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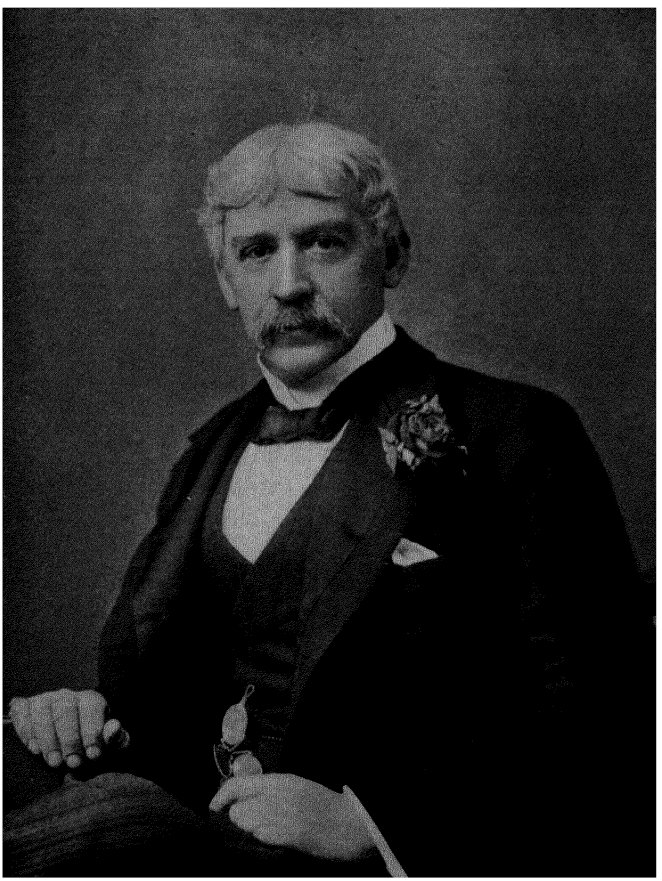
Title Stories and Poems

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STORIES AND POEMS

BY

BRET HARTE



FRANCIS BRET HARTE

From a photograph by Mr. Thomas Fall

OXFORD EDITION

STORIES AND POEMS

BY

BRET HARTE

SELECTED AND EDITED
WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES
BY

WILLIAM MACDONALD



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NOTE

THE present book contains a fuller selection of Bret Harte's prose and verse than has hitherto been given in a single volume, and also represents his third as well as his first and second literary periods. For the latter advantage the Editor and Publishers owe acknowledgements and thanks to Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co., to whom belongs the copyright of *Left out on Lone Star Mountain*; and to Messrs. Chatto & Windus, who have generously permitted them to include "*Chu Chu!*" *Johnson's "Old Woman,"* and *The Mission Bells of Monterey*. The Editor's more personal thanks are tendered to the latter firm for permission to make use of the information in Mr. H. C. Merwin's *Life of Bret Harte*; to Messrs. C. Arthur Pearson, Ltd., for similar permission regarding the biography by the late Edgar T. Pemberton; and to Messrs. Hutchinson & Co. for leave to quote some former observations of his own which are now their legal property. Nor can he leave unmentioned the fact that when he wrote (a stranger, and at a venture) to Madame Van de Velde for some information—not knowing of that lady's recent decease—he received a most obliging reply from her daughter, Miss Van de Velde, who at once placed at his service a valued copy of the book he was in search of, and followed up this kindness by sending transcriptions from note-books of her mother and some bibliographical information that cannot have been collected without trouble, since he had himself failed to find it.

To each of the biographies above named the Editor's debt is great and equal, but their merits are dissimilar. Mr. Pemberton's book (1903) is the work of a warm-

hearted English friend, and while conveying a very pleasing impression of its subject in his human qualities, is rather to seek in the matter of criticism, literary or other. In the earlier part, too, the author makes rapid copy and imports local colour by extensive quotations from stories by Bret Harte, which he treats as biographical documents. The effect is quite good, and therefore the method legitimate, if the reader knows where he is; but he is not always warned. For the English period the book must remain the primary authority, owing to Mr. Pemberton's personal intercourse with Bret Harte and his prior access to the correspondence. Mr. Merwin's book, again,—published in 1912—holds the field for the earlier life and the antecedent family history. Yet its most substantial merits, perhaps, are additional to those of a good biography; for it is the outcome of prolonged study, not only of Bret Harte's works (his knowledge of which is unequalled) but of every aspect of that whole world of Californian life and character which is the main scene and theme of these works. The writer is further a man of wide literary culture and fine discernments, whose admiration of Bret Harte is the more convinced and convincing for not being uncritical on any side. His book is thus in every respect illustrative and on all accounts indispensable to those who would know not only Bret Harte's life but the general life which he reflected.

W. M.

INTRODUCTION

THOUGH the name Bret Harte is not, as was at one time supposed, a literary pseudonym like Mark Twain or Voltaire, it is neither the complete name of the great writer to whom it belongs, nor is it baptismally or patronymically correct as far as it goes. In obedience, doubtless, to an indefeasible instinct urging him to make a name for himself ("and start fair"), the commencing author evolved it as a signature by concurrent processes of simplification and adornment, and having arrived at a form at once individual, modest, and distinguished, ended by adopting it for social use. Francis Brett Hart was born in Albany, the capital of New York State, on August 25, 1836, and came of that good mixed stock which has been the making of so many eminent Americans. The value of pure Dutch and English strains, especially when found together, has been often established, and he had the benefits of both; yet what counted for most among the elements of his heredity was contributed by a Jewish grandfather. Beyond this Ebrew Jew (more accurately, an English Jew settled in America) the record on his father's side does not run, but on the mother's side it penetrates well back into the seventeenth century. Passing William Teller, "a captain in the Indian wars," whose daughter Helena married Francis Rombout, we come within sight of known names with the marriage, in 1703, of Catharyna, daughter of this Francis Rombout, to the Englishman Roger Brett. Roger Brett was a lieutenant in the Navy, and related to Sir Balliol Brett, the judge who was raised to the peerage as Viscount Esher; and he first appears in America about the year 1700 as a friend of Lord Cornbury, which, to be sure, is not such a recommendation

to American favour. As to Francis Rombout, again, he hailed from Hasselt in the Netherlands, having come to the present New York State while it was still New Holland and its chief city New Amsterdam. A man of high character and vigorous abilities, he was a most prevailing citizen under both the Dutch and the British régimes, was chosen for high offices and important charges in peace and even in war, and was wealthy withal. "To his daughter Catharyna he left," says Mr. Merwin, "immense estates"—of which, however, no stick, stone, or stiver seems to have come down to the author of *The Luck of Roaring Camp*.

The Jewish graft upon this good Dutch and English stock was effected by the marriage in 1799 of a granddaughter of Catharyna and Roger Brett to Bernard Hart, who was born in London "on Christmas Day 1763 or 1764," but came as a boy of thirteen to Canada, where he had many relations. "Those Canadian Harts," says Mr. Merwin, "were a marked family, energetic, strong-willed, prosperous, given to hospitality, warm-hearted, and pleasure-loving." Of the latter group of qualities he gives some alarming and convincing instances. Young Bernard, however, did not abide long in this dangerous vicinage, but went to New York in 1780 to act as business representative for his Canadian cousins. To say that he was a successful man in the business career thus early begun is almost an understatement. A local historian is quoted as affirming that "Towering aloft among the magnates of the city in the last and present century is Bernard Hart," this eminence being achieved equally in the commercial, social, religious, and philanthropic activities of his time, place, and race. The latter detail has an important bearing. Bernard Hart, while not at all a sombre person, was a Jew orthodox and devout, and a life-long member of the first synagogue—Shearith Israel or Remnant of Israel—established in America. This moral trait, we may divine, had much to do with the unhappy sequel to his marriage with Catharine Brett. At any rate the Jewish bridegroom left his Gentile bride within a year; and though he is believed to have contributed to her support and that of her son throughout life, they had no other relations afterwards. Not only

so; but a few years later he took to wife a damsel of his own race, and by her had a large family of sons and daughters, "whose careers," says Mr. Merwin, "were honourable." Not, of course, so conspicuously and variously honourable as that of their father, who was full of business ability, good works, and religious acceptance to the end, dying in 1855 at the patriarchal age of ninety-one, when Bret Harte was already nineteen. But never in all this time, nor for fifty years later, did any of the children of Zipporah Seixas know of that earlier marriage to Catharine Brett, or of their kinship to her son, Henry Hart, or to that son's son, the greatest, because the most vital, American writer of his generation. Only after Bret Harte's death, when the genealogists had got to work, did the light break in and the truth come out. The secret had been well kept. But it will be a wholesomer world, a juster, and a less perplexing one, when such secrets are bravely committed to mankind to keep by all concerned.

Henry Hart, the offspring of the marriage thus long kept within the shadow of his parent's past, was brought up by his mother, and therefore lived a secluded boyhood and youth till he went to college. The circumstance goes to explain some qualities of his character and career which reacted in turn upon his son. Illustrative likewise, and also prophetic, is the fact that in the end he was prevented from taking his degree by an unpaid college bill. He was throughout life at odds with his accounts, having even less faculty for managing money than for making it on any large and comfortable scale. Repeating a process which has been many times exemplified, in him the practical and fortune-making energies of the earlier generations had given place to a sensitive, dreamy, and idealizing type of character. He was in no sense a helpless or inherently dependent person; but a certain instability of purpose and pursuit went with his warm-heartedness or resulted from it. The fifteen years of his married life (he had married in 1830 Elizabeth Rebecca Ostander, of Dutch descent, as the name connotes) were a continuous family migration, imperfectly financed by scholastic appointments at the stopping-places, which were all around the eastern States. He was the kind of

man to care greatly for what was no personal interest of his, perhaps to the neglect of what was; and his affection and his political idealism met in his devotion to Henry Clay. When Clay was defeated in the presidential contest of 1844, the blow struck the spirit of Henry Hart so heavily that he sank under it, dying a few months later.

