed we alighted, and stepped into the room that served as bar, office, parlor and reading room, for Sampson's was a hotel as well as a relay station.

The establishment was owned and managed by Mr. Sampson and his wife Almiry, or to put it in another way, Sampson's and Sampson himself were controlled by Almiry. A modern Delilah she, who, when she married Sampson had, speaking figuratively, clipped his locks and left him deprived of all ambition. There

was a rumor current that Sampson drank, a rumor not altogether without foundation, since no one had ever seen him entirely sober. His sole duty was to tend bar, and when not occupied in ministering to the liquid wants of others, he was looking after himself. There was but one beverage sold at Sampson's—whiskey—though there hung upon the wall back of the rough bar, an illuminated card, setting forth in fly-specked characters, the superior merits of Hall's Jamaica Ginger. But as for the Ginger, that was not to be had. Nor were there any indications, beyond dusty lithographs nailed askew to the wooden partitions, that Soda Water, Seltzer, or Mumm's Extra Dry, were procurable on demand. And so it was fortunate that the systems of those passengers who needed stimulation, craved whiskey only, for that was positively all there was. On the sticky bar stood a half-dozen thick, dirty glasses, side by side with the long-necked bottle, half filled with an amber fluid, while a rude sign fixed to the wall just over Sampson's bald and somewhat inflamed head, set forth in terse, though rather profane terms, the business principles of the establishment, to wit:

"IN GOD WE TRUST;
ALL OTHERS PAY CASH."

We had not noticed at first, in the dim light of the room, the figure of a woman, clad in deep black and wearing a heavy veil drawn over her face. She sat in a dark corner and seemed to shrink from observation. But when Tommy entered, after looking to his cattle, and had fortified his nerves with four fingers of the "reg'lar thing," swallowed without a murmur, Al-

miry took him aside and engaged him in earnest conversation, and her gestures then for the first time directed our attention to the woman.

Our halt was necessarily short and we were soon back in the coach; the mules had been changed and we were ready to start. But Tommy lingered, and when at length he appeared at the door, seemed in no hurry. He stood there, slowly drawing on his gloves and surveying the scene with a carelessly critical eye and an expression of countenance that seemed to indicate that as for him, if he were to be given the chance, he could make a good deal better world than this one—easy. In his mouth was a cigar, tipped up at such an angle that the glowing end nearly touched the wide brim of his sombrero. The Major, irreverently inspired, voiced the sentiments of the party when he remarked, in a drawling tone:

"I reckon that after bein' the angel Gabriel, for pure glory an' so forth I'd ruther be a driver to a coach, than most anythin'!"

Just then there appeared in the doorway the lady in black, whom Thomas gallantly offered his arm to and thus escorted to the coach. As they approached, the Colonel gave a little groan. "We're goin' to have lovely woman along with us," he said, plaintively. Consternation was depicted on each face when the coach door was opened and Tommy looking in, remarked authoritatively: "Sorry gen'lemen, but I shall hev to trouble *you*. Here's a lady goin' to Leadville an' she's goin' inside. Jump in, marm!" and in the young woman jumped with remarkable

lightness, and took the vacant seat in the forward corner.

"Cornel, you'll look after her," said Tommy at the door; "she's in my charge. Widder of Smith, she is; him that was killed down to the Walker mine last month, but she don't savvy a word of English, bein' French. You know'd Smith didn't ye, Cornel?"

"Yes, I know'd him well enough, but I never know'd he had a widder. I'll look after her—in English," growled the Colonel, and the door slammed and the stage rolled ahead.

As we pulled out the clouds parted for an instant and a bright ray of sunlight lit up the coach, striking full upon the dark veil of our new companion. It made briefly visible the outlines of her face, and those of us who were fortunate enough to catch a glimpse of it were convinced that the lady had great beauty. Indeed, the Judge, who had a happy facility of expression, acquired from a long, though not lucrative practice at the bar, leaned over to the Doctor and whispered in tones of fervent admiration:

"She's as pretty as Cle-op-e-try, by Jove!" to which the Doctor responded with an assenting nod of much vigor.

Nowhere in the world is a lady more certain of respectful consideration than in the wild West. She is invariably treated with a chivalrous gallantry that is really magnificent; men hasten to do her homage and are proud to be commanded by her. Still the presence of Mrs. Smith in the coach acted on the party as a little restraint, which the Judge and the Colonel vainly endeavored to dispel.

"Fond of travelin', ma'am?" said the latter, in his best off-hand style, as he leaned towards her and smiled handsomely. The lady made no reply and the Judge knocked the Colonel's elbow.

"Sh! Cornel!" he said; "you don't s'pose *she* understands you, when it's as much as *I* can do to untangle your ideas from your words. *She* speaks French!"

The Colonel accepted the rebuke meekly and made no further conversational effort. The road became more and more difficult as we advanced, and the fresh mules were unruly and drove very hard. Several times, in bad places, they had balked, and the coach had swung around in a way that would have upset a lighter vehicle, yet no exclamation of alarm escaped from the lady, who sat motionless in her corner.

"Turrible bad place to be held up 'long here," said the Major, after an unusually long silence, during which the coach had slowly pounded over a huge rock and then slid off with an unpleasant scrunch. "I should hate to be stopped here, for I have a little matter of twelve hundred dollars about me, which I don't care to lose. Of course we're all friends here?" he hastily asked.

We were, and it then came out that each man was carrying various sums of money, ranging from five hundred to four thousand dollars, the last amount being the property of the Colonel, who described accurately how he had concealed it in a package sewed in his clothing next to his body, where it was quite inaccessible to dishonest persons.

"I reckon it'll take a pretty smart chap to find that," he remarked complacently, as he slapped his hand on

the spot where the treasure was concealed. We could not deny this, and murmurs of admiration were heard at his shrewdness. All this time—in fact since we left Sampson's—the mysterious Mrs. Smith had not moved or changed her position. She still kept her veil down, and in the slowly waning light her black dress seemed to emphasize the shadows in the coach.

"Judge," said the Major, at length, "It must be lonesome for her. You're consid'able of a lingo-ist, couldn't you give her a little touch in the native, just to be perlite?"

The Judge looked embarrassed and scratched his head confusedly.

"Why, mebbe I might rack out *some* French," he said, "it aint much to do, but er—what'll I say? You got to be mighty circumspec' in talkin' French to a lady—it's a terrible free langwidge."

Both the military men were impressed by this, the Colonel particularly so, and for a moment his face was expressive of painful perplexity.

"Well, just say somethin' civil," he said at length; "ask her if she wants the winder up. 'Taint likely she does, but you might ask her."

"Oh no! Cornel," said the Judge, "not that. That partickler word winder—in French"—here the Judge lowered his voice to a whisper, "is cussin' an' you'll hev to excuse *me*. That's where *I* draw the line."

"Well, chin your own way then," said the Colonel testily, "though I reckon I can open a winder fur a lady—in French—without breakin' any of the Commandments. Only say somethin' or we'll think you don't know how."

This was touching the Judge on a tender spot, and looking at the Colonel with an air of haughty dignity, he said slowly:

"If it'll amuse the boys, I reckon I'll take a little pasear, though I'm a trifle rusty in my langwidges just now. Had consid'able practice too, down in San Migell county."

Then with a soft ahem! and a flourish of his handkerchief he leaned forward, and casting a bewitching smile at the lady, murmured:

"Buenos dias, senora. Habeis vosotros—er—that is—como esta vey?"

The lady made no answer; in fact seemed not to hear, but the Judge was in nowise disconcerted.

"Reckon she was thinkin' of the late lamented, and didn't wholly catch on to my idee," he remarked pleasantly. "I'll open another lead," and again he smiled as he murmured:

"These gen'lemen—" indicating us with a graceful and comprehensive sweep, "*bein'* gen'lemen, and well acquainted with good sassiety, hev asked me to pass their compliments to you ma'am, which I now do. Er—el tiempo es bien inconstanty senora, and esta—er—;" the Judge concluded the sentence with a gesture. "It's a little remark in the vernacular of the French," he explained, "an' I reckon it'll fetch her."

It certainly did seem to have some effect, for the lady uttered a sound strangely like a chuckle, but said nothing.

"Judge," said the Colonel, after waiting a reasonable time for an answer, "I'm afraid your langwidges have been—so to speak—tampered with. I've always

allowed there was *some* difference between French and Spanish, *myself*."

The Judge waxed indignant. "A joke's a joke an' all right," he said, "but I didn't s'pose there was a man here but knowed the roots of the two langwidges was the same, an' if you can only confine your talkin' to roots—an' you gen'rally can in genteel sassiety—it makes no odds whether it is French or Spanish."

"All right Judge, all right," said the Colonel, soothingly; "of course we know'd that well an' good, but a man must have his little joke now an' then. But ask her—in your roots—if she's any objection to smoke."

The Judge—partly mollified—did not essay this in speech, but beginning even farther back than "roots," managed to ask the questions by signs. The lady nodded her assent with vivacity, and drawing a silver case from her pocket, took therefrom a cigarette, which after raising her veil a little she placed between her lips. At first we were amazed, but the Colonel, with that *savoir vivre* which had always distinguished him and made him so popular with the sex, quickly recovered himself, and gallantly offered the lady a light, which she graciously accepted. Then murmurs of admiration were heard. The Major audibly compared her "a butterfly and a whip-poor-will, by Gad!" the Colonel swore the "she took him, blamed if she didn't," while the Judge repeated his former opinion and declared that "she was a reg'lar Cle-op-etry from the word go." The Professor was silent but I have reason for believing that he endorsed all the others.

"What I admire in lovely wimmin," said the Colonel, as we sat there quietly smoking, "is the er—the ability she possesses to adapt herself to circumstances, as illustrated in the above. We are all friends here—in course—so we can be comfortable, but I'm safe in sayin' I shall be glad to git to Leadville. That little matter of four thousand dollars I got sewed into my—Judge, sure the lady can't understand English—my—in fact, gen'lemen, my shirt," said the Colonel frankly, again indicating the exact location of the treasure, "is a tax on my mind, an' I want to git it off."

Outside the snow had ceased falling and the dusk of a winter's evening was slowly deepening into darkness. High up on the slope that rose on our right stood a solitary pine tree, that had pushed its way through the rocks, and now stood, lonesome and sad, by night and day, keeping a melancholy watch on the valley. The sun, long since hidden to us below, shot a ray as a good-night message, and for an instant the tree was ablaze; then the light died quickly out and we were in semi-darkness again. The road wound its way around the face of a high cliff; on one side towered a wall of rock sheer three hundred feet; on the other sunk an unsoundable chasm. Tommy sat on the box, his two lamps lit, and his tongue playing a rapid accompaniment to his whip. Inside, the small reflector at the end of the coach only served to make the night without seem darker than it was. Silently we sat there smoking, the ends of our cigars alternately glowing and dimming in the dingy air. An unusual volley of oaths from the box, a cracking of

whips, a shouting, and then the stopping of the coach with a lurch startled us out of our quiet. Then a shout from Tom as he spoke to his cattle, and a voice, ringing like a bugle, was heard from the rocks above.

"Come! none o' that! Make a straight haul for it, d—n you! Throw off that box! Lively now! Put up your hands an' git down! Everyone of you, *git down!*"

Sorrowfully we obeyed. The description the Professor had given a few hours before of our probable sensations was exactly true. A pair of six-shooters, held in the hands of a stalwart man, whose face was partly concealed by a black mask, hastened our descent, and in a moment we found ourselves ranged in line, with our hands above our heads, a meek, unhappy, cowed group. At one end of the line stood Tommy, swearing savagely at his luck; at the other stood the Colonel, cool, impassive, dignified, confident in the security of his treasure. The last to descend was the widow, but a widow no longer, for out of the coach there sprang an active young fellow, of slender but sinewy build, smooth shaven, dressed in the conventional garb of the western rider, and carrying in his hand a nickle plated six shooter. And this was Mrs. Smith—*who did not speak English.* Any one standing near the Judge at that time, might have heard an exclamation, both forcible and profane. The "widow" heard it, for with a little laugh he (or she) touched his finger to his lips and said:

"Hush, Judge! that's cussin', an' you draw the line there, you know."

And then he proceeded to search the pockets of his fellow travelers, as if it were a very common-place affair, which it certainly was not, and relieve them of their valuables, his associate keeping guard meantime. Down the line he went, doing his work quickly but carefully, but before he was done the other began to grow impatient.

"Hurry up, Jim!" he said. "Ain't you most through? We're late."

"All done but this one," said Jim, the quondam widow, as he halted before the Colonel. "He's got four thousand dollars sewed plum to his shirt. I reckon I'll hev to rip the old coon open to git it." Saying which he drew his knife and with a quick movement, as if to disembowel the Colonel, slipped the point through his clothing, and with a wrench pulled out the package.

"Sorry to trouble you, gents," said the larger man, bowing politely, "but I won't detain you much longer, fur I know you want to git to Leadville. I hope this old gen'leman," pointing to the rent in the Colonel's dress, "won't take cold. He must be careful—good men are scarce." The Colonel snorted. "You will kindly stand just where you are till I give the word. There is a few friends of mine a lookin' at us from them rocks, and I really wouldn't move very much if I was you—I really wouldn't, fur their guns is all hair triggers an' dreadful liable to go off. You won't move now, will you?

We would not! Wild horses could not have dragged us from that spot, for up in the rocks we fancied we could see two shining barrels, aimed truly at

us, and we were really anxious to remain quiet. Before we knew it we were alone ; our new acquaintances had vanished in the dusk, and an instant later we heard the same voice, ringing out above us:

" Git into the coach now and git ! "

And we got.

But we were no longer the cheerful party we had been. Outside we could hear Tommy swearing all sorts of new and exuberant oaths, at himself, the company, the mules, the coach, and the road-agents. Inside, not a word was spoken until the Judge, stooping down, lifted into view the black skirt that the former widow had worn. A sad smile stole over his face and he whispered, mournfully :

" Boys, I'm reg'larly d—d ! "

To which the Colonel added a short postscript:

" It's just h—l ! "

III. ALANASCAR AND HIS UNCLE.

It was a bright clear morning in early October, in the year eighteen hundred and-I've-forgotten-exactly, that I mounted my horse and started on a solitary ride from Monmouth, Fremont County, Colorado, to the new mining camp of Kirby, which lay in the shadow of Mount Uncompahgre. The day before I had purchased my mount, and by a dispensation of a kindly Providence had secured an A 1 animal. So at least the man I bought him of earnestly assured me.

Said he: "Young feller, it's easy seen you aint no tenderfoot, an' you know ezactly what you require in the hoss line. Now, if you want a hoss that'll buck an' tear 'round, *this* hoss won't suit you. Or if you're lookin' for somethin' that'll jest take the bit in his teeth an' scoot till you can't see, an' pitch an' kick till everythin's blue, why we can't trade—that's all. This hoss aint that kind. If he's well took care of though, you can ride him to Jerus'lem and back—easy. He ain't wild; he's jest strong."

Although I had no intention of going to Jerusalem at that time, I purchased the horse. If he were capable of making such a pilgrimage as that, I reasoned, he must be a good animal, for are we not told that

"Jordan is a hard road to travel"? After the sale was completed the dealer congratulated me on my choice.

"The moment I seen ye, I knowed what *you* wanted," he said. "A reg'lar, sure 'nuff hoss, that's got plenty of sand an' nothin' mean about him. An' there he is! Aint he a blamed little rustler! I dunno what my wife'll say to me lettin' him go. He's a genoine pet; reg'larly sets down to dinner with us sometimes."

The horse was fairly speedy, but neither handsome nor intelligent, Still he was not particularly vicious, and as long as we remained in sight of the town, showed no signs of eccentricity, other than an unquenchable inclination to roll, without waiting for me to dismount, and an embarrassing desire to taste my legs. But so long as he didn't buck I overlooked these faults. It was not until we had advanced several miles on our journey that 'Rastus (I called him 'Rastus because of his gentle disposition) first discovered to me a gay little habit of shying, a most absurd trick considering his age.

My saddle was of the Mexican pattern, with a high cantle behind and a higher pommel in front. This pommel was a sure safeguard for the integrity of my neck in case of a stumble, but opened a long vista of deadly perils to my viscera. Yet in spite of my fears, or possibly because of them, 'Rastus neither stumbled nor bucked, and although he several times shied half across the State, I managed to keep him company. As we advanced—generally sideways—'Rastus developed new peculiarities, before unsuspected. He had three steps, which in a little while I was able to classify into

the waltz, polka and all promenade. He would start with the waltz, glide gracefully into the polka, and then evolve himself into the all promenade before I realized he had started. He was infinite in his variety; he seemed like an unfinished part of the Universe—always in a period of transition. I have never yet seen a fellow creature riding on a rail, but when I do I shall know how to sympathize with him.

Thus I jogged—bumped is perhaps a better word—along on my weary way. I was in light rig, carrying no baggage besides a blanket, a Winchester carbine, and a revolver, the weapons being more for effect than use, as I had long before learned that a man is quite as safe if he is unarmed as when he bristles with breech-loaders.

Away we went, 'Rastus and I; now we sidled, now we backed; one moment we waltzed and the next it was all hands round in the grand chain. The ground was still bare of snow, even at that altitude, and only the summits of the mountain peaks were white; the rest of the land was brown and dry. The road was plain and unmistakable, running south through the mountains; and now and then an opening in the wall in front of me disclosed the snowy peak of Mt. Uncompahgre, that rose 14,235 feet in air. The ride to Kirby was a rough one of sixty miles, through a country of wild beauty. On all sides were mountains, some snow-covered, some plainly capped in decorous brown. During the first hour I was fully occupied in learning the 'individualities' of 'Rastus, for his versatility in steps momentarily threatened to cripple me for life; but in time we arrived at an understand-

ing—either I became used to him or he began to tire, and then we proceeded slowly and sedately.

It was about four in the afternoon that I reached the top of a long ascent, steep, rocky and difficult, and paused a moment to rest and look about. Before me lay the narrow roadway, winding around the precipitous incline like a thread wound about an orange. Down the slope of the hill, grew a few pines, scrub and scanty. The sun was just resting on the spire of some unnamed peak at my right, and it lit up with sparkling brilliancy the snowy top of Uncompahgre, visible between the intervening crests. In the east a blue haze wavered and trembled like the hot smoke from some huge fire.

'Rastus had no dancing steps then; no rhythmical measures trod he, as he stood there on the summit, tired out, legs wide apart, tail drooping, and flanks heaving as he sucked in the thin air. Seeing that my way now led down hill and with a footing insecure for a horse, I dismounted and proceeded on foot. We had advanced in this way perhaps a mile, when turning a corner around a huge rock 'Rastus gave a snort, indicative of surprise, and looking up I beheld a stranger. He was extremely meagre, lanterned-jawed and tall, with a very long and narrow face, and this appearance was exaggerated by the tuft of dusty brown whisker that hung from his chin. His dress was odd, for he wore upon his head a torn and much battered army-cap, that had once been blue, but was then of an uncertain brown. He was clothed in a buckskin shirt, its fringes tattered and ragged, breeches of the same, worn inside enormous boots, red with the accumulated

mud of years, and on the right foot was strapped a gigantic spur, silver-plated where the plating had not worn off. His arms consisted of a battered cavalry sabre, the scabbard indented and scratched, and a six-shooter and cartridge belt, buckled loosely about his waist. And then the horse! Like his master, tall, thin, sorrowful of visage, and tired. His front legs were bent at the knees, as if his strength was hardly capable of sustaining his weight; and a melancholy drooping of his lower jaw was offset by a comical and involuntary movement of his ears. Suspended from the saddle-horn was a scabbard of ragged leather, from which stuck out the butt of a carbine, while a pair of well-filled saddle-bags were fastened to the cantle behind. As I rounded the turn of the road, which was there heavily shaded by pines, I came suddenly upon these strange figures. The man stood by the horse's side, resting his hand on the saddle and gazing into the distance in silent contemplation. The instant he perceived me, he made a lightning movement of his right hand, and levelling a six-shooter cried:

"Halt! Advance and give the countersign!"

I was in a dilemma; how could I halt and advance too? Besides, I knew no countersign, and if I were to guess and make a mistake I ran a risk. As I stood there in chilly doubt, another person came forth out of the woods, leading a mule which he had evidently been feeding, and laying his hand on the other's arm, checked him with a gesture.

The second man was in strange contrast to the first, with his round, bullet head and broad, flat face, yet wearing withal a look of good-natured shrewdness,

considerably heightened by the merry light in his eyes and by a habit he had of, at times, slowly dropping his left eye-lid in an irresistibly comical manner. This wink was very expressive; he could graduate it to anything. Sometimes he would close his eye entirely; sometimes there would be just the faintest tremor of the lid; but each had its own significance. His mule was a tall, lank animal, carrying a huge Mexican saddle, much the worse for wear, to which, as in the other case, there were tied a pair of well-filled saddle-bags.

Not without some doubts of my new companions did I accept the invitation of the younger to, "light an' set awhile." I much preferred to ride on, but one can safely do things in the East he dare not try in Colorado, and I reluctantly joined them. The tall man paid no further attention to me, but stood rigid and upright by his horse's head, and either would not or could not hear me; the younger was much interested in my past, present and future, and overwhelmed me with questions. After a five-minutes stop I started on, for I had a long distance to go before dark and a growing doubt of 'Rastus troubled me. As I made ready, I saw the young man advance toward the tall stranger and respectfully hold his stirrup for him to mount; and then he himself, with many groans and infinite labor, climbed into his place on the mule and followed after us. I was not altogether pleased with my fellow travelers, but I could not "shake them."

We rode along the narrow path in single file, the old man several hundred feet in advance; behind him I came, with the fat squire in the rear, groaning and puffing, and pounding his unshod heels into the flanks

of the mule in desperate efforts to keep up with the cavalcade. Upon reaching the valley where the road widened out, the squire, with some difficulty, urged his mule into a trot, and rode to my side. He pulled up abreast of me and with the comical droop of his left eyelid, said abrubtly:

"Th' old man's a rum snoozer, ain't he?

I nodded.

"Queer'n a unicorn; leetle mite touched here, ye know," he added, placing his finger just over his half closed eye, "but square from the ground up. Oh! cert'nly."

Then with his hand he described a circle in the air just above the crown of his head, and leaning half out of his saddle, whispered confidentially, nodding toward the other: "Scalped! *He* was! Yes sir! An' it's e-fected his hull nervous systum."

It was plainly true; he looked like a seedy member of that misguided and not too clean band, the Salvation Army.

"Is your friend a religious enthusiast?" I asked.

"Him! the Guv'nor! Well, I guess you aint never heard him swear," he chuckled. "Oh! yes! he's a religious enthoosiast with the bark on, he is! No sir! *we're* travelin' to do *good*." Then riding close to me, he whispered, with the slightest possible wink: "'Lixir of Life, ye know! two dollars a bottle or three for five; that's us! See?"

I endeavored to assume a look of intelligent appreciation, but I must have failed, for my companion went on:

"Cures anythin' ye know, from biles to brain fever, but is 'specially valooble in strengthnin' the nerve functions of the systum. Behold! The Guv'nor is a living example of before usin'; me—after usin'. If one bottle don't cure ye buy another an' so on," and my new friend again winked spasmodically, and slipping his hands over his figure to call attention to its rotundity, allowed an infectious smile to play about the corners of his mouth. It was too much for me, and I laughed outright.

"Was you ever up to Clay's Gulch?" he asked, after a short pause.

I admitted that I had been there—more or less.

"That's where I come from—Clay's Gulch," he said cheerfully, as if delighted to find we had something in common; "though I was formally from Illinoy. Got a second-cousin livin' in Chicago this minute; name of Reuben Stone—same name as me."

He bowed in that graceful manner that always marks the accomplished man of the world, and I acknowledged the introduction by feebly imitating him.

"I aint allus been thus," he continued, evidently referring to his pecuniary condition. "I used to live up to Denver—th' metropulus of the Rockies an' so forth—before I got unfortunate in bizness. That was five year ago in June. I used to act there in the slickest dime museum ever you did see—Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays as the Medicine Chief of the Sioux Nation, and Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays as the Wild Man of Borneo, which was my fav'rite character an' much cooler'n the Medicine Chief, fur they kept the room warm 'count of the

Tatooed Man from Polynesy, an' the Medicine Chief had to wear a buffalo skin, which made the pores dreadful open an' liable to catch cold, interferin' some with the war whoop, though addin' to its gashlyness. Oh! I've seen life, I can tell you. Two dollars a day *I* used to get."

We slowly advanced across the valley into which the sun's rays had long ceased to penetrate, and the dull gray light of evening enveloped us. We were still many miles from the ranch where I had expected to pass the night, and a glance at 'Rastus convinced me that he was quite incapable of reaching there. I did not relish the prospect of spending the night out of doors, nor did I much care for the society of the Medicine Chief of the Sioux Nation, but there was no help for it, and so I suggested to him that we had better stop at the first suitable place and camp for the night. He agreed, and we rode on in the increasing darkness, until we came to a small pine grove, at the edge of which flowed a slender stream. Here we halted, but the old man, who all this time had ridden in advance of us, kept on. I pointed out this fact to the Medicine Chief.

"Oh durn it, yes!" he cried disgustedly; "fire yer gun at him; he's deefer'n the deadly upas tree."

I accepted the comparison, although I was not then aware that the upas was any harder of hearing than many other varieties of trees; but I declined to shoot the old gentleman in order to attract his attention, and the Wild Man was compelled to ride after him and bring him back—a task not performed without some difficulty.

A fire was soon made, and after eating what was left in our pouches—and it was very little—we prepared for the night. I had previously unsaddled 'Rastus, watered him and picketed him where he could feed on such grass as there was. I carried my saddle, blanket and rifle down by the fire, and, building up a huge blaze, wrapped myself up and waited for what might come. My companions made a pile of their accoutrements, carefully stowing the saddle-bags on top of the heap, handling them very tenderly; for they were "chuck full of 'Lixir," as Reuben assured me. This done the old man went to sleep and we two lay there silently smoking our pipes. In the woods behind us we could hear our animals, munching the leaves of the shrubs and occasionally stepping on some dry twig that broke with a loud snap. The fire in front glowed warm and bright, and the sap in the green wood, made into steam by the heat, now and then would burst with a loud report, and send the embers flying, meteor-like, through the darkness. The old man, completely buried in his blanket, was peacefully snoring at my right hand, while at my left lay the Wild Man, flat on his back, a stubby pipe in his mouth, and his right leg waving spasmodically in the air, as he endeavored to interpose his foot between his eyes and some of the darting flames that sprang up from the fire. At length, for the sake of saying something, I remarked:

"Your friend seems to be asleep!"

"Friend!" cried the Wild Man contemptuously, rolling over on his right side so as to face me, "he aint no *friend!* he's my *uncle!*"

I hastily apologized for my mistake, and a short silence ensued, at last broken by my companion.

"When you was up to Clay's Gulch last time, did you hear anythin' how old Jim Barker was comin' on?" he asked hesitatingly. "Him that owns th' 'Hard Heart' mine and th' grocery story, I mean. Does th' claim seem to be openin' up pretty middlin' rich?"

I informed him that, according to all reports, old Jim Barker was in a very prosperous financial condition. Reuben sighed wearily; he was plainly growing nervous as we talked, for he puffed with increasing rapidity on his pipe, and allowed his foot to wander along paths of puzzling eccentricity. From where I lay, his boot looked like a tremendous black comet, wheeling along an epicycloidal orbit, across a red sky. His attitude at this moment, indicated deep and troubled thought, from which he at length roused himself to say emphatically:

"I consider that old Jim Barker is a dog-gone mean rooster, sir. He never had another dollar till he struck the 'Hard Heart' claim—grub-staked a man for it, ye know—an' now he swears that any feller that gits Miss Car'line Barker—his daughter, ye know—hez got to size his pile. It aint a square play, but I know a likely young feller that holds the joker over him, and when the time comes, sir—" Here he stayed his foot suddenly in its orbit, and winking a wink of tremendous meaning whispered:—"We're engaged!" and instantly relapsed into gloomy silence, leaving me in doubt, at first, whether he referred to Jim or to Miss Car'line.

"But I tell you, pardner," he said, at length, "I propose to e-quire the hand of Miss Car'line, in spite of unjust conditions. Me an' th' Guv'nor there, we've got th' slickest little thing in them saddle-bags ever you *did* see. Beats minin', for there aint no risks; it's dead sure an' all profit."

"What is it?" I asked.

"Why, that 'Lixir I was mentionin' to you just now. It's the blamedest thing fur a weak intelleck you ever did see. Try it and see for yourself. It's simply rattlin' brain food, blamed if 'taint."

"What is it made of?" I innocently asked.

Reuben slowly closed his left eye quite shut, and thrust his tongue into his cheek, as if to intimate that he was not entirely green, not at that moment certainly.

"Well, you see that's a secret," he chuckled, "but I don't mind tellin' *you* that there's fossiforus,a couple of ingredients, an' consid'able whiskey in it. Them two ingredients gives it range; the fossiforus is brain food an' the whiskey is good for everythin' else. Powerful scope it has; old man's invention."

"Well," said I, "if it is so good for the brain why doesn't the old man try it himself?"

"Hush!" he said. "I'm turrible afraid he will some day. Wouldn't do though; he aint got the constitution to stan' it. No sir! We're sellin' this 'Lixir fur two dollars a bottle, three fur five. Them saddle-bags contain over three hunderd bottles, an' I cal'late we shall hev quite a bunch of money when they're gone. Then we'll begin again an' double up an' so on, and

blame *me* if in a year we aint rollin' in money. Then look out for Car'line. Still it's a turrible feelin', this knowin' you can't get her short of jest so many dollars. It ketches me at times right plumb here," and he laid his hand tenderly on that part of his chunky frame known in popular anatomy as the bread-basket, and sighed wearily.

"But Car'line aint a bit like th' old man. No sir! she takes after her ma. Oh! *she's* all right an' solid for yours truly, you can just bet," he continued hopefully. "Besides, old Barker may die some day; he's got the asthmy bad. An' when we're spliced we'll enjoy life. No tendin' fires or cookin' or washin' dishes then; no sir! Two kinds of meat fur dinner—the ushill vegetables, in course—an' pie as a wind up. Expensive, I'll allow, but what's the use o' scrimpin.' They'll be three or four wimmen to look after the childern with hot an' cold water in every room, an' every p. m. I an' Car'line we'll take our little pasear in the park fur our healths an' go to the opry in th' evenin'."

"But suppose old Barker objects or Car'line changes her mind," I suggested warningly.

He held his foot quite still an instant and looked at me in surprise.

"Object!" he exclaimed, "how can he object when he sees my pile? He'll be glad enough, an' as fur Car'line you aint never seen I an' her together. No sir, the 'tachment is mutual. An' besides, a couple o' million dollars aint to be sneezed at, off-hand, I kin tell you, not these times.

"The way we sells it is this," he said, changing the

direction of his talk. "You see, the Guv'nor there is —so to speak—oddish, and of a figger that attracts attention. Well, that's the dodge. We go up to some minin' camp where there's lots o' money, an' we ride up and down, the Guv'nor on his hoss and his sword drawd, an' me on my mule, carryin' a banner sayin': 'Try 'Lixir of Life fur the Nerves,' an' so on, an' the thing bein' new an' catchy we sells our stock. There's most usually a lot of men up to the camps what drink mighty free, an' bein' badly broke up, and havin' that tired feelin' an' sense of goneness as per full directions on th' label, they'll buy a bottle to try, an' it tastin' like whiskey an' bein' medicine besides, they'll usually buy two. Then we skip, an' when we get back there, six months after, and the men what bought th' 'Lixir first-time being all of 'em dead, an' th' others havin' forgot about it, why we sells some more an' so forth. That's our little game, an' I cal'late after this trip we'll start an outfit. We've got our hull fortune in them saddle-bags, but we're goin' to make a big thing. Double our money every time."

The fire by this time had burned low, and my companion got up to replenish it. The night was perfect for that time of year, calm, clear and cold. So brilliant were the stars that they seemed almost within reach, and the Milky Way lay like a broad white cestus on the dark background of the sky. There was no moon, and save where the fire lit up the scene, everything was in absolute darkness. Reuben, having heaped up a huge pile of green fir boughs upon the fire, resumed his place by me and proceeded with his story.

"I aint just rightly decided yet where we'll live

when we're married," he said. "I'm thinkin' some of Denver, but they is objections to it, an' I dunno 's Car'line would be best suited there anyhow. I reckon New York's the place after all. I aint never been there myself, but I'm pretty sure it's th' place. When a man's got money he should live up to it—that's my idee—an' it bein' the money centre they is nachally more chances for investment there. A man don't want his hull pile in one thing, you know. A few hunderd thousan' in stocks, the same in some good bonds—never mind the intrust so long's the security is there—say fifty thousan' in the bank for runnin' expenses an' a 'casional flyer, an' then let whatever you please stay right here in this 'Lixir bizness, fur it's a sure thing. Aint that 'bout right?"

It seemed to me it was just right.

"Yes, I reckon N Y is the place. Car'line can do her shoppin' an' rustle round in great style. One of the childern 'll be sickly of course, an' we must have the best doctors in the country, an' the others'll need to be eddicated. Of course we'll have a country house fur summer an' when the childern git older we'll buy 'em a yacht, an' go moseyin' off, say 'round the world. Aint that about the right idee?"

Again I had to admit that it was.

"A man can live in good shape in N Y if he knows how. I'll sit down with a nigger waiter fur breakfast. Then I'll mosey off in my private coup to the bank, an' the president 'll say: 'Good mornin', Mr. Stone! what can I do for you' an' then I'll say: 'I want maybe fifty thousan', maybe a hunderd', an' then he'll say: 'Oh certainly! Cashier, just let Mr.

Stone hev whatever he wants an' take his word for it.' Then I'll just roll it up an' stick it in my pocket an' off again, an' double my money before dinner. I tell you money makes money every time, an' it's just as easy. An' when old Jim Barker busts up—an' he will, sure—I'll just put him on an allowance—an' you bet it'll be blamed small, an' I'll make him rustle for it, too."

At this moment Reuben was interrupted by a noise in the woods back of us; the horses were evidently badly frightened—probably by a black bear or mountain lion—and they stampeded wildly towards the fire. Before we could jump to our feet they were within the circle of light, trembling and snorting violently. After them came the terrified mule; slower and half blind, it blundered stupidly into the pile of saddles and fell heavily upon them. There was a muffled crash, and Reuben sprang forward with a cry of dismay, while the mule, frantic with fear, entangled in the straps and unable to rise, kicked and tore the saddles and saddle-bags to pieces, and the "boss brain food" poured out upon the dry earth.

Reuben was overwhelmed at first with the extent of his misfortune. "Our hull stock in trade is ruined!" he moaned. "Farewell forever, Car'line! fare thee well!" But in a few moments he regained his composure and began to look at the situation more philosophically.

"P'raps we can fix it up some way," he said hopefully. "Maybe Car'line 'll hev to wait a spell longer, but Lord! she don't mind; she's just that kind. Never say die! Fossiforous is cheap an' this kind o'

whiskey aint so very high neither, an' as for th' ingredients we can omit them. I guess it'll come out all right."

During all the excitement the Guv'nor slept, never stirring, and tired out I too soon dropped off. The last thing I saw was Reuben, seated in meditative solitude before the fire, into which he was absent-mindedly tossing bits of bark, and repeating to himself: "Yes sir, that's just the kind Car'line is; fossiforous is cheap an' we'll omit the ingredients."

When I awoke it was broad daylight; the sun was shining brightly; the air was cold, and the ground covered with a white frost. I looked about me in vain for my companions. Both the Guv'nor and Reuben had stolen away like the Arabs, and with them had gone 'Rastus. In his place stood the dissipated, one-eyed mule, weary and desolate of appearance. My saddle, which I had used as a pillow, together with my arms and blanket remained untouched, but 'Rastus, light of my life, was gone forever.

In the dead gray ashes of last night's fire was a small bottle wrapped up in a bit of brown paper, on which was written these words:

Deer sir mak you a present of som of our stok in trade all they is lef if yure nurv aint stiddy in morn try it take carr of the muel hese yurn frely we got to rassel for mor capitul it beets hell how hard times is good by Ruben.

IV. THE ASCENT OF UNCOMPAHGRE.

Eight thousand feet above us shone the glistening, snowy summit of Uncompahgre, a giant dome of white, that here and there the refracted light of the rising sun, just sleepily crawling out of bed, colored pale red or yellow. The darkness of the night just past still lingered in the west, while in the east the sky was blazing with the morning. High above its surroundings towered Uncompahgre, with never a consort in sight, though round about, in every direciton, were the lesser peaks that made up a part of the great mountain system.

There were four in our party, and we were about to do the impossible; to make the ascent of the mountain in January—a feat no one had ever accomplished. Or to be quite accurate—no one had ever made the *descent* at that season. A year before, a prospector named Forsyth, against the advice of every one, had started to climb to the summit. That he was successful was proved by finding him, seven months after, at the bottom of a twenty foot snow drift, a few rods from the top. He was quite dead. It was this little circumstance that troubled me. There would be no particular satisfaction in ascending the mountain if I could not get down again. In fact, as I looked

at it, quite half the pleasure in mountain-climbing *is* the getting down—safely.

We left Kirby at sunrise on the morning of January 12th. There had been a heavy fall of snow the day before, which had rendered all trails impassable. We therefore had to seek a new route. Our party consisted of four, namely, two brothers,—Jim and Bill Russell—natives of the State, strong, active and skilled in mountain climbing, learned in many years experience as prospectors. The third member was Robert Dawson, a young mining engineer, and the superintendent of the Pay Rock mine at Kirby. The fourth was myself. The storm which for three days had raged about the mountain was over, and the weather was bright and clear and even mild, for that altitude. We were warmly dressed in heavy woolen clothing, wore stout walking shoes, shod with hobnails, and carried, strapped to our shoulders, knapsack fashion, small packs weighing about fifteen pounds each. In them we stowed an aneroid barometer, a registering thermometer, provisions consisting of dried beef and biscuit, and a blanket. In addition to this, each man carried a staff, a pair of snow-shoes and a coil of strong rope, about thirty feet long, wound over the left shoulder and under the right arm, in such a manner as to leave the arms comparatively free. It can be seen that our load was neither light nor easy, but we traveled with as little as we dared.

A short distance out of the camp we entered the blind canyon of Oknee; Bill was in advance, Bob Dawson and I followed, while Jim brought up the rear. The chasm was narrow and bounded on either

side by abrupt walls of gray rock, here and there enlivened by spots of snow or bunches of fir apparently growing out of the solid stone. Occasionally, as the gorge turned to the right or left, we could see the Peak, glowing like a gilded spire in the early morning sunlight. For an hour our way led us up this canyon, and our progress was quite rapid, there being no obstruction but the snow, which was there covered with a crust sufficiently strong to bear us. At last we entered a long, narrow amphitheatre, the upper end being blocked by perpendicular walls of rock, rising sheer five hundred feet, while the lower end through which we had entered seemed closed by the interlocking scarps of the gorge. Except for the musical trickle of the snow water and the occasional crash of some mass of rock, heaved from its place by the frost, we heard no sound save our own labored breathing, made difficult by the thin air of our great attitude of 12,500 feet above the tides.

A short rest here and then we proceeded to devise means of escape. The walls that encompassed us seemed impregnable; at first we could perceive but one exit and that by the way we had come. But as we approached the upper left-hand corner of the chamber, we saw what in the dim light we had before overlooked; that was a series of niches in the otherwise smooth cliff. No regular steps, nor indeed an incline, but six or seven shelves in the face of the rock, which had been made by the decrepitation of the stone. It was a very dubious pathway, narrow and sloping away from the cliff so as to make the footing very insecure, but it seemed practicable.

We soon had our preparations completed. The first shelf was about twelve feet above our heads—quite beyond reach—and there were no crevices or projections in the rock to aid us in climbing. Forming a three-sided pyramid by standing close together and locking arms, Bill, being the lightest, mounted upon our shoulders. From here he could easily reach the shelf. Getting as firm a hold of it as he could, he gave a spring that sent us staggering away, and left him hanging in the air. Then with a quick, powerful effort he threw himself up upon the ledge. Once there, he passed the noose of the rope he had taken up with him over a point of rock, and lowered the other end to us. With this rope he drew up our packs and we finally followed him. The next shelf was but ten feet above us, and the next but eight feet above that, and these distances we easily passed. But from there on the way seemed closed, for above us rose a smooth wall, fully seventy-five feet, unbroken by any crack or projection. The narrow ledge on which we stood hardly gave us a footing, and any unguarded movement on our part would certainly have resulted in throwing us over the edge. After a short survey of the situation Jim took three ropes and carefully knotting them together, leaned far out over the ledge, sustained in his position by our united weights, we having hold of his arm. He swung the long noose twice about his head and then, by a powerful effort, shot it up into the air. It fell short of the shelf nearly ten feet, and dropped back into the gulf, detaching as it went a shower of loose fragments. Again and again he tried this. The

third time the rope landed on the ledge but did not catch, and it was not until the seventh cast that he was successful; then the noose settled down over a projection in the rock and held fast. Up this rope started Bill and a moment later a shout from him apprised us of his safety. Then our packs followed, and lastly we. I went first and it was a long and hard climb. I continually bumped against the rocks, bruising my hands and body. Halfway up I stopped to rest—out of breath. It was an exciting moment. Above me, thirty feet, was the shelf on which Bill stood; far below me was the dark gorge. Curiously enough, at this time, hanging as I was on a slender, insecurely fastened rope, I was not in the least nervous, and I surveyed the scene about me almost with pleasure. A moment only I paused; then went on again and soon stood on the rock by Bill's side. Bob and Jim followed me, and once more we were grouped together. From this point up the climbing was less difficult; it was like ascending some very steep incline. Bill would go ahead, hanging to the rocks, like a fly, with his toes and fingers, until he reached some resting place where he could contrive to attach a rope, when we all followed, carrying the packs and steadying ourselves by the cord. In this way, after two hours of hard work, we reached the top and turned to look back into the crevasse out of which we had just emerged.

It was nearly a thousand feet to the bottom and not altogether a pleasant prospect. But around and above us the sight was grand. Down the side at our left stretched the mountain slope, until it

blended with the foothills that rose here and there like gigantic waves. The buildings in Kirby were distinctly visible, and we could see even the people in the street. Above us stood the ever-present peak, white and sparkling. The view was undeniably magnificent, and I turned to Bob.

"Isn't it superb?" I asked in a whisper.

"Possibly," he answered indifferently; "but take away the mountains and it wouldn't amount to much."

I turned away impatiently; he was a Philistine.

Another short rest and we started ahead. At first the climbing was easy; the snow was still covered with a crust that supported us, and we advanced rapidly up the steep and rocky incline. We were congratulating ourselves on our great progress when our way was suddenly stopped by a crevasse, about fifty feet wide, but of vast depth. It extended to our right and left a long distance, and a short survey convinced us that we could not go around it; we must cross it. The question was how, and we sat down in the snow to rest and consult. A barometrical observation showed our elevation to be 13,700 feet, and the exceedingly rarefied air made our breathing very painful.

"How deep d'ye call this, offhand?" asked Bill of his brother.

"Wal," said Jim, slowly closing one eye and assuming an air of calculation, "I guess 't 's 'bout two thousan' feet, more or less; it's quite a drop."

It was plainly impossible to climb down it and up the other side. Cautiously crawling to the edge we looked over. The walls of the canyon went down

without a break; worse than that, the opposite side slanted back from the top, so that the ascent would be extra hazardous; very much like climbing up the side of a house and getting over the eaves.

"We might chuck a rope across," said Bill, "and get over onto that. How far kin you throw, Jim?"

Jim closed his left eye again, took a survey of the scene and making a rapid mental calculation said: "I reckon I kin do it."

Taking the four lengths of rope we had brought, he carefully knotted them together again and coiling up the slack loosely, stepped to the edge of the precipice, carrying the large noose in his right hand. With his eye he carefully estimated the distance to a small boulder that was perched upon the opposite side of the crevasse. Then he slowly swung the loop about his head, opening it out into a circle by a peculiar twist of his hand. Again and again did the rope weave about his head, until at last he sent it flying through the air across the gulf. The first and second throws were failures—the noose missed the boulder; but the third time it settled down over the rock and held fast, our united weights being unable to move it. We then secured the end we held to a jagged spike of stone that stuck up near the edge and our bridge was done. Over this frail pathway of a single rope, knotted and chafed, we must go. It certainly seemed like flying in the face of a previously beneficent Providence, but we had gone too far to turn back; besides, we were afraid to.

Our knapsacks had become exceedingly annoying, and chafed our shoulders painfully; but we could not

leave them, as we should certainly need our provisions and blankets, so we secured them again in place in such a way as to leave our arms tolerably free, and made ready for the crossing.

Jim went first: he claimed this privilege, saying the bridge was his—and he was going—anyhow. We let him; it is always best to defer to others in little matters of this kind. Besides the rope might break. We watched him carefully let himself over the edge of the cliff and then, grasping the cord over his head, saw him make his way across—hand over hand. It took less than a minute for him to reach the other side, yet it seemed an hour to us. Bob went next, and he went in good style, never looking down, but straight ahead. Midway in the passage he stopped to rest. It was a moment of great anxiety to all of us. The strain on the rope was tremendous; as he hung there in the middle, his weight of 160 pounds stretched the cord dangerously. I momentarily expected to hear it snap, and to see him sent flying into the depths below. But it held and he reached the other side in safety.

Then it was my turn, and as I stepped to the edge, Bill called to me:

"Look here," he said, "just throw your weight ez light ez ye kin onto th' rope, fer it's beginnin' to chafe."

I examined it and found that where it touched the rock it had been worn so much as seriously to impair its strength.

"I reckon it'll go all right," said Bill, "if you're careful; anyhow 'twont break 'fore ye git to the middle."

This was not eminently reassuring. There was but very little satisfaction in knowing that it would not break until I was in the very centre, and I drew a lightning picture of myself, hanging in mid air, to a thread; then I saw myself striking on the jagged rocks beneath, and so lifelike was the sketch that I could actually hear the unresilient thud I made. It was very realistic but—disagreeable. My reverie was interrupted by William, who inquired facetiously:

"Wal, what ye cipherin' on now. Warnt thinkin' of jumpin' it, was ye?"

I carefully wrapped my handkerchief about the rope where it was chafed and started. Again I was surprised and pleased to find how cool I was; all my fears had been anticipatory; my nerves were firmer than when I stood on the rock. I took great pains not to jar or strain the rope unnecessarily, and I never felt lighter in my life. A third of the way across I stopped, and threw my left leg over the rope to remove the strain on my arms. The scene around me was a wild one. Below, many hundred feet, yawned the black chasm, its bottom only visible here and there, where the sunlight penetrated it. A moment sufficed to rest me and I went on. When I reached the middle, the rope sagged perilously, and it seemed as if I could feel the strands parting. I shut my eyes and hurried over the dangerous spot. I passed it safely, and then began the ascent. This was comparatively easy, for though it was up-hill, I knew the worst was over and that I was secure. Another instant and I was standing by Dawson and Jim.

Bill followed me and being much the lightest of the

party, got over safely, although one strand of the rope parted as he passed the centre. The next question was, how to loosen the further end of our bridge, and this was quickly settled. We all laid hold of the rope and with a "yo! heave ho!" fairly broke it off where it had worn thin.

Before going further we ate our lunch of pemmican and biscuit, and took a short rest. But it was a very short one, for we were still nearly a thousand feet from the top, and our time was limited. The snow over which our way now lay had become too soft to walk on safely, and we had to resort to snow-shoes.

Any one who has ever worn these conveniences remembers his first experience. I do mine. To begin with, the shoes are unnecessarily long and many times too wide. It is absolutely impossible to walk in them in the ordinary manner, or rather, it is impossible to take more than one step in that way. The most inexperienced can always take one step, and if he stops there is all right. Unlike so many things in this life, in snow-shoeing it is the *second* step that counts. For you step on your heels; you step on your toes; you step on everything but the snow, and you end finally by standing on your head and wildly trying, feet in air, to step on the galaxy above. Few succeed in this however, and only these who are suffocated in the drifts and ascend the golden staircase. I wonder if they still wear their snow-shoes or depend on their wings. And if wings then why is the staircase—but I wander.

Fortunately for the success of our expedition we had all had some experience with snow-shoes, and

could walk in them with tolerable ease, so in a few minutes we were on our way again. Our path led over an immense snow field, on which a hard crust had formed the night before, but which the sun had now so softened as to render walking without snow-shoes impossible. The field was of immense depth, of glacial formation, being plainly part of the ice field that formed one wall of the mountain. During the summer the hot sun melts the snow and ice, and the streams thus created dig for themselves channels in the glacial fields in exactly the same manner that the mountain torrents have ploughed the deep canyons through the rocks.

These channels are generally narrow but very deep, and when the frost comes, it hardens the ice walls and fixes them immovably. These fields are also pierced by many small shafts, unusually made in this way. Some dark-colored object, a leaf or a stone perhaps, falls upon the snow. Because of its color it absorbs great quantities of heat, which the white snow reflects, and so the stone sinks rapidly below the surface. A shaft is thus bored into the ice field and often extends many feet down. In this manner the glaciers become seamed and honeycombed by these narrow, deep openings over which, in winter, the snow drifts, forming bridges, often too slender to more than support their own weights, yet which effectually conceal the dangerous pitfalls beneath. In order to avoid plunging into one of these abysses, we tied ourselves together with our ropes. Jim again took the lead, I came second, then Dawson, and Bill last. The cord

was securely knotted under our arms, with a space of about twenty feet separating us.

We proceeded very cautiously, yet as rapidly as possible, for we still had a long distance to traverse and many obstacles to overcome. Our way up the slope was at a slight incline, and we advanced about a mile and a half without accident. We were often made aware of our peril by hearing our footsteps reverberate with a muffled echo as we crossed some frail snow arch that spanned an abyss. Once Bill, striking the iron point of his staff sharply into the crust, saw it disappear from his sight as he relaxed his hold on it. It had pierced the snow and fallen into the cavern beneath. It was interesting to note the celerity with which we hastened forward just then; we seemed to be actuated by a common impulse—particularly Bill.

All at once—without warning—I felt a sharp tug on the rope, that nearly threw me backwards; then a shout, followed by the rush and roar as of an avalanche. Had there been any slack between Jim and myself I should certainly have been pulled down, but the rope being taut, I managed, with the help of his great weight and strength, to maintain my position and half turn around. I found I was standing on the extreme edge of a crevasse, into which Dawson and Bill had been thrown by the breaking of the snow bridge that had carried Jim and myself safely over. They were sustained only by the rope, and Bill, as he swung up against the wall of the cut, must have been badly bruised. It was fortunate for all of us that they were light and we heavy, else we should have been pulled into the pit with them. As it was, our position was

serious enough. By careful manœuvering we contrived to work the rope into a V shape crack on the edge of the precipice and wedging it there were thus enabled partially to remove the strain upon our breasts. Still we dared not move, and we were obliged to maintain a rigid position, straining every muscle to prevent being drawn over the edge. Our snow-shoes complicated the matter, for because of them we could get no grip on the snow. Standing where I did I could look straight down into the gulf. The green, icy walls looked unpleasantly cool where the sunlight touched them, but most of the cavern was in semi-darkness. It was a fascinating sight and one I gazed at earnestly, until I was aroused by Dawson, his voice sounding strangely sonorous, backed by the echoes. "Whenever you get tired boys, we're ready to change ends," he said.

We were tired already, but not able to change, for an unguarded movement, a slip, and we should all go into the pit together. I leaned over slightly, and endeavoring to assume a jesting tone, said:

"This place looks like the mouth of a hole, boys."

"*I* reckon we'll find it the mouth of h—l if anything happens to that rope," said Bill profanely.

"Well, hang on!" I said, "hang on!"

A smothered laugh came from Dawson. "Thanks, dear boys," he said, "but the advice is quite unnecessary; you are the ones to hang on; we can't let go if we tried."

All this happened in much less time than it takes to tell it, and the two men had not been in the hole a minute before we were working to release them. By

throwing his weight heavily on the rope, Jim managed to get down upon his knees, and with the utmost difficulty removed his snow-shoes, so that his spiked soles gave him a better hold on the ice. Then I contrived to do the same, and we were ready. What made our task so difficult was the fact that the two men were securely tied fastened together, and so we had to raise them both at once. This our strength was unequal to, for while we could maintain them where they were, being aided by the friction of the rope against the rocks, the same friction worked equally against our efforts to pull them up. We made several desperate attempts to do this, but were obliged to desist, lest we should wear the rope.

"Don't hurry yourselves, gentlemen," said Dawson from below; "not the slightest good in hurrying, but I should like to get out sometime this month. I have an engagement on the 27th and to-day is the 12th."

Jim began to grow excited. "Hang on! boy, hang on!" he shouted.

"Dear Jim," said Dawson, plaintively, "have we not assured you that we *could* not let go? We're tied! We cannot slip unless you do, but we're slowly freezing to death. A few short hours and all will be over."

A chuckle from Bill showed that he was alive at any rate.

"Bill!" shouted Jim, "can't you ontie yourself an' come up the rope?"

"I've been tryin' to all this time, but the durned galoot that tied this rope made such a cussed knot in it I can't."

"Oh! the ingratitude of man;" said Bob. "I myself well and truly tied that knot and now I am called a galoot. William, you're another. Cut it!"

"Yes, I guess I will; here goes; look out." There was quiet for a few seconds, followed by jerks and fierce pulls on the rope; then we heard Bob's voice, saying: "Excuse *me*, Bill, but if you could take your left snow-shoe out of my eye I should feel duly grateful. It seems to impair my sight a trifle."

Then came a half laugh from Bill and the next instant his head appeared above the edge of the cliff, and he stood by my side, looking as cool and calm as ever. He still wore his snow shoes which he had been unable to remove without losing, and which had occasioned Bob's remonstrance. He quickly kicked these off and joined us upon the rope. The weight was now largely on our side so that we were easily able to pull up Dawson, and once more we stood together.

We had little time to waste however; it was nearly four o'clock; the sun was just touching the mountain tops; the air was rapidly becoming colder and the light was fading. We saw we could never reach the summit that night and our object then was to make ourselves as comfortable as possible. Even as we spoke the sun was gone; the mountain summit looked bare and cold; a biting chill swept over us. The night had come. We hurried on to find a place to camp. There was very much less danger now of breaking through the crust, for the strong hand of frost had strengthened all the snow bridges. We found a place

that was sheltered, and went into camp there. I have never passed such another night in all my life. The cold was intense; we were without any fire, with only some rocks to keep the wind off and but one light blanket apiece. Before lying down we set the registering thermometer and read the barometer. The temperature was 4° Far. above zero; the barometer indicated an altitude of 13,820 feet.

We had all we could do that night to keep from freezing, but we contrived it some way. We did not dare go to sleep, and we passed the time keeping each other awake. It was a wonder we did not freeze our hands or feet. Morning came at last and found us worn out, cold and stiff. In our scrambles of the day before we had pounded ourselves considerably, and the cold served to develop these bruises until we ached all over. At daylight the mercury showed a temperature of 12° below zero. We ate a meagre breakfast of biscuit and pemmican and drank a little whiskey. Hot tea we knew was much better than spirits at such a time, but there was an insuperable objection to tea then—we didn't have any. After breakfast we approached the final obstacle. This presented tremendous difficulties, seemingly insurmountable, but we had gone too far to turn back, short of complete success.

We found ourselves standing at the foot of a wall of stone, forming the sides of a rocky cylinder, which made the cap or crown of the mountain peak. The wall was fully sixty feet high at its lowest point, and

to reach the summit we must scale this cylinder. This we did as the day before we had ascended the side of the canyon, that is, by casting a noose over a point of rock and then going up the rope, hand over hand ; and at exactly four minutes past ten o'clock, on the morning of the thirteenth day of January, we stood on the apex of Uncompahgre and looked about us.

The scene was one of indescribable grandeur ; we were surrounded by the Rolling Rockies, but rocky then in name only, for everything was softened and whitened by the snow. Below us were the mountain slopes, rising in graceful curves until they could rise no further and the mountain peaks were formed. I have watched the sea during a storm, and the appearance of the waves at that time, as seen from the maintopsail yard, was wonderfully like the sight we looked down upon from the summit of Uncompahgre. The yeasty foam that covered the crests of the waves made them white as snow, and in the south we saw the peaks of Wilson and Lamborn, looking like two dismasted wrecks. For miles and miles about us stretched the mountains, rising up and up, until the white outlines of their summits blended with and were lost in the clouds they pierced. The bright morning sun shone on the ocean of frozen billows beneath us, and added to the strangeness of everything, for while the eastern slopes were sparkling in the yellow light, the western sides were still shrouded in dusk. A sense of remoteness came over me as I stood there ; I felt like the Last Man. " What countless ages it has taken to

get this world into its present condition," I thought, "and how many more will it be before ——"

"Look ahere!" said Bill, rudely interrupting my reverie; "you look as if you was thinkin' of buyin' the hull bloomin' universe. What do you call it wuth, now?"

V. THE DESCENT OF UNCOMPAHGRE.

After making observations with the barometer and determining the altitude to be 14,226 feet, we prepared to make the descent. A careful examination of our rope disclosed that it had become very much worn and shortened. It would be necessary to use it with extreme care. But the greatest difficulty that presented itself was how to detach the cord after we had all descended to the slope beneath. Various plans were proposed and rejected as impracticable, and after an hour's fruitless talk, we were forced to the painful conclusion that one of our party must be left behind to cast off the noose. The certainty that this was unavoidable was very depressing.

Then arose the interesting question: "Who should stay?" and we decided this by lot. I tore four leaves out of my note book, and on three wrote "*Go*," and on the other "*Stay*." I folded them up into exactly similar pellets, and buried them deep in a snow-drift. Simultaneously, we all inserted our hands into the snow, and groping about, each brought out his paper. I never shall forget the look of dread that overspread the faces of my companions as they proceeded to read their fate. Bob looked at his slip and his face lit up as he read, "*Go!*" Bill nervously tore

his as he opened it and fairly shouted as he saw he was safe. As for phlegmatic Jim, when he heard the others announce their luck he turned coolly to me and said: "It's even chance 'twixt me an' you, boy. I aint looked at mine nor you at yours; how'll ye trade, sight unseen, just fur luck?"

It seemed absolutely ghastly to jest at such a time, but I handed him my unopened sheet, and looking at the one he gave me I saw, "*Stay!*" Like a fool I had given away my life.

Our leave-taking was short. My companions warmly pressed my hand, and promised to return at once to my rescue. Bob said, with the tears in his eyes:

"Good-bye, old fellow, good-bye! Keep up, won't you?" (This was rubbing it in a little, I thought; I couldn't help keeping up.) "I'd never leave you in the world if I weren't sure I should see you to-morrow. You've got provisions and blankets, and you can amuse yourself with the barometer and thermometer. Good-bye! God bless you," and he was over the cliff before I could say a word. So were the others, and in a minute more I heard them calling out to me, at the base of the rock, to cast off the rope. Mechanically I did so, and as I looked down upon them Bob sang out cheerily, "Keep up, old man; I'll be up to-morrow," but I heard him indistinctly.

My companions had promised to head a party for my rescue, but I knew it would be useless to do so. Our own ascent had taken a day and a half; the mountain was hourly becoming more difficult, and

should another snow-storm come on, the way would be closed for months. Moreover, allowing that they did succeed in re-ascending the mountain, could I live until they reached me? For the cold was intense; the thermometer then read 20° below, and that meant death to me. Of course a fire was out of the question, but I did the best I could; I wrapped myself up in my blankets and burrowed in the snow to my chin.

The day was beautiful; the sky blue and clear, as it so often is in Colorado, and the air transparent to a remarkable degree. My companions were just in sight, skimming rapidly along on their snow-shoes. As I watched them I fell asleep, and slept soundly and dreamlessly for four hours. When I awoke it was about three in the afternoon, but a change had come over the scene. At first I could not recall where I was, but gradually a realization of my position stole over me. Slowly freezing and starving to death on the top of a lonely mountain! I reproached my companions for deserting me; I reproached my weakness in allowing them to go; I regretted ever having left home—I did a lot of silly and useless things just then. Silly and useless they certainly were, for they neither helped nor comforted me.

The sun, which at eleven o'clock shone bright and clear, was now obscured by thick clouds; the wind was rising and moaned around the rocky corners in a ghostly way. A fierce mountain storm was beginning. The air appeared to be peopled with spirits; I seemed to be made up of two persons; one my right hand—the other my left. "Up here," said my left hand, "is it not a proper abode for the homeless souls

of dead men? Could they be less in the world and still out of it in any other place?" "What of it?" said my right hand, to my left hand questioner: "Shall we not soon be ourself a dead man?" I laughed as I noticed the odd use of the editorial *we*.

It grew dark very rapidly, and as the day faded I could faintly see the scattered lights of Kirby. Nearer to me—a little way up the slope—shone the white gleam of an electric arc light, that the Pay Rock Mining Company kept burning over their shaft-house. I even fancied I could hear the clink of the drills that I knew were at work in the mine. But this was impossible, for no sounds could have traveled such a distance in that rare air. My senses were keenly active, and I took an extraordinary interest in my physical condition. I lost the feeling of mental depression that had lately overcome me; every nerve was now taut, and for the first time since my comrades left me I began to think I could escape. I counted my respirations and found I was breathing thirty times a minute; my pulse was making ninety-five beats. Suddenly, the air seemed to grow colder; the wind which had been blowing with fearful velocity lulled for an instant, and then—down came the snow in great white flakes.

It was a mountain storm true enough, for the snow filled the air in an almost solid mass. I could only breathe by sheltering my face in my hands. The gale began with redoubled fury, and seemed to fairly shake the mountain, as it struck against it with tremendous force. It caught my blankets and rushed them out

into the wind-swept blackness about me; it almost carried me over the cliff and I barely saved myself by taking shelter behind a boulder. As I crouched there, I felt it rocking; it swung a little as if poised on its centre; then it fell with a ———.

I find I am getting into a very awkward position, without the least show for escape alive, and I think I had better leave matters where they are. My impression is that I jumped—finally.

VI. BURIED UNDER AN AVALANCHE.

There is a saying current in the Rocky Mountains that "If you want to go anywhere you'd better start two days before you're ready," implying by this that otherwise you are sure to be late. Those travelers on a certain train on a certain road in Colorado, during the month of a certain January established the truth of this saw beyond a peradventure.

It was a southern bound train, and when it reached Colorado Springs it ran into a heavy snow-storm. At Pueblo the gale was at its height, and twenty miles beyond, the road became impassable and the train stuck fast in a drift. The fires in the locomotive were soon extinguished and the huge mass became inert and helpless.

Only those who have been snow-bound on an open prairie can form any idea of our situation and our powerlessness. The wind roared and howled as it blew down upon us a furious storm from the north-east, and the snow fell upon everything, swiftly covering the land and burying the train out of sight. There was snow everywhere. To the eastward for hundreds of miles, lay a vast, rolling prairie, yet so fast fell the snow and so blinding was it, that our vision was bounded a few yards away by a thick, impenetrable wall of white. Westward, twenty-five miles, were

the mountains, yet between them and us hung a screen of snow-flakes and they were invisible. To the north and south stretched the railroad that bound us with iron ties to civilization, but this too was buried deep out of sight. The very air was turned into a solid bank of snow, and we fairly gasped for breath as we faced the storm.

A curious way the snow seemed to fall. Tumbling down one moment the broad white flakes came; tumbling up the next they went, as if suddenly met by some force that sent them bounding into the air, back whence they started. Kaleidoscopic figures in white danced and played all manner of merry games to the music of the North Wind, that whistled a discordant and shrill refrain through the crevices and round the corners of the car. A Midwinter Night's Dream it was, and it was cold too, bitter cold! Snow! snow! snow! it was everywhere and it was everything. The train was snow; the land was snow; the air was snow. It seemed as if the Earth had suddenly put on a white veil and been married to Jack Frost.

Once or twice there loomed up through the mists that enveloped us, the forms of stray cattle, drifting helplessly before the storm like rudderless ships, but even these were white with the snow, and no sooner did we see them than they disappeared and nothing remained but the blank walls.

Twenty hours we lay thus, dull and desperate. Twenty hours, with nothing to do but be miserable, and nothing to look at but each other. Four passengers sat in the smoking compartment of the Pullman car Las Vegas. Three were men with large mining

interests in New Mexico; they had spent many years in the mountains and had prospered. They were known to each other as the Colonel, the Professor and the Judge, and I soon fell into the habit of thus addressing them.

Why these four men were in the smoking-room it would be difficult to say, for they were not smoking; they had long been deprived of that luxury. Tobacco in any form, at the end of twenty hours, was as much a stranger as Hope. The train boy, who at Pueblo experienced considerable difficulty in selling his cigars at five cents apiece, within four hours after we were blockaded cleared out his entire stock at a net price of twenty-five cents, and was heard later bitterly regretting not having asked fifty. This was American enterprise.

At the end of twenty hours in the drift we were apparently no nearer rescue than at the beginning, for the snow still fell and the wind still blew and the banks of white grew higher and higher. We had exhausted all the available devices for killing time, such as card-playing, reading, chatting and sleeping. There was but one thing we had not tried to any extent, and that was—eating. During all that time we had fasted, and the depression of spirits that always accompanies an empty stomach, slowly settled down upon us, and we sat silent and sullen, eying one another in a half-savage way, neither reassuring nor calculated to raise the general tone of the party. The car began to grow unpleasantly cool; the penetrating wind found out the unchinked crevices and made frantic efforts to reach us, and it became necessary to put on our over-

coats. I shall never forget the look of mingled surprise and joy that spread over the Judge's rugged face, as he thrust his hand into the pocket of his overcoat and pulled out, wrapped in a piece of old newspaper, a genuine doughnut. Neither can I adequately describe my own feelings. For it was none of your imitation affairs, that can be digested in a week or less. Not at all! This was a real, tangible contrivance, ring-shaped, brown and harder than Christian Charity. There could be no question about its genuineness, and its appearance was hailed by the four with emotion. No matter if it was so dry and tough it was impossible to break; all the better, in fact, since it would take so much longer to digest, and thus give our stomachs more occupation. With the nicest care and mathematical exactness the treasure was cut into four equal parts, and quickly vanished down four throats. Then a most remarkable change came over the faces of all. From being gloomy and despondent, we became light-hearted and talkative; pleased as to the past and hopeful as to the future. The humanizing effect of the doughnut was wonderful.

"It occurs to me," said the Colonel, "that the hull of a man's moral intelligence is located, to a degree, in his—er—stummick. Fifteen minutes ago I was fightin' ugly; now if a feller was to smite me, I reckon I'd let it pass."

The Judge cleared his throat with a loud ahem! and remarked slowly:

"That quarter-section of doughnut done me good too. I remember once," here he settled himself in his seat and assumed the attitude of a man about to

relate a story, "I remember once I was ketched into a little snow-slide up in the mountains, when the circumstances was peculiar. I had been prospectin' all the fall up in the Gunnison country, I and Major Bill Tuttle, my pardner, and when winter came we 'lowed we'd just put up a shanty on the Maroon Creek road and live there 'till spring. You see, we was not flush just then, an' we wanted to be ekernomical. We picked out a likely spot on a pretty tol'able steep hill, but protected by a heavy gro'th of timber from snow-slides, and we put up a very substantial log cabin. You know the kind, Cornel; the rear end was the dirt of the hill an' the ruff sloped forward, made of clay." The Colonel nodded.

"Well, it was a right likely place, and afore we was done a party of four other prospectors come along, and built themselves a camp side by side. On the mornin' of the 13th day of January—I 'member the day like as if 'twas yesterday—as we run short of grub, Bill 'lowed he'd go to the railroad an' fetch some in 'fore snow come. I didn't mind bein' alone, fur there was my neighbors close to hand, and we all passed the time pretty quietly an' comfortably, playin' old sledge or poker.

"Well sir, on the 20th of that month, just a week after Bill left, it come on to snow, an' it certainly did snow for all 'twas worth, an' could git credit for, just like it's doin' now. It snowed for two days an' nights—steady—and then let up an' begun to thaw. On the night of the 22d, I was over to the other cabin with the boys, havin' a little D. P. an' maybe a little somethin' to keep the snow out—snow's a power-

ful bad thing for a man to git into him in winter, Cornel, as you know—'taint so disastrous in summer—an' 'long about twelve I started for home. It was snowin' then powerfully, an' th' old shanty was half out o' sight, but I got there and tumbled into bed, 'just 'coutered as I was,' "—here the Judge waved his hand in graceful accompaniment to the quotation, and the Colonel nodded approvingly.

"I closed the door, it was a very heavy one and fitted snug; the heavy shutter over the single winder was shut already, an' then I went to sleep. When I woke up the room was dark an' cold. Someways I didn't feel sleepy, sort of slept out, so I got up an' lit a match an' looked at my watch. It pointed to ten o'clock and eight minutes, which was mighty surprisin' to me, for I didn't cal'late I had just slept clear into the next night, for 'twas night I knew, bein' so dark. The watch was going reg'lar, an' then I started for th' door to have a look at the weather. But there warnt any weather to be seen, for I couldn't git the door open. I pushed, an' I kicked, an' I pounded, but she wouldn't budge, and all at once it come to me that I was buried in the snow!

"Gen'lemen, when that impression struck me, at first I was amazed and dumfounded, but I was soon all right. As I figgered it out, a snow-slide had, like as not, come down the mountain, an' just covered up the old shanty out o' sight. And I figgered that as it come rippin' down the slope it went tearin' through them trees, breakin' 'em off an' pullin' 'em up, and they just stretched over the cabin an' sort o' bolstered up the snow, so's to keep it from smashin' in the ruff.

But I 'lowed they was a fearful weight on the old shanty, an' I set to work, first thing, proppin' it up. I knew as long as that snow laid over the cabin I could never dig through it, 'cause of the trees and limbs, for I'd never an axe by me, an' all I could do was to wait for help to come. If the men in th' other cabin warnt buried themselves, or killed, they'd dig me out, and if they was, I knew Bill 'ud be back 'fore long. On'y two things bothered me: First, I couldn't have a fire, by reason of the chimley bein' stopped by the snow, an' they was no way fur the smoke to git out, and so I might freeze to death. Second, was the starvin'. When Bill left me I was mighty short o' pervisions, and for the last two days I was entirely out an' had been boardin' over to the other camp, expectin' to pay back when Bill come.

" Well, gen'lemen, I made a careful search through the cabin fur somethin' to eat, an' all I found was a little salt pork, a small piece of salt codfish, a little bit o' taller candle, an' some bakin' powder. The candle I 'lowed not to burn, but just keep fur the last in the case of sickness, but the pork and codfish I cut up into little chunks, and found I had 'bout enough to sustain me fur three days, allowin' fair rations each day. I realized that I musn't scrimp myself, fur if I was to get weak I'd succumb to the cold. There was just one thing I didn't think of then, an' that was water. I wasn't takin' very much water them days, an' so I naturally overlooked it.

" Well, as soon as I made my plans, I eat some of my first day's allowance, and blowin' out the candle, found myself in darkness. But before doin' this I

looked at my watch and saw 'twas a few minutes past 'leven. Then, in order to keep warm and occupy my mind, I begun dancin' and jumpin' about, exercisin' as much as the narrer limits an' darkness would allow. I kept this up more or less for may be three hours, till I was out o' breath and dead tired, and then feelin' warm and drowsy, I rolled myself up in all the blankets they was in the cabin and lay down on the bunk and fell asleep.