In such conditions, then, did Bret Harte gather his first conception of the human scene and the ways of man's life. The process, be it pointed out, involved successive initiations beyond what mere travel can afford, great as the powers of travel are to speed the development of young minds. For if he moved through a scene of frequent and mysterious change, each new horizon bounded a world not only to be viewed in passing but to be appropriated, absorbed, lived into like the old. And if these many migrations were equivalent to a course of adventures, the new adventure was always fraught with the serious issues of family fortune, and the depressions, exhilarations, or hopes that went therewith: to all of which a sensitive child would be inevitably, however latently, responsive. It is likely, also, that he early had intuitions of relationships beyond his view: some sense of a dim backward and abysm of the family history still influencing their lives. That theme recurs indeed so often in his works, that we cannot doubt that he drew it from the first stock of his mind's preoccupations. Nor were such preoccupations or divinings beyond the capacity of a boy who at six was reading Shakespeare and at seven was a devotee of Dickens, and from them passed freely to Fielding, Goldsmith, Smollett, Cervantes, and Washington Irving. It is a list that would have delighted Charles Lamb, as an account of a small boy's reading. But this small boy's father was a scholar, his mother a fit wife for such a man, and the family—two boys and two girls—grew up in an atmosphere of good reading and good criticism. Young Frank, who started as a studious babe, was further favoured by ill-health between the ages of six and ten, which, if it made him "unable to lead an active life," obviously gained him much time for reading and lessened the chances of stupefaction by school. Hence the Shakespeare, Fielding, and the rest. Hence, too, a poem written at the age of eleven, stealthily contributed to a

New York Sunday Magazine, and accepted on its intrinsic merits. It was entitled *Autumnal Musings*; but neither the tender youth of the poet nor the mellow wisdom of his first production saved either from a sustained harrying by the family critics. He kept out of the way of the press thereafter; but of course to write no more was impossible. What he wrote was done without ulterior intention and was submitted to a boy's best critic, his mother. He left school at thirteen, and after a year's boy-clerking in a lawyer's office entered a merchant's counting-house. The reading continued, and even the studies; for we hear of astonishing progress made in Greek during a two-months' illness when he was fourteen. At this rate, had the family continued its stay in New York, where it had been domiciled since his father's death, he might have been drawn ultimately into the orbit of that Boston system of Polite Letters which was to be the next phase of New England intellectualism. But the call of the West came—"with timely care"—and transplanted him to that larger world which he had been born to see, comprehend, and reveal as no other did or could. In 1853 his mother went to California to live with her elder son Henry, her elder daughter being already married and her younger one almost ready to leave school. It was only to bring this young lady safe-guarded on the way that Francis, who was by this time quite self-supporting, deferred his own migration. But early next year the boy and girl set out, and travelling by the Nicaragua route—certainly not the least perilous way of getting to the West—they entered California through the Golden Gate, on an unknown day in March 1854.

As every year is the Year of the Lord, all modern dates are signally important from the standpoint of eternity. But in the less equable perspective of human views, an engrossing significance attaches to different dates in different places, with sometimes a good choice of reasons for the ascription. Look at it from where you will, 1854 is an outstanding year in the chronology of California. "That is so," at once assents the man of letters. "In 1854 Bret Harte arrived in that country, and made its place in literature as secure as Troy."

Somewhat differently pronounces the historian, who is not thinking of literature and usually refers to Bret Harte only to disparage, seeing in him a rival expositor more generally accepted. Nevertheless, "the year 1854," says he also, "marks an important era in San Francisco social evolution. It was the year in which began the first great financial depression in California."[1] An unfortunate conjuncture, truly, and an ill omen. But we may find another that is blameless and more relevant. In 1854 the great compilation, entitled *The Annals of San Francisco*, was already in the press and was published next year in far-away New York.

Here indeed is a conjuncture, the significance of which is penetrating and comprehensive. For in the *Annals* those who had participated in the rush and thrill of the first Gold Days, and had seen the many changes since then, were hastening to put on record (not *suis manibus*, but by the pens of collecting and redacting editors) what they knew of that celebrated time—say 1849–51—and even, some of them, to commit to posterity their rarer knowledge of that yet earlier age of the mid-forties, when Americans were strangers in a land that was still asleep. Those who remembered that antiquity were foreloopers indeed, and spoke with a special licence to misinform, if not knowingly to lie, in their accounts of the legendary Conquest, and the Bear Flag Revolt that so bravely initiated it, and all the heroes. But naturally it was to the coming of the gold-seekers, horde upon horde of them, and the resulting conditions, and all the wild doing and undoing of the first Gold Days—and, of course, the wonderful progress since then—that the attention of the annalists was mainly due and rightly given. Already men spoke in that country of "the early days, sir!" as a vanished period which the newcomer could never know. They were essentially wrong; if only because the early days could not possibly die while those ancient survivors lived to speak of them. More than that. In many a camp on the Foothills, just being formed in hope or about to be abandoned in despair —in many an inchoate township with the roughness of its primary conditions palpable for some miles around—

[1] Royce's *California*, p. 423.

and chiefly in the good and ill luck, the surprises and disappointments, the mistakes and follies, the generosities and crimes of numberless individuals still travelling on an old road without the light of experience from those who had gone before them—in these and other ways were being re-enacted in the interior the typical social evolution, the typical personal fates of "the early days, sir!" even as late as 1854, and later. Nor had the city of San Francisco herself—for all her magical growth and specious development—for all her five great fires and all her impudent advance, as if for safety, knee-deep and more into the ocean's domain—not even so had she shed either the evidences or the contacts of her dishevelled past. If new attributes were forming, old associations remained, with the added power of quick inveteracy and redoubled superfoetation. If those who came through the Golden Gate came now to a better hostel than the first gold-seekers found, and generally on another errand, yet there came now also from inland, or had long haunted her streets, those who had been upon that errand and were sick or satisfied, and could tell the story to whoever cared for it. In the space of an illimitable lustrum many changes indeed had come and gone in San Francisco: but many facts of outward appearance and inward being—not least her rudimentary moral sense and the miscellaneity rather than cosmopolitanism of her population—were as recognizable pieces of her wilder past as the sand-embedded hulk in *A Ship of '49*.

Nevertheless, the publication of the *Annals* in 1854 was significant equally for the history of the country and for the biography of Bret Harte. It meant that a second period had begun in the new California, though not that the first period had ceased, even in San Francisco. California was becoming conscious, and remembering, and relating; while still the process which had been translated into a subject of fond legend went on, hard by, in its actuality and concreteness, innocent of thought. It was a juncture of the social soul in which one might see the auld moon wi' the new moon in her arms. It foreshadowed some auspicious advent or some enactment of note: the nature and manner of which may, perhaps, be best put before the reader by borrowing a paragraph

from an earlier essay of the present writer. The essay treated mainly of the typical stages in the history of mining camps—stages leading on to endurance or abandonment—and made the application which follows:

"And if, returning now to Bret Harte, it be asked why we have said so much about the passing of disorder which was never a general fact of the scene, and about the rise of social conditions with which literary criticism has little to do, the answer is simple, if not obvious. Those things had much to do with the psychology of California, as Bret Harte found it when he came; and their reaction upon him was not less powerful, but rather the more pervasive, because for him, and for those to whose life-history they belonged, they had already something of a legendary range and prevalence, and were the common subject-matters of a tale that is told. For man, be it never forgotten, lives not by the bread of fact alone, nor only in the presence of the thing that is; but also by the large atmosphere of his moods and his imaginations, and in the presence of the reality which has been liberated and made essential by evanescence, like a soul that becomes sincere when the body dies. The crudeness of actuality, till time frets it away, is a curtain to the Truth, and immediate contact—first-hand experience, as it is called—may deaden the perceptions and give a thwart to the judgement rather than deepen the knowledge of those to whose lot it has fallen. It follows that as the man in the centre of the crowd sees least and is most acted upon, so the actors in any large social drama are its worst historians and its best memoirists. Their memoirs are *pour servir*, as the French say, and are of value just because they are subject to an immense discount in the audit of testimony. What is finally important is not their fact, which they speak of, but their feeling in regard to it, which they betray. That is the determining truth, the temper of the time, the real agent, though it may be entirely an error in relation to the narrated event. Historical interpretation becomes possible only when there is a sufficient quorum of contradictory voices, with an imaginative genius as chairman and clerk. Similarly and conversely, by the agreement of many

witnesses the truth of Romance is established, and he who allows every common soul to tell its own story arrives in time at the wonder of the world.

"Now there never was a land in which so many common souls had each its uncommon story to tell as in the California to which Bret Harte came in 1854. It was a land already full of memories, of reverie, of dream. In the minds of men, as in the outward landscape, there was a sense of great distances, of long travel, of peopled solitudes, of constant change. Scarce a thing was visible—save the hills, and these how altered!—which they had not seen arise out of nothingness. Scarce a forsaken slope, a silent river-reach of to-day, but had had its yesterday of experimental animation and brief tumult. The streets of cities were built far out where the sea had been, and the crises of individual and civic fortunes broke and went, as many and casual as the waves. Here, of a truth, the Friend of Humanity could have found no Needy Knife-Grinder without a story to tell; and it would have been told without that surcharge of mean accuracy for which, and not for his moral destitution, his poverty of ideals and of wrongs, the Knife-Grinder was fated to be damned. For as the newspaper perishes and gives place to history, and perhaps to truth in time, so Realism has its euthanasia in Romance, and is justified of its crabbed and ill-chosen life only if it passes, in this recantation of its sin, into the Better World of art. Of the large utterance and the large air of that world the Argonauts, without knowing it, had made themselves inheritors by a double token, in that they had left behind them the safeties of their own parish and had crossed the insuperable mountains for visionary gold. And romantic was, indeed, the air they lived in when they had arrived, as they arrived so early, at that afternoon sense of existence of which we have spoken, and looked back upon the vicissitudes of thirty or forty months ago as things in the dimness of long distance, the glory of great years. For thus the social psychology had generated, in relation to its own enacted experience, that aerial detachment which is the beginning of art as it is the first step towards infinity. And thus a great part of the work of literature was already done, if only a New-Comer would appear with imagination enough to be

influenced by it, and genius enough to take it for his own."[1]

Bret Harte came; and he made it his own not only by the right of genius, but by the power of knowledge widely gathered and vitally absorbed. The two years (or less) spent in his mother's house at Oakland were doubtless a time of strenuous acquisition for the working and storing brain of the all-observing adolescent. His occupations during this period as a teacher and again as a clerk would leave time for many an excursion to towns old and new, for many a climb among the coast-hills, and many a wander in the valleys converging on the Bay; above all, for many an hour of loitering and learning in and around San Francisco, reading the book of its life in street and warehouse, wharves and by-ways, and the friendships there enjoyed, the acquaintances encountered, while yet he had no consciousness of a purpose beyond the pleasure of seeing. Had literature alone been his destination, he need have gone no farther for material. He need not, indeed, have gone to California at all. For the stuff of representation was in all experience for him, and human nature wherever met had much to tell him. But he was called to something above and beyond the common task and achievement of the artist. He was to give the total impression of an epoch in the history of a country and to make the whole land live visibly in the minds of mankind. Wherefore, as if recognizing the call, sometime before he was twenty he left home for good, and entered at once upon the wander-years that were to qualify him for mastership. Had he ever written the autobiography of which he sometimes spoke, it is likely that his recollections of this period would have been found the most interesting part of it. What we have is a catalogue of occupations by which he paid his way.