"Well sir, I was woke up by a most awful thirst; my mouth and throat fairly ached, and my tongue was dry and parched. The feelin' was terrible, an' hardly realizin' my situation I jest jumped up to get some water. But I'd no sooner touched the floor than the hull thing flashed into my mind; I was helpless. All round me was 'water, water everywhere, an' nary drop to drink.'" Here the Judge made a slight pause to note the effect of this quotation, which being well received he went on:

"No sir; not a drop, for I couldn't reach the snow to save my life; I was bound in too tight. The winder I knew was barred, an' the door I had already tried to open an' failed. In the hope of gettin' somethin' to moisten my throat, I bit a piece off'en the taller candle an' slowly swallered it. It was disgustin' but it give me a little relief. But from that moment the dreadful horror of my situation slowly grew on me; the cold got more intense, an' I slowly felt its chill creepin' over me, as I sat there motionless in the dark. Hours passed so; my mouth and throat were still unmoistened and my distress grew greater with each minute. I begun to feel drowsy, an' this grad-

ually got worse, till at last I wrapped myself in my blankets an' fell asleep again, an' dreamed; dreamed of brooks an' streams. I could just hear 'em ripplin' an' chirpin' through the medders, clear an' bright. I plunged my face into the water an' drank, but still I was thirsty. Or I caught some in a bright glass an' watched the cool dew gather on the outside, but when I went to drink, no water trickled down my parched throat, an' I woke more distressed than ever.

"I had slept, it seemed to me, 'bout five hours, for I had been worn out, body an' mind. No change had taken place, an' the cabin was as dark an' colder'n ever. Now I ain't a man that's easy beat; I've been up an' down too off'n to be discouraged, but that awful thirst seemed to parch my very soul, and my pluck just withered up. I was partially dazed. I judged I had been in the cabin then 'bout twenty-four hours, as my watch showed it was a little past one. I just sat there and let the time slip slowly by; I dared not exercise, for the exertion increased my thirst, which was already almost maddenin', so I wrapped myself in my blankets an' lay in my bunk. Then in the darkness about me I saw all kinds of ghostly things. Once, standin' by my side appeared the figger of a man that I recognized as Henry Freeman, a miner who had been killed by my side in a mine-cave a year before. A moment later, hanging from the bend in the stove-pipe I saw the body of Coal Oil Jimmy, a desperado who I saw hanged by the Vigilantes in eighteen eighty. Then, before me danced rows of small figgers, of fantastic shapes; now up, now down they went, till my brain reeled an' I thought I was goin' mad. All this

time I felt I was steadily losin' strength—starvin'. I hadn't eaten anythin' in a great many hours an' my thirst also made me very weak. I saw I could not hold out much longer.

"Suddenly a new horror came to me—I feared I was in danger of suffocatin', for I noticed the oxygen of th' air was becomin' exhausted. The snow had packed so tightly around the cabin as to prevent the air gettin' in. There seemed to be no way to meet this danger, an' the greatness of it at first overcome me. But by givin' the situation careful thought I come to the conclusion that if I could reduce my breathin's from eighteen to twelve a minute, I should save one-third of the air in the room, or make it go one-third further. So I tried to do this, an' with some success. But all this time my thirst was steadily increasin', an' I suffered terrible torment. The agony was dreadful; my tongue was swollen to great size and was cracked an' bleedin'. I could not close my teeth together; my mouth was parched an' hot; my throat smarted an' burned so that every breath sent a stingin' pain down into my chest. The cold increased—or I became more affected by it, as I grew weaker—an' in spite of my distress a powerful drowsy feelin' overcome me. I resisted it as well as I could, dreadin' lest I should freeze to death, but though I realized the danger of it, I fell asleep, an' was tormented by painful dreams of death an' disaster.

"I don't know how long I slept, but I woke as tired and weary an' sad as before.

"The thirst of yesterday was now worse than ever. I was most crazy with it; it was difficult to breathe;

the air was certainly losin' its oxygen; my head felt light and giddy, while a gnawin' pain in my stomach told me that I was starvin'. Still I could have endured it all but for the thirst, which was awful. I could think of nothin' but water, and the knowledge that within a few feet of me lay ice an' snow in vast quantities, only served to make it worse. I could not sit still! I could not think! I raged up an' down the cabin; I pounded on the door; I dashed my weight against it, but it was firm and hardly rattled. There was no doubt about it, I was a prisoner, and would soon be a madman or dead unless help came. My exertion, in consequence of the bad air and my weakness, soon exhausted me and I sat down to rest. But I couldn't rest! My tongue, enormously swollen, almost stopped my breathin', an' I feared I was slowly suffocatin' in that way. I began, at last, to realize that I was goin' to die, for my neighbors must all be dead to have left me buried so long. Perhaps Bill was also lost.

"As I sat there in the darkness I heard a sound, the first not made by myself in the three days I had been in the cabin. It was somethin' diggin' in the snow. At first I could not make out what it was, but I believed it was some wild animal, a wolf or coyote, that had discovered the existence of the cabin. But in a few minutes I heard voices murmurin' indistinctly; —then talkin' and laughin'—they were very near. The men approached very rapidly; I tried to shout, but my throat refused to give forth more than a hoarse croak. More laughter! The rescuers were close at hand. How could they laugh at such a time, not

knowin' but I was dead! Nearer an' nearer they come, till at last, after what seemed hours of waitin', they reached the door an' bust it open with a crash. With the inrush of the cold air an' dazzlin' light I fainted. When I come to, Bill—my pardner—was standin' over me, smilin', and near him was two of the boys from the other camp. Bill looked at me steadily for a minute, and then he says:

"'You must have been pretty bilin' lately, Judge, 'cordin' to the looks of this cabin.'

"'Water!'" was all I could say.

"'Aha!"' says Bill. "'I knowed I was right. But sody is better; Chimmy, just ring the bell and tell Cæsar to fetch some B. and S. I feel a little that way myself.'

"His jokin' was quite lost on me, and weak as I was I rushed to the door and greedily swallowed a handfull of snow. Bill looked at me sadly. 'Judge,' he says, 'You'd better reform. It'll be a case of snakes before you know it.'

"'What day's this?'" I asked, still confused, for now that my thirst was temp'rarily relieved I felt the effects of my fast. "'It's two P. M. in the afternoon of the 23rd day of January, Anni Domino, 1881,'" says Bill; "'and accordin' to the alminick the moon was full same time you was, an' that's last night.'

"It was just so. I had been locked up in that cabin from twelve o'clock one night until two the next day, and that was all. There was no avalanche, nor snow slide; there had been plenty of air; the door was not fastened at all, and could have been opened easy if

I hadn't tried to push it out when it actually swung in."

The Judge paused, carefully shifted his long legs, and looked benignantly upon us.

"Well, but look ahere," cried the Colonel, in great excitement, "why didn't you try it both ways?"

"Yes," said the Judge slowly, "that's the very question the boys asked me."

"Well then, all I've got to say is that you were a perfect blamed fool," the Colonel continued, in a disgusted tone; "a reg'lar cussed tenderfoot, by Jove!"

The Judge smiled sweetly. "The very identical expression that Bill used," was all he said.

VII. THE WEDDING AT PUERTA DA LUNA.

The sun shone down upon Puerta da Luna* with a yellow glare that was blinding in its intensity. The red dust, through which an occasional horse or mule kicked a cloudy way, rose sluggishly from the earth, then slowly settled back, hot and scorching, upon the traveler. The air was baking, and it quivered and shrivelled in a way that made one fairly gasp.

Down below the town flowed Rio Pecos—lazy and dirty—its alkaline waters seeming, in the fiery sunlight, to boil, as they flowed with languid difficulty around the sand bars that blocked them in. The plaza of the town—for every Mexican town is built upon a plaza—was a grand affair, being bounded on one side by the town itself, and on the other three by the horizon. The founder of Puerta da Luna was a man of large ideas, and he intended that the town should have room to grow. It certainly had all the advantages in this respect that ever a town had, for there was nothing for hundreds of miles to stop its extending in three directions. Yet there it stood, at the advanced age of one hundred and fifty years, a sad

*Lippincott's Gazetteer spells this Puerto de Luna, but Governor Walker himself insisted that it should be Puerta da Luna, and so that spelling has been retained here.

monument of neglected opportunities. It is doubtful if it had increased in size by a single house in the last century. Indolence was the only industry there; a liking for work would have made a man's sanity questionable. The white men, who from time to time had gone to Puerta da Luna, at first carried with them a breezy air of bustle and enterprise, and each avowed his intention of "waking things up, sir!" But their energy and ambition were soon burnt out of them by the hot suns of the desert, and the sleepy influences of the place overcame them.

Close by the town rises the bluff of a mesa, and from there we can look down upon Puerta da Luna actually, as we do figuratively at all times. Below us, on our left, we see the cacti and ocatillas crisping in the heat, and the white face of the land glowing in the fierce noon sun. We see the red clay roofs of the town itself, and our eye is caught by its one frame building, the Dew Drop Palace of Pleasure, that lifts its warped and splintered walls to the extraordinary height of two stories. Near at hand is the little adobe church, older than the town itself, that holds within its walls that precious relic, the holy image of Santa Blasa, to whose shrine often come barren women, who kneeling and praying, return thence to their homes, and are made happy within the year.

Beyond the town we see the river again, and the quivering heat that rises from its sand bars is as visible as a fog. Everything else is yellow or red, and the baking earth is quite unmasked by the green of vegetation, save for the cactus or sage, things

that are but the mockery of living, growing plants. One can almost believe he has left the abode of earthly dwellers and has been transported to another planet, because of the strangeness of everything about him. Or else he can fancy, on some cruel hot day, that he is seeing the death of the earth. The wither and blight of the desert, the decay of old age are everywhere. Even the children seem to be centuries old, their parched, sun-burnt little bodies making them look like animated mummies.

During the day one seldom sees a moving thing exposed in the heat. But as the light wanes and the sun drops behind the mesas in the west, the town slowly awakens. The air is still hot, but not with the dry and scorching heat of noon-time; the sands still glow with the stored-up caloric, accumulated during the day, but the night-wind that follows the sun reaches the town as the daylight fades, and then, of a sudden it is cool. Slowly the people rouse themselves from their lethargy. The doorsteps and narrow piazzas that abut upon the plaza become populous with life, and the sounds of guitars and castanets are heard, playing an accompaniment to some melodious soprano, singing a long-remembered song of Castile or Andalusia; a song brought here, may be, by some singer in Cortes's band, three hundred and fifty years ago.

A curious state of affairs exists in Puerta da Luna, as in many other New Mexican towns. There are two races there, the Mexican or Hispanio-American, and the White or American, as they are called, and these two races do not commingle readily. It being a frontier town, many of the riff-raff of the country

have drifted there, and have earned by their lawlessness a bad name for the place. Not even the exhausting, enervating climate has entirely subdued the vitality of this element, and it now and then breaks out in some mad feat of blood.

Twenty years ago old "Guv'nor" Walker came to Puertà da Luna, determined to make a success of his life. At that time he possessed brains, pluck and a little money, which he had saved from the wreck the war had made of his fortune, for the "Guv'nor" had been on the side of the south. And what had he actually done for himself? Nothing! The fatal influences of the place had grown about him and he was ambitionless. Yet in spite of his loss of energy, the old man still carried himself with courtly dignity. Twenty years in Puerta da Luna had not entirely worn away the polish of his Kentucky breeding. The Governor was tall in figure and stately in manner yet, and though he dressed shabbily, you would never think it was less than broadcloth and linen he wore. He was fond of reminiscence also, and wielded much influence in the hamlet. The Governor was looked up to by all, and where fair dealing and honest arbitration was desired he was appealed to, though it was seldom that any other arbitrator than the six-shooter was needed.

The Dew Drop was his property, as was also the adjoining small store, where might be purchased many things, such as tobacco, calico, bacon, flour, cheap saddles and baking-powder. Nothing ever gave the Governor more pleasure than to collect about him in the Dew Drop half a dozen companions who would listen to his

stories of by-gone days. It used to be whispered in Puerta da Luna that during the war the Governor had been guilty of some tremendous, unmentionable act of treason against the United States, and that he was waiting for it to blow over before returning to Kentucky. One would think that in twenty years it had had time to be forgotten, yet still he lingered. "I was thinkin' of going back this summer," he would say, as regularly as the spring came around, "but I reckon I'll wait now till fall. Don't quite see how I kin leave my bizness."

Seated with his hearers about him, the Governor would warm to his work. "Porty de Luny was not what it used to be," he would protest, with a sorrowful shake of the head, as if "Porty de Luny" had ever been anything different since the Christian era began. "It was gettin' too near the settlers; it wouldn't be long before there'd be a railroad runnin' slap in front of the Dew Drop, and where would old Guv'nor Walker be then? Dead, sah! that's th' idea—dead of a broken heart." Here the old fellow's feelings always mastered him, and he found it necessary to stimulate.

"When I fust come here," he would say, "we used to hev great times. It was at the close of the wah, sah, and there was a lively scatterin' of the boys for certain reasons. Old Porty was very gay in those days; too gay almost, for we was obliged to get up a little company of vigilantes, in order to sort of steady things. There used to be some tol'able quick shootin' for all that. I 'member once a chap named Bill Thomas let off his six-shooter into a crowd and killed

three Greasers. We had to tie him up, on account of pop'lar opinion, though it didn't seem hardly fair, they bein' only Mexikins. You see, Bill was after a feller he had a right to kill on sight, and these Greasers sort o' got plum in line, so, not bein' able to shoot round, he tried goin' through 'em, killin' 'em by the way, as it were, incidentally, and I always said it was a mistake to hang him.

"There is a couple of holes here," he would add, with a small laugh, pointing to the wooden bar, "that has a story. It was before I was proprietor, bein' only tendin' bar, when one day, while the usual game was goin' on, a little feller, Manuel Manzanares, waltzes in and sallies up to the bar an' calls for some whiskey. Well, it just filled him up to the edge, and he whipped out his gun an' sayin' he hadn't got any money, covered me an' backed fur the door. I dodged behind the bar, whipped out my pistol and cal'lated to git pay that way. Well, I caught him, caught him twice in fact, an' could have caught him three times if it had been necessary, but it warnt. An' the cur'us thing about it all was that there was two other men hit same time, an' it was claimed I did it, though I only pulled twice an' both those leads was found in Manuel. Well, it became convenient for me to go to Vegas just about then, and I must've stayed away several months. Cur'us, ain't it, to think of a man's havin' to leave Porty for such a thing as that? We were mighty strict in those days, sah; most too strict."

But it was with the ladies the Governor was most popular. There was always about him an air of respectful homage and attention, no matter who the

woman was, that at once won her regard. As he strolled across the plaza he was constantly bowing his salutations to one or another senora, and his sombrero was being beaten isochronally with his stately gestures. There wasn't a house within fifty miles of Puerta da Luna at which the white haired old "Guv'nor" was not welcome, and though the envied of all men for his taking qualities with the sex, no one ever questioned his right to their favor.

Great things were to happen in Puerta da Luna this night, when the bright moon, hanging high in the lunar pathway, shone through her "gates" upon the sands of the desert. The moon was half full, and she offered herself as a noble example of temperance and moderation to the roisterers on earth; an example alas, neither understood nor followed, for Puerta da Luna was undeniably—drunk.

The occasion of this unusual hilarity was the celebration of the marriage of Placide Baca y Baca, eldest son and heir of Don Selso Baca, the wealthiest and best known ranchero in San Miguel County. The title to thousands of acres of dry, red land was vested in Don Selso, it having descended to him from his father, who in turn had received it from his father, and so on back, until you could trace the title straight to the great land grant, given in the year 1723 to Don Ferdigo Baca by the Spanish King. Besides the land he owned, hundreds of cattle bore Don Selso's brand and thousands of sheep were watched by his herders. On the banks of the Pecos stood his house, and near it was his orchard and vineyard—a few acres wrested from the drought and made fertile by the alkaline

waters of the river, which had been led thither through rude canals. Here grew fine fruit; peaches, pears, apricots, plums; melons too of such tremendous girth that I dare not give their dimensions. In the vineyard grapes could be plucked, the bunches rivaling in size and flavor the celebrated samples brought back by the original investigating committee from the land of Canaan. From these grapes wine had been made, and this, the wine of Baca, was expected to add to the innocent hilarity of this joyful occasion.

Placide—son of Don Selso Baca—had that afternoon led to the altar in the little church, the blushing daughter of Don Anton Chico—herself called Maria Dolores. In front of that altar they had knelt and clasped hands, while the swarthy little priest had mumbled and stumbled through his unfamiliar mass, and at length they had walked out, they who had entered as two, forever bound together as one. And by this marriage were united the houses of Baca and Chico; the rights and titles to the two estates were joined, and there was great rejoicing.

Invitations had been sent out for miles around, bidding the ranchmen come and be merry, and an hour after sunset the town was alive with swaggering cowboys, dressed in their best; all wearing broad sombreros, fancifully colored shirts, bright flowing neckties, curious little high heeled-boots, into which were tucked their trousers, and huge, jingling spurs, buckled over their insteps.

The two Dons had united to celebrate the notable event becomingly. They had secured the large room

over the Dew Drop for an "Assembly Room," and had craftily appointed Governor Walker Master of Ceremonies. The bar of the Dew Drop was thrown open to all comers, and long before the hour for the Ball had arrived, Free Whiskey and the fiery Mescal had made themselves felt. Now and then, some intoxicated reveler might be seen in the shimmer of the moonlight on the plaza, arguing with his unstable shadow, and as he swung his arms, to emphasize with gestures his flowery, albeit disjointed sentences, the earth would slip from under him and he would fall limp in the dust. A companion, himself apostrophizing the night, wandering spirally by, and seeing the prostrate form, would pause in pity, when from under him the world would whirl, and he too would repose in drunken dustiness. Then a merry laugh from some dusky senorita would set vibrating the clear night air, as the two roisterers would attempt to rise, then fall, stagger and fall again, singing swanlike as they sank to the unsteady ground. Fainter would grow their voices and fainter, diminuendo—last and lost effort, prostrate would they lie, drunk—dusty—happy.

The upper room of the Dew Drop was, this night, devoted to Terpsichore, and presented a truly attractive appearance. Around the rough, unceiled interior were hung flags, in an ineffectual attempt to conceal the bareness of the walls, while from the naked rafters overhead were suspended two flimsy chandeliers, holding kerosene lamps which shed a smoky, dingy light about. Through the cracks in the warped and creaking floor came the heat, the smoke, the odors and the profanity of the bar-room below. The atmosphere in

the Ball room was like that of an oven, and the four narrow windows served to ventilate it but poorly.

In a frontier town like Puerta da Luna, society is not defined and hedged about as it is where what is called civilization has made more progress. Still it has its limitations even there. Not every one was bidden to the Ball that night, and a resolute, active young fellow, with a significant six-shooter hanging at his right hip, stood by the door as the guests passed in, and closely scanned each face. Not every-one was admitted, but nearly every one, and by ten o'clock the scene was one of entrancing beauty. It was eloquently described by the Governor, as he stood in the doorway, as being—"bewitchin'—'pon me soul, —hic!"

Seated on the benches about the room were the ladies, becomingly dressed in white. They were of various nationalities, from the light-haired, fair-complexioned dame of Saxon descent, to the dusky belle, whose shining black hair and dark skin betrayed the mixture of Spanish and Indian blood. They were of all ages, for no maiden was without her chaperon. They are very particular about this little point in Puerta da Luna, though the fact that the ball was to be given over a bar-room was accepted as a matter of course. Besides, where else could it be given?

Lounging about the door, in awkward, uneasy attitudes were the men; brave enough, all of them, yet none daring now. Every one felt ill at ease;-the Ball seemed to be a funeral. But on the appearance of the wavering Governor, a change took place. He wan-

dered across the room, vainly endeavoring to follow undeviatingly a crack in the floor, through which arose the vapors from beneath. Cautiously he approached the band—a fiddle, guitar and accordeon. Arriving at the side of the fiddler he laid his hand in a free and easy manner on his shoulder and with this support, endeavored to lean over and whisper confidentially in his ear. But he miscalculated, either as to the strength of his prop, or his own stability, for he lost his balance, and making a clutch in the air was only saved from disaster by the accordion. Then, realizing that he was not in proper condition to deliver the speech with which he had intended to open the ball, with a delicate sense of the fitness of things, he removed his sombrero and swinging it about his head shouted lustily, "Hurrah!" and the festivities began. With the first note of the music, a cowboy, inspired by the wine of Baca, dashed with a wild "Whoop!" toward the row of ladies, and seizing one at random, rattled away in a mad, jingling waltz. Then others followed, encouraged by his example, and in a few minutes the floor was covered with dancing couples. Round and round they went; the warped boards creaking, the glass of the lamps rattling,and the men whispering soft curses to themselves as they collided with one another. The Governor did not dance, but stood by the door, leaning heavily against the wall, his sombrero tipped over his eyes and a benevolent smile on his lips, as he beat unsteady time to the music with his forefinger.

While the ball was at its height there appeared in the low, narrow doorway at the head of the ladder-

like stair, the figure of a stranger. A little old man, bow-legged, with arms of unnatural length, and clad in faded blue-jeans. His small face was wizened and parched; no trace of a beard was visible on his sunken cheeks, and his small eyes, set unpleasantly close together and unframed by eyebrows, glanced restlessly about. Bob Lynch and Rube Priday were standing near the door as the stranger appeared, and as he hesitated about entering, Rube, in that easy *bonne camaraderie* manner that became his style so well, stepped up to him and hitting him a substantial blow on the back, that seemed to shrivel him up, until small as he had been before, he appeared even smaller then, said:

"Hello! Major! Glad to see ye. Lookin' fur a chance to jingle yer spurs, hey?"

"No sir," said the stranger slowly, "I'm lookin' fur my little boy. You aint seen him, now, I reckon?"

"Seen him!" said Rube, winking facetiously to the others who stood near. "Oh yes! I've seen him. Little feller, pinafore, pink curls, 'bout so high an' answers to the name o' Bub."

"Y-e-s," said the stranger doubtfully, "I guess that's him. Where is he? Hev you seen him lately?"

"Well, I should say I hed! Less see——" here Rube assumed an air of deep abstraction, occasionally varied by heat-lightning movements of his left eyelid, of so humorous a nature as to send everyone of the bystanders into ill-repressed spasms of laughter.

"Less see; where was it I see Bub last? Just you wait? I got a powerful mem'ry fur furgettin' things."

Here Rube pressed the back of his hand against his forehead and assumed an air of meditation.

"Where—wuz—it—I seen Bub—last? He was a well mannered chap, wasn't he? Had fust rate comp'ny manners—sort o' swallered the juice when talkin' to ladies, so to speak?"

"Yes, yes!" said the old man eagerly; "where did you say you seen him?"

"Tryin' to recollec'. There wuz a feller like that had some trouble up to the X Bar X ranch a year or so ago, and never quite recovered from it. Got ketched into a lariat someways an' it affected his breathin' permanently. Made a mistake about the brand on some hosses through bein' short sighted. At least that's the way it come to me."

"It wasn't Willie, I know," said the old man.

"No, I reckon not, myself. Then there wuz a feller down to the Half-circle-diamond place, down near the Laberde grant, that got into a misunderstandin' with the boss an' hed to pull his freight to save his head. Thet couldn't hev been Bub now, I reckon?"

"No," said the old man, "that couldn't've been Willie. He left home four year ago, an' I aint heard 'bout him but onct, an' then they told me they'd seen him out near Porty de Luny, an' so I come lookin' for him. I'm from Missouri, myself."

"Well," said Rube, generously, "You keep right on as long as you feel like it. Lord! I guess this is a free country, an' a man can look fur the devil if he wants to."

The others acknowledged the humor of this remark by a quavering laugh, and dispersed.

The dancing went merrily on. Too merrily most of the ladies soon thought, and in a little while they took their departure, escorted to their domiciles by their attendants and chaperons. Then, such was the effect of the wine of Baca and the fiery Mescal, that the scene in the Assembly room became something indescribable. The slim walls rocked with the blows of heavy feet that fell upon the flimsy floor; the rafters shook and the lamps burned dim. Up through the splintered boards still came the smoke, the heat, and the odors from the Dew Drop bar beneath. The noise slowly grew fainter below, as one by one the celebrants, overcome by the fiery potions, sank helplessly down to the floor and slumbered in their awkward positions. One by one they fell, until not a soul sat upright to maintain the power of mind over spirits. Most proud would the two Dons have been could they then have seen how faithfully their friends were rejoicing with them. Proud also would have been the young Placide and his blushing Maria Dolores, could they have seen the Dew Drop then.

Up stairs but four still kept their feet; the rest snored noisily. Off in obscure meekness, in one corner, sat the little old man, his small eyes closed to the smoke and shadows; for he too slept. Out on the floor were four booted and spurred rancheros, hard-headed and well-balanced, who showed but little the worse for their merriment. They were tripping a jig to a fantastic measure, and the music was making desperate, though ineffectual efforts to keep up with them. Away they went, their heels rattling noisily and their spurs tinkling merrily. While they were thus occupied a

second stranger appeared in the doorway. The dancers were too busy to notice him, and so failed to perceive the two pistols he carried, one in each hand. He was appearantly not over twenty years old, smooth-faced, short and thick-set. He was dressed in the garb of the country; his light grey eyes glistened in the smoky light, and his thin, compressed lips showed he was what Rube called a "nervy little cuss." For a moment he surveyed the scene from the door, then advancing towards the centre of the room, and halting before the dancers, said quietly:

"Reckon you'd better throw up your hands, gents."

The dancers stopped instantly; they were sober enough to know what the outcome would be if they resisted. Besides, in compliance with a request of Don Selso's, they had left their pistols at the bar, and so were unarmed and helpless. They quietly held up their hands and stood there in a row.

"I'm sorry to trouble you gents," continued the stranger, apologetically; "specially as we're unacquainted, an' I hope you wont think me rude. If the fellers down stairs had panned out anythin' like, I'd never hev come near ye, fur I know ez well ez anyone there's a time fur work an' a time fur play. But I never see just such a pauper outfit as they was; I aint made enough to buy a drink, an' so, if you'll *ex*-cuse me, I shall hev to ax you to be so kind."

When the stranger had accepted the various offerings thus forced upon him, he found himself in possession of nearly two hundred dollars, and three gold watches.

"Really gents," he said, with a polite little bow, "you're men after me own heart. You are rich, well-mannered, an' open-handed. You'll be pleased to know that this little contribution of yours will be used to endow an orphan asylum — an' the little orphans will pray for you every night, which will be be very gratifyin', I'm sure." The four victims were silent, Rube Priday alone showing by a grimace his vexation of spirit. "Perhaps, now we've been so intimate and friendly, you'd like to know my name," the stranger continued. "I'm pop'larly known as Billy the Kid. See here!" He raised his right hand and with his pistol snuffed out one of the remaining lights. He still kept his victims in control by holding the other pistol in his left hand, pointed straight at them.

The old man, who had been dozing in the dark corner all this time, was awakened by the shot, and catching sight of the stranger as he stood fronting the four men, ran wildly toward him, shouting: "Willie! Willie!" All were startled, none more than the robber, at seeing this strange figure in the obscure light. He hesitated an instant, but with four resolute, angry men behind him he dared not pause, a delay might be fatal; besides, in the dim, smoky room, he did not recognize the stranger. With a lightning gesture, he raised his pistol and the old man fell to the floor—dead. Quick as a flash—for it was all over in a second—he faced the four again, and covering them with a revolver in each hand, backed to the door, and bowing there, said: "Good night, gents;" then with a third shot he extinguished

the last light, and the room was in darkness. A moment later the sound of galloping hoofs was heard as he rode off.

It took but a very little time for the four men to reach the open air in pursuit. As they ran through the bar-room they reached behind the bar and took from the rack, rifles and revolvers. In front of the saloon, tied to a low railing, were some thirty horses, all saddled and bridled, and on four of these the men quickly mounted. The moon was still shining brightly, and objects on the white sands of the desert were distinguishable at a great distance.

Placidly as ever flowed the Rio Pecos, its gleaming sand bars looking whiter than usual, and down toward the river was visible the figure of the robber, riding rapidly.

"The cuss has shot his father, the old man, dead, an' got away with my watch," said Rube, as he pressed his horse into a hard gallop; "an' he'll hev to swing fur it, I'm thinkin', if there's any justice in Porty de Luny."

"He's makin' fur th' river," said Hank Pennel, who had been watching him closely."

"Well, he'd better look out how he crosses 'long here," said Jim Pardee, the third rider.

"Boggy?"

"Boggy as hell!"

Doggedly the four kept after the one. He had a long start and a better horse, and he gained on them perceptibly. His brain too, was clearer than theirs, for he had not been drinking. He rode diagonally toward the river, aiming to reach it about a mile below

the town. Once on its banks, he did not hesitate, but dashed boldly in for the other side. He had gotten about half way across; the water was up to his horse's shoulder, when suddenly the animal stopped, reared slightly, then struggled furiously as it slowly sank under, caught in the treacherous quicksands of the river. The instant the rider perceived the plight of his horse, he slipped out of the saddle into the water, and started to wade across, mercifully sending a bullet into the horse's brain before he left its side. The water rose to his breast, but there was no current, and he pushed boldly forward, holding his rifle and pistols above his head. But he too had taken but a few steps when his footing slipped away from him, and he found himself gripped in the sand and slowly sinking. Down, down he went; struggle as hard as he might, it was all the same; he was fast and helpless. He felt the cool water creep up on his breast, little by little; now it touched his shoulder—now his throat—

Just at this moment his four pursuers dashed up, and halted at the edge of the stream. The head of the robber was plainly visible above the water, upon which the moonlight fell so that its reflections lit up his eyes until they glowed phosphorescently.

"What'll we do now?" said Jim to the others. "I could pitch a rope over him an' snake him out in no time, if you say so. Shall I?"

"It don't seem to me ez if 'twas policy," said Rube slowly, "we shall hev to hang him anyhow, an' it'll save trouble in buryin' him, an' make a neater job all round if we let him slide." Then raising his voice he said, "Say you! we was goin' to hang you when

we ketched you, but we've concluded to let you off this time. No thanks! you're quite welcome!"

The only answer the doomed man made to this was to level the pistol he still held above his head, and fire. The ball whistled close to Rube's shoulder.

"As ungrateful a cuss as ever I seen," Rube muttered, "but game."

He was clear game. He never uttered a sound, but silently waited his inevitable death. Little by little he sank; the water rose past his mouth, past his nostrils—his eyes; then a few bubbles—

Mechanically and in awed silence, a little overcome by what they had done, the four men rode back to the town. The dawn was faintly showing in the east, and the moonlight was slowly growing yellow as the day drew near. As they pulled up in front of the Dew Drop and dismounted, Rube suddenly slapped his hand on his pocket and exclaimed:

"Sold, I swear! He's got my watch."

The river still rolls on, silent and yellow; the air above its white sand-bars still quivers in the heat; but there is nothing to mark the grave of the desperado, and his only funeral oration was Rube's remorseful reflection.

VIII. ON WATCH WITH THE NIGHT HERD.

The day had been one of hard work, for we had picked up many cattle that morning, "on circle," and the afternoon had been most busily spent in branding and sorting the herd. There were five wagons in the Round-up party; thirty-seven men all told, and two hundred and fifty-six horses. When we came to clean up the herd at sunset we found that there were nearly three thousand head of cattle that had to be guarded and watched all night.

The life of a cowboy is one of constant hardship and peril. He is in the saddle, riding a vicious horse, from sunrise to sunset, and often stands guard two hours of the night besides. He eats beef, fried in lard and cooked until it resembles a dried leaf. He is supplied with the yellowest imaginable doughy biscuits, and the water he drinks is often so bitterly alkaline as to be nauseating. During the day he suffers from the heat and lack of food and drink; during the night from the cold and wet. The little time he has for sleep he often spends in a pool of water, for his bed is made in the open air with the sky for a roof. He is as completely isolated from the world as if he were on a remote island; he knows nothing of what is happening in civilization, and fortunately doesn't care. He is exposed to constant danger of life and

limb ; associates with rough men ; hears hard talk and sees wild deeds. Is it a wonder then that the cowboy has acquired a reputation for reckless disregard for his own and other people's lives? The very existence he leads obliges him to be indifferent to danger, and removed as he is from many of the restraints of law and society, he is very apt to go to an extreme. The riders are sometimes men who have been unable to live in law-abiding communities,and have gone to the frontier to escape the restraints of civilization. These men may prosper at first, but never for long. For a time they act the part of the bully and bravo with great success, but some day they are sure to meet their fate—personified in some-quiet spoken, mild-mannered man—who gets the " drop on them " and brings them up with a round turn and a short shrift.

The captain of a Round-up party has great powers placed in his hands, and the man who occupies that position must be naturally fitted to command. He should know the cattle business from A to Z. Moreover, he must be perfectly familiar with the country through which the Round-up is to work, for much depends on him whether the land is carefully searched for the cattle, since a knowledge of the watering-places is of the utmost importance. He must have good executive abilities, and be possessed of firmness joined to good temper. He is invested with almost autocratic powers, and while he certainly has not the legal right to put anyone to death, there are many instances known where men have been tried before him for gross crimes—murder or cattle-stealing —convicted, sentenced, and executed.

By a territorial law no man is allowed to carry a pistol on the Round-up, and the reasons for this are obvious. In the first place it is quite unnecessary for any one's personal safety that he should be armed. In the second place, the men being all quick tempered, are very apt to resent with pistols—if they are armed —some slight grievance, that otherwise they would let pass, or settle with a rough-and-tumble fight. In the third place, the life of the Round-up renders the revolver dangerous to the owner himself, because of the liability to accidents.

After supper, the eating of which takes an incredibly short time, pipes are lit and the men have their short loafing time. Some play cards; some mend their clothes or harness; some even wrestle or spar a little, though not very actively, for there is not a rider who is not dead tired, though not one would willingly admit it. Here a musically inclined cowboy is playing a fiddle or accordion to a group of listeners, who now and then interrupt him to call for some favorite air. There is a group discussing some event of the day. The great staple of conversation is the horse, though one hears much about saddles, bridles, boots, slickers and spurs. Every man has some hobby about an outfit and likes to ventilate it.

"What party is the L J Bar wagon workin' with this spring?" you hear one man ask.

"They're with the Fort Summer Round-up, workin' north."

"Is Dutch Jake ridin' with them now?"

"Naw! th' old man bounced him; said he used to

stampede the herd tryin' to talk United States—and he wouldn't have him round."

The humor of this remark is received with a light laugh, and it is a specimen of much of the talk.

It is at this time of the day that the picturesque side of the cowboy's life is seen. The heavy wagons, with their white canvass covers, are drawn up in a row at the edge of the stream, and around them are grouped the men. They are all young, some even boyish-looking (I never saw an elderly cowboy), but they have sinewy, well-knit frames, and fresh, open faces. At seven o'clock, the first guard of two men goes on duty. Their business is to picket the herd that is drawn up a few hundred feet from camp, and their watch extends until ten o'clock, when they are relieved. By eight the beds of the men are stretched out near the wagons, and before many minutes the camp is asleep, each man wrapped in a heavy tarpaulin to keep off the dew and rain. The horses that are to be ridden later by the reliefs are tied near at hand, with saddles loosely cinched in place. In front of the captain's wagon hangs a lantern, the only light allowed after night-fall.

When I turned in at 8:30 it was not dark, but a few stars had appeared overhead, and it bade fair to be a pleasant night. I expected to watch in the third relief, from 12 to 2, and as I was a green hand I was simply to ride as a companion to the regular guard. It seemed as if I had been asleep but ten minutes when I felt myself roughly shaken, and a voice shouted in my ear:

"Third relief! git up, pardner!"

I was brim full of sleep and it was hard work waking up, but when I had my eyes fairly open, I hastily pulled on my boots, buckled up my spurs, slipped on my coat and hat, and picking up my bridle out of my bed, stumbled over to my pony, already saddled. I quickly fastened the bridle over his head and tightened the cinches, and had just finished this when my companion appeared out of the gloom, on his horse.

"Ready?" he asked.

My answer was to mount, and the next moment we were riding out into the darkness, in the direction of the herd. The night was as black as a pocket; heavy clouds had rolled up and shut out the stars, and there was a feel of rain in the air.

"Got yer slicker by ye?" asked Rube, my companion.

"Yes," I told him.

A slicker is an oil cloth coat, made for horsemen, and so constructed as to completely cover the person of the wearer and his saddle. It is usually carried tied to the cantle, ready for use at all times, for during the round-up season in New Mexico, it rains nearly every day.

We paused to catch the sound of the restless cattle, and rode on again when we had located this. On reaching the herd we found the guard, relieved it, and then began our watch. There were three of us "on" that night; the two regular men and myself. For the sake of the society, I rode with Rube, and as we circled round the herd he sang merrily. He had a long repertory of words, all fitted conveniently to

the same sounds, but his favorite verse sounded something like this :

"O der sling-iling—O der sling-ilung, fur hatz pun ahoy !
Aus ler opree—scouse ler dopee,
Dum blitz her adoy."