The first was that of tutor to a family "at Alamo in the San Ramon Valley." If one or two of the sons were older than their teacher, that circumstance was quite in keeping with what occurred in other grades of Cali-

[1] From the Introduction to *Tales of the Argonauts and Selected Verse, by Bret Harte* (in the Turner House Classics), with the kind permission of Messrs. Hutchinson & Co.

fornia's educational system. "I'll be damned," wrote the most valuable member of Pine Clearing school-board, "but I'll have peace and quietness at Pine Clearing, if I have to wipe out or make over the whole Pike County gang." The member of the said Pike County gang who comes most prominently into view in the story is a free and independent but also surly schoolboy of nineteen, whom Bret Harte could have taught at ten. We have no reason to suppose that the teacher wiped out or made over the pupils at Alamo; but for some reason unknown he presently betook himself to the coast-town of Humboldt, 250 miles north of San Francisco. That was to be not so much a stopping-place as a point of departure for many journeys. While there he took an engagement as Expressman to Wells, Fargo & Co.,[1] a famous coaching and banking company, whose name *now* suggests to us Bret Harte's stories as instantly as does the name of Yuba Bill, whom he doubtless met in that service under an alias. During this engagement he made many and perilous journeys to the northern boundary of the State and eastward to the mines. It was a wild country in all senses, and the road-agents (*Anglice*, highwaymen) were frequent and free. "Bret Harte's predecessor was shot through the arm; his successor was killed"; and a friend who had often heard him talk of his adventures at that period says he ran a thousand risks. The risks were well enough, and doubtless most informing; but though mounting guard over other people's money afforded pretexts for travel, it was not an occupation for life. So we hear of him next at a place called Union, fifty miles farther north, where he qualified himself in the learned art and craft of printing in a newspaper office. From this connexion, and some others like it, he brought away gains of more enduring value than the power to set type. His humour is never more instant or more

[1] Mr. Pemberton says Adams & Co. But as that firm came to grief in 1856, it is more likely to have been the great and long-lived rival firm that Bret Harte worked for. The duty of the Expressman was to guard the treasure conveyed by coach: gold and gold-dust being sent down from the mines for safe-keeping, and legal tender sent back for current use. The excitements of the Expressman's life are vividly presented in *Jeff Briggs's Love Story* and *A Niece of Snapshot Harry's*.

authentic as a report, than when he looks into an editorial sanctum or quotes the utterances of a free and enlightened press. Nor is his observation ever so happy, his sympathy so governing and sure, as when he is noting the behaviour of children, divining their mental gait and view. For both these motives in his future work, all this period was full of instruction. For again he kept school at Union, and again put in some time as a druggist's clerk. It was probably between those two engagements that he tried his luck as a gold-digger. There seems no reason to doubt that the paper *How I went to the Mines* describes an authentic personal experience; and that adventure, it is to be noted, was entered upon because the writer had suddenly found himself in the position of a schoolmaster without scholars. It was upon the whole a very quiet adventure. He had his one exciting moment of what seemed "nigger luck" (the inexplicable good fortune of the inexperienced or the inexpert), but it was a false flash; and he only found that, if it came to the worst, he could probably make "grub wages" with his pick and pan. However, such an organization as his was not bestowed for the handling of these tools, honourable and epic though they were: so he went farther. The last position which he held during this wander-period was that of a sort of general aid—compositor, printer's devil, and assistant editor—in the offices of the *Northern California* of Eureka. It came near to being the last position which he was to hold in this world. For in the absence of the editor he imprudently denounced in a leading article the conduct of some miners of the vicinity, who had indulged in an Indian massacre. The massacre of Indians was not considered an excess in that region, but these moral airs and impertinences were. So the more forward members of an indignant community gathered towards the offices of the *Northern California* with intent to wreck the premises and hang the stranger. The said stranger must have felt that he had struck the early days at last, as he held the mob at bay with a couple of pistols till military relief came. The editor returned in haste, and as hastily dismissed the assistant who had shown such an imperfect sense of what the public wanted. Had the

incident not occurred, the assistant would presently have dismissed himself. For it was absolutely essential that Bret Harte should have lived in a place called Eureka, but absolutely impossible that he could have continued there. Through what adventures he made his return to San Francisco we do not know, but we next find him in the offices of the *Golden Era*, where he had been taken on as a compositor, but was soon "discovered" and transferred to the editorial rooms.

The migratory course thus briefly summarized (and there may have been stages not recorded at all[1]) was traversed within the bounds of two years. But those two years constituted a long and dominating period in the life of Bret Harte: long in the living, long in the retrospect, longest perhaps in the reach of their effect on his works and ways. During them he had verified as much of the legend of that land, had been a part of as many of its characteristic scenes and incidents, as any young man then could, and emerge master of himself. And he had plunged into this experience without apparent sense of direction, but also without the disabling purposes of the seeker of local colour or the book-making observer of "scenes of life." He had gone forth for the love of going, like a truant schoolboy. He had gazed at near and far for the love of beholding—"for to admire and for to see"—like one whose nature was constituted to take the impression of the world, and therefore satisfied its need and fulfilled its end by an interlude and service of wandering. Thus it was that he acquired (not during this period alone, it is true, but in many wanderings and reveries before and after) that almost unconscious and organic knowledge of the whole region—that continuing latent sense and awareness of all its sights and scents and sounds—which is a constant quality in his work, and gives to it its indefeasible stamp of authenticity as a regional literature. Now it has been profoundly remarked

[1] Mr. Pemberton, for instance, speaks of his friend's "soldiering days, too. In the warfare with the Indians he fought through two campaigns to a staff appointment." This is rather a wonderful statement, and Mr. Merwin takes no notice of it. As a fact, there was some trouble with Indians in the northern part of the country during this period, and Bret Harte may have gone along as a volunteer, an unofficial attaché or camp follower.

by the Historiographer of the Pacific Slope that no one in the early 'fifties ever left New York by any route and arrived at San Francisco the same person. And when the long journey had done its work of sifting, testing, and rearranging the character and outlook, there were still new adjustments to be made at the scene of arrival. The whole transition, says Mr. Bancroft, was a transmigration of souls.[1] If this was true for the average newcomer, it was also true for Bret Harte; who, if he had fewer prepossessions to shed, had a greater avidity and faculty of absorption. It was a great happening, therefore, that one so sensitive should have come to California in the full onset of his adolescence: that the high mental rate-of-going which belongs to that greatest of life's periods should have synchronized with the stimulating influences of an epic journey, and with his entry upon a scene abnormal in its immediate aspects and charged with the reverberations of a recent past more abnormal still. Then had come an interval during which he was assimilating this new disordered world in all the ways open to him without breaking with the home. But when to all these courses of stimulation and unsettlement (recalling, as they did, the shifting experience of his earliest life) there was now added a period during which the young spectator cut adrift from all customary attachments, and committed himself to the chances of the road—doing the chores which enabled him to tarry till he had seen enough, or to go on when he would see more—making the friendships which he met upon the way, and leaving them there when he went farther—separated at every stage from his past, if not from himself, by immersion in an ever-new present to which there seemed to be no future, since it was leading ostensibly nowhither for him—surely it begins to grow obvious

[1] *Retrospection, Political and Personal*, by Hubert Howe Bancroft, 1913 (pages 115, 123, 135-6). A volume of reminiscence, prophecy, and reverie by the only man whose arrival in California was possibly more important even than Bret Harte's.

With regard to the subject in the text: the phenomenon was observed so early as 1849 by Bayard Taylor, who says: "A man, on coming to California, could no more expect to retain his old nature unchanged than he could retain in his lungs the air he had inhaled on the Atlantic shore" (*El Dorado*, vol. ii. p. 40).

that the result was likely to be not alone an addition to the stored resources of the future writer, but some effect also on the whole man: some unintended bias of his nature acquired on the way, that might determine the note of his life. For the present we are concerned with the effect on his work. It was this: that during those two years of detachment and roaming, and immersion in the forgetful present, he had visited awake the scenery of his dreams, and henceforth knew it by a double initiation. He knew it—the scenery, and that past and present of California which it enclosed—because he had become it.

But now he was back in a sphere more obviously suited to a young man of his education and talents. Nor was there, be it said, anything in his appearance or tone to suggest the rough places he had been through, or the tumult of recollections he carried about with him. His early colleagues all picture to us a young man singularly quiet and modest, yet bright withal, with an engaging instant friendliness to the stranger; gentlemanly in manners and bearing, good-looking to the point of distinction, and neat to the point of dressiness. "I think he was the cleanest man I ever met," says Joaquin Miller, referring not to externals alone but to the more close-fitting habits of thought and speech as well. Finally, all who knew him, then or later, speak of his low, rich, pleasing voice: "the mellow cordial of a voice," says Mr. Howells, "that was like no other." Everything, even to his handwriting (the beauty of which also has been a subject of exclamation), seems to have expressed a nature poised, in its affinities, between the exquisitely fine and the generously ornate. Morally and intellectually also he held of both; witness the personal sensitiveness which made him feel even the small wounds of the world somewhat keenly, and the robust and almost insurgent force of his sympathy with human life, especially beyond the parterres. That, however, was yet to be fully seen. Meantime, the parterres contained no human flower more douce or well-behaved. He lived a quiet and studious life in San Francisco, quite *en garçon* now, making the acquaintance doubtless of the Neighbourhoods I have Moved from. He went little into society, and a colleague of the *Golden Era* days even tells us how

the recent runagate would seriously reproach him with "wasting my substance in riotous visitation." It is evident that if not "the desire and the intuition of renown," at least the aspiration to achieve some work of excellence in literature had now fairly taken hold of him. He had, indeed, an organization which would not let him accept as good enough, in his own work, anything which had not some degree of excellence—all the degree that he could give it—and some authentic touch of life. Hence that extraordinary fastidiousness, and sometimes inhibiting scrupulosity as a writer, of which his earlier and later friends alike speak, but the nature of which has been strangely misjudged by some recent critics. It was inherent, and not removable by any amount of practice, but we need not wonder if in the early days he himself misread its meaning. Certainly his aspiration drew little support from his self-confidence. Even when he had to his credit many admired pieces in prose and verse, and was becoming notable among the pressmen of San Francisco, he would still grow hopeless at times as to his own powers and depressed about his future. Here the influence of two friends, both of them outstanding social personalities, stood him in invaluable stead. The first was Mrs. Frémont, the wise, witty, and kind-hearted wife of the famous Pathfinder. The second was the Rev. Thomas Starr King, whose part in Californian affairs in the years 1860–64 entitles him to a high place in America's roll of Great Citizens. Both of these interested themselves warmly in Bret Harte, and by them the talented and engaging, but none too resolute young man was, as we now say, mightily bucked up at needful times, and stimulated to get from himself the best. It was for Starr King that he wrote *The Réveillé*, read at a great public meeting in San Francisco at the beginning of the Civil War. The whole series of patriotic lyrics doubtless owes much to this connexion; and the noblest of them all is the poem of three short stanzas—*Relieving Guard*—that commemorates with such sweep of vision and such poignant succinctness of phrase the too-early death of Thomas Starr King in 1864, at "the hour before the dawn was breaking" for the cause he had served so valiantly.