"That's German," said he complacently, after he had repeated it a good many times. "You allus got to sing to the cattle in the night, fer if they didn't hear you comin' you might skeer a skittish heifer into stampedin', by ridin on to her sudden."

And Rube roared out again :

"Aus les opree—scouse ler dopee,
Dum blitz her adoy,"

till I expected to hear the herd rush away into the night.

Round and round them we went. It was pitch dark, and the wind from the north came piping up with a cool dampness in it that foretold a storm.

It blew in clouds the dust into which the many thousand hoofs had ground the red clay, and sent it stinging into our faces, the alkalai making our throat and eyes smart painfully. The cattle, which had been lying down and quietly reposing, became restless and surged now this way, now that, as some impatient animal urged its way out from the centre of the mass. And dark! it was never so dark before or since, I believe. Certainly it could never be darker.

"Curus sort of feel, aint it, hearin' all them cattle breathin'?" says a voice by my side. It is my companion, and though I can almost touch him, I can not see him.

"Truly," I say, "it sounds a little like the noises of the sea; it makes one feel quite lost out here, enveloped in the vast, impenetrable blackness of the night."

Reuben coughs slightly. He evidently thinks my language is above my business, but he merely remarks that the night is a "Caution." Just then his horse makes a quick jump away from the herd and I fancy I can see the white form of a cow that has slipped out from the bunch, searching for her calf, which she has lost. Away she goes across the prairie, and Rube after her and I after him. She keeps her lead for a few yards and then he catches her; she doubles, twists and turns, but the smart little pony follows every movement and slowly heads her back into the herd. Time and again she tries to break away, but as often as she does she is met and turned, and at last, trots back with the other cattle, Rube muttering as he rejoins me that, for "cussed contrariness *he'd* like to have someone show *him* something to beat a *cow*, 'less it was a woman, and yet where the difference was he couldn't for the blessed *life* of him see."

I privately suspect that Reuben has had the best impulses of a confiding heart cruelly betrayed, at some time or other; he seems to be very bitter, and to take it out of the cow at every opportunity.

We resume our tiresome ride round and round the herd, and as we pass the other guard we exchange a few words.

"Herd blamed uneasy to-night," says one voice.

"Dredful! *I* reckon we're going to have a storm," replies the other voice.

"*I* ex-pect! Got half a mind to call the cap'n; guess better hold on a little though," and we drift apart in the darkness and continue our patrol. Half a dozen times does Rube ride away at full speed after some truant cow, and each time does he drive her back, "cussin'" her obstinacy. The cattle are getting more and more restless.

"Don't like the looks of things—not in the least," he says at last. "The herd is actin' like as if the storm was plum here." As he speaks a flash in the west lights up the scene for an instant, and then comes the low, bass rumble of the thunder. At once we hear another sound, nearer at hand and more unearthly. It is the cattle which, startled by the coming storm they have long been dreading, are now upon their feet, alert and anxious. Suddenly, almost without warning, a wild steer makes a dash for liberty and instantly the whole herd—with a rush that shakes the earth—are off in a mad stampede. It is as irresistible as a tidal wave. We are caught in the fearful panic and hurried along, helpless. Our position is one of deadly peril. Surrounded by wild animals, which we cannot see, pressed on all sides by their hot flanks, our safety depends entirely upon our horses. Should they stumble, or we become unseated, we should be instantly trampled to death by the senseless brutes, whose headlong flight momently increases their terror. This is the greatest danger the cowboy is exposed to, and many a stalwart fellow has been thus killed in a night stampede.

By spurring hard to the front of the herd, by shouting and yelling and a vigorous use of the lash, we

succeed in slowly checking them, but not until after they have run a mile or more, and not until we have lost many stragglers out of the bunch. The storm is rapidly approaching; the lightning is frequent; the thunder incessant; the cattle wildly uneasy. As each report tears the air into shreds, we can hear them answer it with convulsive movements or low bellowings.

"I reckon we'll hev to hev 'em out, Rube," comes to us out of the darkness; "we can't begin to hold 'em, an' they'll be all over God's creation in an hour at this rate."

"I guess that's so, though I hate to do it," says Rube regretfully. Then to me: "Pardner, wont you ride into camp an' tell the old man the facts in the case."

And so I start. Two miles or more away I can see a spark, looking like a tiny star. This is the lantern in front of the captain's wagon, and touching my weary broncho with the steel I ride toward it. It is a singular sensation and a novel one, out there in the pitch dark night, a cold wind blowing rain and thunder from the north. Behind me is a herd of three thousand wild cattle, churning and crowding, and controlled by only two men. In front is space, with the single star to guide me forward.

But it was hardly the time for reverie, for I could hear the rain as it came sweeping over the plains. I dashed into camp and rode straight to the captain's wagon. I didn't have to tell him what the trouble was, for no sooner did he hear the rain and thunder than he was up and dressed, booted, spurred and coated. He hurried toward his pony, shouting, "Horses!

Horses!" The effect was magical. Where before had lain sleeping men, covered with white tarpaulins, now appeared hurrying forms, groping for boots, hats and bridles. The cooks lit their lanterns and replenished the fires, and in three minutes a dozen men were mounted and on the way to the relief. I rode with them, as it was supposed that I knew the location of the herd, but we should never have found it but for the vivid lightning, that lit up the scene, and now and then disclosed the low, black shadow of the cattle.

All the rest of the night we guarded them. Rain! How it did rain! Every man wore his "slicker," but this was soon wet through. My heavy sombrero, which when dry was as hard as a board, grew limp and flabby, and hung around my face dejectedly. The rain streamed from my hat, my coat, my boots, until I looked like a broken water-pipe with the head full on. By daylight the storm ceased and we were ordered back to camp, the wettest, forlornest looking group imaginable. The herd then was over three miles from the wagons, the stampede and the storm having carried them that far; for cattle drift before the wind much as a disabled vessel does at sea.

IX. DON QUIXOTE DE SANTA ROSA.

He certainly was an odd one—that is, if a fancied resemblance to Cervantes' hero, modernized, can be said in any way to constitute eccentricity.

It was down on the Pecos that Captain Dick Mosier first met and adopted him. Captain Dick was riding over from the X Bar X ranch to the Barzee, of which he was the general manager, one pleasant morning in October, and had just reached the ford by the Laberde grant, intending to cross the river, when upon the opposite bank he spied a stranger. A citizen of New Mexico approaches his fellow man with caution. Almost the first thing an acquaintance with the best society in that country teaches him is narrowly to inspect a chance comrade, and to loosen his pistol in its holster when coming within range. And so, before starting his horse into the water, Captain Dick had a look at the man across the stream.

The two were not very far apart—fifty yards or so, for the Pecos was not wide there—and at that distance Dick saw that the other was a tall, gaunt man of about fifty. His face was partly hidden behind a thin, scraggly beard, that grew randomly out of a dark, sun-burnt skin ; a tangled forest of hair hung from his chin, while his cheeks were like the open prairie, with only an occasional sage-brush spear to break the

smooth monotony. The narrowness of his face was accentuated by two small eyes, set in close to either side of a thin, pointed nose; and his head-covering still further exaggerated this effect, for in place of the customary sombrero he wore a small, knit skull-cap, that fitted tight to his head. This cap had once been black, but the sun and the rain had faded it until it had become a rusty brown, and so nearly the color of his clayey hair that at a glance he appeared to be bare-headed. Altogether the first impression he created was his resemblance to a straight line—length without breadth or thickness. But he seemed harmless enough, and Captain Dick started to cross the river, giving his broncho a needless touch with the steel to hasten him. The stream was high and the current swift, and although the horse was stout and sure-footed, he found it no light task to breast the flood. Half way over the water rose above the stirrups, and Dick loosed his feet and sat cross-legged on the saddle. When at length he reached the bank, and halted there a moment, the stranger gravely saluted him, and said slowly:

"Mornin' Cap—it's 'bout 'leven o'clock, ain't it?"

A nearer view disclosed several things that Dick had not noticed before—his dress for one thing. A ragged, faded velveteen jacket ineffectually covered the upper part of his person, while his lower limbs were cased in a pair of heavy leather "shapps." They had evidently been made for a much shorter man than their present owner, for there was a yawning gap between the lower ends and the deer-skin moccasins that covered his feet. He was armed cap-a-pie, with a

Winchester carbine over his shoulder, a heavy Colt's revolver (45) and knife at his waist, and enormous rusty spurs, with jingling chains, on his feet. His saddle had once been a gorgeous affair of stamped leather, with silver trimmings, one a grandee might have used; but now it was tattered and torn, hopelessly beyond respectability. The leather was worn away in huge patches and the naked wood of the tree appeared unblushingly in sight. The horse matched the saddle and the rider. Altogether the stranger looked like a bandit who had been unfortunate in business, yet his smile was cherubic in its sweetness.

"If you're goin' to Santy Rosy we might ride 'long together," he said in a mild voice, and although Dick much preferred to go alone, he assented, and they rode on.

"I heard tell down to the Cross-circle-diamond ranch that they was wantin' a cook up to the Barzee," the stranger said slowly, "so I just pulled my freight to strike the job. Know if it's so?"

"Yes, it is so,' Dick answered; "I'm from the Barzee myself. Can you cook?"

"Yes," he said slowly; "I *kin* cook, if you aint *too* pertickler. I aint fond o' cookin' but I *kin* do it. I kin fry beef, make a tol'able sallyratus biscuit an' a middlin' fair pie outen most anythin'. But I aint enjoyed cookin' much since I reformed.

"I used to be as bad as any of 'em," he continued, leaving Dick in some doubt as to whether he referred to his cooking or his morals, "but I seen th' error of my way 'an stopped on the brink. I got religion," —he spoke of it as if it were an article he had pur-

chased—"I got religion with a feller I was herdin' sheep with down on the Gallinas, four year ago. He let me into the ways of the righteous an' I'm walkin' in the straight path now an' forevermore. Leastways, I'm walkin' when I aint ridin'," he added solemnly and accurately.

They soon reached Santa Rosa. Captain Dick had to stop there a short time on business with the blacksmith and the harness maker (the two were one in Santa Rosa), and so, riding up in front of the Maverick Inn, he dismounted. His new friend called after him: "I reckon I'll just nachally wait 'round till you come out, an' look over the sights."

A half hour later Dick walked out to his horse, drawing on his gloves preparatory to mounting, and then discovered that his new companion had a weakness. In the language of Gov. Walker, "he was gellorious." He had employed his half-hour well, and he stood at that moment leaning heavily against a post and singing in lugubrious and wavering tones:

> "Touched with a sympathy within,
> How weak our feeble frame."

Dick was puzzled at first to know what to do with him. He had previously determined to take him to the ranch, for he did need a cook there, yet when he saw his condition he hesitated. Not just because the man was drunk—looking from a moral standpoint—but because, being drunk, he was difficult of transportation. But Dick knew that a cowboy can often ride when he cannot walk; so with a little assistance he rolled the stranger into his saddle and the two started. For the first few miles they proceeded on a walk;

then as the stranger grew slightly sober, and his seat in the saddle became more assured, they broke into a trot and were riding at this gait when, making a sudden turn in the road, around the point of a mesa, they came upon a herd of burros, driven by three Mexicans; two boys and an old man. These hurriedly scattered out of the way, and as the two riders rattled by, the old man saluted them with a respectful:

"Buenos dias, senores!"

They had passed them but a few yards when Dick's companion pulled up, and turning to him, said with drunken gravity:

"Did ye see tha' Greaser make face 't me? He 'sult me an' I'm goin' t' rebuke 'im," and he unslung his rifle.

"No, no! he didn't make a face at *you*," Dick said, endeavoring to quiet him; "that was at *me*."

"Thas all ri', but aint *you* goin' t'ave sas'fas'hun?"

"No, not now; to-morrow, perhaps."

"Thas' all ri', but you're my frien' an' goo' f'ler, an' I'll 'ave sas'fas'hun for you," and before Dick could stop him the stranger threw his rifle to his shoulder and fired. It was a chance shot, of course, but it was a true one, and down went the old man and the burro he was riding, both apparently dead. The avenger of his honor looked smilingly at Dick, and then at his victims, lying in the dust, and said pleasantly: "Th' man t' wont do that fur fren aint worth' name o' man. How's that fur a shot, eh?"

Dick was seriously alarmed, for not only did he realize the sin of killing an unarmed man—even in New Mexico—but he knew the fellow-countrymen of

the victim would work reprisals on him by stealing his stock and annoying his men in every possible way. And he was still more disturbed when he saw his companion preparing to shoot again.

"Hold on!" he cried, "you've killed him; that's enough; you'd better get out of here now as quick as you can."

"Killed him all ri', on'y he aint th' one. Here goes fur 'nother—wash th' lill f'ler jump," and Dick had just time to strike up the muzzle of the rifle when it was discharged again. Then, in desperation, he seized his companion's bridle, and facing him down the road, laid his "cuert" smartly over the horse's back, and in another moment they had rattled out of sight around a turn in the road. It afterward turned out that the burro was killed but the Mexican was unhurt beyond a very bad fright.

That evening the men sat around the fire in the bunk-room at the ranch house, talking and passing the time as usual. The new arrival had been installed as cook, with a monthly compensation of forty dollars and board, and he was at that moment in the kitchen attending to his duties. Jim Carroll—the foreman, who was popularly believed to possess fine literary acquirements, shamefully wasted in cow-punching, was quite taken with the cook's appearance and with Captain Dick's adventure of the morning, and he declared that henceforth the new comer should be known as Don Quixote de Santa Rosa, which name was adopted by acclamation and promptly shortened to Don.

"Still I can't make him out," said Reuben Friday; "not in the least; he *says* he's a worker in the vine-

yards an' he's gone to cookin' to help out, but *I* think he's a stray from the Rio Grandy; Maverick maybe, fur I don't see no brand on him."

"No, he aint a Maverick," said Bill Coleman, "fur he told me he belonged to the Band of Hope outfit, and was out lookin' over the range, roundin' up. I reckon he hadn't better make any converts in our herd; some folks might think he was stealin' cattle."

Day by day the men learned to like the Don. He had such a modest way about him; he was never blustering, never profane, but always quiet and cheerful. He was not didactic or puritanical, but he had a singular habit of interspersing scriptural selections through his conversations that at first was very puzzling to the men. He did this without the slightest notion of the incongruity or of the unpleasant effect it had on some, for he did it all in a deeply reverent way. He never drank again, and was deeply mortified at his one unfortunate lapse. It is true he could not cook—true indeed, that he made worse failures than any cowboy ever made before—but somehow no one could find fault with him.

"Them biscuits hev got consid'able sallyratus in 'em, I expect," he used to say, apologetically, as he daily laid a pan of heavy, saffron-colored lumps of dough on the table, "but it seems to take a heap of it t' operate on this flour. I cal'late there's four parts sallyratus to three of flour—fear ye not death—but you won't mind it with a little raw onion and plenty o' salt."

His mode of cooking beef too, was darkly mysterious. There would appear on the table, three times a

day, a dingy, blackened pan, filled with a something or other, floating in melted grease, and as the Don laid it down he would smile benevolently, seeming to say that no one could guess what that contained, not if he were to try a week.

"Th' foundation fur it is fried beef," he would say, "but there is other things in it fur to give it twang —I bring ye tidings of joy—such as chopped pertaters an' pork. It's got consid'able nourishment into it, though it don't look so very good."

One day there was great excitement at the Barzee—the Don had been there about four months then—for a neighbor rode up and reported that there was to be a dance the next night at the "Widder Davis's," four miles up Los Tanos.

"The "Widder" was the relict of the late Jim Davis, who came to an untimely end some five years before by reason of his pistol's missing fire. Besides the Widder, Davis had left behind him a son and a daughter. They had prospered, and by shrewd and careful management of what the old man had bequeathed them, had become possessed of a fair ranch and a bunch of seven hundred cattle. The son was a harum-scarum fellow, even for a cow-puncher; the Widder was admitted to be a Rustler. As for the daughter—Mirandy—she was the belle of San Miguel County. Few who saw her could resist her fascinations. She was none of your sickly wee things; that kind does not flourish on the frontier. No, Mirandy was "stout, strong and handsome withal." And yet, frontier born and bred though she was, she had all the coquettish ways that some think are only acquired by

a society training, but which are in truth as much a part of woman's make-up as her back hair. It was a liberal education to see Mirandy modestly drop her eyelids when one of her admirers was touching on dangerous ground, or to hear her say, "Get along now Bill, or I'll lam ye," and to note the stalwart cuff she administered to Bill, if he attempted to steal a kiss. Admirers she had by the score, suitors by the dozen, but never an accepted lover among them all. She was believed to be heart whole and fancy free, a condition which added an indefinable charm to her society.

Of course such an event as a dance was hailed with pleasure, and every one at once made ready. There was a greasing of boots and a polishing of spurs and a dusting of clothing all that day and the next. The time for starting was impatiently waited, but at last it came, and the party was off—a cavalcade of six, including the Don. The dance did not differ greatly from the usual affairs of that kind. No one was shot, no one was even physically hurt; but there was one of the party who was apparently wounded in a serious way. I refer to the Don and the Don's very susceptible heart. The attentions that he lavished upon both the Widder and Mirandy that night were the cause of much remark. With what grace did he lead the matron out on the floor, and take his place at the head of the reel; with what a stately bow did he salute her as the accordion and fiddle struck up Money-musk; with what ease and dignity did he guide his buxom partner down the middle, his huge spurs and chains playing a jingling accompaniment to the music, and then, when

the dance was over, how gallantly did he lead her to a seat and hurry to get her some negus. To see him you'd have thought he was a carpet-knight born and bred, instead of the cook of the Barzee ranch.

And then, when he appealed to Miss Mirandy for the favor of her hand in the bolero, how cleverly he showed his versatility. With the dame he had been dignified; with the maiden he was as agile and graceful as José Garcia, the handsome young Mexican, said to be the best dancer and the worst liar in San Miguel County. The other dancers paused to watch the two as they swayed and pirouetted to the music, and when at last they stopped, cheered them right heartily. It would be worth a good deal to you could you have seen the gallant way in which the Don led his breathless partner to a seat, and stood by her side, fanning her with a huge palm leaf that raised such a breeze in the room as to blow out one of the lights. And not the worst part of it all either, was to see the savage scowl that came over José Gracia's swarthy face at finding himself—hitherto the best dancer in all the county, just beaten by a—cook. The Don treated José's ill humor with the haughty disdain that it merited—and led out Mirandy to supper.

"It beats all how he kin round-up an' cut out just the heifer he wants, every time, while we fellers can't even git outen the corral," said one disconsolate wall-flower, envious of the Don's popularity with the sex.

But the Barzee men were proud to find themselves so well represented on the floor.

As they rode back to the ranch after the ball was over, the Don was the only silent one in the party.

He was evidently turning something over in his mind, and gave no heed to what was said to him, though Jim Carrol swore that he heard him mutter to himself something about maiden's tears and lover's fears, and so it was promptly agreed that the Don was in love.

The effect of his new attachment became at once noticeable in his cooking. Instead of the biscuits having four parts saleratus to three of flour, the proportion became as five to two. His "Irish stew" degenerated into something beyond belief or description; his dishes were never washed. "I don't want you waddys to git too blame finicky—take no thought 'bout what ye shall eat," he explained.

"Look here, Don!" roared Jim one morning, as the Don absent-mindedly emptied a pot of boiling coffee on his wrist; "What d'ye mean? I aint a cup!"

"I know it, Jimmie, I know it," said the Don mildly; "fight ye the good fight—I'll make some more in a minute," and Jim had to be contented with that apology.

Every evening after supper the Don would mount Rozinante and ride away to court his Dulcinea del Tanos. No one ever knew what time he returned, but he always had breakfast—of a certain kind—ready by sunrise. He was extremely reticent about his affairs and gave no hint concerning them, nor could the men judge from his manner how he prospered. It wasn't even known whether it was the mother or the daughter he sought.

"Come, Don" said Rube once, at supper, "we're old friends, you know, and you ought to tell *us*. Is it the Widder or Mirandy?"

The Don merely smiled his pleasant smile and said softly; "It's both—all flesh is grass, Reuben," and that was all they got from him.

"I'd like to know how he gits along," said one of the boys one evening, as the Don rode away; "though if love an' affection is anyways influenced by sally-ratus, I reckon he'll get thar, Eli."

"Wal," said Shorty, as he reared his six-foot body in front of the fire, and faced the party, "If he undertakes to hitch up th' Widder, he wants to cinch his saddle pretty snug or he'll git throwd. Women are a queer lot."

It was generally understood that when Shorty spoke of Women he knew what he was talking about; he had been married himself more or less several times, and his knowledge had been gained by long and bitter experience.

This condition of affairs continued through most of the winter. Regularly every night the Don rode away into the darkness, and regularly the next morning he was to be seen bending over the cracked stove, stirring round and round his unholy concoctions. He was never late and his demeanor never varied from day to day. The only change noticeable about him was that already mentioned—his cooking—which finally became so bad that even the cowboys objected. Still the Don received the complaints as if they were words of praise, and went on his quiet, dogged way, unmoved and smiling.

But one morning he appeared at breakfast, looking but the battered wreck of his former self. Dark circles of black framed his eyes and one was swollen shut.

His velveteen jacket was torn up the back and a sleeve was gone. His right wrist seemed to be sprained and he limped as he walked. He received the chaffing in silence.

"Hullo, Don!" cried Rube; "what's up? Widder must hev bin extry 'fectionate last night."

"It's all along of his bronk, that is," said Shorty. "He's bin feedin' it some of his cussed sallyratus biscuit on the sly, till the beast got to feelin' so good it most kicked the head off'n him."

The Don resolutely refused to disclose the cause of his dilapidated appearance, and went about his duties wearing a piece of raw beef tied over his eye, but otherwise as if nothing unusual had happened. But that evening, instead of mounting Rozinante and riding away, he took his seat by the fire, and briefly told his story.

"It'll set your minds at rest, maybe, if I tell you 'bout it," he said, "an' so I cal'late to do it. That night—spell ago—when we went over to the Davis's to the dance, I was quite took with the looks of Miss Davis an' Mirandy, an' I says to myself—like as not you need convertin', most every one does in this country—an' for brass will I give you gold, I says; yea, much gold, says I. Well, last night a young f'ler rode up an' got off'n his hoss an' come in. The Widder didn't seem to shine to him, but Mirandy called him Bobby." Here the Don paused and repeated thoughtfully: "Yes, sir, she called him Bobby, right before my eyes." Then resuming his story: "Well, he talked a good deal an' acted 's if he owned San Migell County; indulgin' freely in ripartee an' other little

things, till finally I says: 'My friend, are you lookin' to be saved?' an' then he says, he wasn't thinkin' about himself, but he reckoned he'd hev to keep his eye on his hoss, so long as I was about, if he wanted to save him. Then Mirandy laughed, so I turned to her an' I says: 'It would seem as if that young man's been poorly brought up; he's a Mexikin, aint he?' Well—that's 'bout all I distinctly remember now; there's a interval in my life where all is naught." Here the Don made an attempt to smile that was lost in the swelling of his cheek. "Th' only way you can be free with any one in this country is to get th' drop on him. I reckon I won't go there so often, after this."

And from that day his visits ceased altogether.

Spring came at last, though the transition from winter was so gradual that we should hardly have noticed the change but for Jim Carrol, whose poetic nature was stirred by the advent of the new season, and who took every opportunity to assure us that, "The earth again is young *and* fair, ethereal mildness fills *the* air, spring, gentle spring smiles *on* the land, and May flowers bloom on every *hand*."

With the warmer weather came the usual work on the range. More riders were needed, and the Don was relieved from his duties as cook and sent out to look up stray cattle. This change in his labors he hailed with pleasure, although it meant a loss of ten dollars a month and harder work.

"I've allers held that cookin' warnt no proper business fur a white man," he said; "but I done it—

blessed are the meek—an' it's conquered my pride in great shape."

Preparations for the Spring Round-up were rapidly made; the wagons were examined and repaired; the horses were driven up from the pasture and corralled in a convenient place; new horses were broken in and old ones shod. Men were sent out over the range to examine the watering-places, with orders to pull out of the boggy ground about them any Barzee cattle that had become mired and unable to extricate themselves. These duties were hard and disagreeable, having neither the excitement nor the social pleasures incident to a Round-up, but the Don performed his part willingly. One morning he rode away from the ranch with instructions to examine carefully a certain specified territory that lay in the west. His route led up Los Tanos and as he started, Rube, who was preparing to ride south, called out to him, in unconscious quotation of Tony Weller: "Beware o' th' Widder, Don!" To which the Don replied with a wave of his hand: "Thanks, Reuben—judge ye not others," and disappeared around a bend in the stream.

It was the afternoon of the second day of his excursion that found him approaching the Horse-shoe V 3 ranch. It had been a perfect day in April, that best of all months in New Mexico. The gramma grass had exchanged its winter coat of silver for a fresher one of green; the few trees that grew along the river were bright in leaf and blossom. Even the sombre sage-bush had put off its mournful gray and the cactus was gorgeous in its yellow flowers. The cattle too seemed to feel the benign influences of spring, and as

the Don drew near, hurried helter-skelter across the vegas, followed in frisky content by their wobbly, long-legged calves. The prairie-dogs squeaked in their hundred holes, and here and there a rattlesnake might be seen, gliding rapidly away on the approach of a man.

The Don dismounted at the ranch house, and having unsaddled Rozinante and turned him into the corral, strode into the bunk-room.

"I'm from the Barzee," he said to one of two occupants there, "an' I'll put up with ye—the birds of the air hev nests—'till to-morrer."

"Well!" said one of the men, "what's the news over to the Barzee way?"

"Nuthin' much!" said the Don as he took a seat on a bunk and commenced to whittle.

The two men resumed their interrupted conversation.

"You was sayin' th' cattle was lookin' well up your way?" said one.

"Middlin', though th' old man is growlin' 'bout th' range gettin' crowded."

"Well, he's 'bout right—more blamed tenderfeet rushin' in with their Texas cattle, that don't know a yearlin' from a parara-dog. *I* say there ought to be some law 'bout it."

"Guess that's so! Any strangers 'round here?"

"Naw, 'ceptin' him," pointing to the Don.

"Him! Oh, he aint no stranger. He's nothin' but a graven image."

The two men chuckled over this remark, which the Don heard but declined to notice.

"Seen Mack lately?"

"Mack! yes, week ago. Had the spring fever bad then; delerious. Thought I was his grandfather first an' then swore I was the devil."

"Well, you might hev bin his grandfather all the same. Mack's got a pecooliar pedigree."

"Haw! haw! Well, so long! I must be gettin'."

"Well, so long!"

Bed time comes early at a ranch, and there were a dozen men packed away in the bunk-room that night, when Texas, the foreman, shied his spurred boot at the candle. Yet, although the Don was tired, for he had ridden far and hard, he could not sleep. He was dissatisfied with his lot. He had a soul above his work, and yet he had succeeded in nothing else. He had always had a lofty ideal in Woman—an ideal that had been rudely shaken several times, but still stood upright—and yet he had not been fairly treated by the sex. There was that little incident at the Widder Davis's—he still recollected the details of that perfectly. Indeed, there were one or two black and blue spots on his body yet. Still for all that, his chivalrous regard for Woman—as Woman—was unabated, though when you came to particularize—well, that was a different matter. He was partially roused from his reverie by hearing a voice over in the darkest corner of the room say:

"Wal, Jim was sayin' you punched the feller's head till he didn't know nothin'."

"Guess I didn't hurt him very much then, fur he didn't know nothin' afore."

"Haw! haw! best ever heard; must tell Jim that."

"Why, the feller called me a Mexikin," said the second voice; "I'd a right t' hev pumped lead into him fur that, hedn't I?"

"Surely, but Jim was sayin' you called the feller a hoss-thief."

"Don't recollec' 'bout that. Might 'a done so; never could recollec' little things."

"Haw! haw! When did you say you was goin' to run the gal off?"

"To-morrer, I ex-pec'. She'll be all alone up to the place. Th' Widder's gone to Vegas and Tom Davis—well, *you* know *him*?"

"Yes, *I* know *him*. So you cal'late to run her off to-morrer, when her nat'eral guardeen is away, eh Bob?"

"Yes, an' make for Santy Rosy," said Bob. "And I'd like mighty well if you could be there then, Billy."

The Don saw it all. This was the young man he had had the trouble with at the Widder's that night last winter, and now he was going to forcibly abduct Mirandy in the absence of her mother and brother. All the chivalry in the Don's nature was roused at this. He determined to thwart the scheme, and save the lovely damsel from the clutches of the villain. He would—his thoughts were again interrupted.

"How was you 'lowin' to do it, if it's a fair question, Bob?" said the first voice.

"It surely is. Why, I was just a goin' to put her on a pony and then dust for Santy Rosy. I figgered to foller the old overland stage trail, till we come to the Montezumy Marshes, and then—cross lots. There is a path over that bog near the spring, that only two

fellers—I and Rube Priday—know—an' I'll save five mile over follerin' the rud, that way. Shouldn't care to try it with a female gen'rally, but ez we aint hed rain in six months I reckon the bog aint very shaky!"

"Yes, you kin do it, I guess. Well, good night Bob!"

"Well, good night Bill! Say Bill!"

"Huh!"

"You'd orter been there to the Widder's that night and seen old Ten Commandments. One—two—three—down he went. One—two—three—down again. No guns drawd; just stan' up an' knock down. Haw! haw!"

The humor of the situation evidently appealed to Bill as well as Bob, and for some time nothing was heard but the sound of subdued chuckling.

"Bill Ransom!" said voice No. 2 at length. "I want you to be over to Santy Rosy to-morrow at three o'clock. You're goin' to stand by me, aint you?"

"You bet I'll be there; if I aint, I don't want another cent in this world." Silence followed for a while; then Bill drew a long sigh and murmured:

"Well, good night Bob; good luck!"

"Well, good night, Bill, old boy," and the camp slept.

Before sunrise next morning the Don left the Horseshoe V 3 ranch. He had passed a sleepless night thinking over what he had heard, and as he placed his left foot in the stirrup and mounted Rozinante, he swore a reverential oath, that, come what might, Mirandy should be saved. It was true he had not been well treated, either by the Widder or Mirandy,

he told himself again, yet—love yer enemies—he'd heap coals of fire on their heads, and do them good for evil. That had been his principle in life, ever since he reformed. Besides, what man of spirit and honor could see such an outrage committed and not intefere? Even if the girl were a stranger to him, he could not do less than shoot the villain, and restore her to her weeping family. But when she was his heart's-ease—Mirandy! Rejoice, for the hour is at hand!

He pulled out his carbine from its holster under his leg to see if it was all right. And yet, wasn't shooting too good for a man who would treat a woman as Bob Green was going to treat Mirandy. Shouldn't he be hanged? Then he examined the raw-hide lasso that hung from his saddle-horn, in painful doubt on this question.

He would intercept the party at the Montezuma crossing, he told himself, and show Bob Green that there was one man of honor and courage still left in San Miguel County. And he'd do the deed single-handed; perhaps Mirandy would smile upon him a little for that—perhaps she'd—marry him. B'hold th' bride-groom cometh—perhaps. His head grew dizzy at this thought, and he pushed his horse into a hard gallop and rode out of sight of the ranch.

When the sun rose that morning, it lit up a perfect day. Here and there on the rolling mesas, stood a sentinel cactus or pinion, that split up the yellow light into long lanes that lay softly on the lea. As the day grew older and the shadows shorter, one might have noticed a small, cumulus cloud in the west, hanging close to the line where land and sky joined.

This cloud grew larger and darker as it sailed up toward the zenith, and others followed it until the blue was hidden behind the gray. Then swift zig-zag streaks of gold darted from one part of the heaven to another, and dull, rumbling peals of thunder followed the flashes. There was coming a storm in April—an extraordinary occurrence in New Mexico.

Down the road that skirted Los Tanos might have been seen two persons—a man and woman—riding at full speed. The man sat bolt upright in his saddle—a perpendicular line from his shoulder would have touched his hip, his knee and his heel,—and he stuck as close to the leather as if he had been tied there. Beside him galloped the woman, mounted upon a spirited chestnut mare, which she rode on a side-saddle. Upon her head she wore a huge, white sombrero, tied tightly under her chin, and from beneath this her hair had slipped and hung in masses down her back. Her riding-habit was a long, flowing skirt of some dark brown material, and her left foot—although concealed by her dress—carried a spur, with which she now and then urged her steed onward. The man looked anxiously up at the sky, and turning to his companion, said:

"Can't you git a little more outen the mare, Mirandy? We must git across the Montezumy bog afore the rain comes, if we want to git married this year. Least bit o' water there 'll make the rud too soft."

"I don't 'low I kin do anythin' better, Bob," said Mirandy; "still I'll try." She spurred the mustang again and again. To each prick of the steel the ani-

mal responded with a few vicious jumps, then settled back again into the lope.

"It's no use, Bob," she said; "I can't git him outen this gait."

"Well, we must take our chances then," said Bob. "We can't turn back now; the Widder 'll be after us in two hours with a possy."

Before them stretched the low, flat expanse of the marsh, extending to the right and left for several miles. To look at, the surface of the bog appeared to be a hard crust, baked dry and stiff, and covered with a white coating of alkali, through which grew no manner of living plant. So parched had the land become that it was split and seamed with cracks, that yawned for moisture. Down through the middle of this desert flowed the sluggish stream that came from the Montezuma spring, a curious natural phenomenon, that yielded a water as bitter and heavy as that of the Dead Sea, yet strange to say, nourished a row of trees, willow and pine, with here and there a scaly, narrow-chested cypress, that grew along the edges of the creek. These trees were the only green things for miles—the land elsewhere presented a bare, desolate appearance.

Across this bog there was a faint path, which could be traversed in the dry season; but once let the crust become wet, and it turned to a slimy mud, that yielded to the weight of man or horse, and gripped so tightly what it seized that self-relief was impossible.

Just before the two riders reached the edge of the bog, the storm, which had been gathering all the morning, suddenly burst upon them. Sharp flashes of

lightning darted from one black cloud to another, and loud, rumbling thunder answered the flashes. Then came the rain. The man hurriedly sprang from his horse, and untying his slicker, which he had carried tightly bound to his saddle, wrapped the huge yellow oil-cloth coat about the girl, and mounting again, pulled his sombrero down over his face.

"Wal, we got to go on, Mirandy. No use stoppin' here. In half an hour the creek will be up so's we can't cross anyhow. How's your mare? Skittish, least bit?"

"Wal, yes, special when there's a storm like this yere."

"Wal, I reckon I'd better slip a hackamore over her head an' lead her then; jest give her a loose rein an' she'll go all right."

Thus they advanced across the bog. The rain poured down in sheets, as it does in the tropics. The water soon obliterated the path, and the dry earth greedily drank up the moisture. The ground grew softer and softer every moment. Twice Bob's horse sank to the knees, and once the mare narrowly escaped. But at length they reached the stream that flowed through the marsh and gave it its name It was perhaps fifty feet wide; shallow, sluggish and evil-looking, with rocky banks that gave refuge to innumerable rattlesnakes and lizards. Pausing a moment on the edge to assure himself that his companion was all right, Bob started to ride into the creek.

"Don't you foller me, Mirandy," he said, "till I pull on th' tug; this bottom 's nasty long here, special since this rain begun."

All this time the Don had been concealed in ambush a few yards off, and dripped disconsolately in the rain which was falling. He had reached his present position with great difficulty. The trail across the bog was quite unknown to him, and he had been obliged to dismount and lead his horse. The storm that followed had washed out his tracks, and prevented those who came after from suspecting his presence. He was too far away to hear what Bob said to Mirandy, but he could see her sad face—her eyes seemed big with tears—and her long brown hair that hung down her back, resting in wet masses on the yellow slicker, gave her the look of some lovely martyr maiden, in the grasp of a vicious giant. He burned to distinguish himself; to rescue helpless virginity from the power of the monster. Not only was here an innocent female being carried off by force, but she was his innamorata—the Dulcinea del Tanos—whom he had so long worshiped, silently but faithfully.

He watched Bob ride into the stream; he saw his horse lifted off its feet and carried down by the flood current; he saw him recover a foot-hold again; then he heard Bob shout to Mirandy: "Go back! go back!" and he realized that the horse was fast in the bog—for Bob was cutting him right and left with his heavy riding-whip, while the animal was churning the water into suds in his frantic efforts to escape.

Now was the Don's chance. There was the wicked monster, helpless to harm his Dulcinea, whilst here was he, her savior, free and unfettered. So touching Rozinante with his heel, he dashed out from behind the chapparal, and rode straight at Mirandy. She

gave a little scream when she saw him coming; it was not like Mirandy to indulge in such a feminine weakness, but just then her nerves were quite upset. The Don endeavored to reassure her. "Fear not maiden—fly with me. I will save you," he said, and he laid his hand upon her bridle rein.

"Halt!" cried a voice.

The Don looked up and his eye caught sight of a shining object, that seemed suspended in the air without support, like the coffin of Mahomet. It appeared to occupy space to the exclusion of everything else, for the Don could see nothing beside the sinister looking weapon, except the more sinister eye of Bob, that glistened behind it.

He saw it was a pistol, and although he showed no emotion, he mentally raved at his own rashness. He had stupidly put his head into the lion's mouth; Bob had got the drop on him with a 45, at ten yards. A nice predicament truly, for one who wished to appear well before Mirandy.

"What you monkeyin' 'bout here fur?" asked Bob sternly, and his gray eyes looked wicked as he snapped out his words. "Put yer hands up—put 'em up, I say!"

The Don reluctantly obeyed. It was a most humiliating position for a knight like himself to be placed in—just as he was about to rescue his own Dulcinea—but what could he do? He was not afraid, he was simply yielding to circumstances—and Bob's persuasive air and six-shooter—when he raised his hands and sat there on Rozinante, dripping from every angle.

Bob studied the situation a moment. "What hed we better do, Mirandy?" he asked. "I've a notion to turn my 45 loose into him—fur mixin' himself up in fam'ly affairs. How'd he get here, anyway?"

"Better get outen that quag first, Bob," said Mirandy with great good sense; "you kin shoot him most any time."

"That's 'bout so, I guess. Look here, you," he said to the Don, "what you hangin' round here fur, anyhow?"

"I come here to rescue Innercence—from a villain, an' to have—Vengeance," said the Don, with an effort, for his position, with his hands above his head, was a tiresome as well as a ridiculous one.

"Haw! haw!" laughed Bob, hoarsely. "You seem to be doin' it in great shape. None o' that! Put 'em up!" he added sharply, as the Don lowered his aching arms a little.

"Wal, you *are* a tenderfoot," said Mirandy, looking at him scornfully. "Fust place, I aint innercent, an' Bob aint a villain. We're on our way to Santy Rosy to get married!"

Married! The Don was thunderstruck. He had not expected this. It was not an abduction but an elopement after all. Here was he blocking the wheels of Love's chariot when he believed he was pushing them out of the Slough of Despond. Mirandy going to marry Bob! Then she could no longer be *his* Dulcinea! What should he do? At first he trembled with indecision and doubt, but in a moment, like the true knight he was, he bowed to the lady's choice, and saluted her gracefully. Mirandy watched his

face attentively, and as he bent forward in obeisance, said:

"I reckon you kin put up your gun, Bob. He's all solid," and Bob returned his pistol to its holster.

Then the Don set manfully to work to smooth the path of true love, which thus far had been rough enough. If he could not be the very best man, he would be the next best, and he hurriedly untied the raw-hide lasso that hung in a neat coil from the saddle-horn, just in front of his right knee. All this time Bob had been seated on his mired horse, in mid-stream, quite powerless to help himself or his animal. The Don rode to the edge of the bank and said:

"I cal'late to chuck this over ye, Bob, and git ye outen thar. Look out!" Bob nodded his acquiesence.

Very deftly the Don swung the loop about his head, opening it at each turn with a gentle movement of his wrist; then, when it had acquired just the right momentum he let it slip from his hand. It went weaving and twisting through the air, and settled down over Bob's shoulders. Taking a turn of the free end about his saddle-horn, the Don backed Rozinante away from the stream, and in another second Bob, wet and muddy, stood by Mirandy's side. The Don did nothing by halves, and when he saw Mirandy jump to the ground to greet her lover, he discreetly turned his head, and endeavored, though ineffectually, not to hear the sounding smack that followed. That little matter over, once more he swung his lasso and once more it shot snakily through the air. This time the open loop dropped over the

head of the horse. Now the Don had his hands full; the animal reared and struggled and snorted, but the effect of the strong, steady pull was apparent in time, and at last the horse stood upon the bank—muddy, trembling and weak.

About four o'clock that afternoon a party of three rode into Santa Rosa. In spite of their wet and bedraggled appearance it was plain that two of them were in excellent spirits. The third was silent and preoccupied. The rain had long since ceased; the warm sun had dispersed the clouds, and the blue sky was without a spot or speck. The party rode straight to the little adobe church—built years ago by an over-sanguine missionary, but now a long time unoccupied. It stood gable-end to the plaza; its ridge ornamented with a bell-tower that sheltered a voiceless bell. To the rail in front of the church were hitched three or four saddled ponies, while loitering in the shade were as many men, dressed in their best, with freshly greased boots and clean-shaven faces, that showed white by contrast with their sun-burned necks and foreheads.

"Well, boys! here we be!" cried Bob cheerfully, as he drew up. "Everythin' all right, Bill?"

"Yes," said Bill Ransom, as he stepped up and laying his hand on Mirandy's rein, helped her to dismount. "How d'ye do, ma'am? You're lookin' well!"

Then noticing the Don he leaned over to Bob and whispered: "Good Gawd! Bob! What's that? Some new kind of fam'ly ghost?"

"He's my hated rival," said Bob complacently; "an' he's goin' to give the bride away, owin' to the un-

avoidable absence of her mother." Here he winked at Bill in a very facetious manner.

"Give us all away, you mean," growled Bill. "Looks 's if he'd bin locoed," but no one seemed to hear him.

"Wal, come on now, boys," said Bob, as he gallantly tucked Mirandy's arm through his—"Come along! Less get this little exper'ment over. Is the Hon'able Justice Parker on deck an' sober, Bill?"

"The Hon'able Justice Parker, I regret to say," said Bill slowly, "*is* on deck—*re*-markably so—but far from sober. He attempted to clean out the 'Maverick' at exactly two p. m., an' we had to tie him an' put him to bed, where he now is, a ravin' maniac from too much strong drink."

Bob uttered a very profane ejaculation.

"Curse him! I give him five dollars in advance 'cause he promised to keep straight 'till after the weddin'," he said. "What we goin' to do? Tom Davis an' the widder 'll be here in an hour with a possy, an' I want to git married 'fore they come. There's sure to be a fight an' I want to leave Mirandy all right in case I git hit."

The Don stepped forward. "If you're lookin' fur some one to marry ye," he said, "I reckon I kin help ye out—do good fur evil—as I'm qualified to that extent, hevin' a license to preach an' marry."

It was a very short ceremony as the Don performed it, and he brought it to a close in a style that some of the guests thought a little abrupt. "Walk ye in the narrer rud—I pronounce ye both one an' the same."

Indeed, Bill Ransom was much dissatisfied with the whole affair.

"Less make him do it over again," he said; "'taint more'n half bindin' as 'tis now. I could've done it better 'n that m'self."

But Bob would not hear of it.

"No, siree!" he said; "we're married an' thet's enough. There's no double or quits about this. I'm satisfied if Mirandy is," and Mirandy said she was, entirely so.

"An' now gen'lemen, said Bob, a few moments later, standing in front of the Maverick bar, "here's my thanks to all, an' good-bye." He slowly raised his glass, and held it an instant between his eye and the light. "Mirandy an' I cal'late to rid over to Porty de Luny to-night; it's only twenty-five mile an' we've borrowed a couple o' fresh hosses, an' to-morrow we'll go on up to my place on th' 'Lupy creek. A week from to-day we'll hev a dance, an' you're all to come. By that time the Widder 'll be all solid, I reckon. I'm sorter glad we didn't meet her to-day; she's so devilish sensitive she'd shot some one, sure."

As Bob and Mirandy rode away, they were sped on their journey by a salute from a dozen revolvers. Bill Ransom, who felt that he occupied the position of best man, was determined that the affair should come nothing short of complete success, and he hurriedly pulled off his huge riding-boot and threw it after them, spur and all. "Not hevin' a slipper," he said, "I fired my boot—fur luck—though its God's mercy it didn't hit 'em."

A year from that day saw very few changes in San Miguel County. The Widder and Tom had long since forgiven Bob and Mirandy, who were living quietly at Bob's ranch on the 'Lupy creek. With what Mirandy had brought him, added to his own, Bob found himself owner of 350 cows, which made him quite a man of property. But then, there was every reason why he should be, since he was a man of family also. "Yes, sir; it's a boy, just as certain as the world," he had announced at Santa Rosa, "but he's redder an' softer'n what I s'posed babies gen'rally was. I'm sorter 'fraid to touch him, fear he'll break in two, but he's a healthy breather."

This addition to his responsibilities made Bob more sedate and steady-going than before. He worked hard, early and late, and his only play-time was at night, when he took his seat by the fire and watched Mirandy and the baby. "Lord! it's the queerestest thing, to set here an' see you dressin' an' undressin' that there kid, Mirandy, just as if you'd never done nothin' else all yer life. Where ever you larned it, I can't think;" and Mirandy would look up at Bob and smile, but not in her old coquettish way. Another expression, more thoughtful and tender, had taken its place now. She was still the same buxom, stalwart Mirandy she had ever been, but now she had a new object in life; she felt that new responsibilities required new manners. It was quite a picture to see those three—Mirandy seated in a low rocking-chair before the huge, open clay fire-place, filled with a roaring wood fire, with her baby on her lap, and Bob by her side, watching her with a smile of gratified pride, as she fussed and

cooed over the boy. "It beats all," he used to say, "which likes it the best—you or him—or me."

Sometimes the Don would ride over from the Barzee, where he was still attached as cook, and spend the evening. His regard for Mirandy was as deep as ever, but since her marriage it had taken a different form, being now more of a paternal nature, for he had come to look upon her almost as a daughter.

The Don—he was still known by that name—had appropriated the empty little chapel at Santa Rosa, wherein Bob and Mirandy had been married, and every Sunday morning during the winter, he had ridden over from the Barzee ranch and preached there. His success in that direction had been no better than his attempts at cooking, but he was not cast-down, and persevered faithfully. "San Migell is pretty stony ground, but it aint *all* rock," he would say hopefully.

The new spring opened promisingly. The price of cattle was unusually high; a very severe winter had raged over the northern ranges, in Dakota, Montana and Wyoming, and the losses among the cattle there had been enormous, in some instances entire herds having died from cold and starvation. The stockmen of San Miguel County were jubilant, for their own losses had been very few, the Barzee estimate being less than 2 per cent.; and this, added to the fact that three-year-old steers were bringing $30 and likely to bring $35, made every one happy and prospectively rich.

With the return of spring, as in former years, men started out over the range on preliminary surveys, in preparation for the Round-up. Thus it happened that

Bob left Mirandy and the baby at his ranch one morning and rode away. He had kept no assistants all winter; he did his own work, knowing it was his duty to economize for his family's sake, and so Mirandy was left alone, but neither he nor she were troubled about this. Mirandy was quite able to take care of herself.

The next afternoon about five o'clock, a horseman rode at a hard gallop over the prairie towards Bob's ranch, and checked his horse in front of the door. Mirandy stepped out to see who it was, but not until she had shaded her eyes with her hand did she recognize the Don. "Wal, I declar'!" she said, "ef taint you! Wont ye light?" but the Don declined the invitation, rather abruptly.

"Mirandy," he said, "I hearn down on th' Pecos that there was a band of Injuns out from th' Reservation, loose, and ——"

"Injuns!" cried Mirandy incredulously. "Why, there aint no Injuns within two hundred mile of this yere!"

"Ef you'd seen the things I've seen," said the Don slowly, "you'd say there was Injuns within ten mile of this yere—broke out of th' Mescalero reservation—they shot at Rube Priday, an' they're runnin' off stock an' killin' anyone they kin ketch. You must git your baby and come with me to the Barzee till this thing's settled."

Mirandy demurred at first—she warnt afraid of no Injuns, she said—but the recollection of her baby decided her, and in a few minutes they were riding rapidly towards the Barzee, twelve miles away. Very tenderly the Don carried the child, wrapped in a heavy

blanket, while Mirandy rode at his side, her eyes constantly on the bundle. As they reached the top of a mesa, two miles from their destination, they paused a moment to breathe their horses. Suddenly the Don noticed a commotion in a bunch of cattle behind him; they were running in evident alarm; then he heard a rifle shot and then another. His keen little eyes instantly detected the cause of the disturbance.

"There they be! Ride! Mirandy, ride!" and away they dashed down the hill. Spur, spur and spare not! Ride, ride—for your lives, ride! They had a good half mile the start, and if they could only maintain it they were safe. Mirandy's horse was fresher and speedier than the Don's, and she had constantly to slow up for him, but he rode steadily along, giving his entire attention to the child. And yet they had to ride carefully too, for if a horse should step into a prairie-dog's hole, or even stumble, it would be fatal. On they went through the dust—their pursuers very slowly gaining on them, and keeping up a continued firing. It seemed as if they must be hit, but they rode on and on, never swerving nor halting a moment. Once a rifle-ball furrowed the rim of Mirandy's sombrero; once the Don's right stirrup was splintered; but still they kept on, on, on, with the yelling fiends behind them.

At last they neared the ranch (the dusk was slowly turning into night) and once there they were safe, for it was garrisoned by a dozen men—good shots, well armed and daring, every one. As they dashed along the trail they came to a place where it forked; the main track ran around a mesa bluff and down into the

valley where the house stood, but there was a shorter path, leading straight over the cliff, down which it was possible, with great care, to lead a horse. It was rocky and steep, there being a straight jump of five feet in one place. As they approached the fork, the Don motioned Mirandy to take this path, and without hesitation she rode for the bluff and disappeared over the edge with the Don close after. How they ever reached the bottom alive is still a mystery in the county, but they did, and a few moments later pulled up in front of the Barzee ranch. The men crowded to the door—one bearing a lantern—to see who the new arrivals were, and to learn what the firing had been about. No one suspected then that the Don had been hit; he still bore the baby very tenderly on his left arm, while with his right he steadied himself by the saddle-horn. It was not until his charge had been transferred to Mirandy's care that he reeled, and Rube Priday had just time to catch him as he lurched heavily from his horse. As they laid him gently on the ground he fainted, and the blood welled through his lips, which he had till then kept tightly closed. They carried him into the house and endeavored to staunch the blood, but it was a hopeless case—he had been shot through the lung. It was a solemn scene that the dim rays from the smoky lantern lit up in the Barzee ranch, that night. Around the dying man were grouped the stern-faced riders, while at his head knelt Rube, vainly endeavoring to force some stimulants past his lips. After a little he revived and looked about him on the familiar faces.

"Boys!" he said very faintly, "they're safe, Mirandy an' th' baby—deliver me from—mine offences—an'—forgive—"

That's all.

One of the men turned to the couch where the baby lay. "He's asleep!" he whispered. "So is the Don," said Rube, as he reverently drew the rough blanket over the poor old fellow's face.

X. THE ASSAYER'S STORY.

I am the assayer of Phœnix. That is to say, I was, for Phœnix no longer exists, except upon a map of Colorado, published A. D. 1876. The edition is out of print now, but I have a copy in my possession. Looking at it I can see that PHŒNIX (in capital letters) lies in the very heart of the Sangre de Cristo range of the great Rocky system. That is, Phœnix used to lie there, for as I said before, Phœnix happens to be dead now. Whether she will some day rise from her ashes, somewhat scattered at the present moment, and prove herself worthy of that reputation for immortality so long connected with her name, I can't say. On the whole I hope not. For Phœnix dead is better than Phœnix living—that is, this Phœnix is. Not that I bear the place a grudge, for I do not, but I believe I have the interest of mankind at heart when I say again —on the whole I hope not.

The three red lines radiating from Phœnix (on the map of Colorado, 1876) represent railroads—projected. The three lines of stakes and bench-marks that wind and twist up through the Sangre de Cristo mountains represent the present condition of the aforesaid railroads. They died a bornin'. During the heyday of its brief existence, Phœnix dreamt nights and worked days for railroad communication with the trunk lines, and just

as everything was fixed, Phœnix passed away, leaving nothing to mark its grave but a few battered sheds and dump-heaps, say two hundred holes in the ground, and half as many rough, wooden crosses, rising out of the western mountain slope—the cemetery.

I am sure you will admit that Phœnix had a most undesirable location, when you hear that it was eleven thousand feet above the sea; that it was seventy miles from a railroad, from civilization, from anywhere. Upon three sides of it rose the stony sides of the mountains, while the fourth was guarded by a perpendicular wall of rock, that stood a thousand feet straight up in the clear air. Sprinkled here and there upon the steep slopes were the rough shaft-houses of the mines, and close to them were conical piles of broken rock—the dump-heaps.

The state of affairs in Phœnix may be best described in the words of Justice Shallow to Sir John Falstaff: "Barren, barren, barren; beggars all, Sir John, beggars all. Marry, good air."

The only desirable thing that Phœnix possessed in exhaustless quantities was good air. And that was often of such an unpleasant temperature as to render a very little of it a good deal to much.

When I first saw Phœnix it was but two months old, yet claims had already been staked out there, which, according to their owner's estimates—proverbially too small, contained sufficient treasures to pay the debts of all the nations in the world and leave a handsome surplus for contingent expenses. The main thing was to get this treasure

out—no one doubted it was there—and a great and glorious future was predicted for the camp.

As long as the land was bare of snow, Phœnix could be reached by a hard and dangerous ride, but during the long winter months of that altitude, it was cut off from the world by huge white barriers, that buried the mountain passes deep out of sight. If you were to object to Phœnix as a residence on this account and say—in the hearing of one of her citizens—that it must be lonesome living there, without news of the rest of the world, the aforesaid citizen would promptly reply that the thing was just even, after all, for the rest of the world then had no news of Phœnix. It is this magnificent local pride that makes the Westerner the valuable citizen he certainly is.

During the season of snow, no man dared travel the mountain paths of the Sangre de Cristo. Avalanches raced elephantine games of tag down the slopes; the wicked winds played hide-and-seek in the hollows and canyons, piling up the snow into hills and digging deep valleys between them, until the face of the land was changed. The cold was so bitter that, but for its dazzling light, you could truly believe the fires of the sun were extinguished forever.

Thus it happened that they who were in Phœnix when the first snows of winter came, were there—provided they had not come to an untimely end meanwhile—when the spring sun had loosed the clasp that bound the white mantle over the breast of the earth. It was a motley crowd that wintered in the camp its first year, and in it were found all sorts and conditions of men—who at the first reports of the discovery of the

mines had instantly dropped whatever they had in in hand, whether pen, spade or spare ace, and started for the camp. And among the thousand and odd was the undersigned, John Warner, Mining Engineer. An unkind Providence, or lack of funds —the two are much the same, after all—detained me there. My success in prospecting during the fall had been very poor. I had not then learned the golden and silvern secret of mining, namely, to let some one else do the hard work. Thus, instead of bettering my condition I had so impaired it that it became a burning and a freezing question with me how I should live, for provisions were scarce and dear, and I was very poor. Just when I was mentally comparing the various methods of suicide with involuntary, slow starvation, the death of a resident of the camp, gave me the chance I wanted. The Assayer of Phœnix, Peter Ashe by name, got into a little difficulty with a miner, through making a mistake in his report on some ores, and the position of assayer became vacant in consequence.

Mr. Ashe, in his professional capacity, had sworn that certain specimens from a certain claim assayed 165 ounces of silver, three ounces of gold and 21 per cent. of lead to the ton, and largely upon the strength of this report the mine was bonded to a contemplating purchaser for $20,000. It very soon turned out that the mine was worthless, and the unfortunate purchaser obtained a meagre satisfaction—at sight—in the usual way. At the informal inquest it was shown that Mr. Ashe had been paid $10,000 by the former owner of the property, coincidently with the unfor-

tunate error in his report, and a verdict in accordance with the testimony was rendered.

In consequence of Mr. Ashe's untimely demise, the camp was without a competent assayer, and seizing the chance, I stepped into the vacant position. I was backed by several influential men, Colonel Crocker among others. The Colonel was the discoverer—by purchase—of Phœnix, and had an extended acquaintance in the camp.

"You jump right in an' take the outfit," he said. "I'll back you. You can act as ex-e-cu-tor of the unfortunate diseased, don't you see, an' do your assayin' same time."

And I did so.

I found a fairly well equipped laboratory, containing a muffle furnace in tolerable repair; two sets of balances, one a cheap pair, the other a very good one by Troemner; a supply of crucibles, scorifiers, cupels and all the other apparatus and chemicals necessary for the work. The assay office was made of green, unplaned boards, battened outside with cleats and sheated within with old illustrated newspapers, principally *Police Gazettes*, pasted up two thick. Although these precautions were quite ineffectual to keep out the cold, the pictures gave the room a delightfully cosey and refined appearance, in marked contrast to the other houses in the camp.

Major Oswald, Colonel Crocker's partner, was never tired of studying this gallery of art treasures. He was especially pleased with one full-page picture, representing "The Lynching of One-Eared Mike by the Vigilantes of San Juan." Perhaps his interest was

partly due to his having been present at the death of the aforesaid Michael, and the picture therefore recalled pleasant memories. The engraving was fastened to the wall near the furnace, just where the glow from the fire lit it up to great advantage.

"To look at that picture," the Major would remark, with a critical squint of his left eye, "you'd almost think you was in the saloon at Paree, durn me!"

Colonel Crocker was best pleased with a full length portrait of "Mlle. Rosalba Confetti, premieure danseuse, as she appears when about to make her wonderful leap for life, from one flying trapeze to another," and he used to protest, "that she didn't have a fair show, pasted up in a dark corner, where the light was so devilish bad."

"Give her a chance," he would say, "an' she'll get away from anythin' in her line, sure. I know what I'm talkin' about too, for I've seen every first-class show this side the Missouri river."

My house was a low, one-story affair, of so flimsy construction that when the wind from the mountains swept down through the valley it used "to rack an' twist an' shake to its very roots," as the Major said, in humorous reference to its being built upon stumps of trees. The interior was divided by a couple of blankets into two rooms, the front being the laboratory and office; the rear "a combination libery, settin'-room and boo-dore, all in one," according to the Colonel.

I had plenty of work to do, for in spite of the severe winter, the mines were kept open and operated. They never stop digging in Colorado, and never will,

until the mountains are leveled with the plains. And even then they won't, for they'll set out to make some new mountains. When that time comes, I shall have a suggestion to make—about the mountains.

One stormy evening in January, I had just finished work on some specimens from the "Big Six" mine, and was clearing away my table and furnace, when the door was suddenly opened, and there was blown into the room, along with a tremendous gust of twenty-below-zero atmosphere, an odd figure of a man.

"Evenin', pardner," said the figure, from behind a ragged, worsted muffler, that completely hid his face and disguised his voice. He backed himself up against the door to try if it was shut, and then advanced a step into the room. "Evenin' pardner," he said again. "Cussed mean weather, aint it?"

I made no reply to this other than a nod; the state of the weather was so obvious it didn't need any more attention. The stranger went on:

"You don't happen to know now if the ass-sayer is about, do ye?"

I signified that I was acting in that capacity, just then.

"You!" By this time the stranger had unwound the wrapping about his face—it seemed as if he never would get unswathed—and advancing towards the fire, stood with outstretched hands before the glowing mouth of the muffle. He was a short and plump little old man, and his rosy face was framed by a rim of yellowish-white beard, thickly matted by icicles, frozen there by the cold, mountain winds. He wore a frayed and tattered buffalo-skin coat, from which

the fur had been rubbed in huge blisters. Upon his feet were enormous cowhide boots, seemingly all wrinkles, while his head was ornamented by a cap matching his coat.

"So you're th' ass-sayer, eh! Wal, I dunno but it's all right. I'm gettin' so nothin' surprises me nowdays. I want to see you on partickler an' private bizness."

He glanced suspiciously into the dark corners of the room, and then, cautiously inserting a grimy hand into the bosom of his shirt, drew forth a small piece of stone. He touched a corner of it to his tongue, and holding it close to the furnace, so that the light should glance upon the moistened surface, asked with an air of assumed indifference:

"There ass-sayer, what d'ye call that, off-hand?"

I told him I thought it was a piece of rock—which it most undoubtedly was, and—

"Of course it is," he interrupted impatiently, "I know *that*, but what's the value of its argentiferous contents! Give us an ass-say."

He handed the specimen to me, and I went to work. The steady crunch, crunch of the ore-pulverizer, as I ground the rock into powder, was the only sound heard except the whistling of the wind outside. While I worked the stranger wandered uneasily about the room, as if in search of something.

"Cussed mean weather," he said at last, with a dreary poverty of conversational resource. "I dunno as I ever see it much worse, an' I've seen consid'able weather too, fust an' last."

I made no attempt to answer him, nor did he seem to expect it, but went on from time to time with his monologue.

"Ores runnin' pretty good now?" he asked of the furnace, "or aint ye doin' much 'count of snow? I dunno 's I ever see just such a winter 's this in a long time. Come to think, not since seventy-one."

By this time I had prepared my samples for the fire; four small clay scorifiers were duly weighted with proper quantities of powdered ore, and covered with a thin coating of oxide of lead, and I carried them to the furnace. The old man watched me anxiously as I raised the cups, one by one, in the tongs, and pushed them into the hot muffle, and when the last one was safely deposited he gave a deep sigh of relief.

"I allus took lots of amusement in ass-sayin," he said, as if to explain his interest; "it's so cussed scientific. I kin do a little of it m'self, off-hand, as fur as gettin' the button goes an' so forth, but then I weaken. When you come to cipherin' you've got *me*. Ought tums ought's ought an' carry ought is about 's fur 's I kin go."

The ore in the scorifiers rapidly melted in the hot muffle, and at the end of twenty minutes the first step was completed; the rock had given up its impurities to the oxide of lead, and there was left only a small button of alloy, containing lead, and possibly silver and and gold. I drew out the scorifiers from the furnace, and the old man observing me carefully as I hammered the round balls into clean, bright cubes, dropped them into little white, bone-ash cupels, and put them back into the muffle.

"It's this dog-gone-slap-me-on-the-back familiarity with science that gets me," he cried enthusiastically. "You just take a piece of ore—grind her up—stick her in the fire"—here he picked up one of the red-hot scorifiers to illustrate, and instantly dropped it with a muttered, "Hottish, aint it!"—"an' there you be. When it's cooked you pull her out, weigh her, an' find, may be there's fifty ounces of silver, maybe a hunderd, or may be"—here he lowered his voice to a confidential whisper;—"maybe there's two or three hunderd; it aint unushill, and I know a mine that—"

He checked himself, and looked mysterious.

Within the furnace the little metallic cubes were soon melted, and from the surface of the fluid there arose red vapors, that wavered and floated in the hot space of the muffle; then lazily crawled to the chimney's mouth and vanished. Slowly these vapors grew less; slowly the molten metal shrank, until at last nothing was left in the cupels but tiny, glowing beads, that winked and twinkled like stars. The fire test was done, and these little specks contained all the precious metal there was in the samples; the baser elements had been driven off.

Then I withdrew the cupels, and carefully lifting up the little beads with pincers, took them to the light. They were very tiny—hardly visible, but they were large enough to suit the stranger.

"Oh, maybe not!" he cried, "*may-be* NOT! Perhaps th' Old Man hasn't struck it this time! Oh no! certainly not!"

Accurately weighing the beads on the fine balance, I found that the ore contained only six ounces of

silver to the ton, a very poor quality of rock indeed —for Phœnix, in those days. But the old man didn't think so.

"That'll do for a beginin'," he said, "but you wait a little. You let me get into th' vein a ways, an' I'll show ye some three or four hunderd ounce rock, sure. Just now you was sayin' ores was runnin' poor, wasn't you? I guess you'll talk t'other side soon 's I git th' Mary Ann Billings—after her—m' wife you know"—he added with an explanatory wave of his hand—"after I get her to payin' dividen's."

Just then Colonel Crocker and Major Oswald came in, covered with snow, and filling the close room with the cool, fresh odor of the pure air. The stranger stepped briskly forward, and with a polite little bow said cheerfully:

"Ah, Cornel! good evenin'! Always at it, you see, always at it. Just havin' a little ass-sayin' done now. I'd like to make you acquainted with m' friend the ass-sayer. Cornel, the ass-sayer—gen'lemen, be acquainted!"

The Colonel and the Major bowed gravely to the little man, and he bowed and smiled back at them.

"My name's Elisha R. Billings, you know," he said, "but most every one in th' camp calls me th' Old Man. Cussed mean weather, aint it? I dunno 's I ever see a wuss winter since seventy-one, an' I aint sure but it's longer."

The old man monopolized the talk that evening. "Speakin' of claims," he said, "I know where there's a mine that's wuth—well, I dunno 's I can say exactly what it is wuth—but it ass-says way up, as my

friend the ass-sayer will say," and he looked at me for corroboration.

He resolutely refused to tell where this mine was, but he had it all snug and buttoned up tight in his vest pocket—well, slightly—he should think so—oh certainly, and he winked with an expression absolutely machiavelian, and repeated "Oh certainly!" in a diminuendo, until his voice was lost in the labyrinth of his beard. He bade us good-night about nine, and with a cheerful promise to call again, he went out into the darkness.

Those who passed that winter in Phœnix and lived through it, will not soon forget their experience. Never before, in the memory of the oldest miner in the camp, had the snow lain so deep on the mountains; never before had the winds been so cruel or the cold so bitter. The very wild beasts came down out of their lairs, and sought a refuge in the camp. The barkeeper of the "Poodle Dog" one morning found a wild-cat behind an empty barrel, and humanely killed it, "rather than let it suffer." For days at a time no man dared leave his house, lest he should be overwhelmed and lost in the snow. The valley seemed to be the dwelling-place of storms. After seventeen days of this weather in February there came a lull, and a few of the bolder men ventured out among the hills on snow-shoes. They came back with a report that the ten miners who had been working the Avalanche mine, a claim up Eagle Gulch, only half a mile from the camp, had been buried in a slide, and were

lying, frozen to death, beneath hundreds of tons of snow and ice. It was impossible to find their bodies then; the spring sun alone could release them.

For a few days the sky was blue, the sun shone and the snow sparkled; then the storm-clouds swept down again from the mountains, and the wind, the snow and the cold sported in wanton merriment about us—"a savage trinity," truly. Day after day the white heaps rose higher and higher in the one street of Phœnix, and men had to labor hard to keep their dwellings from being crushed flat under the tremendous pressure.

I am sure I cannot tell—if you were to ask me—how it was brought about, but in a very little time after his first visit, the Old Man was domiciled in my house, and acting as First Assistant Assayer for the camp of Phœnix. To this day, the manner in which he insinuated himself into the position is a mystery to me. Perhaps it was our mutual love for science; perhaps it was his good-humor and optimism that won me over. At all events, he soon became as much a part of the laboratory as the furnace itself. He was by no means a useless article either, for he learned to tend the fire and pulverize the ores for assaying, very skillfully. He entered into this latter work with such enthusiasm that in two days he had ground up every bit of rock in the office, including some very choice specimens I intended to preserve as curiosities. His interest in his new profession, as he called it, was great, and grew greater every day.

"I tell you what," he said one day, pausing in his work at the pulverizer, "it aint so difficult bein' an

ass-sayer, after all. What you got to do is to make your reports *big* enough. If you find the ore runs, say 30 ounces to the ton, why write her down 35. That'll tickle the miner, an' when he sells his ore to the smelter, an' they on'y pay him fur thirty, why he wont blame you ; he'll swear the smelter is cheatin' him outen his hard earnin's. Then he'll git you to make some more ass-says, an' so forth—just to prove he is right. If you work the cards you kin git lots of bizness that away."

The Old Man had not been living with me three days before I found myself admitted to a "full and equal pardnership in the Mary Ann Billings mine, with all her dips, spurs, angles and sinuosities as aforesaid." This generous act on his part was due partly to the feeling of friendship he had for me, and partly to sheer benevolence. Half was as good as all to him ; the Mary Ann was too valuable a property for one man to hold, he said. This cussed concentration of capital would play the devil with the body politic in time, and like the true philosopher he was, he practiced what he preached. I am not a man of lively imagination—being a Mining Engineer, as I've told you—and I have had much experience with Holes-in-the-ground-mines, that never paid back the recording fees to their owners ; but the enthusiasm and dead-sureness of the Old Man, took me clean off my feet, and I soon fell into line with him in cheering for the Mary Ann.

And still, this may not seem so strange to anyone who has been among the silver mines, and observed the mad stampedes that sometimes take place there, when hundreds of thinking and breathing men will

often lose their self-control and commit the most absurd follies, just because some one else does.

So it happened that in a very short time, I believed as fully in the Mary Ann as the Old Man himself, and though I never visited the claim, I took his reports for gospel, and even caught myself enlarging on them—a little.

"Talk about your mines, Johnny," the Old Man would say, as we seated ourselves before the furnace of an evening, "there's where you git it. I've bin in this bizness risin' twenty year, an' I never see a prettier prospec' fur a reg'lar teaser than the Mary Ann, an' we're th' boys to prove it."

Twice a week he would mysteriously disappear and return at dark, tired out, but triumphant. "I've been lookin' her over," he would explain; "lookin' after her dips, spurs, angles an' so forth, an' she's all there, you bet."

He invariable brought back samples of rock which he requested me to analyze, but he seemed in no ways disconcerted whenever I informed him that they contained no silver, as was generally the case. On the contrary he appeared to be amused.

"Silver!" he would exclaim. "Silver in them specimens! I should rayther say not! Them stones"—here he would point his finger at them impressively—"them stones aint out of *our* mine. Well, hardly! I just brought 'em in fur you to practice on. You don't expect to find native silver in snow-drifts, do you?"

After that I let the Old Man assay his own samples.

Besides his scientific studies, he developed a fine appreciation for literature and art, and when not engaged in his professional duties spent much time in reviewing the pictures that constituted the wall-paper of the house. He always read the letter-press accompanying the engravings, but with some difficulty, and could never accurately connect the two. Thus, he would attentively study a column upon "The Careless Boy, Champion Light-Weight Slugger," and endeavor to fit the description of this noted pugilist to Mlle. Rosalba Confetti, with but indifferent success. Her portrait, by the way, had a never-ending attraction for him. Still he did not accept it without criticism.

"The lady looks as if she'd catch cold," he would say musingly; "it's a middlin' light outfit she's got on; wouldn't do fur these altitudes."

How much more elegant was that than the Major's comment on the same subject. "Raythe leggy, *I* call it," was what *he* said.

Day by day our enthusiasm over the mine increased, and we longed for spring, that we might get to work. The Old Man's graphic description of the splendid appearance of the Mary Ann, her extraordinary richness and quantity, her desirable location, "just where you can slam the ore out on a gravity rud" and her many other good points, completely carried me away, and made me dissatisfied with my humdrum life as an assayer. The samples he brought back, too, began to show up well, according to his assays. Not one was under two hundred ounces, and once he had one, which he told me, in an awe-struck whisper, "unless I've made a mistake it's a

thousan' an' eight ounces of silver an' seventeen of gold. Johnny, we're millionaires! Less take suthin'!"

Towards the middle of February a new danger menaced the camp—famine. An insufficient quantity of supplies had been laid in to carry us through until spring, and our situation became alarming. The price of provisions rose enormously. Flour was three dollars a pound and only to be had by favor. Meat, except a little tainted sow-belly pork, was a delicacy quite unknown, and as for tea, coffee, sugar or salt, they were never even thought of. Yet all this time, the saloons kept open night and day (there seemed to be plenty of whiskey); the gambling houses were crowded and the proprietors made independent fortunes, although the amount of money in circulation was comparatively small.