Meanwhile, Bret Harte was not only coming forward in literary reputation, but was also, it seemed, striking root as a social being in the usual ways. That he might not have to trust entirely to his reluctant pen for a livelihood, his friends procured him in 1862 a small post in the Surveyor's office. This thoughtful act chiefly improved his fortunes—or what came to the same thing, his immediate happiness—by affording the young man a specious excuse for getting married: which he accordingly did forthwith, the bride being Miss Anna Griswold, from New York. Naturally he now stayed at home more gladly than ever. Also, since Fortune will favour the brave where she can, even in the heart of an advanced civilization, a yet more eligible post was found for him in 1864, as secretary of the Californian (branch) Mint. There was little to do, his chief was a friend and admirer of his talents, and so he was allowed to devote much of his office-time to literary work. Also for the products of this diligence he found a new outlet in *The Californian*, a literary weekly inaugurated in that year and run by what Mr. Howells calls "an extraordinary group of wits and poets." The very first article in this organ of all the talents was his *Neighbourhoods I have Moved from*. It was followed by much else of his, signed and unsigned, in prose and verse, a great deal of it being, of course, ephemeral matter, such as articles on national affairs, local paragraphs, and book-reviews. But out of this drift of letterpress a precipitate appeared in 1867 in the form of a book of poetry, *The Lost Galleon and other Tales, by Fr. Bret Harte*, and also "a single, not very plethoric volume" containing the *Bohemian Papers* and the *Condensed Novels*. In the passage in which he speaks of these first ventures into separate published authorship, Bret Harte lays somewhat eager stress on the fact that "during this period, 1862 to 1866, the writer produced *The Society upon the Stanislaus*, and *The Story of Mliss*, . . . his first efforts towards indicating a peculiarly characteristic Western American literature."[1]

In saying this, he was putting in a plea against a disparagement which vexed him a good deal at one time.

[1] Introduction to *Collected Works* (Chatto and Windus), vol. i. p. 2.

It was often alleged, long after he had settled in England, that it was the extraordinary success of *The Heathen Chinee* that had first prompted Bret Harte to work the local vein for all it was worth, the outcome being *The Luck of Roaring Camp* and the rest. The implied suggestion that his fame was in some sort the result of shrewdness in exploiting an accident, should have carried its own confutation even for those who did not know that the poem was of considerably later date than the stories. Nevertheless, the reference to *Mliss* in the above passage has a good deal of meaning when taken with its context. The story had appeared in the *Golden Era*, as did the earlier of the *Condensed Novels* and at least three of the *Bohemian Papers* ("A Boys' Dog." "Sidewalkings," and "From a Balcony"), both series being resumed and continued elsewhere. Taken as we find them now, these were above the average work of their kind: regarded as first fruits, they promised a rich harvest. The sketches show the fresh and gustful working of a vivid faculty of observation, while no small maturity of thought is indicated by the writer's attitude towards his subjects, by the flashes of general remark, and by the absence of palpable lapses into the trivial. How searchingly *seen*, for instance, and with what contained humour set before us, is that young man (in "From a Balcony") who severely contributes his sonorous "Star-r! Star-r!" to the ritual music of the genteel drawing-room! Later numbers of the same series naturally show a maturing quality and a firmer touch at all points, fully entitling them to their permanent place in his works. They have also a good deal of autobiographic significance, like most of his sketches and many of his stories. The *Condensed Novels*, again, give proof of a generalizing and translating power (witness "Selina Sedilia," that exquisite quintessence of *East Lynne*, *Lady Audley's Secret*, and *The Trail of the Serpent*) and of a high degree of intellectual confidence ("The Dweller of the Threshold," "Fantine," "La Femme," and several others), to say nothing of the humour which, in all, was of the essence of the attempt and the achievement. It is the present writer's opinion that no other prose parodies in English come safely through a comparison with them: not even Thackeray's. For Bret Harte not only travesties

the story so as to bring out its characteristic unrealities or absurdities and make it a commentary upon itself, but he invokes the author's aid to ensure that the work shall be congenially done. He seems to recreate and bring to bear the whole mental physiology of his original, with all its effects, down not merely to noted peculiarities of opinion or vocabulary, but to the very colour-tone and atmosphere of expression. With the *Condensed Novels* as with his stories, it will always be a moot point which is best among half a dozen. Victor Hugo, Charlotte Brontë, Fenimore Cooper, and the two lady novelists just mentioned—what could be better than the humorous presentment and summation of these? Yet I think there is among the easily excellent an absolute best; and am inclined to pity a young generation which is neglecting to read that once-famous book of Colonel Lawrence, *Guy Livingstone, or Thorough*, and is thereby shut out from the full reaming pleasure that should attend a later perusal of *Guy Heavystone, or Entire.*

Nevertheless, sketches and parodies were familiar literary forms, and in this case the subject-matters were customary. However well the young man on the *Golden Era* might produce his samples, they might equally well have been produced in New York, New England, or Old England itself. In truth it was from these quarters that California drew her main supplies of reading; and in the article of literature, as in all other articles, she prided herself on importing the very best. The leading Eastern and English magazines were widely diffused among a population of exiles drawn largely from the educated and professional classes. But this sustained contact with the tone and topics of a more conventional society had one off-setting disadvantage. It confirmed the said exiles in the habit of regarding present conditions too exclusively as anomalies in process of correction, stages on the way to something more proper and imposing—to the time when the mining-camp should be a flourishing town, and the town should have developed a genteel suburb. So was it with the themes that presented themselves to the clever young writers as likely subjects for an article or a story. They were chosen under the influence of the prevailing canons as to what was suitable

matter and good manner, and were treated in the admirable ordinary way which never fails to please. As for the society that was casually forming and dissolving all around, and the marked human flotsam and jetsam which so largely composed it, they were incidental to a state of things outside the purview of serious literature, and a good deal of it outside the voluntary vision of persons of good taste. "Californian life, especially in the mining regions," these would have said, "is only *forming* as a subject of social literature, of the novel and its kind. Nobody would care to read, if anybody cared to write, about all the transitory rawness, and the rough diamonds, and the eccentrics, and the disreputables, with whom we are plentifully blessed. It is not the kind of idea we want to give people about California, anyhow; the California that is only coming on." Howbeit, as the great circle of the earth passes under the feet of every living man wherever standing, so every stage of society is definitive for those who can see it whole, and is ripe for interpretation if the teacher is ready. The significance of *Mliss*, then, is that it shows the interpreter of California was ready, or nearly so. The story is indeed one of his best, in spite of faults that would have ruined a fable less inherently strong or less truly centred. The chief fault is, of course, the author's irritating surrender to sentimentalism if not to hypocrisy, in affecting to regard Mliss as a "child." This is partly due to the Dickens influence on Bret Harte, of which more will be said. It is also a sort of defence against local criticism, an attempt to conciliate the good people who are so prone to think evil. However, no specious imposition of infantile epithets could obliterate the strong, brave nature of Mliss, or make a pathetic lost child out of that valiant, self-subsisting, hot-hearted little daughter of a woman. Again, the high moments with which the story is crowded are so clearly projected that it is perhaps the best remembered of his stories—remembered at the greatest number of points. Finally, though there is some uncertainty here and there —though the writer has not his eye on the local object quite so consistently as was his later wont—yet the impression of the physical scene is adequately given and is a substantial element of the story. The first two para-

graphs, if the reader will but turn to them now, show that Bret Harte has definitely and with conscious purpose entered his own domain, and will not make the mistake of the arriving stranger at Smith's Pocket and look for it in the wrong direction. These paragraphs, and the story altogether are, what all his Californian work was henceforth to be—of the soil, redolent![1]

Move forward a year—to a day in July or August 1868—and look into the office of the *Overland Monthly*. That magazine had lately been projected with a high ambition: to give California a serious magazine and review of her own that should bear comparison with the best produced in the Atlantic States or in England. A brilliant Editor had been secured: he had mustered a fine force of talented supporters: and the first number had already justified the promise of the projector and the hopes of all. But now there was a crisis, if not a scene, in that office. Thither the Editor has been hastily summoned, to find the publisher standing, "the picture of anxiety and dismay," with a proof before him. Emotions as high, if of another kind, invade the soul of the Editor also, when he learns what this tableau means. He had considered it a defect in the otherwise excellent first number of the magazine, that it contained "no distinctive Californian romance"; and had said that if nothing suitable of that sort was offered for the second number, he would make good the defect himself. It fell to him to fulfil this promise, and a story was handed in to the printer. Hence the summons, the emotions—*en fin*, the tableau. For the printer, instead of sending the proof to the author, had "deemed it his duty" to submit it to the publisher, on the ground that "the matter thereof was so indecent, so irreligious and improper

[1] Thus far of *Mliss* as it appears in the present volume and in all English editions, including the *Collected Works* "edited and revised" by Bret Harte himself. It is, of course, the only genuine version. But the reader ought to be warned that a version with a continuation written by the author (the last man who should have done such a thing) is current in America, and is what American critics and professors of literature have in mind when they refer to *Mliss*. The same fictive kind of thing as the second part of *An Episode of Fiddletown*, this continuation is one of its author's mistakes, but happily the effect is merely local.

that his proof-reader "—a young lady—" had with difficulty been induced to continue its perusal." The very existence of the magazine was being shamefully imperilled! . . . The astounded author took up the proof and began to read it through in a bewildered search for these portents. He found the story, in its new dress of print, more moving than before, and as innocent; and could only lay down the proof again with the hopeless remark that he " saw nothing objectionable in it." Other opinions were called in, but they went solidly against him. Then the story was submitted to " three gentlemen of culture and experience," friends of his own; but they afforded him no real support. There were other consultations; tactful and conciliatory suggestions were made. But one of these had the unintended effect of rousing the author to point out that what was *now* in question, seemingly, was not the propriety of the story, but his possession of proper editorial judgement and his power to use it without bias in his own case. He would either put that question to the proof by publishing the story " and abiding squarely by the result "—or he would resign at once. At this the publisher gave way: the story appeared as it had been written; and public opinion supported the printer and the young lady. The secular press looked askance and hinted its surprise: the religious press was in full outcry. " The high promise of the *Overland Monthly* was said to have been ruined " by this offensive production: " Christians were warned against pollution by its contact: practical business men were gravely urged to condemn and frown upon " a picture of Californian society " that was not conducive to Eastern immigration." It was a dejected and branded Editor that went about his business in San Francisco during the next few weeks. Still, there was a world beyond the Sierra Nevada, and he had yet some hope. It was magnificently vindicated. The next returning mail from the East brought to the anonymous author (" care of the Editor ") an invitation to contribute a story like that to the *Atlantic Monthly*—the model, the cynosure of its kind! It brought newspapers and reviews welcoming the reprobated child of his brain with an enthusiasm of eulogy " that half frightened its author." The Eastern

States were ablaze with the fame of *The Luck of Roaring Camp*, and it was already on its way to England.[1]

This glad message of the mails not only reassured the author, but was in other ways also decisive. California, with her habitual deference to Eastern opinion, could not well challenge its authority when it declared that the work of a Californian writer—of the Editor, in fact, of their own *Overland*—was the event of the hour in literature. Bret Harte had now, certainly, a free hand; yet six months elapsed before he contributed another story. It was a second masterpiece, unlike the first in everything but its perfection. In *The Luck of Roaring Camp* it is the whole community that, in effect, forms the theme. Only two characters, Stumpy and Kentuck, stand out from the rest in a narrative that is felt to be astir with personalities named and known—a society in which (so instantly have we been planted in the heart of it) we might pass familiarly from man to man, renewing acquaintance, were there time for visiting. But just because we know Roaring Camp to its boundary, we are borne from the outset on the wider current of the whole camp's life, and move in sympathy with it to the end. This domination of the story by its milieu, social and physical, gives to *The Luck of Roaring Camp* a breadth, an implicit multitudinousness, that makes it, within its limits, as much an epic as an idyl. Yet it involves no sacrifice to the bleak spirit of generality, no forfeiture of the concreteness, the definite human appeal, that should belong to the most intimate presentment of individual character or fate. The story is indeed charged with intimations of humanity and humour, in many nuances of each, from the moment when we first meet the waiting crowd of miners around Cherokee Sal's cabin to the moment when Kentuck goes down, taking The Luck with him. But between those two moments, while we seem to have been following the story of The Luck, we have really been becoming endenizened and familiar in Roaring Camp; so that the death of the Indian baby, which puts an end to the tale, is the signal for our expul-

[1] Account based on Introduction to the *Collected Works*. There are variant versions of the incident, but Bret Harte's own is doubtless the best.

sion from a society in which we have lived—if only as naturalized aliens.