As February drew to a close the prospects of the camp became very gloomy, and starvation seemed near. A party of men made a desperate attempt to escape from the valley. There were thirteen in all—an unlucky number some said—and they started on snow-shoes on the morning of the 26th. Many thought they would succeed, as they were active and hardy, and knew the mountains well. Four days later there crawled into camp, on hands and knees, one of the band, the only one left alive. The others had been caught in an avalanche and smothered. This man—James Russell—was walking in the rear of the party at the time, and so escaped, and managed to make his way back to Phœnix after enduring terrible suffering.

Both his hands and his feet were frozen, and he died three days later.

Just as we had eaten the last pound of flour, it occurred to some one that the barracks of three of the mines, whose men had been killed by the snow-slides, were stocked with provisions; and parties were at once organized to dig out the supplies and bring them into camp. I attended the sale of the provisions and purchased, for twenty-five dollars, a venerable, moth-eaten looking ham, and that evening the Old Man and I dined like princes.

"It's a trifle dry," he said, "but then, what of it? It quenches your hunger. If we on'y had the materials here I could make a gay little Sally Lunn or floatin' i-le-and, but then we aint, so what's th' odds? But what bothers me most just now is, how we're to git our ore to the smelter. It'll cost too much to pack it seventy mile on burros; still, when we're gittin' five and six hunderd ounces of silver outen a ton we hadn't orter kick very much, had we? An' then, of course, we can put in a con-centrator. Still we must have a railrud in time. Run her right up Eagle Gulch; it's on'y sixty mile, air line, to the main track, an' allowin' ten fur angles an' sinuosities makes seventy, don't it? Just check me up when you see me gittin' off. Well, say seventy mile at—we can do it for a hunderd thousand a mile, can't we? Yes, that'll cover it, an' that makes the rud cost seven hunderd thousand! What? Oh! seven million, is it? Well, another ought or two is all the same. Well, say seven million for a neat little rud slap up to the camp. I tell you, Johnny, I an' you, we'll build her next spring,

ship our ores fur nothin' and beat the other boys to death. An' when they want to buy us out, maybe we'll sell an' maybe we wont, just as it happens."

The next morning the Old Man had disappeared, and with him had gone the venerable ham, all our provisions. I confess it was in no pleasant frame of mind, that I went to the grocery-store and expended my entire capital on a little flour. I didn't appreciate the Old Man's eccentricities, just then.

At night he returned, as lively and chipper as ever.

"Just been out to see her," he said, as he took off his ragged fur coat. "Didn't know but suthin' had happened to her, but there she was, snug as a reg'lar old bug in a devilish little rug, with that cute little notice just stickin' up outen th' snow, recitin', to wit, how I the undersigned claim so an' so. I tell you Johnny, I was relieved."

But just then the question of rations was uppermost in my mind, and I asked him: "What have you done with that ham?" in much the same tone I would have accused him of murder.

"Well now, Johnny, I 'low perhaps that wasn't quite the fair thing, my takin' the ham, but poor little Billy Strong—you know Billy?—well, he was just starvin' to death, an' sick, an' dead broke, an' so—well, he's got the ham, an' I told him to come here, now an' then, him an' his family, an' git suthin' to eat. I know'd you wouldn't mind; you can just charge it to me. You don't mind so very much, now, do you Johnny?"

Mind! God bless the little man, I should say I didn't mind, and I liked him better than ever then.

But after that nothing would do but we should have a regular set of books.

"May as well begin right," he said. "Our bizness is gittin' so large an' complicated we never can keep track of it." And so I took an old note-book in which I had kept a record of my assays, and wrote at the top of a clean page: "Billings and Warner—Mary Ann Mine," and our books were opened.

"Just hold it into the light, Johnny, so's I can see it," he said. "There, that's it; neat, ain't it? Billings & Warner! Me an' you. Joint pardners in the Mary Ann. An' now write—Charge Elisha R. Billings one partly-used ham, per Billy Strong, debtor. If I'm dog-gone fool enough to fling away a ham like that, why make me pay for it, that's all. The mine'll stan' it, I guess. Git it down in writtin', slick, Johnny. Joint pardners in the Mary Ann! Great, isn't it? Less take su'thin' on that."

One afternoon the Old Man stopped me at my work on some samples for the "Not Much" mine, (the name was singularly prophetic, not only of the mine, but of Phœnix also), and said: "Johnny, less I an' you go out an' look her over to-day. You aint seen her yet, an' bein' a joint pardner, you'd orter git familiar with her dips an' spurs."

It was rather late when we started, the sun set early in Phœnix that winter, and the air was cold. As we proceeded in the direction the Old Man said the claim lay, we came to a ricketty old cabin, half buried out of sight in the snow Before this he stopped.

"Johnny," he said appealingly, "you don't mind goin' in with me, do you? There's a sick man in

there, I'd r'ally like to see a minute; he aint a long ways from dyin', I'm afeared."

The shanty was a wretched, tumble-down affair, and through its splintered walls the wind and snow drifted unhindered. We put aside the board that answered for a door and entered. There was no fire in the room; in one corner we saw the form of a man, buried beneath a pile of tattered blankets. His face was thin, terribly thin and white, and except for his slow, gasping breathing, he seemed to be dead. Dying he certainly was. But what surprised me most was to see a child, not over ten years old apparently, from her size, though a woman to judge from her pinched, shrivelled little face. She was dressed in an old blanket, through which a hole had been cut for her head and two smaller ones for her arms. A piece of rope bound the folds about her waist. Yet in spite of this garment, the child was almost frozen with the cold. She kept her place by the head of the sick man, but nodded slightly to the Old Man as we entered. He was visibly affected by what he saw, and turning to me, said with a trifling shake in his pleasant voice:

"This is Bob Strong, ye know; what there is left of him." Then to the little girl: "How is he to-day, Nellie?"

"Bad, Mr. Billings, dreadful bad. We're most starvin'—an' I'm so hungry."

The tears came to the Old Man's eyes. "It's tough, I swear it's tough, Johnny," he said, huskily. "Aint it too bad that everyone aint got a Mary Ann mine back of 'em? Don't you think you'd better come with me an' this gen'lemen, Nellie?"

"Oh, but father!" she cried, "he'll soon be well when the warm weather comes."

Yes, before the warm weather should come he would be well, for as we stood there, a fit of coughing seized him; it seemed as if it would tear his poor, worn body asunder; then came a gush of blood from his mouth; a gasp and he was well, indeed.

No more pain or hunger for him; no more trouble or sorrow; no more striving after what he could never reach, nor regretting what was past recall. Lucky, some say. I'm sure I don't know. I hope so; he never had any luck before.

We did not visit the Mary Ann that day, but when the shadows of the mountains had veiled the snowy valley, we covered up the body of Strong, and after the Old Man had spoken a short prayer, we went back to camp, with Nellie between us.

From that time she was as much a partner in the mine as the Old Man or I. At first her grief was excessive, but she was so young and so hopeful, and the Old Man devoted himself so earnestly to her, that in a little while she became as merry and light-hearted as himself. This is not the place to discuss the wrong done the child in bringing her to a mining camp. It was a cruel thing to do—but the one who was responsible for it was buried under the snow, and the Old Man, like the warm-hearted old grandfather he was, took her straight to his heart, and saved her life and soul.

It was a pleasure to him to find in Nellie an attentive listener, and he would hold forth to her by the hour on the inexhaustible resources of the Mary Ann. His favorite position was with his back to the furnace,

one hand in his pocket and the other swaying to emphasize his words.

"You shell ride in your kerridge, Nell, an' be a sure 'nuff lady," he used to tell this ten-year-old child; "you shell marry a prince; live in a gold palace and be happy forever after. But never forgit, child," he would add impressively, "that you're a joint pardner, an' that you must live up to the responsibilities that the position kerries with it."

When the Old Man grew tired of being serious, he and Nellie would indulge in a little blind-man's buff in the office, until the room looked as if an elemental disturbance had been traveling that way.

"Never mind, Johnny, never mind!" he would say, with the utmost good-nature, if I found fault at having my cupels broken or my samples scattered; "charge it to the Mary Ann; she kin stand it. It's only been a couple of the pardners havin' a little frolic."

The way the Old Man and Nellie made things in the cabin jump sometimes, would have driven a nervous man frantic. I was not over-burdened with nerves at that time, being only twenty-three, still I must admit that once or twice I was on the point of speaking out.

The number of miles that those two rode, evenings, over the Phœnix and Eagle Gulch Railroad (on passes, the Old Man being the engineer, president and brakeman of the corporation, and Nellie the conductor and passengers generally), would have worn out any ordinarily constructed road-bed. The furnace was a capital locomotive, and our two chairs and an empty barrel made such a train of cars you couldn't tell them

from real—in the dark. Sometimes, as general manager, (also riding on a pass), I would go over the road on a tour of inspection, and then, how we would swing down the Gulch to the Junction. The president and engineer, being anxious to show up the property, would rattle over that seventy miles at a hair-raising speed, keeping up a tremendous whistling—through an old blow-pipe. We always started behind time, yet never failed to make a good connection with the Denver Express, and after the run was over the engineer would come to me, and taking out his watch, would say: "There sir, how's that for runnin'? Seventy-one mile in sixty-three minutes?" And then I would shake hands with him, and ask what he'd take, and we'd have something mixed out of two broken crucibles, with a little yellow slag in the bottom for lemon-peel: and very often the conductor would join us.

When the Colonel or the Major dropped in, they were always invited to ride, and the Old Man presented them with perpetual free-passes, which they thankfully accepted, and gravely showed to the conductor—Nellie—every trip they made.

Once, in going around a sharp curve, the baggage-car (the flour-barrel) went into the creek, and the brakeman was killed. But the president, who was on board, was luckily unhurt, and soon had things straightened out.

One night, coming down the grade just out of Phœnix, the engineer let the train run away with him, and the engine (the furnace) was upset. For a few minutes it looked as if the entire outfit, including the Assay office would be burned, but by hard work, the

fire was extinguished, and the damage charged to the Old Man, on the partnership books of Billings, Warner & Co.

I never saw so much enthusiasm as the Old Man displayed over this railroad. At first it even supplanted the mine in his affections, but after a while he consolidated them, and thus relieved himself of much extra work. Although he enjoyed running the passenger trains over his road, he became absolutely radiant when he backed his engine up to a line of flat-cars, loaded with ore from the Mary Ann mine. The number of pounds of pay-rock he thus took down the mountains was millions. I figured once that he hauled to the smelter that winter a little over 500,000 tons of ore, not a ton running under $500, as he positively assured me, making a total valuation of two hundred and fifty million dollars. Not altogether a bad winter's work, we both agreed, even allowing but half of it as clear profit, not to mention the handsome sum the railroad earned us, something like twenty per cent. on its cost.

The capacity of the road was enormous. The Old Man and Nellie would often take down five trains of cars in an evening, and the actual running time was so shortened that I have known them to make the whole seventy-one miles in a shade under four minutes by the watch. I venture to say there is not another railroad in the country that can do seventy-one miles in a shade under four minutes, night after night, without an accident.

Thus the winter wore away; our lives being brightened, and sweetened I'm sure, by Nellie's presence in

the house. She had a lovely disposition, and her short contact with the world had in no wise hardened her, though she was sometimes as grandmotherly in her ways as the Old Man was grandfatherly in his.

At last it seemed as if spring had really come. The warm March suns broke the fetters that bound the land, and the streams once more began their interrupted labors of plowing the mountain's face. The canyon of Eagle Creek was full to the brim with a rushing, roaring torrent of water and snow and ice.

The air was mild; the cold winds had been tamed into quiet zephyrs. The barkeeper of the Poodle-Dog composed a song—both words and music—upon the season, with appropriate local hits, that was encored three times at the Hall of Delight, and made his reputation in a night.

The camp had survived the winter, and every one was happy. Then the Old Man began to get restless.

"We must be gittin' to work, Johnny," he said one evening. "We must sure-ly be gittin' to bizness. I reckon I'll mosey out to-morrow to look at her again. Maybe th' notice 'll want fixin' up a little. You kin clean up your ass-sayin' work; we wont do any more o' that for any but Billings, Warner & Co., joint pardners in the Mary Ann. That'll keep you busy an' more too, for ass-sayin' these high-priced ores takes con'sid'able cipherin'."

The morning came and the Old Man started off in high spirits. "I'll be back by sundown," he said, as he kissed Nellie good-bye; "on'y want to see if she's there. This has been such a cussed mean winter—I

dunno 's I ever see much worse—I want to look her up. Good-bye, Nell! So long, Johnny!" and away he went, smiling and happy.

But he never came back. The spring which we all thought had come to Phœnix to stay, was in fact, only coquetting with winter, and that afternoon ran down the mountain to the valley, chased by the winds. The storm began, as all mountain storms do, with awful unexpectedness, and the winds blew and the snow fell, and in a few hours the face of the land was white again. And it was in this storm that the Old Man perished. We never knew exactly how, but we believed he wandered through the blinding snow, and fell at last, into the roaring hell of Eagle Gulch.

Late that summer a party of engineers, surveying through the canyon for the railroad that the Old Man had himself projected, and over which we three had taken so many exciting rides, came upon a skeleton, still clothed in a ragged buffalo-skin coat, in the pockets of which were found some specimens of quartz. No one doubted for a moment that these bones were the mortal remains of the Old Man, and we made a grave for him in the canyon, at the foot of a towering spire of rock, that formed a truly noble monument. At the foot of the grave we put up a rough board, with this inscription:

ELISHA R. BILLINGS,
THE OLD MAN.
DISCOVERER OF THE MARY ANN MINE.
Died March, 187—.

That's all; that's my story. Not much of a story, is it? How's that? About Nellie! Oh, she's a woman now. Where is she? Not far off, I should—Look there! see that boy over there, trying to walk—isn't he a baby for you? Well, that's mine—and her's.

What's that? About the Mary Ann mine! Why, to be sure! Well there never was any mine and there never had been. But there—look at him now—isn't he a baby for you?

XI. THE LOG OF A LANDSMAN.

Saturday, March 27.—I mentally patted myself on the back and drank to my pleasant voyage as the Zealandia swung away from her dock in San Francisco, and slowly turning her bow down the bay, steamed out through the Golden Gate. It was a perfect day, warm and bright, with just enough wind to give motion to the water. A thin haze hung over the land and softened the rough outlines of the hills that rose up from the edge of the bay. The island of Alcatraz looked misty and blue in the afternoon light, and the seals that were sporting in the harbor stared at us with an indifference born of long familiarity, as we sped by. Through the Gate we went, and then out to sea. A breeze from the north-east was tumbling the green waters into high hills of foam, and blew us merrily south on our course. At five o'clock we lost the land and were bowling along—thirteen knots—in fine style. There are but few passengers on board and they were all present at dinner, evidently thinking, "Let us eat and drink for to-morrow—it may be impossible."

Among them are all sorts and conditions of men and—some women. There is the Tarry Yachtsman, who wears a braided jacket, a nautical cap, and whiskers that are little better than 'airy nothings. He carries oakum in his pocket, smells unpleasantly of pitch, and

talks in a breezy way of "reef points" and "boom jiggers," that is particularly refreshing. He has given the captain many useful little suggestions about the management of his ship, and makes me feel very thankful he is on board to advise with in case of a storm.

Then there is the man who is "never seasick, sir." Confound him! what business has such a person to go to sea? And the man who "doesn't know whether he will be sick or not," but invariably is. (I belong in this class.) He wears a mingled look of Doubt and Hope, until he catches sight of some one already in the throes, when with an "I too have been at Philippi" expression, he rushes hurriedly away, and though not seen again, is heard.

Then there is the young man who thinks going to sea is "nice;" who calls everything delicious, and whose digestion is dubious or more. And the elderly lady, in curls and spectacles, who has never been to sea before, and who is nervous and unhappy now. And the newly married pair, who little think how soon their rapture will be changed to woe. And the two missionaries, pale but determined, who are manifestly too thin to become popular with the Islanders. And several young ladies, in charge of a matronly dame. They are delighted with everything, and exclaim: "Oh!" at short intervals during the voyage, but not always from joy.

There have been times when I was sick at sea, but then I was on the Atlantic. That such a misfortune could happen to me on the calm Pacific, I believed impossible, and I went to dinner with a light heart.

Not only that, but at nine o'clock I sat down to tiffin. In the night the winds arose in their might, and they smote the vessel, and she did roll and pitch most dreadfully. How everything creaked and groaned! I did, I remember, now.

SUNDAY. SECOND DAY.—When this morning came I found myself somewhat upset; the thought of breakfast was disquieting to me. Last night was a rough one. About three bells I heard the Tarry Yachtsman —who occupies the next stateroom to mine—remark that he feared the ship was going down. I was glad to hear of something that was going down; it was nothing about me. All doubts as to whether I am going to be sick or not are at an end. I am simply dreadfully ill. Why do people assure you that it will do you good, and why does the man who never is sick look into your stateroom and tell you to "go it!" as if you were doing anything else, or could possibly help "going it," for any worldly gift mentionable?

I know of nothing more prostrating to a person of nervous temperament than to have to put on his own shoes after a rough night. Your land lubber, who has never been to sea, may tell you that it is all a "matter of will"; and he may prove to you very logically, that you need never be sick, if you are only possessed of sufficient resolution and firmness. All I say is—let him try it! The will has nothing to do with the matter, or if it has then the brain is not the seat of the intelligence. [Mem. The Pacific is misnamed; it should be called the Terrific.] My state room is at the end of a long passage, and down it comes the sound of

much distress. The steward tells me that the Tarry Yachtsman is seriously ill, and one of the men who are "never sea-sick, sir!" (there are two on board) is in a dangerous condition. My only remaining, watery hope is that they will both die; the world can spare them. I begin to think the world will have to spare me. With infinite labor I managed to get up on deck this afternoon; how I did it I cannot quite say; I am not even prepared to swear I did do so, but I think I did, as I retain a lively impression of seeing many waves and much water in a state of disgusting activity. I also have an idea that I grossly insulted some one, and that he was only restrained by force from knocking me down. I wish he had; I'd have turned to him the other also with pleasure.

At noon we were in Latitude 35° 41′ North; Longitude 126° 50′ West; distance from San Francisco 233 miles.

The night is closing in black and stormy; the wind is blowing hard from the north-west, and I am dismally sick. I wish it were to-morrow!

Monday. Third day.—It is to-morrow! I wish it were yesterday! For I am, if possible, much worse, oh, very much! The ship is rolling her rails under, and I can hear the Tarry Yatchsman exclaim at each dip: "Oh Lord!" What can he mean? I have passed the day wearily in my stateroom, and now the darkness has shut in on us again. As I lie in my berth, tossed this way and that, I feel a wild, at times an irresistible, impulse. Can this be death?

Tuesday. Fourth day.—I am better! I rejoice

that it is to-day. The sea once more looks blue, the sky bright, the ship gay. I now think I shall live. I am not sure of it, but I dare to hope. I am still unable to eat, but I can think of dinner without anguish. I ventured on deck during the afternoon. How grand the sea looked and—how dizzy it made me! It was raining hard, but it was rather a relief to get wet; it diverted my mind. I was doing very well until that insufferable nuisance, the man who is never seasick, (the other is not expected to live, thank Heaven!) recommended me to try a little bacon and molasses. Then I hurried to my stateroom and had a relapse. I'll have that man's blood if I live through this.

WEDNESDAY. FIFTH DAY.—I am quite well! But six passengers were present at breakfast and I was one of them. I find I really like life at sea. True, it is monotonous and very unpleasant—at first, but you get used to all that in time. But what a constitution Columbus must have had!

The air is growing perceptibly warmer; the officers are all dressed in white duck and look enviably cool. A rumor circulated through the ship this afternoon that the Tarry Yachtsman was dead. Investigation disclosed the fact that he had not been out of his berth since the first night, and that he was still breathing—but that was all. I suppose he is not accustomed to steamers, and the vibrations of the engines disturb him. He is only used to a "yot, doncherknow!" I feel peculiarly blood-thirsty to-day and should delight in seeing the Innocents slain. The Tarry Yachtsman is an Innocent. With the sinking of the sun the wind

arose and blew hard from the north-east. I never knew such a place as this is for wind!

THURSDAY. SIXTH DAY.—Last night was very rough and the ship rolled her rails under. I collapsed again and when morning came I was so occupied with other duties that I quite forgot about breakfast. Some one told me that I was a Jonah. He is mistaken; I am the whale!

By noon, however, the sea went down, and one by one the passengers reappeared. I was shown a very interesting contrivance by one of the missionaries. It was a preventive or cure for seasickness, and much resembled the popular form of chest-protector in appearance. He said he had tried it on the bo's'n, and was gratified at its entire success. Had also tried it on himself, but the conditions were not entirely favorable, and it rather aggravated than soothed. Even as we were talking, he would leave me suddenly, and return, each time looking paler and thinner. Poor fellow!

At noon we were in Latitude 26° 2′ North; Longitude 146° 29′ West; distance run from San Francisco 1,405 miles.

All the afternoon the wind was light from the north-east; the sky was clear, the air warm and the sea a deep blue, only broken here and there by the white crest of some lazy wave, urged into sluggish motion by the soft trade-winds. The passengers have nearly all recovered from their troubles, and are sitting around the deck, looking very cool and comfortable in their white clothing. What a pleasure going to sea would be if we could only skip the first three days, and how

delightful is this complete freedom from all responsibility that one feels on shipboard. We haven't even to think about living. The entire charge of our existence is taken out of our hands and given into the keeping of the captain. Our duties are merely to breathe now and then, and to eat when we feel that way. And then again, what a tremendous satisfaction it is to know that our dinners are secured and settled on us until the voyage is ended! It is true that we may not care to eat all the dinners we are entitled to, but there they are—ours on demand. It is like having a balance at the bank.

The night shuts in upon us very quickly when the sun drops down behind the sea on our right; the twilight in these low latitudes is very brief, but we hardly miss the daylight, for the full moon more than replaces it, and sailing o'er summer seas is very pleasant, truly.

The air is soft and balmy, but laden with the salt moisture that the trade-wind picks up in its long journey across the ruffled bosom of the Pacific. We do not dance; that requires too much exertion, but we listen approvingly when the missionaries sing a mild song, or watch the moonlight as it sprinkles over the water on our left.

Friday. Seventh day.—To-day all the passengers are out except the Tarry Yachtsman, who still hovers over a watery grave. The air is decidedly warmer. I went down into the fire-room, but could stay there only a few minutes. The temperature rose to 160° Far. whenever the furnace doors were opened. A disciple

of Calvin would have found in that room a practical illustration of a sinner's hereafter.

We are almost within the tropical zone. We have the same clear sky and dark blue waters that we had yesterday, but were it not for the cool trade-winds we should suffer from the heat. As it is, our only endeavor is to do nothing. We sit under the awning on the hurricane deck and talk in a listless way, or are silent even more listlessly. We look out upon the transparent sea and watch a school of flying fish, frightened from the water by our ship, and see them go scurrying away, for all the world like a flock of birds. Now we discover the fin of some huge shark, that is swimming doggedly after us. Straight down we gaze and "nine fathoms deep" behold, in fancy, some monster of the sultry sea. The chambered nautilus floats by, and for a moment we exclaim "Oh!" rapturously, but only once. The exertion is too great, even for this beautiful sight. Our only thought is to be idle in the easiest way, and so we pass the day, and at night we sit in the moonlight and listen to the songs of the sea. One sweet-voiced soprano sings Ariel's chant:

"Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes:
Nothing of him doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
Ding-dong!
Hark! now I hear them,—Ding-dong, bell!"

And in answer to the call the ship's bell sounds mournfully, one-two-three-four.

Then the stalwart, red-faced captain growls out in his deep, hoarse bass:

"Loud roared the dreadful thunder,
The rain a deluge show'rs,
The clouds were rent asunder,
By lightning's vivid powers.
The night was drear and dark,
Our poor devoted bark,
Till next day there she lay,
In the Bay of Biscay, O!"

At eight bells (midnight) we turn in and dream that the Tropic of Cancer has suddenly been materialized and stretches like a chain across our path, and we can only pass by going under or over it.

SATURDAY. EIGHTH DAY.—The dream has not come true; we are in the Tropics; anyone can tell you that, for it is very, very hot. Our thoughts and occupations are the same as yesterday; that is, we think and do as little as is compatible with a mundane, or semi-amphibious existence. At noon we were in Latitude 21° 41′ North; Longitude 151° 21′ West; distance from San Francisco 2,021 miles. It is too warm to write more now; besides, there is nothing more to write.

LATER—We rapidly neared the islands, till at two o'clock in the afternoon we sighted Molokai, and at half past three, Oahu, upon which is Honolulu, rose to view. It looked very rugged and picturesque; its black volcanic rocks rising straight out of the sea, which dashed itself into impotent spray against them.

We steamed along the south-eastern shore of Oahu all the afternoon, and at eight o'clock reached the mouth of Honolulu harbor, where we were boarded by the pilot. He was a grievous disappointment. I expected to see a stalwart native, clothed in his own unconscious dignity and a ring in his nose, come out to meet us in an immense canoe, rowed by twenty men, similarly dressed with the exception of the dignity. The pilot was to board us and salute the captain with a stately bow, at the same time expressing a hope, in pure Sandwich, that he was well. Whereupon the captain was to drop upon one knee and humbly admit that he was well—or at any rate so-so. Then the stalwart native was to lift him to his feet and say: "Rise up my faithful servant—and let her come starboard." I was fully prepared to hear that this native was no other that the king himself, or at least the Prime Minister. But how was I disappointed! For the pilot was, in fact, a squatty white man, with a divil of a brogue, a torn shirt and a collar in the wash—where his shirt should have been and he along with it.

With this fraud in charge we went on once more. Out of the darkness on all sides of us, we could hear voices uttering strange sounds, uncouth and harsh, and now and then a canoe would be visible. After what seemed like an interminable delay, we reached the dock and landed with our baggage. Then, stowing ourselves in a vehicle, driven by a native who said he spoke English (and he did—enough to beat us out of five times the proper fare), we started pell-mell for the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. And we got there,

though how, I never can say. Briggs (he is the one that was never seasick, and very nearly died), never looks on the bright side of anything, and he found fault because we were upset once in turning a sharp corner—but Briggs wants the Earth, I think. He got a little of it that time, however—some on his trousers and some in his mouth—yet he grumbled still. For my part, I was satisfied—I fell on Briggs.

At ten o'clock we drove up in front of the Hotel, and a few minutes later were settled in large, airy rooms, cool and comfortable. But still I seemed to be on shipboard, for the floor rose and fell, and the mosquito netting looked like the Zealandia's jib.

XII. MOLOKAI—DEATH'S VALLEY.

"For my part," said the Doctor, as he poured a little water into his claret; "for my part I don't think so. You say, Jack, that Hawaii is as near Paradise as you expect to get. Good—admit that it is, but what does that prove? Have you not said the same thing of twenty other places? Did you not say it as you floated on the Lake of Lucerne, one moonlight night? Eh! Did you not whisper it into the ear of Donna Dolores, as you glided in a gondola down the Grand canal in Venice, taking care the while not to waken the duenna, her mother, who was lending propriety to the affair? Eh! Did you not say it one night in Cairo? Or one midnight at Delmonico's? Come, you are altogether too quickly moved Jack; too easily influenced by your environment. You should have been a poet instead of a rambler."

It was true what the Doctor had said; and now that I have cut my eye-teeth, now that I have seen the world, the flesh, and necessarily therefore, a little bit of the devil, I am convinced that Delmonico's is not such a poor substitute for an urban Paradise. Take it on a winter's night after the opera. What can look more like a conventional and highly proper Garden of Eden than the big room there? Over in the eastern corner we see a gay young fellow sipping his Pom-

mery, *très sec*, with his bediamonded Dulcinea by his side. He stands for Adam before the fall; she for Eve, and mightily she looks it—from the waist up. Then outside is the poor devil, who is turning a discordant tune out of a wheezy box, and freezing to death sixteen hours a day in order that he may beg enough to warm him the other eight. He is Adam after the fall. If you want to see his Eve, go—oh! go anywhere; you can't make any mistake, God knows, about a little matter of that sort.

But I have jumped from Hawaii to New York.

The Doctor's attack upon me was received by the others with a laugh, and he was encouraged to go on.

"You say," he continued, "because you've just eaten a capital dinner"—the Colonel, our host, bowed—"or because your conscience is not troublesome—probably from inanition—or because your digestion is good and your purse lined, that this is your idea of Paradise. Good! Admit that this *is* like it. But there was a serpent hidden in Eden, you remember, and there is a serpent in Hawaii."

"I thought there were no snakes on the islands," said Van Baalen, the literal. Van comes from New York, and otherwise than being rich, is not a very bad fellow.

I found it necessary to defend myself and my position, so I said:

"It comes pretty near my idea of Adam's sensations to be awakened in the morning by the perfume of orange blossoms stealing into the room, though he must have been quite incapable of appreciating the poetry of it, since he had nothing to contrast Eden with.

No! I still maintain that Hawaii—as I have seen it—is a very fair modern Paradise—with rural accompaniments. I have found no serpent here."

"And still I don't think so," persisted the Doctor. "Do you for one moment believe that Adam ever underwent the sorrows of breakfasting, in Eden? Don't you know that he had a cup of chocolate in bed, and never dressed for the day before eleven? Compare his system with the Hawaiian and be dumb. Here, at eight o'clock, you order what you please of a Chinaman, who doesn't understand you, and at nine—as he hasn't returned—you look him up. You find him asleep under a palm tree. It does no good to kill him—I've tried that, and find it really delays matters—for you must then get another waiter and begin all over again. There is so much red tape in Hawaii. The best way is to kick the fellow; thus soothing your own spirits and stimulating him; convincing him in fact, that the Chinese must go. Don't you see your error now, Jack? Adam never had any waiter to trifle with his peace of mind."

Here the Doctor absent-mindedly emptied the remainder of the claret into his own glass and filled up mine with water. "What I meant in the first place," he continued, thoughtfully watching a vortex ring of smoke that Van Baalen had puffed out over the table, "was, that at this moment, while we are living lives of comfort, enjoying health and mental ease, surrounded by a tropical profusion of flowers, and gazing upon a scene of absolutely fairy beauty, yet still we are within striking distance of this serpent. We—"

"Let's go out on the veranda," interrupted the Colonel. "We can have our cigars and coffee there where it is cooler." And we arose and went out.

We had been dining with the Colonel, the owner of a vast sugar plantation on Maui, one of the Hawaiian or Sandwich Islands. His home was situated on the south-western coast of the island, at a little place called Lahaina. The house was a low, one-story building, with wide doors and windows; completely encircled by a broad piazza, and embowered in a garden, in which grew, with wasteful profusion, all manner of trees and shrubs; bananas, oranges, palms and huge-leaved, wide-spreading exotics of the southern sea. The soft air, stirred by the trade-wind, was so laden with the odors of the rose, gardenia, hibiscus and oleander, that it seemed to have the consistency of some rich syrup, too dense to be breathable. Five of us sat out upon the piazza there, the Colonel, the Doctor, Van Baalen, Kapana, a native Hawaiian Chief or *Alii*, and myself. The Colonel usually spent a few months of each year at Lahaina, and with him he brought his wife and two daughters, just grown to womanhood. He was a portly, white-haired, red-cheeked old fellow, and rich beyond the dreams of avarice.

The Doctor was a true cosmopolite. His father was French—whence his name of Lebrun; his mother was English. He was born in London city; lived the first twenty years of his life in the United States, and only the Lord knows where after that. Or rather, only the Lord knows where *not* after that,—for I believe he had been in every country on the globe, and had only been prevented from exploring space through lack of

the necessary means of locomotion. He had been a surgeon in the Confederate Navy during the war of the rebellion; attached to the Garde Mobile, during the Franco-Prussian conflict; had fought with the Turks against Russia, and been in charge of a Bulgarian hospital, during the little difficulty between Bulgaria and Servia. And now he had come to Hawaii in search of new excitement, after having just returned from an expedition to the Arctic seas.

Kapana was one of the finest specimens of physical development I ever saw. Six feet two he stood; weighing two hundred and fifty pounds, yet so well proportioned that he did not look massive. His skin was dark; his short black hair curly, but not kinky, and his face, though heavy, was not ill-looking. There were a certain glitter in his eye and a heaviness about his brows that gave him an appearance of sternness, almost ferocity, contrasting with the peculiarly mournful lines of his mouth. He rarely spoke, but smoked like a furnace.

As for Van Baalen and myself—nothing. We were merely travelers, seeing what we could one day and forgetting it the next.

We all seated ourselves comfortably upon the wide piazza, where we could catch a glimpse of the white sea, and smoked awhile in silence. Within the house, around a dim lamp, sat the ladies; the Colonel's wife and his two daughters, and two native *wahine*, handsome, refined women, guests of our hostess. They were playing softly on guitars, and humming mournful Hawaiian airs. The scene was absolutely enchanting. Ulysses could never have deserted Calypso had

she dwelt in such a place; Telemachus would have laughed if Mentor had urged him away from Lahaina—at the full of the moon. Thus was I thinking when the Colonel's voice roused me.

"Suppose you tell us, Doctor," he said, "what is this serpent that lurks in our Paradise."

"In two words," the Doctor answered, "I mean the curse of Leprosy."

We were all silent again; we did not even move, but I could see the cigar that Kapana was smoking glow hot in the darkness, and I fancied I saw his glittering eyes and lion-like brows behind it. But of course that was my fancy.

"There is no cure for the leper," the Doctor went on slowly; "no hope, no life. He is one of God's accursed, doomed to die by inches; avoided by men; feared and fearful. For even under the lime-light of nineteenth century investigation, the disease remains what it has been for thousands of years—a mystery. And it is this curse, lurking in the green forests of Hawaii, that has changed it from Paradise to a plague-spot."

"But how is the disease contracted?" asked Van Baalen. "You medical men must know that."

"No, not even that," said the Doctor. Again I fancied I saw Kapana's eyes shining through the darkness. "It is not contagious or infectious as those terms are generally used; neither is it necessarily hereditary. It is not impossible that the poison may be carried by mosquitoes, as is sometimes the case in Elephantiasis."

"An extremely agreeable theory, upon my word,"

said Van, slapping his cheek; "there goes one of the little beggars now."

"The inorganic world is a perfect world," went on the Doctor, not noticing the interruption. "So many parts of hydrogen and oxygen combined always make water; so many parts of chlorine and sodium always make salt. We know to a surety that certain results are invariably produced by certain causes. The laws of the inorganic world are immutable. But in the organic everything is uncertain; there we can be sure of nothing except Death, which really means the resolution of organism back to its inorganic elements. You introduce a grain of arsenic into a gallon of water, and that arsenic is always detectable. You introduce a poison into the circulation of an animal, and it may or may not be discoverable. Leprosy is caused by the inoculation of an active animal poison into a man's blood. This poison will generate the disease in one person and not in another. Leprous parents may have all their children tainted, or only one or two, or even none at all. This may happen when only the father or the mother is affected, but transmission through the mother is more constant. Again, the disease may skip several generations and reappear when the memory of it has been forgotten. The circumstances that seem particularly to favor its extension are a damp and humid atmosphere, and a diet consisting largely of fish. All these conditions exist in Hawaii, where the warm air is laden with moisture and where the natives subsist mainly upon *poi*, fruit, and sea-food."

The Doctor paused a moment; then, seeing the look of eager attention on the faces of Van and myself, and

being thus assured of at least two hearers, he went on with his monologue.

"Leprosy is identified with the disease known along the Nile and its Delta 1,500 B. C., and the disease common to-day in Asia, Africa, South America, West Indies, parts of Europe and Hawaii. It was endemic with the Jews at the time of their exodus from Egypt, as you may see by reading Leviticus xiii, and was prevalent for hundreds of years after, as any of the books of the New Testament will tell you."

"Is there no hope for Hawaii?" said a voice behind a glowing cigar tip. "Can the disease never be eradicated?"

"Never, I believe," answered the Doctor, "short of the practical extermination of the native race, and that, at the present rate, will soon be completed; perhaps by the end of this century. When Captain Cook discovered these islands, about a hundred years ago, he estimated the population at 400,000; to-day the natives number less than 40,000. Possibly this fearful death-rate is what Herbert Spencer calls, 'one of the mild and beneficient results of civilization,'" added the Doctor, grimly, "but it doesn't strike me so."