Widely different from this in scene and setting, in spatial projection and human content, is *The Outcasts of Poker Flat.* Here is no community in the daily process of its life, but a few unrelated disreputables who have been expelled from the nearest settlement on their individual demerits and made travelling companions by a common rejection. The tragedy which overtakes them on the way may for a moment seem factitious, as resulting from an act of folly and caprice. Yet it has the inevitableness of the great dramatic fates, because it was an outcome of character in their circumstances. Nothing could be truer to nature and to type than the petulant act of the Duchess in breaking the journey, which made disaster possible; or than the incorrigible thievery of the clot-souled Uncle Billy, which made it sure. Then the situation defines itself swiftly, sharply; and as we see them abide the oncoming doom against the impassive background of the Sierra, our sense of the company they make for each other is swamped in our larger sense of their remoteness from the world, their isolation in space. It is this which constitutes what one may call the conceptual difference—a difference in the whole imaginative contour and plane—between *The Outcasts of Poker Flat* and *The Luck of Roaring Camp.* In the earlier story there is a leisurely and gracious progress towards a close that is abrupt rather than catastrophic, and not so much a tragedy as the dispersal of a dream. In the second there is, not indeed a greater, but a more obvious conciseness in the recital, and an effect of finality as complete as fate can enforce or art can hold. This effect of finality, however, is due not to the obliteration of human lives wrought by the storm, but to the instant oneness of the story from its first sentence to its last. If all these sentences admitted of magical compression, they would close up without conflict into one articulate sentence of disaster. Regarded from this point of view—the point of view of a somewhat abstract and schematic literary criticism—there is in English literature nothing of its kind more perfect than *The Outcasts of Poker Flat.*

But it is further distinguished from *The Luck of Roaring Camp* by the more complete presentment of individuality in the persons involved. Each stands out clearly against the background of loneliness in the amphitheatre of the hills, as if to assert the separate uniqueness of human souls against the power that can destroy them. There is scarce any description, moral or physical, only the barest introduction to the reader. Yet not a word, not a gesture or pose, but is expressive of character, so that we know them all—Oakhurst and Uncle Billy, the Duchess and Mother Shipton, the Innocent and Piney—as though we held the full story of their lives and the inventory of their habitual ideas and emotions. Every touch is true to the person, true to the type, and true to human nature. And—what is a sure mark of genius—never truer than when it takes us by surprise :

> As the embers slowly blackened, the Duchess crept closer to Piney, and broke the silence of many hours : " Piney, can you pray ? " " No, dear," said Piney, simply. The Duchess, without knowing exactly why, felt relieved, and, putting her head on Piney's shoulder, spoke no more.

The writer who realized *that*—who knew that the Duchess " felt relieved "—had no farther to go. He had reached the point where human insight and sympathy cease and divine illumination begins.

The contrast between the first and second stories was reiterated not less emphatically in each successive addition to the series in the *Overland.* Considering how much it means, it is surprising how little this feature of Bret Harte's early work is recognized. Yet it would become apparent at once if we were given, for enjoyment or for critical assay, a volume containing only his first six stories, and a similar volume by any other writer in this kind. Assuming all alike to have been hitherto unread, we should have no hesitation in recognizing that each of his stories stands sharply and instantly alone in its general effect alike of atmosphere and incident, of contour and content ; yet is sufficiently charged with its own distinctive quality to have been the central, the characteristic masterpiece of a new writer. We should observe that while such variety as there may be in the work of

others is a variety in the anecdote—another deliverance of something, not quite unfamiliar, in a known voice—in Bret Harte it is a variety, a freshness, in the whole experience, intellectual and moral and even physical, which that particular reading imports for us. In a word, we should find in his book six separate and full affirmations of what literature—sheer, dynamic literature—is and means: not a single story among them all requiring the reinforcements of juxtaposition, or the attributive buttressing of mass, to give confidence to our judgement of its plenary quality and perfection in type. And I do not know who else there is of whom one can say it. But any reader may say it for himself who, with a mind sensitive to what it is receiving, proceeds from *The Outcasts of Poker Flat* to *Miggles*, from that to *Tennessee's Partner*, from that to *The Idyl of Red Gulch*, and then, at the lyrical close of *Brown of Calaveras*, tries to assess the gains of his journey.[1]

What realism and what art in *Miggles*, for instance, and what freshening light and shade in its momentary situations! The opening passages in the storm-crossed outer world: the rough approach and unkept surroundings of the lonely by-way house: the travellers crowding, none too kindly, around the silent and enigmatic figure they find seated within: then the flashing entrance of Miggles herself and all the life and truth she brings with her, and the difference it makes! Greatest difference of all, when the early retirement of the married ladies from the affront of her utter naturalness has cleared the scene for the most memorable setting, and we behold the fire-lit group of men, strangers from everywhere an hour ago, now listening with eager interest and deepening subjection of mind to Miggles's low-voiced discourse of herself and the stricken man at whose feet she sits, as within a shelter, yet protectingly. And when those travellers get back to the open road again, taking these memories with them, what comment could they have

[1] And the account will be greater still if his course includes *Mr. Thompson's Prodigal* and *The Iliad of Sandy Bar*. Through a mere accident of publication these stories, both of the first quality, have got permanently separated from the series to which they worthily belong. They appeared in the *Overland* in July and November 1870, by which time the first six were already reissued in book form.

exchanged that met the case like that grave procession in Indian file to the hotel bar, that ready response to the Judge's challenge, and that heart-felt drinking of "Miggles —GOD BLESS HER!" It was a stroke of genius in somebody, however. Clearly, author and travellers were equally subdued to a sense of what they had seen and heard, and could not help themselves. For the story is, in an indescribable degree, what Miggles herself is and makes it—as wholesome as the earth and as fresh as dew.

But while he was thus making California less a geographical expression to the rest of the world than any other region of America, the ties that held him there were being steadily undone. There was much that was bidding him depart; there was not less that was calling him elsewhere. The social evolution of San Francisco had proceeded apace since his arrival, and mainly towards the production of a type of man and community which his whole nature recoiled from. The opportunities of "development" had produced there in less than twenty years full half as many generations of practitioners of the art, whose mutual sharpening of wits and narrowing of souls set, as it were, the high local examples of what business intelligence and success meant; and were soon reflected in an average social milieu as depressing—as hard, arid, callous, and material in grain—as could have been found outside of China. The nemesis of this practical elimination of the ideal element in the collective life (individual "good" people there were no doubt in plenty, and churches galore!) was yet to show itself in that tradition of political, legal, and administrative corruption which has held California in a vice during the greater part of her history. But already in 1868 Bret Harte's sense of "the materialism and ungracious atmosphere of San Francisco" (as one of his loyal colleagues mildly puts it) was expressed in the poem which was the Editor's own bold contribution to the first number of the *Overland*:

> I know thy cunning and thy greed,
> Thy hard high lust and wilful deed,
> And all thy glory loves to tell
> Of specious gifts material. . . .

Certainly he could never feel at ease even in random

intercourse with men to whom this condition of the social soul was congenial or profitable; and as he sometimes got in their way (in his editorial character of a publicist), they naturally tried to get in his when and as they could. Not with much success, however, for in all ways but one he was now (say, by 1870) a man who had arrived. He was famous wherever English was read; called upon by distinguished visitors from the States or abroad; respected, socially besought, and heartily liked, by the best elements of Californian society; and happy in wife, children, and a charming home of his own in Oakland.

But, not least for this last reason, the one respect in which he had not arrived was important. He was not making an income sufficient for the needs of a growing family, and his own. His post at the Mint (which he still held), his literary work, and (if it is worth mentioning in this connexion) his appointment to the chair of Recent Literature in the University of California, did not combine to yield him the yearly returns that were commonly won by inferior labour and abilities in many walks of business. It is alleged that he had extravagant tastes; he owns that he was constitutionally improvident, and it is known that his kind-heartedness where others were concerned cut deeply into his prudence. So the habit of being at shifts for the means of the moment soon became a personal feature, and was worn with much grace, candour, and gaiety. But, for all this gaiety, there was in Bret Harte a sub-melancholic basis, and especially a sensitiveness to the worries which compel. Still greater sensitiveness (albeit without bitterness, and almost without resentment) to the shafts of malevolence and the wounds of lying tongues; which, we gather, were not wanting. In fine, with the California which he had divined and known, and which had become a part of his being, passing away before his eyes—and the place of the Argonauts, whom he had known and loved, taken by a generation without memories when not without a soul—it was time for him also to be going. Equally, too, it was time for an author, whose work had been so widely and generously acclaimed, to come from his exile beyond the desert and the mountains and meet his fellows at the world's centres of intellectual production, where in an older society he would find new

material for observation and greater rewards for all that he could produce. The East was calling; the West, however unawares or indifferently, was bidding him go. The die was cast, the resolution was come to; not without heart-burnings, nor without regrets. So on a night of February 1871 there was a small reunion of closest friends —working writers all of them—in which the talk was reminiscent, "all of the shop, and heart to heart. Bret Harte was the centre of the little company, and was never more fascinating and companionable. Day was breaking when the party dispersed, and the ties that bound our friend to California were sundered for ever."

If there were none to mark his entrance into California in 1854, it was otherwise with his departure from it. The attention given by the press to every stage of his journey eastward was conspicuous enough to be observable at this side of the Atlantic. The *Daily News* dealt with the phenomenon in a leading article which began thus:

America has a new star. The planet which Tycho Brahé saw suddenly kindled in the heavens and gradually increasing to the size of Jupiter has been questioned by more recent astronomers; but the full-orbed fame of Mr. Bret Harte among his countrymen comes to us in no questionable shape. The East and the West contend for the reflected rays of his celebrity; cities dispute for the honour of his presence; Chicago beguiles him from San Francisco, New York snatches him from Chicago, and Boston plots deeply his abstraction from New York. His lightest movement is chronicled in every paper, and where he stops for a few days a kind of "Bret Harte Circular" appears in the daily press.

"Mr. F. Bret Harte arrived in this city about eleven o'clock, Saturday forenoon, and went immediately to the residence of Mr. W. D. Howells in Cambridge. Mr. Harte is accompanied by his family, consisting of his wife and two children." "Mr. Bret Harte on his first day in Boston dined with the Saturday Club, where he met amongst others Louis Agassiz, Henry W. Longfellow, James Russell Lowell, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Richard H. Dana, junior." "Mr. Bret Harte visited the Consumptives' Home fair yesterday accompanied by Mr. James T. Fields." "Bret Harte returns to New York from Boston to-morrow (1st) and goes at once to his work of writing for Eastern magazines. Probably his first new work will appear in *Harper*." These are items from

our Boston files of two or three days, and similar passages have attended the young author's triumphal progress through various cities from the Pacific to the Atlantic. . . .

These excitements of the route require a word of explanation. They were not so much a tribute to pure literature as a welcome given to one who had lately established a sort of personal relations with the whole American people. He had done this quite unawares by means of an anecdote in verse, thrown off primarily as an experiment in metre, and thereafter nearly thrown away. Deeming the verses too trivial for the *Overland*, he offered them to his friend Ambrose Bierce, of the *News Letter*. Bierce showed better judgement and greater generosity by refusing to accept the extravagant gift; so into the *Overland* for September 1870 went "Plain Language from Truthful James," and had perhaps the most instantaneous and universal success in the history of letters—a success that was a *furore*. It was as if the supreme word of humour that the American people had been waiting for or trying to find had at last been spoken, and the whole male population had gone unanimously glad[1] in a peal of hearty, ever-renewing laughter, nation-wide. The poem was heard everywhere: it was even heard (as befitted a national topic) in Congress. And that it deserved this acclamation cannot be doubted. In its kind there is nothing like it: witness the fact that it alone appeals equally and instantly to every degree and condition of intelligence, to the subtlest and to the most rustic taste in humour. For many years, however, its author himself held it in very dubious regard, and almost wished he had never written it. Partly, no doubt, because he was plagued by the genial allusions to Ah Sin and Bill Nye and the Leaves on the Strand, that awaited him wherever he came. But still more because he felt he was being labelled by it, and so classed to his ultimate

[1] To insular dwellers who may wonder how the appearance of a humorous poem could be a national event, we would point out the profound observation of Mr. Howells (made in quite another connexion) that when the American husband is not making money or trying to make it, he is making a joke or trying to make one. The relation of the American wife to all this concerns nobody but the American husband.

disadvantage. One may say at once that he divined justly. But for the moment the somewhat accidental masterpiece gave a sudden and continental expansion to his fame, so helping to make the journey Eastward the triumphal procession which has been described.

One regrettable incident has to be recorded. Some leading men of Chicago had a project for a great Middle-West magazine, to be called *The Lakeside Monthly*, and to be edited, it was hoped, by Bret Harte. Suitable inducements in the form of a handsome salary and a share in the profits had been arranged for in the large manner which even then distinguished Chicago's operations. His investiture with the office and endowment with the riches (symbolized by a cheque under his plate) were to be effected at a banquet where he was to meet the chief movers in the enterprise. All of which fair prospects were forfeited by the failure of the Editor Designate to turn up: *Why*, remains a mystery. He always maintained that he had expected a carriage to be sent for him, as he was a stranger; and that after waiting till it was too late to start out and look for the place of meeting, he decided to dine with his family—"and that is all there was to it." His best friends seem to have least believed this story, and most enjoyed it. Other explanations have been propounded; but it is simplest and most reasonable to suppose that he had been having a good look at Chicago and felt a renewed desire to continue his journey. Certainly no hindrance now was put in his way. The journey was continued, New York was reached, and after fixing the domicile temporarily with his relatives there, he at once proceeded upon his promised visit to Boston.

There (or more precisely in Boston's academic suburb, Cambridge, Mass.) he was the guest of William Dean Howells, at that time Editor (under J. R. Lowell) of the *Atlantic Monthly*. It was while Bret Harte was still in California that Mr. Howells "had proposed being his host for Boston" when he should come East. Writing of the occasion long afterwards with equal discernment, kindness, and humour, Mr. Howells has told how "when the adventurous young Editor read the honours attending his coming guest from point to point," he trembled at

his own presumption in offering to entertain so tremendous a celebrity; how, to guard at least against committing the grave offence of Chicago, he drove into Boston with "the handsomest hack which the livery of Cambridge afforded"; how, finally, he "instantly lost all fear when they met at the station, and Harte pressed forward with his cordial hand-clasp, as if he were not even a fairy prince, and with that voice and laugh which were surely the most winning in the world." A delightful first impression; nor was there anything in their week together, or in all their subsequent acquaintance, that prompted Mr. Howells to retract or qualify it. In what manner those few days were spent has been indicated already. At his host's table or abroad, in Cambridge and Concord and Boston itself, he met all the head Brahmins of New England, and many lesser men of high intellectual caste. As to these, they were as the cards that Ah Sin had been hiding: he remarked to Mr. Howells on first learning who lived immediately around, "Why, you couldn't stand on your front porch and fire off your revolver without bringing down a two-volumer!" He visited Concord and saw the great Emerson smoke a pipe. He walked home from an evening party in Boston with the to-him-greater Longfellow, and was clearly at the height of his character and quality, as men are at rare moments in a lifetime, all the way. But idiosyncrasy as well as character came into view during that week of initiations and entertainments; chiefly the idiosyncrasy of being inveterately unpunctual, or only avoiding the fault, when the engagement was abroad, by the agitated aid of two families and some final tying and buttoning in the cab. "But," says Mr. Howells, "people were glad to have him on his own terms, and it may be said that it was worth while to have him on any terms. There was never a more charming companion, an easier or more delightful guest." Here also, as on the journey hither, interest in the famous visitor was widely diffused, and Mr. Howells tells how (amongst others)

pretty presences in the tie-backs of the period were seen to flit before our house, hungering for any chance sight of him which his outgoings or incomings might give. The chances were better with the outgoings than with the incomings; for

these were apt to be so hurried, in the final result of his constitutional delays, as to have the rapidity of the homing pigeon's flight, and to afford hardly a glimpse to the quickest eye.

Such were the happy conditions with which Bret Harte entered upon the second period of his career as a writer. Fame attended the author and liking awaited the man wherever he went. Even the literary contract under which he resumed work on his return to New York was unexampled and appropriate. For whatever he should write during the next twelvemonth, be the whole amount much or little, Mr. Osgood of Boston, publisher of the *Atlantic Monthly*, undertook to pay him ten thousand dollars. Such faith in human honesty is, I believe, only to be found in the United States; but, for the credit of business as an intellectual pursuit, one must hope that the enterprising publisher safeguarded himself with an insurance of the author's life and health. Howbeit, the author kept manfully to the fore, and made a consignment of work in prose and verse of which the best specimens have been culled for this collection. To speak only of one of the poems, the consensus of critical opinion marks *Concepcion de Argüello* as his greatest in that kind. Of the stories, *How Santa Claus came to Simpson's Bar* is in the front rank of his masterpieces. Dick Bullen's ride has its place with the heroic themes of the world's literature, and the whole story is great-hearted and energetic as the man and horse, carrying its load of other qualities—the resolute realism of scenes and persons, and the humour that lies so near to tenderness—as dominantly as Jovita carried Dick. *The Romance of Madroño Hollow*, again, is a curiously perfect work, with the atmosphere and, so to say, the moral technique of real tragedy as distinguished from killing people at the end. It is full and varied withal, from the playful humour, touched with poetry, of its opening, the effortless intimations of character and mood of every kind, the simple weaving of the web of fate, on to the poignant tragedy of the close. And if *The Poet of Sierra Flat* is a lighter order of production, nobody but Bret Harte could have produced it. A delightfully wild anecdote superexcellently told, it gains something from the virtues of

an opposite kind in one quick heroic passage—that which tells how the curtain came down—that thrills the reader at every re-perusal.

Yet despite its flattering inaugurations, the seven-years' period which now followed was a dangerous one for the artist and a distressful one for the man. To speak of the latter aspect first: he was not long in the East before money troubles began again. Living was more expensive in New York than in California, and no doubt a higher scale was attempted. He has been blamed for having set too smart a social pace at the beginning of his career. But if it was the beginning of his career it was the height of his fame; and the expectations of fortune which that fame seemed to justify were hardly calculated to remind him of the wisdom of going slow. And, of course, the fact that he was a besought and honoured guest at so many good men's boards reinforced the genial inclination to be hospitable at his own. It has also been charged against him as imprudence that he established his family in the season at expensive summer places like Lenox and Newport. It is to be presumed he did not do so without taking counsel with his family or having in view their health and happiness. But to keep this going he had only his pen, and it was a pen that could not do its best work under pressure of time or anxiety. Yet these were the conditions which henceforth held him, partly owing to a bad system of economy and partly to an inherent disproportion between his literary prestige and the market-value of a faculty like his. The constant need for immediate money caused him to sell his work outright, thus making each season's income absolutely dependent on the season's productions. His work commanded a good price, but after the first sportive transaction with Mr. Osgood it settled into a market-price, not one based on an expectation of the purchase proving a gold mine. And probably it was not always even a fair market-price. For a friend who knew him intimately in his Californian as well as his New York days declares that he was "utterly destitute of what is sometimes called the money-sense. He could not drive a bargain, and he was an easy mark for any man who could. Consequently, he was continually involved in troubles

that he might have escaped with a little more financial shrewdness." The instances of this belong rather to the end of this period than the beginning, but doubtless every year had its crop of them.

As early as 1872–73 he was fain to act on the advice of friends and, much against his natural bent, make a bid for the quick gains of the lecturer. A couple of tours carried him into the colds of Canada, the wilds of Kansas, and the bland airs and manners of Old Virginia. In the first he received the courtesies of the great—Lord Dufferin, Sir John Macdonald, and other sachems—while in the west and south he made some delightful social observations and discoveries. But he was badly served on the business side, and the net proceeds did not tempt him to continue in a career for which he had no liking and in which his health had suffered serious detriment. He returned to stories and poems as his proper work and source of income.