I was right about it: I could see shining out of the darkness the face of Kapana, glowing with a dull phosphorescence that disclosed his massive brows, under which his glassy eyes glistened strangely. I rubbed my own eyes once or twice, thinking that I did not see clearly; I pinched myself to make sure I did not dream. But I was awake and I was not mistaken. It was curious the others did not see it.

"I must say, Doctor," said the Colonel, "you have not chosen a very agreeable topic to discuss on such a night as this. I am used to this sort o' thing, but I feel as if I were sitting alongside of an actual leper, b'Gad, I do! Ho, Puna! bring us some more champagne! Champagne is a good preventive, isn't it Doctor?"

The Doctor laughed softly. "There is no preventive but to keep away from the infection, but champagne isn't a bad thing to try," he said. "The disease does not generate spontaneously but spreads by the bacillus of———but here comes the ladies; let us change the subject," and out upon the broad piazza they stepped.

"Didn't I hear you calling for more champagne, papa?" said Louise, the younger daughter. "You have had quite enough, sir, for your good, and at this time of night, too."

"Well, you know, Lou," said her father, "the Doctor has been saying such unpleasant things I just wanted to take the bad taste out of my mouth."

By this time the ladies were seated. They were dressed in rustling gowns of white—dresses that would have rivalled many worn at the Italian Opera in Paris, or at a ball in the Faubourg Rue St. Honoré; and out into the warm, sensuous night, as they came, the *frou-frou* of the fabrics tinkling in our ears, the sight of so much loveliness, carried me from the Purgatory whither the Doctor had led us, to the Eden where I would be. The ladies grouped themselves together where the light from the room within fell faintly upon them, and was reflected back again by their

white shoulders and arms. Talk not to me of the pleasures of gratified ambition—greed—revenge. Old campaigner though I am, I still believe there is no joy so great as the tender sorrow of loving, and while I was long past that sort of thing, I could feel for Van Baalen, that night at Lahaina, when he whispered: "By Jove, Jack! this *is* Paradise Regained, serpent or no serpent."

For I do not see how one could help feeling sentimental there; the moon had at last forced a zig-zag hole through the green roof over us, and the white dresses and forms of the ladies stood out in superb relief, like negative silhouettes, against the dark background of the tropical foliage. About their necks they wore *leis* of ohias and gardenias, and in their hair, roses. Behind them, in the shadow, sat Kapana.

Van, inspired by the place and the hour, sprang to his feet, and addressing the moon-lit sea—and Louise—recited the sonorous lines of Lorenzo:

> "In such a night
> Troilus, methinks, mounted the Trojan walls,
> And sighed his soul toward the Grecian tents,
> Where Cressid lay that night.
>
> In such a night
> Stood Dido with a willow in her hand
> Upon the wild sea-banks, and waft her love
> To come again to Carthage."

The ladies applauded him.

"What were you talking about as we came out?" one of them asked.

"Comparing our present position with that of Adam and Eve," said the Doctor.

"And which did you decide was the pleasanter?" asked Marjorie.

"Oh! our own is decidedly better," said the Doctor. "Adam and Eve had no father or mother to begin with; they knew not the flavor of Pommery *sec*, with just enough ice in it"—here the Doctor sipped a little from his glass—"they had nothing to gossip about, and although they ruled supreme on earth they were not even well dressed."

Louise modestly dropped her eyes to the diamond locket that hung from the *lei* about her round white neck, but the others laughed merrily. Our hostess screened a yawn behind her fan; this was not very entertaining for her.

"Come girls, give us a song or two, and then we'll leave the men to their cigars," she said.

And without more urging, they sang to us one of the old Hawaiian songs; a mournful love chant, with a soft thrumming accompaniment on the native guitar.

"Moa popo ku'u ike i ka nani
Na pua rose o Maunawililo,
Il aila hiaai na manu;
Miki ala i ka nani o ka liko

O ka halia' lo-ha i hiki mai,
Ke hone ae nei ku'u manawa
O oe no ka'u ipo aloha;
A lo ko i hana nei."

Chorus—Aloha oe, aloha oe
E ke ona-ona i-ka lipo

Sweet Rose of Maunawililo,
Day after day thy beauty grows,
The wild winds kiss the sweet red lips
Of thy petals rare and ripe, fair Rose.

Sweet memories often come to me,
Soft tender thoughts of days gone by,
When thou wert mine and I was thine ;
Before our hearts were seared and dry.

Chorus—Farewell to thee—to thee farewell !
Sweet Rose, my love, my life—farewell !

At length the ladies rose to go. It was very late, they said, and they must retire. As for us, we could sit on forever, if we liked ; it surely was too lovely a night to waste in sleeping, but they had their good looks—such as they were—and their complexions to think about ; and leading the way went madam, curtesying and saying: "*Aloha oe !*" then the others : "Good night ! *Aloha* to all ! "—and we returned to our chairs and cigars. No one knew what time it was, no one cared ; the air was soft, the moon still bright, the cigars excellent. And so we sat on and on, until of a sudden the moonlight grew dim ; the breeze which had died down piped up again. In the foliage about us the awkward call of the mynah bird was heard ; a yellow light appeared in the east, and a new day was announced.

" Bless my soul ! " said the Colonel, " it's to-morrow morning ! I had no idea it was as late as that. Well, I think I'll take about forty winks, myself ; you gentlemen can do as you please," and off he went to bed. For my part I did not care to sleep, and I strolled down to the beach and watched the surf as it came booming in upon the sand.

Close to the water's edge at Lahaina stood a group of royal palms, tall, slender and graceful ; their tops formed of a cluster of leaves that waved lightly in the

morning air. Back from the shore was the village, buried beneath groves of bread-fruit, banana and orange trees; while behind it, six thousand feet in air, rose the ancient volcano of Eaka, its green sides split here and there by dark, gloomy canyons. In and out of the grass huts that straggled along the beach went the native women, looking like gorgeously tinted butterflys in their brilliantly colored garments. At my feet lay the Pacific, stretching away for miles a surface of deep, dark blue, save where the water concealed some wonderful coral grotto, which lit up the waves until they became the golden color of the western sky in a September afternoon. Off in the northern distance, floating in the air above the water, was a huge purple cloud, that seemed to drift, now this way, now that, as the hurrying winds, caught in some of its cavernous recesses, whirled it hither and thither. The color of the cloud changed with the changing skies above; now smiling as the sun fell full upon it, now frowning as some wanton shadow danced over the azure fore-ground. "Surely," thought I "there at least, is Paradise; such a place is too lovely for this curse to enter. One could rest forever in those soft purple beds, soothed by the lullaby of a Siren:

> "Where the shadows are blue,
> And the light is gold;
> Where the ——"

"And yet," said an unmusical voice at my side, "that Paradise, as you call it, is the most dreadful spot in the world." I turned and found it was Kapana who had spoken; Kapana, lusty of limb and mild of manner, but in the daylight innocent of that

ghastly appearance, so dreadful at night. "It is the living hell, *hoaaloha**," he said; "the grave of the living. Do not look at it too long, lest it poison your eyes."

I smiled in amusement; such fancies might do for midnight but I was not so nervous as that now.

"Do not smile, hoaaloha," he went on gravely, "for it is Molokai—dwelling place of the lepers. Look again now!"

I looked again. The shadowy outlines seemed to have grown hard and black; I could see the white surf, beating on the dark volcanic rocks that formed its iron sides; I could see the yawning caverns that led into the home of living fire.

"Let us go away, hoaaloha," said Kapana, seizing my arm; "let us go away. It is not good to look at Molokai too long. I cannot! I am myself *pau loa i kamake*—quite used up. Let us go away."

And we strolled down the beach, and for a while watched the natives bathing in the tremendous surf. At length he said to me: "I am going this morning on a short visit to Wailuku, upon the northern side of this island. It is my home—such a home as I have left. Will you be my guest? We shall go in a large canoe—and be absent a week. You need take nothing—I will entertain you in the old Hawaiian style. Will you not go, hoaaloha? Your friends are in no hurry; no one ever is in a hurry in Hawaii, and they will await your return contentedly here at Lahaina."

And I went.

*Friend.

II.

"If you will take your seat amidships and not mind a little water, we shall go through the surf all right," said Kapana to me, and so, placing myself in the centre of the large double canoe I awaited developments. Eight naked natives seized the boat, and upon the reflux of a huge wave, rushed it forward. For an instant, just as it met the incoming roller, it wavered, but with a shout the men shoved us outside the breakers and then clambered in, their brown skins shining with the salt water. Kapana stood in the the stern, steering-oar in hand; his calm, impressionless face and magnificent stature giving him the appearance of some huge bronze statue.

The wind being strong and nearly aft, a species of mainsail and jib were set, and under these we ran rapidly along the south-west coast of Maui. The light canoe, following the motions of the long waves, rose and fell with the rythmical regularity of a a pendulum. On our right were the precipitous, black lava cliffs of the island, against which the sea beat with useless fury, while here and there, fantastic cascades sprang over the edge of the wall, embroidering the dark expanse with silvery threads.

"Is it not beautiful?" said Kapana to me. "I see it often—very often—and yet, I love it more than ever now. How hard it will be to leave this to die. What have my people done that this curse has been visited upon them?" He pointed with a stately gesture to Molokai, blue in the distance. "Is it not pitiful? My people are dying; in a little while we

shall be extinct; the world will know us no more. Why are we thus damned? Is it because we were once cannibals—idolaters? But what can you know more than others? The curse is everywhere in Hawaii. It reaches the high—the low—the rich—the poor—though there are no poor in Hawaii—except they who live *there*." Again he pointed to Molokai, growing more distinct as we neared it.

"Listen, hoaaloha!" he slowly continued. "I was married, once; I had a wife, and she was very beautiful—then. And she bore me three children—they are dead now, my children—and she is dead also—over there." Once more he pointed to Molokai. "I have not seen her in five years," he went on thoughtfully. "Five years! White men say the Hawaiians have no parental instinct; that we are incapable of an enduring love. But I loved Kola and our children—yet I rejoiced—yes, I was happy—when they died, one by one, for I had learned of the curse that was upon them. Five years ago she was—she went away, though for a year before that I knew what was surely coming. But she had to go at last—she who had once been so beautiful; she who had been called the Rose of Maunawililo. Her cheeks became seared, her voice harsh, her—but pardon, this is unpleasant for you. Look! let us go a little nearer to Molokai; we are no longer superstitious about it, are we? But we must not go too near; I do not want to see Kola again."

On we swung through the tumbling waters; nearer and nearer we drew to the land. It lost its cloud-like appearance; its harsh outlines grew apparent; we could see its walls of rock, rising perpendicularly from

the sea for thousands of feet, here and there gashed with deep, black canyons. It was well named—Molokai Aina Pali, The Island of Precipices.

It was with something very like awe that I watched the island as we ran towards it; it was such a mysterious place; so awful in its possibilities. I felt as though it were the ante-room to the Hall of Death.

"Kapana!" I said at last; "do not go too near; it is not right."

"Fear not, hoaaloha" said he; "I cannot go too near. Look! look!" he cried suddenly; "see them there!"

I strained my eyes, and when my sight became adjusted to the new focus, I seemed to see strange figures on the shores; not men, and yet—not anything else.

"This is near enough, Kapana," I urged. "Near enough; I am a coward; let us go away."

He made no reply, but kept the boat steadily on its course, his form standing rigidly in the stern and his glittering eye fixed upon the land, as if striving to distinguish something there. Again I spoke:

"Let us turn now," I said—"we have seen all there is—this is enough, and it has been very pleasant."

"No, it is not near enough," he said harshly, "and the joke has only just begun. You may find it will last for years." I began to think he was insane.

"See here!" he cried, "Here's a joke for you!" He tore away the sleeve that bound his right arm. "Look at this and tell me if this isn't a joke!" The arm was horribly scarred; great patches of dead white or black skin, showed the rotting flesh beneath; at the elbow was a festering sore, open to the bone. I

shrank back at the sight—he was a leper! Kapana laughed discordantly at my disgust. "Ah ha! you do not like it, eh! It is not pleasant, you think. But you shall see much more than this, soon. Yes, wait till we find Kola, my wife. She will be something worth seeing, I warrant you. This is nothing—but she—she *will* be a sight!"

He was plainly beside himself, almost violently insane, and capable of doing mischief—though I did not realize it at the moment. "But you must not go there!" I weakly protested.

"But I *will* go there," he answered. "I want to show you all of Paradise—last night you wished to see it—now you shall have the chance. And my Kola—she will be the Eve!"

We were now but a mile from the land, and hurrying towards it every moment. Frenzied at my own powerlessness, I grappled with Kapana. I might as well have attempted to overthrow the pyramids. His enormous strength had not yet been undermined by the disease, and he flung me easily into the bottom of the canoe. But in doing this he lost his balance; the boat gave a lurch and I was in the water. With the roaring of the waves in my ears I sank—down—down—to rest.

Then followed silence and night!

Yet in one way I was conscious—I did not completely lose my identity. At first I knew who I was, yet could not realize where I was, until all at once it came to me—I was dead! and I laughed to think I had died so easily. Yes, I was dead, and these objects about me were but denizens of the next world. Queer sort

of an affair, the next world is, I thought; somewhat different from the common idea of it. And this little matter of dying that I used to dread so much, is rather pleasant than otherwise.

Then I felt myself swiftly lifted up by some invisible force and carried onward through darkness. There came a desperate pain in my heart—a clutch at my throat. I experienced two peculiar sensations—one, physical—a desire to breath; the other, mental—an attempt to think. I no longer felt that buoyancy of spirits I did at first. With a shock, as of a physical injury, my senses partially returned to me. I drew a little cool air into my lungs—I tried to speak, and my returning consciousness fled again. I knew nothing—or rather I knew everything. I became a mere idea—an abstraction. I felt that I could understand the meaning of Infinity; that I was an integral part of it. And yet I was helpless—hopeless. This, then, is Death—the final Death I thought—when my soul is to be ground up into Nothing and this dust of Nothing is to be scattered out through Space. Death means Darkness, both to Body and Soul; Death means absolute Annihilation—eternal, black Night.

Slowly I felt my powers of understanding this, fade. I knew that the end was coming—then, with a puff, as of a candle extinguished, I lost all sentience. It was over—the end had come.

Very slowly and very painfully I opened my eyes after what seemed, to my returning consciousness, a lapse of eons of years, and looked about me on a scene that was startling and horrible. I awoke to semi-

consciousness with a feeling of melancholy, such as the eaters of opium must feel, when deprived of their drug. It was a complete relaxation of every nerve —a loss of every hope. I seemed to have gone beyond death (I could realize what that meant then, though I cannot now), and to have seen most horrible and sickening sights, the memory of which was still haunting me in the figures I looked upon. I found myself lying upon an irregular plain, at one end of which was a black wall of rock that rose perpendicularly in the air several thousand feet, without a break or foothold, absolutely impregnable.

Around me were clustered, what might once have been human beings, but from whom now almost the last vestiges of humanity had been stricken off by the transformation that Death had worked upon them. Here was a man whose hands were gone at the wrists, yet who waved the frightful, unhealed ends in wild gesticulations in the air; there was one, standing unconcernedly upon the raw and bloody stumps of his legs, shortened to the knees. I saw two women; the face of one was a mass of hideous corruption, her nose and ears were literally dropping off; in the cheek of the other was a great hole that laid open the half of her face; her eyes were unshaded by eyelashes or eyebrows, her hair was of a disgusting yellowish-white color, and hung about her head in snaky, Medusa-like locks. In her arms she carried a year-old babe, whose skin was clean and undefiled — a really beautiful child—making the contrast with the others all the more dreadful. I saw a woman whose head was entirely denuded of hair—

great white patches covered her dark skin wherever it was visible, and she was blind—for in the sockets where her eyes had once been, now swelled hideous tubercles, red and slimy. A young girl of fifteen stood by her, and she like the rest, was cruelly scarred with great discolored blotches upon her face and neck, while her hands were like a skeleton's—bony and stiff; the nails had dropped off; the joints were laid bare by festering sores, or were swollen and red; her eye-lids and lips were raw and bloody. And yet these people, in spite of their horrible appearance, seemed not to think of it. They were talking and laughing, one with another, and pointing and looking at me—such of them as had eyes to see with.

Their voices added another horror to the scene. Harsh, shrill, discordant with some; miserable, wheezing, puny sounds with others. And when one of them laughed aloud—it was the man without legs—I covered up my face with my hands, and shuddered in ineffable disgust.

With an effort I controlled myself at last, and spoke to the one nearest me. It cost me a tremendous exertion to do this, on account of both the man's repulsive appearance and the dread I had of hearing my own voice, sounding cracked and shrill like the others. But no attention was paid to me. I endeavored to sit up, but the change of position set my head whirling, and I became deathly sick. Just at this moment the objects about me moved a little and I saw, coming toward me, a strange figure. It was that of a man, dressed in the garb of a priest of the Order of Jesus. He was of slender build and erect carriage, and but

for a certain heaviness of brow, a glassy look in his eyes, and here and there, white or brown patches on his forehead and ears, he would have been a really handsome man. There was, in the lines of his mouth, a look of benignity, combined with firmness, that was very winning. He appeared to be about 40 years old. He approached my side, and kneeling down said in English, though with a marked French accent: "Ah! he is not dead! *Dieu soit remercié!*" He poured out a little liquor into a cup. "Drink this! it will do you good!" he said. "No, do not touch *me*," he added, hastily, as I rested my hand a moment on his shoulder. "It were better you did not."

I drank off the liquor—it was brandy—and as I did so the priest watched me. "I had only just heard of your misfortune," he said, "and I hurried here to you. Can you walk a little way?"

"I think so," I answered, "although I am weak yet, but where am I? Is this ——?" I was going to ask if it was hell, but checked myself. The priest smiled sadly—he understood my meaning. "Yes, this is Molokai — Death's Valley," he said, "and those whom you see here are really but the dead alive."

He turned and spoke a few words in Hawaiian to the hideous things about me, and they slowly moved away, talking unconcernedly and merrily, in shrill, discordant voices.

"You say this is Molokai," I said, "the asylum of the lepers. But how did I come here? I cannot remember."

"You were upset in a canoe," said the priest, "and

brought here by the crew, who swam ashore. They thought you were dead."

The whole affair flashed through my mind. "But where is Kapana?" I asked. "Was he drowned?"

"If Kapana is the *alii* who was with you, he is still alive," said the priest; "but did you know he was a leper? Just now he seems a little insane—lepers are sometimes afflicted in that way at certain stages of the disease. But let us go to my house—slowly—this way, M'sieu—voila!"

And off we started together at a very slow pace, towards a group of houses that stood a half-mile back from the sea. As my strength and confidence gradually returned to me, I was able to take note of my surroundings. I found myself upon a point of land of triangular shape, two sides being bounded by the sea; the other, or base, was formed by the wall of rock already spoken of. The triangle was a high plateau, that stood straight up a hundred feet from the water, except at two places, where short strips of sand formed landing places. The area of the triangle was about ten square miles, I should say, and sloped gently upwards towards the centre. Here rose a high, rocky mound, perhaps a quarter mile in diameter, forming the extinct crater of the volcano of Kohukoo, its black rocks yet undraped in green. But the sloping plains about the crater were bright in the luxuriant vegetation of the orange, bread-fruit, banana, fig and palm trees. The manienie grass clothed the earth with a tight-fitting garment, while the flowers were everywhere. It was a truly noble sight, and made me forget for a moment where I was. But only for a mo-

ment. The very voice even of my companion told me that I was in the company of a leper, and reminded me that this spot was occupied only by the human outcasts of the world. As we walked toward a little group of white cottages, the good priest, in a few words, gave me an account of himself and the place. He had landed on Molokai, he said, in September, 1873, having come from Belgium here.

Had M'sieu ever been in Anvers—in Antwerp? Yes? Ah! then he had seen the Cathedral there; did not M'sieu think it the finest Cathedral in all Europe? That spire, so light, so graceful and slender, yet so strong. And then that sweet carillon of bells! What is that like more than an angel's harp! And did not M'sieu recollect those two paintings by Rubens? Ah, si magnifique! (he crossed himself), the Elevation and the Descent from the Cross. And the old fountain in front of the Cathedral, that brave Quentin Matsys made, and—but pardon, this was silly in him. But he had once been a priest in that same grand old Anvers Cathedral, and when he met some one who had seen it, and its pictures and—and its delicate spire—there is nothing in the world more beautiful, is there M'sieu?—he could not help it—it seemed as if he were once more there. Jesu! but it was a blessed place! And now he had other things to do besides dreaming.

He had come to Molokai, he said, because he believed it his duty as a priest. He had left the old world's comforts and its chances of preferment, to carry God's word and the promise of Salvation in Christ unto these poor people. And M'sieu can see that they need

comfort spiritual, since they cannot have comfort physical.

"Do they live long, these lepers, M'sieu asks? Mais oui—hélas yes, only too long; it is sluggish disease; all the more dreadful for that. Sometimes they will be lepers twenty years and not die, yet growing more horrible every day. Still, it is a mercy that they gradually loose their sensitiveness; the disease deadens all their susceptibilities.

"M'sieu asks my name! A thousand pardons, I should have told it before. They call me Father Damien; it is my priestly name, as M'sieu of course understands.

"No one can imagine the dread I had of coming here in the first place, M'sieu. Again and again my heart failed me; I felt like an irresolute man about to commit suicide. And yet, even while I halted, I knew I should go, for I was ordered by a more than Earthly power, and although my weak flesh protested yet I came. I knew I was going to a living death; that I was forever giving up the world, but a Jesuit priest must have no thought or fear of such things.

"Have I succeeded in my labors to my hopes, M'sieu asks? No—no one ever quite does that, but that I have done good here I'm sure I can say. Voyez, M'sieu: I have built me two small churches; I have established two schools for leper children; I have preached the word to these poor wretches; I have taught morality and cleanliness, and brought some little order out of the former confusion. It is small, what I have done, but it is something. When I came here in 1873 I found eight hundred unfortunates, liv-

ing together in inconceivable wretchedness. The dead were buried without ceremony, in shallow nameless graves; the dying passed away without absolution. Now we have a hospital, in which the poor can come to die; they go not hence unshriven, nor are they buried without the rights of the church. God knows my work has been imperfect, but I have done my best, and when my turn comes I shall be ready."

I was wonderfully impressed with his manner and with himself. Since the Christian era began I could think of few nobler instances of self-sacrifice than this of which he spoke so quietly. Men had given up their lives for country or for others, but none had deliberately walked into the mouth of a yawning grave, as this priest had—solely actuated by the desire to help others—knowing that in time he too *must* contract the dreadful evil and himself become like the loathsome objects about him. To a sensitive man—such as he was—there could be no greater torture than to see, in the hideous faces that he looked upon every day, the pictures of what he soon must be himself. He had buried himself alive when he landed on Molokai, and went to face a death that might be prolonged for many years. If ever a martyr deserved to be canonized, this Father Damien did, I thought.

By this time, in spite of our slow progress, we had reached a little wooden church, whose short spire I had seen far out at sea. It was painted white, and the bright clean appearance of the building and the grounds about it, was noticeable. Facing it, and a hundred feet away, was a small, two-story cottage, also

painted white, and with windows and doors shaded by green blinds. Entering, I found the cottage consisted of two rooms, scrupulously clean, but with bare floors, and walls unadorned except by some pictures of Catholic Saints, and a shelf, upon which stood a few well-worn books. A couch in one corner and two rough chairs comprised all the furniture.

"If M'sieu will come this way," said the priest, "I will show him how to get dinner. Although it may seem inhospitable, it would not be prudent for me to prepare the food—I being a leper—but M'sieu will find plenty of fruit, oranges, bananas and figs, that are clean and untainted, and perhaps the juice of a cocoanut, if he wishes it. Meantime I will attend to one or two little duties and then we will talk more, for it is a greater pleasure than I can express, to meet one with whom I can converse."

As I sat eating the oranges and bananas, I suddenly thought of Kapana again, and when the priest returned, I asked about him.

"If you mean the *alii* you were speaking of before," he answered, "he is alive, but he seems to be somewhat affected mentally. I believe I told you he was a leper." I bowed; I knew that before. "I think he has been brooding over his misfortunes so long that his mind has become unbalanced. It sometimes affects them so, though usually the Hawaiians are too ignorant and thoughtless to care about anything whatever. But this Kapana was a man of good ability once. All the other men in the canoe were saved of course; it is impossible to drown a Hawaiian. Two of them are already lepers, though in the first

stages; the other six are as yet clean, but such is their indifference to the disease that they have decided to stay here upon Molokai. But if M'sieu is not too tired, we might walk out a little way over the land; we can then see something of this place. But first let me tell you something of it."

"This point we are on," he said, "is the Leper Settlement of Kalawao. It is practically inaccessible, except by water, being bounded on two sides by the sea and on the third by the *pali*. To this place are sent all lepers, as fast as the Health officers of the Government discover them. Once here there is no escape for them but death. There have been landed on this point, since the establishment of the Colony, twenty years ago, 3,101 lepers—of whom 1,985 were males and 1,116 females. There are alive to-day 689, showing that 2,412 have died of the disease in twenty years. M'sieu asks if there are but eight hundred cases of leprosy in all Hawaii. Ah no! There are many more cases than that, four or five hundred perhaps, but they are not known. The natives have no fear of the disease, and will conceal a leper from the officers, by hiding him in the forests, or under mats, until the risk of detection is past. I tell you M'sieu, leprosy lurks in the green forests of Hawaii, just as the serpent lies hid in the grass.

"Each leper is supplied by the Government* with weekly rations," continued the priest, "consisting of twenty-one pounds of *poi*, or rice and *poi*, and seven

*The biennial appropriation by the Hawaiian Government for the care of the lepers is $100,000, but this is insufficient and should be largely increased.

pounds of beef or mutton, besides a certain quantity of milk, kerosene oil, and soap, and a small supply of clothing. Those who have the means often build houses for themselves; those who are poor are housed by the Government. There is a hospital, established for the reception of the worst cases, and it is here that the lepers come, one by one, to die. As M'sieu can see, there are two villages on the point, the one at the northern side is called Kalaupapa; the other on the southern is called Kalawao. It is at Kalaupapa that the steamer lands, once in six weeks, and this is our only means of communication with the world."

"And now let us see for ourselves what there is in Kalawao. En avant, M'sieu!" he said, smiling to hear himself use such a military expression. And picking up his staff and hat, he and I went out together.

A little way from his cottage we passed a group of children playing. Some were clean, but many bore upon their bodies the unmistakable signs of the dreadful plague. "It is the pitifullest sight," said the good man "to see these tiny children, all suffering from the curse, visited upon them for no fault of their own. Allons M'sieu! there is worse coming."

As we walked slowly along, we saw advancing towards us, two figures, and as we neared them I perceived one of them to be Kapana; the other was a woman. She was dressed in the native *holoku* of red cotton cloth, and it was not until we were quite near that I perceived her dreadful appearance. Her face was seamed and riven with the leprosy. One ear had been eaten away; one eye was sightless. Her

right arm was twisted and shrunken; her fingers were claw-like and paralyzed, while wretched sores appeared upon her hands. Her hair was turned to a yellowish white, her eye-brows were gone, and her lips were raw and bloody. As if to accentuate her dreadful appearance, about her neck, swollen with the sores and scales of leprosy, she wore *leis* of bright yellow and red flowers, and in her hair—her horrible, snaky hair—roses.

"Ah, ha! hooaloha!" cried Kapana as soon as he saw me. "And so here you are! And you were not drowned after all! Never mind, there is no hurry about dying. You've heard of Kola, my wife? Well, this is she." The horrible figure made a grotesque curtesy and in a shrill voice cried: "Aloha oe!" and extended her hand as if to shake mine. But I shrank away from the disgusting contact with fear. Kapana laughed harshly.

"Ah, ha! he cried, "so you are afraid she will defile you, are you? You who are so clean! Are you not glad I brought you here? And is not my Kola beautiful?" and again he laughed discordantly, while the thing by his side echoed it shrilly. He touched his finger to her seared cheek. "See!" he said, "here is the Rose of Maunawililo; it was to my Kola that that song was written. Don't you remember?

> "The wild winds kiss the sweet red lips
> Of thy petals rare and ripe, fair Rose.

"Look now at her sweet red lips?" and he pointed to her seared cheeks, and grinned horribly.

I turned away in disgust at Kapana and his words, and followed the priest down the path. A few rods

beyond we entered the hospital inclosure. The hospital consisted of a dozen detached cottages, cleanly whitewashed, outside and in. Within the buildings were 48 patients, 28 males and 20 females, all momently expecting to die, yet dreading death most strangely. Never have I beheld such sights as I saw there. Of all the sickening and repulsive libels and hideous caricatures upon the human face and form that I had before looked upon, none compared with these new sights in the hospital. Here I saw those about to die; those whom the dreadful disease had at last almost conquered. If one can imagine the appearance of a corpse exhumed after being a week buried he may have an idea of some of the lepers slowly dying in the hospital at Kalawao. On every hand was Death, in its most horrible shapes. There was nothing peaceful—nothing hopeful—everything was as dreadful as it could be; worse than I had before thought possible. It seemed like looking into some tomb, and throughout all the rooms there prevaded the peculiar sickening odor of the grave, that but added to this impression. Here was what had been a pretty child of ten; now a loathsome, rotting mass. There lay the putrefying, yet breathing remains of what one time had been a young maiden. All ages were there in the hospital, from the child of a few years, to the old man of seventy, yet all so dreadfully disfigured by the disease as to be indistinguishable one from the other.

The horrors of Dante's Inferno, I believe, were outdone by the sights in the hospital. Death! death! death! on every side. Not that quiet, peaceful death, where the smiling soul glides away into space and

leaves a benediction on the frame that so long gave it shelter. No—here everything was frightful. It seemed as if the body had long since died, and that life was lingering in a corpse unburied, "whose only duty was to die," and yet which could not. Through the rooms blew the soft air from off the warm ocean, but it could not purify the corruption there. Outside, the land was gay with the most brilliant flowers and luxuriant vegetation; everything was bright and fresh and clean—within everything was foul and hideous. Why could not these things die and hide their corruption out of sight. "For this corruptible must put on incorruption"—it were a mercy to all if they did now. The contrast between the fresh glories of the tropical vegetation without, and the horrors of the dying within was indescribable.

As the priest and I were walking through the buildings, a native attendant approached and spoke to him in the Hawaiian tongue. He turned to me and said:

"He tells me that one of the lepers is dying and I must go to him. Will you not return to my house and await me there? I shall not be long."

It was with a feeling of immense relief that I turned away from that Chamber of Horrors and hurried back to the cottage, hardly daring to look behind me lest I should see myself followed by some inquisitive corpse; and I took my seat on the veranda of the priest's house, thankful that I had seen the last of those sights, which I cannot forget, and yet which I am thankful my pen cannot accurately describe.

III.

"Now, M'sieu," said the priest, as he rejoined me, "the first thing we must think about is how to get you away from this dreadful place. I believe I am consulting your own wishes when I say this, for no one would stay here long unlesss"—here he smiled sadly—"unless he has work to do. God sent me here to labor among these unfortunates, and now I am myself afflicted. Yet I looked for this when I came; I knew it would surely happen, and so I am not cast down. I shall labor here until the end cometh—but this is not what I wanted to talk about."

He paused for a minute, then slowly continued: "No, M'sieu, you must not tarry. Every moment that you pass here is fraught with danger to you. There is pollution everywhere. You have to-day seen what a dreadful curse this leprosy is; do not, I beg you, stay here and run the risk of contagion." His voice shook a little with the earnestness of his words, and he paused a moment.

"Do not think me inhospitable, M'sieu, in thus urging you away, for a slow and horrible death inevitably awaits you if you linger."

I could not help feeling moved by the good priest's words and manner, and I assured him that I wished, above all things, to escape from the place. I was sick, soul and body, with the awful sights I had that day seen—many so dreadful as to be indescribable on these pages, and of which I have not even dared to hint. No grave or charnel house could have offered more horrors than I saw on Molokai.

"You may leave by the Government steamer, M'sieu," continued the priest, "but unfortunately she will not be here again in five or six weeks—perhaps longer."

"Is there no other way, then?" I asked. "Must I stay here six weeks? Is there no small boat in which I can sail to Maui?"

"None," said the priest. "No boat but the Government vessel is allowed to land or leave here; the lepers are forbidden to own canoes and indeed, they are all too feeble to handle them. But there is another way by which you can leave, though it is very difficult and dangerous."

"It cannot be more dangerous than living here six weeks," I said.

"No," answered the priest, "that is so; it is not. You must climb to the main part of the island, by ascending that cliff. Once at its summit you can easily reach the village of Hulahoke. The steamer Likelike touches there every two weeks, and on her you can embark for Honolulu or Lahaina."

"But," said I, "I cannot fly and so I can never scale that precipice that rises three thousand feet straight up."

"There is a slender path up the *pali*," said the priest. "It is a very insecure one, the more so now since a recent earthquake has rent the face of the cliff. Still, I think you can scale it, if you are willing to try."

"I am willing to try anything," I said earnestly. "I must leave this spot, for I believe I should lose my reason if I were to stay here a month."

The priest smiled faintly. "Yes, M'sieu, you are quite right! It would be wicked to rest here unless you have work to do. Yes—you must go, but not to-night. See! the sun is almost set; it will be dark soon and no one can venture along the face of the *pali* save in the clear light of day. To-morrow, at sunrise, you shall start, and I will send with you a native as a guide He is not a leper yet, though he lives here on Kalawao, where his ancestors have lived for many generations. Before long the curse will smite him—it is as inevitable as death itself—but as yet he is clean."

As the westering sun slowly sank into the sea, the air which had been very hot all day grew cooler, and the soft trade-winds blew a refreshing draught through the cottage. We moved our chairs out upon the narrow veranda, and sat there awhile in silence. The long rolling surges of the Pacific beat with a ceaseless shock against the black rocks that formed the point. About us on every hand grew trees and flowers, with the splendid profusion of the tropics. The land glowed in its bright dress of warm colors or looked fresh in the cool green of grass and leaf. In front of the cottage stood a cluster of palms, their tops waving softly in the breezes, and between their slender trunks we saw the sea, red in the evening light. Just as the sun touched the water the bell in the little church tower tolled musically, and the priest arose:

"M'sieu will excuse me," he said; "but it is sunset, and at this hour I hold a service in my chapel. But perhaps M'sieu will care to go?"

"Above all things!" I said, and followed him into the little chapel.

It was a beautiful sight to see the good Father that evening, and to note the earnestness and devoutness with which he conducted the splendid services of his church. Yet it seemed like a Mass in Purgatory to me, when I looked about on the congregation assembled there. For every one had been stricken—every one was doomed, and upon the bodies of each were the dreadful signs of their coming fate. Hands, fingers, feet sometimes were gone; cheeks were festering, lips were raw and bleeding; voices were harsh and discordant.

Among the worshipers were everywhere the evidences of approaching death. I saw children of tender ages, upon whose elfish, wizened faces were deep scars and furrows and blistering sores. Then youths and maidens, who should have been enjoying the health and beauty of happy lives, but who stood there upon the edges of too early, and yet too tardy graves. And old men and women, whose twilight of life was black midnight, as mournful and sad as can be imagined. But why go on? I am only repeating what I have already written—dwelling upon horrors that are better forgotten.

As I sat there in the slowly waning light, surrounded by these repulsive remnants of humanity, the scene was ghastly and fearful. And when I heard the priest chant his *Ora pro nobis*, I felt that if ever a prayer were answered his would be.

It was with a feeling of relief and thankfulness that I stepped out into the fresh air again, and felt the soft

wind blowing upon my face, and caught the sweet perfume of the flowers that grew about the cottage.