As already said, it came in considerable abundance, but irregularly, and always in the rearward of his needs. Payments in advance were but a debt contracted, and a more oppressive one than the occasional obligation to a friend for a timely loan, or to a tradesman for waiting a little longer, when all would be settled. Owing to the general prevalence of these factors in the situation, the whole period yields the impression of a harassed existence and a sadly over-driven faculty. There is no need, however, to make too much of the fact that the few records we have (some letters to his wife, some reminiscences by his friends) all bear on his financial difficulties. He was not in difficulties all the time, nor always thinking about it when he was. So long as he retained confidence in his own power to make good, a man with his qualities of gaiety, gusto, and good humour could get a great deal of happy life while blamelessly outrunning the constable. That it was so with Bret Harte we know, and should rejoice to know it. For the rest, he was neither an habitual borrower nor a careless debtor, though the legend of Bret Harte's debts—his unpaid debts—had persistent currency in America during his long residence in England, and largely because of it. There were no unpaid debts whatever. And as to borrowing: a companion of the

Argonauts and a devotee of our jolly eighteenth-century writers was not the man to take his maxims of life and conduct from Polonius, who took them from the poverty of his soul: but would borrow without derogation and lend without distrust, as it is done among free spirits and true partners, making no secret of what carried no shame. Obligations of this kind sometimes added to his perplexities, no doubt; but the perplexity was merely how to meet them. For he was neither Bigod nor Harold Skimpole, nor any other of the race that lives on tribute or alms and calls it a loan, but a man of strict honour and sensitive independence in money matters as in all others. That, being this, he should yet have run a seemingly careless and irresponsible course is explicable enough were there room to consider it further. Instead, we must come quickly to the upshot of the process.

If his troubles began early and beset him more or less all the way, his reaction was for a long time valiant and successful. He produced much work, good, better, and not so good; he maintained his position as prince of the magazines, his captivating personal naturalness and good cheer, his vogue in a social world (from which he could not have escaped if he would) that consisted generally of far richer men. Yet all the time, in spite of valiant efforts and apparent success, he was fighting a losing battle on both wings. His literary course was being watched with anxiety by friends; with a desire, on the part of others, to exult over a fallen idol and a promise unfulfilled. Some current productions gave the lie to the prophets of evil, but others delivered him helplessly enough into their hands. His most ambitious effort was his worst failure—the novel *Gabriel Conroy*; yet immediately afterwards he did far better things. But through loss and recovery, and loss again, it was clear that the forced rate of production was telling on his work: and meanwhile the financial situation was getting steadily beyond his control. Living was now become indeed a struggle for life, a struggle in which some of his best qualities counted for defects, since they did not make for victory. There are few records, so we cannot mark the stages of his progress to defeat. But there is a letter, undated, written to his wife from Washington, that

seems to belong to the hour before surrender. It tells of the default of a man with whom he had entered into a journalistic partnership; of the loss of money from that quarter, and from some others, that was anxiously awaited at home; and of most unjust attacks upon himself in the newspapers. The gentleness of this letter, its uncomplaining submission, is sadder than the tale it tells. We feel that the writer has been too long over-weighted with care, and is at last under the weather in heart and fortunes.

It was a juncture that portended the final ruin of a talent if not the shipwreck of a life. What was needed was release for a time from all compulsions, and a breathing space for self-renewal. The means was happily found by the friends who procured his appointment to the consulate at Crefeld in Prussia. "Leaving his family for the present," says Mr. Merwin, "at Sea Cliff, Long Island, he sailed for England in June 1878, little thinking he was never to return."

Without that knowledge, it must have been a sad enough man who sailed away when he thought of how the period had opened and how it was closing. It had witnessed a critical reaction in the estimate of his work almost as pronounced as the clouding of his fortunes. Some degree of reaction was inevitable, and would have been justified had it been founded on the faults of his current productions, and not on unreasonable comparisons and impossible expectations. He was trying new things and discovering his limitations. He was doing the work of an artist under the compulsions of a journalist, and as he had just then rather crude ideas of what constituted a "powerful motive," the result was sometimes mere unreality, as in *The Man on the Beach* and *The Fool of Five Forks*. But he never did work that was not good workmanship, that did not bear the quality of a great writer's manner, however disappointing owing to flaws in the conception. In *Mrs. Skaggs's Husbands*, for instance, there is a second part loosely attached to the first and leading to a melodramatic climax. The want of organic unity consigns the story as a whole to an inferior grade. But if we take the first part by itself, as we well may do, then we shall place it with the best of his work, or any man's work. The same may be said, with differ-

ences, of *An Episode of Fiddletown*.[1] Both these early instances (1872–74) show the influence of the market and of inexperience in working to a new scale. In each he had, as it were, appended a plot to what was perfect as an episode, in order to make a story that should run to more than one issue of the magazine containing it. But even well-compacted works like the contents of *Tales of the Argonauts*, to which we are indebted for some of the choicest things in this volume, were but currishly received by the critics. There is not space to run through the bibliography of the period, but the only thing that need be given to the dogs of criticism is *Gabriel Conroy*, in which the unsuitable usage of a delicate faculty wears the aspect of an act of debauch. It is his only full-length novel, it appeared serially, and he seems to have written the instalments, if not improvised the plot, during the course of publication. If ever there was a writer of romance who could not do that and prosper, it was Bret Harte. His defects and his qualities equally forbade it: his brain made it difficult and his character made it dangerous. Regarded as a story, *Gabriel Conroy* is as bad as can be: it combines the evils of a nightmare in which you are lost and a quagmire in which you stick: no great writer has ever done so wretchedly. Regarded as a collection of chapters for desultory reading, there is much to be said for keeping it alive. It is choked with matter, some of it memorably excellent, the work of clearer moments. But there were many moments, alas, in which he could not bring his mind into full and effective relation with the business in hand, and then he marked time: usually by falling back on the familiar manner of Dickens, sometimes of Thackeray, as a kind of common literary form. Altogether, *Gabriel Conroy* must have cheapened

[1] The second part of this (being novelette pure and simple, though with some charming touches) is omitted from the present collection to make room for something more substantial. Owing to the second part (but not the first) having been copyrighted in England, it appears in none of the familiar reprints. Its place is taken, without explanation or warning to the reader, by a couple of pages of jesting summary by some person unknown, but apparently a baulked and angry pirate, who takes that suitable opportunity of saying that the author is no gentleman. This curiosity will be found among the Notes at p. 627.

him immensely, though he did things admirable and things exquisite almost immediately afterwards. But the truth is that the tradition of disparagement which dates from this period did not originate in criticism but in childishness: his critics wanted the moon. He was made the victim of his own fame as no other writer has been, and because he had surprised so often was expected to surprise always. The common substance and structure of story-writing was virtually forbidden to one who had heretofore builded beauty almost immaterially and produced the moving effects of literature out of a mere nothing of events. He was to travel in the old track, yet not to repeat himself, and so forth. Naturally, one of whom all this was expected was easily judged to have proved a disappointment, and some in whom the wish may have been father to the thought loudly and very early opined that what had gone up as a rocket was coming down as the stick. Nowhere are habits more catching than in criticism, and this one became so much the fashion that the *Atlantic* intervened (January 1877) with a few remarks on Mr. Bret Harte's genius, the almost impossible promise it had seemed to hold, its recent uncertain course, and on the phenomenon of a critical reaction as unjust as the unlimited expectation had been inconsiderate.

"We have observed," said the writer, "a disposition in various places to decry all his work, especially his performances since he came to the Atlantic States. One critic cannot remember that he has ever done any thing but write a comic song. . . . Others find nothing good in his writings of the last five years. I am bound to own that some of his best work, if not most of his best work, has been done since he came hither from California . . . and I do not think he has yet filled the measure of his talent."

It was a wise and generous voice, but those of another intention were then more familiar. And it is a little shameful to think that the shrillest of all should have sounded from the *Overland Monthly*, which riddled rather than reviewed his successive books with sustained fusillades of insult and bitterness.

But beyond these voices there was peace at Crefeld in Prussia, where he arrived on July 17, 1878. He was

evidently still in very low tone, and the entire self-preoccupation betrayed in his first letter to his wife makes unpleasant reading. "It's been uphill work ever since I left New York, but I shall try to see it through, please God! I don't allow myself to think over it at all, or I should go crazy." But though he talks of a possibility of breaking his heart through disappointment there (which he could not bear to see *her* do also), he very soon recovered a fair degree of cheerfulness. His never-resting faculty of observation was itself restorative, and it had now a fresh world to work in. Its best literary results in this region, among those that reflect local life, are the stories *Peter Schroeder* and *Unser Karl*, though the latter was written much later. To this period seem to belong those admirable "longer stories," *Jeff Briggs's Love Story* and *The Twins of Table Mountain*. But it is difficult to think of him as writing anything in Crefeld, for that chapter of his biography seems to show him always in England. He had spent a day or two here on the way over, making some hurried acquaintances with persons and places, under the pilotage of a countryman. Among the persons was George Eliot, and among the places the grave of Dickens. Invitations followed him to Crefeld, and he was soon back in England on a "vacation of a few weeks." His first host and chief friend was Froude, who knew or was related to all the "kings" of literature, and was "anxious to make my *entrée* among them a success." He seems to have succeeded well; for during that "vacation" and others that followed fast and frequent, Bret Harte received a kind of desultory ovation from all that was distinguished in English life. He had come into a blander world than any he had known, and one feels that his head was a little turned, for a while, by the whirl of introductions, intimacies, attentions, public and private. Not that it made him either conceited or fatuous, but that he gave himself up too gladly, too naively, to the excitements and the absorption of all this pleasant new life, hypnotized perhaps by that fallacious sense of expansion which in such circumstances often means only a forgetting of the past. He was urged to lecture; and he lectured with such success that Froude told him he must not ask less than

£50 a time, though he might ask more. The press on these occasions came out with welcomes and tributes to his genius. His works had already appeared in French and German, and now *The Athenæum* informed him that it had before it for review a Serbian translation of six of his stories, with a German preface. No wonder that before a year was over there was more than a restoration of confidence. "Germany is no place for me," he writes to his wife; "I feel that more and more every day." He applied for a change of post, and in May 1880 was transferred to the consulate at Glasgow.

The period of his residence in Scotland is in several ways important, not least in what it contributed to the regional variety of his works and to the proofs of his versatility of perception and sympathy. He began with good intentions, staying at his post (as he writes in September) "pretty regularly," and only going on an occasional cheap excursion—"this is the country for them." To them, indeed, we are indebted for some pages that would make a Glasgow man exiled in the Sahara feel that he was "doun the watter" once more. And it may be said at once that in his few Scotch stories Bret Harte shows a better comprehension of the national character than any English writer whatever and many Scotch ones. And though his skill in the vernacular is not all that has been claimed for him, it is very creditable and is used with respect. What happiness it gave him is shown by some verses to his artist friend, Alexander Stuart Boyd.

SCOTCH LINES TO A. S. B.
(From an Unintelligent Foreigner)

We twa hae heard the gowans sing
  Sae saft and dour, sae fresh and gey;
And paidlet in the brae, in Spring,
  To scent the new mown "Scots wha hae."

But maist we loo'ed at e'en to chase
  The pibroch through each wynd and close,
Or climb the burn, to greet and face
  The skeendhus gangin' wi' their joes.

How aft we said "Eh, Sirs!" and "Mon!"
  Likewise "Whateffer"—apropos
Of nothing. And pinned faith upon
  "Aiblins"—though why we didna know.