Very late that night did the good Father and I sit up, talking of many things, or looking off at the white sea. For a while I was alone, the priest having been called away to see some poor creature whose death was happily near. And in his absence my thoughts were of him and his noble martyrdom. Who says this is not the age of gallant deeds? I thought. Who says men are less brave than of old? "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man will lay down his life for his friend," said Christ. And men are doing this every day; in battle, in shipwreck, in burning building, in engine-cab, where a moment's tarrying means death to the engineer and life to the passengers behind him. We read of such deeds constantly. But this act of Father Damien's is of a higher order than those, for he has thoughtfully and cheerfully entered this Valley of the Shadow of Death,

> "Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
> Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind,"

and knowingly stepped into the open grave. And his heroism seems all the more splendid, when one thinks that he went to Molokai, strong in body and active in brain; in every way one whom the world would have welcomed, for graces both of person and of mind; in every way one for whom the world had charms. And this man had come to this foul spot, under every stone of which is hidden the curse, solely actuated by his belief in a future life, and that it was his mission to point out to these afflicted people the way to salvation. The thought returned to me with increasing force, how

dreadful it must be to him to daily see in the hideous faces and corrupted bodies, the pictures of what he soon must be, and to know that for years he will linger thus, growing daily worse; longing for that day's sun that shall see the kindly earth close over him, and for that moment when he shall stand forth—clean and pure—and take his place high among the saints.

When at length the priest returned to the cottage, he sank down wearily in his chair. "Each day I find I lose my strength, he said. "When I first came here I could work the day long and not tire; now the smallest exertion wearies me. Et maintenant—je suis bien faible."

The night was a perfect one. In front of us stood the palms, their leafy tops swaying in the breeze; beyond them was the white moonlit sea. Save for the dull noise of the waves on the rocks and the mournfull note of some singer—whose voice was happily softened by the distance—we heard no sound. The little cottage was embowered in flowers, and the whole scene was one of as much beauty as that I had looked upon at Lahaina the night before. Yet there I had been surrounded by men and women in perfect health; the men handsome, stalwart, manly; the women as beautiful as women could be. Here at Kalawao I had seen no man or woman who was not far uglier than death; hideous, revolting libels on humanity, every one.

As the sun rose next morning I stood ready to start to climb out of the Dreadful Valley, into which I had so strangely and unwillingly entered. Since my first

meeting with Kapana I had not seen him. So many things had occupied my mind that I had forgotten him, or if I thought of him at all, it was merely as a leper—one of a full six hundred. And since he had not come near me again, I believed he had forgotten me, which I did not regret.

I was accompanied on my way to the foot of the *pali*, which I was to scale, by Father Damien and a young native, Upala by name. He was a descendant of the original dwellers on Kalawao—an *alii* or chief—and the only one remaining. He was a man of great size, and proportionately strong. Since he knew no English and I but little Hawaiian, our conversation was necessarily limited. As we approached the tremendous cliff it looked absolutely impregnable. For a few hundred feet above its base, it was clothed in a dense garment of green, but beyond that rose a blank wall in which I could see no mark nor crevice. At the foot of the *pali*, Upala, who was leading, turned abruptly to the left and skirted along its base until he came to what looked like an irregular flight of steps, hewn in the solid rock. Here we halted and waited for the priest, who followed painfully and slowly.

"Now M'sieu," he said, as soon as he could recover his breath, "we must part. I am very thankful for this brief visit; it has given me great pleasure, but you must go." I held out my hand to him.

"No, my son," he said, shaking his head sadly. "You must not touch me; but I give you my blessing, and I rejoice that I can send one out of Molokai who is not unclean. Say to the beautiful world you are

going back to, that I am doing Christ's work here, and that I am happy in that work. Say that the holy message of the church daily carries comfort to these poor doomed wretches. And now, adieu;—*Pax vobis cum!*" and he was gone.*

Once out of the grove, we halted to rest, for the sun was already hot and scorching. Then I perceived a narrow, zig-zag *mark* on the face of the wall, which was the path we were to follow. At first the ascent was easy, not steep nor perilous; then it grew more difficult, broken by ragged steps, or the path sloped away from the face of the cliff, until it seemed to give no hold for hand or foot. More and more slowly we went; once we came to an abrupt termination of the path—a wall of rock rose in front of us. But we surmounted this in some way, how I cannot now recollect, and then paused to rest.

At first I dared not look over the edge, but in a few minutes my nerves became adjusted to the situation, and I enjoyed the sight. We were half way up the *pali*, fifteen hundred feet in the air. Off in the shadowy distance, I could see Maui, but that was all that

* The splendid self-sacrifice of Father Damien is only one of many instances of this kind. Twelve sisters of the Franciscan Convent of St. Anthony, at Syracuse, N. Y., have gone to Hawaii within the last three years, and have devoted their lives to this work. Seven of them, Mother Marianne and Sisters Crescentia, Martha, Leopoldina, Carolina, Irene and Cyrilla are now living in Honolulu, in charge of the Leper Hospital and the Kapiolani Home for leper children. Four of them, Sisters Bonaventura, Renata, Ludovica and Benedicta are at the Maluiani Hospital, at Wailuku, on the island of Maui. The twelfth, Sister Antonella, is dead. The work these noble women are accomplishing is beyond praise. They have not been permitted to go to Molokai, though the writer was told by one of them that she was willing and anxious to do so, and only waited the consent of her Superior.

specked the blue expanse of water. Below was the triangle of land, its outlines sharply defined by the black rocks that formed its boundaries. Two clusters of tiny white houses marked the leper villages of Kalawao and Kalaupapa. Near the centre of the triangle was a great yawning hole, its black sides uncovered with green. This was the dead crater of Kahukoo, and as the shadows just then fell upon it, it seemed to be bottomless—a fit burial-place for the lepers. Here and there I could see moving specks, but a merciful distance at last veiled their hideousness.

Up and up we went once more; the path grew narrower and more slippery. Once I should have fallen if Upala had not caught my arm. I shuddered as I saw the huge piece of rock on which I had been standing slip away from the wall and plunge into the abyss beneath. I waited in vain to hear it strike; we were too far above it for the sound to reach us, for we were suspended mid-way between sea and sky. The higher we went the further off seemed the summit, and the more fearful the gulf below looked. Nothing but the horror of returning again into the Dreadful Valley drove me on.

At last we reached the top, hot, parched and trembling with weakness. If it had been twenty feet further I should never have succeeded. Even Upala, accustomed as he was to such work—he had ascended and decended the *pali* hundreds of times—was completely exhausted. To add to our discomfort the sun which had all along been shining hotly, was suddenly obscured, and a hard rain set in. We were enveloped in mist, and the Dreadful Valley below us

was shut out of sight. I was not sorry; I had seen enough of it and its horrors. If I could only forget everything about it but the memory of its guardian angel, Father Damien!

At five that afternoon we reached Hulahoke, and two days later I was again carried through the surf at Lahaina in a canoe—but this time I was alone.

IV.

"And so you've spent the last week in travel, Jack!" said the Doctor to me, as once again I found myself seated at the Colonel's dinner table. "Well, and where have you been and what have you seen, if I may presume to ask?"

"I have walked through the Valley of Death," I said, "and I have seen the Serpent in Paradise."

Somehow, I did not feel like telling my story that evening, though urged by the Doctor to do so. Everything was too fresh in my mind; the sights I had lately seen I remembered so vividly that I could not then describe them without a return of the same horror I felt as I looked upon the lepers. And so it was but a short time before we rose and went out into the open air. As we stepped upon the veranda, Van took my arm and led me off into a dark corner.

"Jack!" he said seriously, "I've got something to say to you, and this is my first chance. Do you know I don't believe there is any serpent here; this place is a pure, unadulterated Eden. Look there if you don't believe me."

I turned and saw the ladies, as once before I had seen them, seated just where the moonlight touched

their white dresses and soft rounded shoulders ; I saw the *leis* about their necks and the roses in their hair, but I did not see, as I almost feared I should, the glassy eyes and heavy brows of Kapana. As we stood there, looking on the fair sight, one of the group turned her head, as if to look at us, and the moonlight showed the lovely face of Louise.

"And Jack!" whispered Van earnestly; "see there! Didn't I tell you! She—Louise—some day will—that is—Jack—we're engaged!"

Faith, I didn't wonder then that Van thought Lahaina the new Paradise; so should I if I had been in his place, or if I could only have forgotton Molokai.

"And Jack!" he continued; "there is something else. Do you know, old man, you've changed tremendously since the other day. Seem to have grown older. You can't be in love—for that makes a man feel young. I can almost fancy myself a young man to-night." (The venerable speaker was in his twenty-second year). "I wonder if you know how white your hair is."

"By the way, Jack!" said the Doctor, as Van and I returned to our chairs; "there's one thing you certainly can tell us. What has become of Kapana? The ladies are anxious to know."

But even that I could not tell them—then.

XIII. THE HOME OF EVERLASTING FIRE.

FIRST LEGEND.

An ancient Hawaiian legend* relates, that: "Once upon a time the wicked goddess Pélé dwelt in the fiery lake of Hale-mau-mau, Home of Everlasting Fire, in the volcano of Kilauea. Here in the midst of the flames she held her court, surrounded by her attendant sprites; the unearthly noises of the burning mass were the music of their dances and revelry, and they bathed in the red surf of the fiery billows that dashed against the sides of the crater.

"Pélé was the chief goddess. Her principal followers were *Ka-ma-hu-alii*, King of Steam; *Ka-poha-i-kahi-ola*, King of the Explosions in the Palace of Life; *Ke-ua-ke-po*, god of the Night Rains; *Kane-hekili*, god of Thunder and *Ke-o-ahi kama-kaua*, Fire-Thrusting Child of War. These were brothers, and like Vulcan, two of them were deformed. *Makole-wawahi-waa*, Fiery-eyed Canoe-breaker; *Hi-aka-wawahi-lani*, Heaven-dwelling Cloud-breaker, and several others of longer names and similar definitions. These latter were sisters.

"The whole family were regarded with the greatest awe. The volcano was their principal residence, but occasionally they renovated their constitutions

* Jarves' History of the Hawaiian Islands.

amid the snows of the mountains. At such times their journeys were accompanied by earthquakes, eruptions, and heavy thunder and lightning. All were malignant spirits, delighting in acts of vengeance and destruction. The numerous eruptions with which the island was devastated, were ascribed to their enmity.

"Pélé was of a particularly vengeful disposition; her greatest pleasure was to destroy, and often, without the slightest cause, she would turn loose her dreadful messengers and ravage the land. The least irregularity in her worship, a failure in the observance of the smallest ceremony, was enough to precipitate death and destruction upon the people. The natives were the slaves of her priests, a numerous and wealthy body, who were held in the highest reverence, and were thought to control the fires of the all-powerful goddess. To insult them, break their taboo, or neglect to send offerings was to call down certain destruction.

"Pélé had also a very implacable spirit, and when once aroused nothing but some great sacrifice would appease her. Vast numbers of hogs were thrown into the crater of Kilauea when any fear of an eruption was entertained, or to stay one already begun. Offerings were annually made to keep her in good-humor, and no traveler dared venture near her precincts without seeking her good will.

Often, ordinary sacrifices proved unavailing, and human victims were offered up to mollify her devilish anger; and there is no tradition extant, wherein such an offering is said to have proved unavailing. And

the higher the rank of the victim the sooner was Pélé appeased.

Once the great King, Kamehameha I, sought to check a vast river of lava flowing down from Mauna Hualalai, and which was carrying destruction to all the land. Many lives and much property had been destroyed, and still the flow continued. Thereupon, Kamehameha, attended by a large retinue of chiefs and priests, approached the river, and having cut off a piece of his own hair, threw it into the burning lava, after proper incantations, and the flow stopped.

In Hawaii it is known to be true that the sacrifice of a single victim of the rank of *Alii* or Chief, will instantly check the most violent eruption, when every other offering has failed to assuage Pélé's anger. And it is believed to this day, that the goddess dwells in Hale-mau-mau, the Home of Everlasting Fire, and that the earthquakes and eruptions that devastate the land from time to time, are the evidences of her evil disposition, excited by some slight or accident.

SECOND LEGEND.

Another legend runneth thus: Once upon a time —a good many thousand years ago, in fact—volcanic fires were burning upon all the Hawaiian islands. Then there dwelt in the huge pit of Haleakala (House of the Sun), upon the island of Maui, a fierce and wicked demon, Wahokiho by name. This volcano of Haleakala was the largest in the world, being more than twenty-five miles in circumference, and filled to the very brim with molten lava. And while the demon lived in the House of the Sun, Pélé dwelt in

the Home of Everlasting Fire, upon the adjacent island of Hawaii.

Ever since the beginning of time these two evil spirits had been bitter enemies, and each had striven to overwhelm the other. Long before Man appeared this contest raged, and language is taxed to describe the terrible battles between the two, backed as they were by the gigantic forces of the burning world, and actuated by a fiercer than human hate. For hundreds of years the combat lasted; the atmosphere was black with dense, sulphurous clouds of smoke; there was no sun; the ocean was boiling hot; millions of tons of molten lava were vomited forth, and in time the Hawaiian islands were formed, built up from the bottom of the Pacific.

For a long time the struggle was a very even one, but at length the demon, being a little the stronger, began to get the better of the goddess. Then she, forseeing her inevitable destruction, begged for peace, and sent a messenger to Wahokiho, acknowledging his superior power, and praying him not to destroy her. The demon replied that he would spare her if she would become his wife. At this Pélé demurred, for in the Hawaiian mythology, the rank of a goddess is far above that of a demon. She took several days to think over the matter, and Wahokiho, becoming impatient, renewed his attack. Thereupon Pélé hastily accepted his terms and married him.

As neither Wahokiho nor Pélé were allowed to appear upon the surface of the earth, the demon dug for himself a tunnel, running under the sea, between Haleaka and Hale-mau-mau, and through this passage

he used to go, when visiting his own or his wife's house. And the story relates that from the marriage of the two dates the failing of the fires in the House of the Sun. For, being no longer actuated by hatred against Pélé, and being, in point of fact, henpecked, the demon neglected his duties as fireman, and little by little Haleakala grew cold, until at last it died out entirely.

Then Pélé, having Wahokiho in her power, and hating him worse than ever since she became his wife, drove him out into the world, and he is believed to have perished miserably, for nothing was ever afterwards heard of him.

DESCRIPTION.

Upon the island of Hawaii is Hilo, its capital. As we enter the mouth of the bay on which it stands, we see before us a panorama of the whole world. The canoe in which we are seated floats upon the broad bosom of the blue Pacific, that heaves in long, deep respirations—soundless until the waves finally break in surf upon the beach. There we see groups of figures; white men, half-bloods and natives; some dressed in European costumes, many only in their dusky skins. They represent the three divisions of men—civilized, half-civilized and savage.

The town itself presents a delightful picture of a tropical settlement. It is buried deep in foliage, and but for a few gleaming spots of white, and three church spires, spindling above them, one can hardly believe there is a town there at all.

The land about Hilo gives forth fruits and flowers with prodigal bounty. The plantations of sugar-

cane are the finest in the world; the kalo root grows so abundantly that it is said the product of an acre of ground—made into *poi*—will feed a thousand men for a year. Bananas, oranges, and cocoa-nuts grow wild. It rains almost daily in Hilo, for it is upon the windward side of the island, where the moisture-laden trade-winds reach it, and so, with the hot sun and the wet and eager earth, vegetation is rank and prolific.

The eye, wandering over the scene, at first searches in vain for something noticeable. A narrow strip of white sand and a few dark figures, indistinctly outlined against the back-ground of dense, tropical foliage are all one sees. But behind the town, rising somewhat steeply, are the rich lands and pastures of the hill-sides. Here, as below, almost the only color is green—deep, rich and fresh. Then, looking upward still further, we are attracted by two snow-covered mountain peaks, nearly fourteen thousand feet above us; Mauna Kea, the White Mountain, upon the right, and Mauna Loa, the Great Mountain, upon the left; both often so veiled in clouds we cannot see where the mountains end and the mists begin.

To the left of Mauna Loa, and ten thousand feet below its summit, is the volcano of Kilauea, in which is the Home of Everlasting Fire. When not hidden behind the low-flying clouds of the trade-winds, we see that Kilauea, by day, is surmounted by a pillar of smoke, that rises up in air, until the breeze catches it and drifts it away to leaward. By night the sky is illumined by the glow from the fiery crater beneath;

a great red canopy seems to be suspended from the clouds and lends a gorgeous dressing to the scene.

The mystery of it all too, adds to the fascination, for it is very unearthly to see, through the mists of a dark, wet night, that dull glare up in the sky, and to hear, above the boom of the surf that beats eternally upon the beach, a long moaning sound, that sometimes floats down the mountain slope. The natives call it Pélé's breathing. It is very strange, very uncanny, and one cannot hear it, even for the hundredth time, without starting.

Looking at the land from the bay then, we can go, in imagination, from the equator to the pole in an instant. At the water's edge the sun burns with a tropical fervor, and the air is moist and enervating. Back from the coast we shall find the life and vegetation of the temperate zones. There we northerners put aside that slothful, languid feeling so oppressive below. Farther up—upon the summit of Mauna Kea —where the snow rests unmelted all the year round, we shiver in the polar temperature of perpetual winter. In Hilo we wonder what is worse than too much heat, and look longingly up at the snowy mountain; upon Mauna Kea we think regretfully of the warmth of Hilo below.

Besides the general interest that every mountain posseses for us, Mauna Loa has a mysterious and awful attraction of its own. For festering in its side, like vast leprous sores on a giant's body, are two huge volcanos, the largest living fires in the world. Close to the very apex of the mountain is the crater of Mokuaweoweo, six miles in circumference; and ten

thousand feet below it is Kilauea, larger and fiercer than the other, and within whose fiery precincts dwells the wicked goddess, Pélé.

One can form no idea of the awfulness of the desolation, of the horrible, ghastly ugliness of Kilauea, until he has stood upon the brink of the crater and looked down into it. There are no words, no matter by whom put together, that can describe the scene; there are no colors, no matter how cunningly mixed and spread, that can picture it. One needs the vastness, the huge dreary emptiness of space; the deathly quiet, save for the hiss of steam and the curl of the sulphurous smoke, that rises in thin columns out of the crater, to accent the horrors of the place to the full.

Riding up from the sea, one comes upon Kilauea very suddenly. The path has led us past sugar and coffee plantations and pasture lands; over slopes of rough *aa* lava, so ragged and jagged as to be absolutely impassable except along narrow paths hewn across them. Then over expanses of *pahoe-hoe* lava, where we have to pick a careful way, for the fields are seamed and honey-combed with tunnels and subterranean chambers. Once past these dangers, we enter a dense forest, climb a steep incline, and pull up our horses just in time to save ourselves from plunging into the awful crater that yawns in misty expectancy at our very feet.

At first we do not see it at its worst; the extent of its hideousness is mercifully hid by clouds. But when at length these are slowly rolled aside, we look upon a scene that is frightful in its malignant extent

and desolation. We behold a deep, elliptical pit, seven miles around, walled in by cliffs, eight hundred feet high. Everything before us is black as midnight, and the rocks are so twisted and shattered and deformed as to be absolutely hideous. A floor of black lava covers the bottom of the crater, and here and there through it rise columns of pestilential vapors, deadly to life. It is a picture of fearful desolation, of death materialized; yet back from the edge a little way vegetation grows rankly and densely. It is but one more of the amazing contrasts one sees in Hawaii. Kilauea has the same place in a landscape that the leper would have in a *genre* picture.

As if to magnify the ugliness of the crater, we have but to turn our backs to the pit and look upon the magnificent white dome of Mauna Loa, or farther away and more dimly seen, the summit of Mauna Kea, both gleaning white and pure in the sunlight.

It is at night that Kilauea is seen at its best, for then the darkness hides the black hole, and conceals the vastness of the huge caldera. But by night or day we hear the sighing of the wind among the sharp rocks; the faint hiss of steam and that occasional moaning sound, the breathing of Pélé, that each time blanches our cheeks and makes us start in nervous fear. A little tremble of the earth, a sound as of some giant gasping for breath, a pause, and then that long shuddering sigh—followed by a moment of absolute silence, that is even more fearful than the sounds; and the whistling of the winds and the hiss of steam begins again.

When night falls upon the mountain, we have sight for but one thing in Lau Pélé (Pélé's Pit) and that is the Home of Everlasting Fire—wherein dwells the goddess. There are other pools of molten lava within the precincts of the pit, but this, Hale-mau-mau, is *the* one of them all. It is a long and dangerous journey there across the thin lava floor of the crater. Great cracks yawn beneath our feet, leading down, perhaps, to the end of Infinity. The lava becomes so hot that our feet are blistered, the rain that is falling becomes steam; yet still we keep on, until we reach a jagged wall of lava that extends across our path. Slowly and painfully we climb this and then face to face we stand with the most awful sight in this world. For we see nothing but the red blazes of the Everlasting Fire. It is in front of us, to the right and to the left of us. Instinctively we look back, thinking we must be surrounded by fire, and are half disappointed at finding only black space there.

At first the surface of the molten lava is smooth and glowing, but even as we look it breaks forth into violent motion; now surging this way, now that, in great red billows. Then, for an instant, it lulls, and there comes to us that long deep sigh of Pélé's breathing, doubly startling, now that we are standing on the very threshhold of her House of Fire.

When this sound has swept past us, down the mountain, the lake once more becomes agitated, as by a storm. The force of the billows of lava is tremendous; they sway in long waves, poise themselves for an instant to gather fresh force, then rush onward and dash against the red-hot walls of the crater in burning

surf. At intervals the glowing surface is skimmed over with a thin coating of hardened lava, but this is no sooner formed than the heat shatters it with a wicked crack! and the burning surface is again exposed. Everthing we see is fearful, overwhelming. The goddess Pélé must be indeed a devilish spirit, we think, to dwell in such a place.

As we stand watching the scene, a thick smoke-cloud slowly settles down over the burning pool, and we turn away, nearly blinded with the glare. But a moment later, the wind brushes aside the dingy pall, and then the lake appears in another mood.

At its very centre are four curious mounds, or small pyramids, floating upon the surface of the lava, and rising and falling with the hot billows of the flood. From their apices spout forth flame and sparks, recalling the most magnificent fireworks. And as we watch them, they slowly separate, and in couples move to opposite sides of the lake. Then they advance again toward the centre, pause, swing with majestic undulations upon a high rolling wave, and slowly retire to the edge. They seem to be dancing a minuet. Again and again is this repeated, faster and faster do they move, until at last the black smoke sweeps down over the scene, shutting it out from view, and we hurry away. Darkness falls upon everything, and slowly and wearily we grope our way back over the treacherous floor of the crater, and once more stand upon the firm footing of the rocks about the Pit. The smoke has cleared away over the lake and the misty sky is red with the light from the Home of Everlasting Fire. And as we watch the waving blaze,

there comes to us the hoarse rumble, a shock—a pause—and that long, deep sigh, as of a dying giant, so mysterious and awful—the breathing of Pélé. Hardly has it passed when we see the ruddy glow in the sky grow pale, and looking off towards the east, behold the sun rising up out of the sea, once more to show us new horrors and to announce the end and the beginning of a new chapter.

HISTORY.

In the annals of Hawaii this is related: That once upon a time—not very many years ago—two travelers had journeyed over the island of Hawaii; had ascended Mauna Hualalai, Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa; had looked into the volcano of Kilauea and stood upon the brink of Hale-mau-mau, the Home of Everlasting Fire. Then, surfeited at last with the horrors of the place, they had descended the mountain toward the sea. Stopping at noon at the small grass hut of a native, they left their horses there, and started to make a short excursion on foot, across an immense field of *pahoe-hoe* lava, that lay at their right hand.

It is known that the hills and mountains of Hawaii, being of lava, are undermined by subterranean passages and chambers, which pierce them with a vast network of tunnels and galleries. These are created by the cooling of the lava-flow upon the surface, thus forming a crust, from under which the molten substance beneath glides. Often, merely short, blind leads are thus made, but not seldom several passages are united and form a curious labyrinth, in which one unacquainted with the clue might easily become lost.

As the two travelers, accompanied by a native guide, were making their way with some difficulty over the billowy surface of the *pahoe-hoe*, they came suddenly upon a small opening in the field. It was circular, about a hundred yards in diameter, an extinct crater plainly, and though its fires had been dead for centuries, its steeply sloping sides were still bare of vegetation. The black rocks were covered with a green, slimy ooze, and the pool of stagnant water at the bottom of the hole was jet-black, smooth and glassy as a leper's eye. A dank haze, which even the hot sun could not dispel, hung over the opening, and the only sign of life visible was an unhealthy fungus, that clung here and there to the slippery rocks with vice-like tenacity. Everything spoke of death; the crater seemed as if it might be some ghastly charnel pit, and the mist that overhung it had that sickening odor we associate with such places.

Yet, in spite of its repulsive appearance, the travelers resolved to descend into it and seek a little shelter from the burning sun, which was fairly splitting their heads with its fierce rays. In the wall of the crater —opposite to where they stood—was a narrow, vertical gash, disclosing a passageway leading somewhere into the lava field, and they thought that in the shadow of this tunnel they should find some protection.

With much difficulty they made their way down the slippery rocks to the opening, and entered it. The change from the heat and glare without to the cool, half-light within was very grateful to the men. Except for the reflection that came through the entrance, the tunnel was dark, but they could see that it

stretched out before them into the heart of the lava field, until its walls seemed to come together in a sharp point, with that curious effect in perspective noticed in long tunnels. The roof of the passageway was out of reach; the walls about ten feet apart.

The curiosity of the two men was excited by the singularity of the place they found themselves in, and after a short rest they started to explore it a little. But by neither threat nor persuasion could they induce their native guide to accompany them. He insisted that it was dangerous; that they were coming within forbidden limits and that Pélé would be angry at them for trespassing; that they would be suffocated by gas and that they ran in the way of a hundred other dangers. So they left him at the tunnel's mouth and started on without him.

They had advanced but a few rods, when a turn in the passage shut off the light from behind them, and they halted, irresolute. Neither was timid, but the overwhelming horrors of Kilauea were fresh in their minds, and they felt themselves still under the spell of the volcano. But when their eyes had become accustomed to the darkness, they thought they could see a very faint glimmer of light ahead of them, and toward this they proceeded. Taught by the experience acquired in their explorations in Hawaii, they advanced with great care, never taking a step until they were certain it was safe. The darkness of the passage made this necessary, and it was well they were thus prudent, for twice they stayed their feet upon the edges of bottomless chasms, whose existence they discovered only by feeling their faces fanned by the cur-

rents of air that rose out of them, and hearing, far beneath them, the faint sound of falling waters.

But the crevices were narrow, and across them the men sprang and went on. As they advanced the light grew stronger, until the tunnel widened and they found themselves in a large chamber. An opening in the roof, where the lava crust had fallen in, served to admit the light, and the two explorers saw that the room was circular in form, and about fifty feet in diameter. The roof, which was thirty feet from the floor, was supported by irregularly placed columns of twisted lava.

Walking around the periphery of the room, the men noticed three passages leading out of it. One was that by which they had entered; the other two led off somewhere into the heart of the great lava field under which they were. Near the centre of the chamber, and directly beneath the opening in the roof, was a symmetrically shaped block of lava, not unlike the frustum of a pyramid, its base being about four feet square, and its height five feet; upon its four faces were rude carvings and hieroglyphs, wholly undecipherable. A thick covering of dust and fine ashes lay upon everything, and showed plainly that it was long since the chamber had been visited by man.

Upon the floor, at the base of the pyramid, the explorers found a very small and grotesquely carved idol. It was lying upon its side, almost buried in the dust, and had evidently fallen there from the top of the pile. The blow had split it through the very centre, but the two halves were still joined by a few tough slivers. The image was made of some dark, heavy

wood, and emitted a faint odor, not unlike that of sandal-wood.

Searching further in the chamber, the men found four worn and tattered *Kahilis*—great tufts of feathers, mounted upon bamboo poles, and often used in native ceremonies. They also discovered three heavy, knotted clubs, such as were sometimes carried by warriors and priests, and used by them with deadly effect; and a pile of calabashes, lying in a confused heap in the darkest part of the room and covered with dust and fine ashes.

In spite of the ventilating aperture in the roof, the air was strongly impregnated with sulphurous gases, and the men, finding themselves becoming affected by the fumes, started hurriedly for the exit. As they did so one of them picked up the little idol—it was no larger than a common doll—and placed it in the pocket of his shooting-coat. Halting an instant, in doubt as to which passage they should take, they heard hurrying toward them, from somewhere in the heart of the great mountain, the long, deep sigh of Pélé's breathing. They felt a blast of wind, rushing out of the tunnel—then came the moaning, faint at first, then growing louder—a hoarse rumble, and the rocks about them creaked and splintered in the shock of an earthquake. The men had never heard these sounds so distinctly before, nor felt the breath of the spirit blowing on their faces, and these gave an unpleasant reality to the superstition. The awful fear which an earthquake always engenders in the bravest, seized them, and for an instant they were helpless. But with the passing of the shock, they recovered their self-possession,

and hurried from the tunnel out into the sunlight again, and so on down to Hilo.

And in the course of time, they departed from Hawaii and went into other lands, and saw new sights, but before doing so they were received by the Princess Likelike, sister of the reigning king, Kalakaua, and Governess of the island of Hawaii. And to her, as a present, the travelers gave the grotesque little idol which they had found in the chamber in the great field of *pahoe-hoe*, and the Princess accepted the gift, and thanked them. Then they sailed away and *Hawaii nei* knew them no more.

The people of Hilo had lived so long under the charm of their environment, had so yielded themselves to the influences of the enervating climate of the place, and to the absolute freedom from care that was their birthright, that they had come to believe the world was made solely for them. Living though they did within the shadows of two terrible volcanoes, wherein fires were forever burning, they forgot the threat thus constantly extended, or believed that nothing could awaken those fires into activity. If they thought at all, it was that within the boundaries of Hawaii might be found both the beginning and the end of the world. The Pacific lay broad before them, but it led to nowhere, they believed; it was only water, and there were no paths on the water. And so they passed their days in idleness and pleasure, and gave no thought for anything save the Now.

Therefore they did not notice that night after night the clouds that had overhung Kilauea since before their traditions began, were now slowly grow-

ing brighter; nor that day by day, the column of smoke grew denser and blacker, and spread out over the cloudy sky until the daylight became dusk.

They may have perceived that the shuddering sound of Pélé's breathing came more frequently hurrying down the mountain slopes, to startle them from their sleep or revelry, but with the thoughtlessness of their race, they noticed it only to forget it.

Within the Home of Everlasting Fire, a great change had taken place since the two travelers stood upon its brink. The molten lava had risen in the Pit, until the immense caldera was full to the brim of a white-hot fluid that surged now this way, now that, in desperate efforts to beat down the walls that hemmed it in. Yet for a long time the rocks resisted the blows, and the people of Hilo lived on, undisturbed by the impending danger.

But one night, they were suddenly awakened to a realization of their peril. The land was shaken by violent earthquakes; we are told that three hundred and ninety-one heavy shocks were felt in twenty-four hours; the earth was never quite still. The sound of Pélé's breathing was heard with alarming frequency, coming louder and more distinct each time; the column of smoke above the Pit became denser than the air, and cooling as it rose, rolled back down the slopes, darkening the streets of Hilo, and then slowly drifted out to sea. By night, the heavens were ablaze, and the land was lighted up as if it were sun-time.

Then, of a sudden, the swaying of the earth ceased; the side of the mountain was cleft, as if with a gigantic

axe, and through this opening there gushed a river of molten lava, that hurried on its destructive way to the sea.

Down the slope it crept—a huge, glowing stream four miles wide—scorching, terrrible, irresistible. It withered the forests with its fiery breath, and turned the streams into vapor. It plowed down hills and filled up valleys; nothing could delay its steady advance.

The natives, at last aroused from their apathy, became wild with terror. They ascribed the eruption to Pélé, and sought by all known means to propitiate her. Every sort of sacrifice was offered up; cattle and hogs by the hundreds; calabashes of *poi*, fruit, flowers; everything that tradition showed had heretofore been acceptable to the goddess—everything but human life.

Yet still the flow continued, rolling daily nearer and nearer to the sea, and still the volcano gave no signs of abating. All accounts agree that the scene was one of awful grandeur—an exhibition of terrible and relentless power. Many of the very old or very young died overcome by terror. The teachings of civilization were forgotten by the Hawaiians, and Pélé was worshiped as she had been before the islands were discovered by the white men. Yet all the offerings made to propitiate her were of no avail; the mighty red-hot river still held its slow, persistent way down to Hilo.

Then there appeared—no one knew whence he came—an old man, who announced that he was Kanoa, a high priest of Pélé. He was of gigantic stature,

and though of great age, carried himself as upright as a youth. He declared that the flow was an evidence of the goddess's anger, and that unless she were immediately pacified, Hilo and all it contained would be destroyed. He told the people that Pélé was provoked because one of her secret temples had been invaded by impious strangers, the taboo broken, and an idol carried away. This idol, Kanoa said, was Wahokiho, once the husband of Pélé, and demon of the House of the Sun. By her direction, it had been placed in a temple in the heart of Mauna Loa, when she drove him out into the world; and the priest predicted that with the release of Wahokiho from confinement, the fires of Haleakala would soon be rekindled and the old fight between the demon and the goddess would be resumed.

This prediction, coming at such a time, added to the terror of the excitable natives, and they clamored loudly for the punishment of the men who had broken Pélé's taboo. The Princess Likelike, albeit a well-educated, intelligent woman, became herself influenced by the popular superstition; and from the fact that she had been the custodian of the idol, ignorant of its name and character, she believed that she had become the object of Pélé's wrath, and that nothing but her death as a sacrifice would save Hilo and its people from total annihilation. This superstition was shared by the Hawaiians almost without exception, although a few of the most intelligent believed that the returning of the idol to Pélé would suffice to calm her.

Meantime, these reports, coming to the hearing of the Princess, served to confirm her in her belief that

she was the chosen victim of Pélé's anger. The continued slow advance of the great lava river; the destruction of lives and property; the increase of the heat and smoke and the growing terror of the natives, made the scene in Hilo a most extraordinary one. Night was literally turned into day, and the sullen booming of Pélé's breathing, now coming bursting forth more and more rapidly as if she were growing impatient for her revenge, added greatly to the superstitious fright of the people.

On the evening of the second of February, the lava was within a mile of the town, and before morning, would reach the sea and destroy Hilo and everything remaining in it. The place was deserted; not a soul dared stay upon land, but the bay was crowded with boats, themselves crowded with people, who lingered near to catch a last glimpse of their homes. The glare from the molten lava lit up the cloudy sky, and the trade-winds, blowing the smoke up the mountain, left the scene in full view.

The Princess, in spite of her fixed belief that she was the selected object of Pélé's anger, had fled with the others to the water, and was seated there in her canoe, in the centre of a large fleet. She had but one attendant, the high priest Kanoa. While all, white and native, were watching the slow advance of the lava flow, and counting the minutes until it should reach the sea, two figures seated in a small canoe were observed making their way swiftly towards the land. It was not until they had passed through the surf and reached the beach, that the Princess Likelike and Kanoa were recognized.

The two paused a moment there, when Kanoa handed the Princess a long staff of bamboo, upon which was fastened the idol of Wahokiho. Holding this high above her head, she advanced alone through the deserted streets of Hilo, straight toward the flow, now but half a mile away. When the natives saw her approaching the deadly stream they set up the long mournful death-wail, and chanted the song sung at the dying of a chief.

"Ue, ue! ua make kuu alii
Ua make kuu haku, kuu hoa;
Kuu hoa i ka wa o ka wi,
Kuu hoa i paa ka aina,
Kuu hoa i kuu ilihune
Kuu hoa i ka ua me ka makani;
Kuu hoa i wela a ka la
Kuu hoa i ka ino,
Kuu hoa i ka malie
Kuu hoa i na kai awalu;
Ue, ue! na hala kun hoa,
Aole e hoi hou mai."

And as this chant arose from the singers in the boats the Princess walked on steadily through the town toward the lava, bearing the idol high above her head; and louder and louder rose the wailing from the water.

While all were watching her, a quick change in the wind swept the smoke back down the mountains, over the bay, and the figure of the Princess disappeared behind the black, enveloping clouds. The wailing ceased and all gazed at the spot where she had last been seen. At this moment, there came hurrying down the mountain the long, low sigh of Pélé's

breathing; it ended with a shock, and those who were looking saw the opening in the mountain, through which the lava had been flowing, grow dark as the edges of the gash were drawn together. The eruption was over, and Hilo and its inhabitants were saved.

That night the land was visited by a tremendous storm. The lightning was incessant and the rain fell in sheets, cooling the crust of the lava into stone; and in the morning the people returned to their lovely village and began again their life of lazy indifference.

ALOHA!