We've heard nae mon say " gowd " for " gold,"
  And yet, wi' all our tongues up-curled,
We—like the British drum-beat—rolled
  Our R's round all the speaking worruld.

How like true Scots we didna' care
  A bawbee for the present tense,
And said " we will be " when we were—
  'Twas bonny, but it wasna sense.

And yet, " ma frien' " and " trusty fiere,"
  We'll take a right gude " Willie Waught,"
Though what *that* may be is not clear,
  Nor where it can be made or bought.[1]

The aforesaid good intentions seem not to have survived the end of the excursion season. The frequency of his absences from his post has been grossly exaggerated, but there is no doubt that the social inducements to truancy, both in north and south, drew him away a good deal. What is more and worse, they, and the cultivation of shallow literary camaraderies (like that with William Black) were either relegating his talent to disuse or causing him to use it in a confident casual way for ends easily attained. This was a dangerous juncture in his life, and was marked as such by two of his newest but truest friends. He made the acquaintance of M. and Mme. Van de Velde[2] in London in 1880. Both had

[1] From Pemberton's *Life of Bret Harte*, by kind permission of Messrs. C. Arthur Pearson, Ltd. In the last verse I have corrected the obvious error " frere " for " fiere." " Gude ' Willie Waught ' " may be Bret Harte's fun. But if not, it is a great reproach to his Scotch friends that they did not instruct him better in the essential things. The true scripture is "guidwillie waught" = goodwill draught.

[2] " M. Van de Velde belonged to the Belgian Diplomatic Service. He was for many years Counsellor of Legation in London, and retired with the rank of Minister Resident. . . . Madame Van de Velde was the daughter of the Comtesse de Launay, wife of the Italian Ambassador at Berlin " (Pemberton, p. 213). Among her writings are *French Fiction of To-Day*, *Random Recollections of Courts and Society*, etc., and (in the present connexion) two articles on Bret Harte marked by wisdom and fine feeling. The first, a tactful attempt to remove some of the misrepresentations of Bret Harte current in America, was contributed to the *New York Sun*, and is mainly reproduced by Mr. Pemberton. The second, a memorial article, entitled " Bret Harte : First and Last Tales of the Argonauts," appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for December 1903. Mme. Van de Velde also translated several of his chief later works into French.

been enthusiastic admirers of the writer, and both conceived a sincere friendship for the man. But whereas a man accepts his friend as he is and wishes him well, a woman seeks to influence him for his good. So it was in this case. Madame Van de Velde could appraise Bret Harte's genius as few English and no American critics could,—by unbiassed comparison with the continental masters with whom he had affinities—and she was vexed to see it neglected or carelessly used. Therefore she let slip no opportunity that visits or correspondence afforded of urging him to resume his vocation with renewed seriousness. These admonitions could not long fail of effect; for to her own generous portion of talent and culture was added what had always a great power with him, the wisdom of a woman conversant with the world. For the rest of his life he owned gratefully that he was indebted to her for recalling him from carelessness, and for counsel and help in his work afterwards. He took up his pen again with a clearer ideal than he had ever had before; and with the publication in 1882 of *Found at Blazing Star* and *Flip* he entered upon his third and (I have little hesitation in affirming the heresy) his greatest literary period.

A glance at some of the chief productions of the next few years—to 1885—will show how the new purpose was working. *Found at Blazing Star* is a capital mining-camp story, with matter enough for three or four, yet never congested. The characters are perfectly objective, seeming to owe nothing to the author, while the humour, of which there is plenty, is never sought and is rarely separable. The return to more implicit humour, and the careful control of the plot, mark already a difference, a bracing-up of powers and attention to the task. This strength suddenly yields in *Flip* something finer than itself, an exquisite delicacy for which one may seek the descriptive terms in all the arts, but will hardly find them. "*Flip*," said John Hay, "is beyond criticism." It is almost beyond praise. As realistic in characters and as disordered in scene as anything in all the author's works, more than anything else it leaves on the mind the impression of the most beautiful plastic art in its more relenting forms. The story has a classic perfection, but a more than classic tenderness;

and in the passage which tells how " in the midst of his thoughts, and the darkness, and the storm, he heard a voice at his side—' Lance, how long you have been ! ' " —it reaches a dissolving point of compunction for human fates that is rarely reached save in poetry, and supremely rarely there. And the strange, almost organic responses between Flip and the absorbed alchemist soul of the old man, her father—an inward bond expressing itself only in an idiom of moods and phrases that seems a denial of affection, yet is never mistaken by either—how wonderfully it is known or how profoundly imagined ! And the more closely we look, the more coherent it is all seen to be. The strong little hand that was stretched under the dead leaves to take away the pistol of the sleeping stranger is one in substance and impulse with the heart which carried that constant love of her absent brother, and was kind to derelicts and runaways in the hope that somehow it would help *him* also. But enough to know that *Flip* is beyond criticism and almost beyond praise.

And hardly less can be said of *In the Carquinez Woods*, though it has to be said with a difference. A story nearly thrice as long, involving a diversity of incidents and momentary withdrawals from the main scene, it could not yield that effect of a thing of exquisite contour that belongs to *Flip*. But it is exquisite enough from page to page to any one who knows the relish of literature, and is beautiful, if possible, in a larger way, with the immense unification given by an atmosphere all its own. It is a tale of two exceptional beings thrown together in the woods : a woman " sinful " but more sinned against ; a man in whom a strain of Indian blood has had no other influence than to set him aloof, and to make him immune to what was coarse or false in the life around him. The situation is developed with moral imagination and mastery, and if the forest in which their fates are wrought out to the terrible close ultimately seems religious as a cathedral, it is by an emanation of the nobler elements in human nature inhabiting there. And never is there a moment's uncertainty or a pin-point of the inanimate in the presentment of either character, to say nothing of secondary ones that vindicate their independent reality with every act and word. If out of a story in which the dramatic

realization of character is so continuous that a careless reader might suppose it came by nature, and was a thing of course, one were to seek a single illustrative passage, it would be the perilous meeting in the woods between Dick Curson and Low Dorman, with the hunted woman, Teresa, standing by. The passing of the crisis, and the whole mentality of the moment, are indicated in a way that is more than masterly, with a comprehension that misses nothing, and a conciseness as swift as thought. Reading it, and scores of others like it, one does not know whether to smile or be indignant at the thought that the man who could do this is persistently represented as a mere writer of stories with (at his best) a powerful sentimental or humorous appeal. Bret Harte had a passion for stories — without it he would have been unworthy of the call to California—but his great gift (" his best holt " as Cressy would say) was his knowledge of human character, the range and alacrity of his subjective intuition, and his power (at his best) of conveying what he knows by the fewest touches man ever used. Take, not for a supreme example, *Left out on Lone Star Mountain*, which belongs to those years 1882–85, and which we are enabled to give in the present selection. To say nothing of the scenic and moral elements that go to make this story so clarifying and exhilarating,—the large air, the large heart, and the deep human breathing of the whole thing—let the reader note the intangible way in which we are put in possession of every shade of feeling that unites or sunders the shamed or remorseful partners after their expulsion of The Old Man, and still more after they find that he has gone. The order of their going and coming, and every change of juxtaposition among them, are eloquent of their diverse moods. And as to the inspirations of art, for happily closing this tale of brief alienation and friendships renewed—and therewith in a double sense atonement—what more auspicious signal could have been waved from heaven than that far-off cry of " Merry Christmas ! "

From the productions at the opening of his third period only two others shall be named, for the sake of what they respectively exemplify. In *A Blue Grass Penelope* there are few characters and almost nothing happens. Yet

the seventy-five pages to which the story runs are athrill with interest, and exhale continuously what can only be described as a sense of beauty. The interest results from our recognition of the finely-tempered heroine and her chivalrous friend as real human beings, and the sense of beauty issues in some degree from the presence of those two superior natures. But chiefly it is a result of the superb lustre of style, and a rate of going that has the qualities equally of *élan* and restraint, in which the whole history is presented. It is not really better written than many others—and of course not so beautifully written throughout as many passages elsewhere are—but the comparative absence of action and dialogue here throws into prominence the constant element of literary mastership which is in all Bret Harte's work, and permits us to stop and remark upon it. And the point which I wish to make here is that Bret Harte may claim a secure place in English literature by reason of a vital quality in his writing or so-called style (in that full sense which involves outward form and inward matter) that stamps him as a classic; and that he is no more to be ranked with the mere story-writers, however excellent their fictions, than Pater is to be ranked with the library novelists, or Hazlitt with the text-book writers of literary history. It is strange that this is so little recognized; stranger still that exactly the reverse should have been affirmed, and that an inability to write decent English should have been charged against him. A milder form of defamation, with an ostensible grain of excuse,[1] is that which opines that he was careless, that he "did not labour cheerfully with the file." As a fact, while he had no affinity with the painful professors of distinguished diction, few have paid

[1] Because based on one or two grammatical foibles that have nothing to do with stylistic quality. He was occasionally (but very rarely) guilty of the wild ungoverned *whom*: "They hanged the man whom they believed was the thief." It is really a dying form, and seems to die a little harder in America, including Canada. Also, he had no superstitious dread of a convenient and idiomatic unrelated participle. But especially he was careful to always, and even at some inconvenience to himself, conscientiously and deliberately split his infinitives; that is, when the elements presented themselves together. But as he seems to have taken a vow to *always* do this (Mr. Merwin thinks it was out of loyalty to Dickens) he did not let the elements come together too often.

to the ideal of good writing such ungrudging tribute of time and trouble. Hence that blending of utmost conciseness with perfect rhythm in a style that conveys so many qualities besides. His conciseness, certainly, is incomparable, his "search of the word" being ever uncomplicated by vanities or by-ends, or any purpose other than the fit and clear expression of his meaning. It is this vital conciseness, and the elimination of everything not essential and organic to the theme, that makes possible the rapidity of felt and realized development which is so characteristic of his work. No writer takes you so far upon your way in the first few paragraphs of a story as Bret Harte does, but it is the rapid succession of ideas and no trick of abruptness in the opening that secures this effect. In his manner of approaching his subject and of leaving it—whether a tragic enactment like *The Outcasts of Poker Flat* or a light thing and a joy like *The Pupil of Chestnut Ridge* (in his very last published book)—he is the artist revealed. In no sense excessive, therefore, were the words with which Mr. Howells qualified his refusal to take part in the *Overland's* Bret Harte symposium, at the time of its greatest contributor's death.

DEAR SIR—I hate symposiums, but you may put me into yours to the extent of wholly dissenting from the belief that Bret Harte was wanting in literary finish. He was one of the most refined and delicate of artists, and he wrought in rude material with the exquisite perfection of the poet to whom the effect was everything and the material nothing. He knew what he was about in every touch, and his touch was of the subtlety which strength alone can give.—Yours truly,

W. D. HOWELLS.

Widely different from *A Blue Grass Penelope* is *Snow-Bound at Eagle's*. With no claim to be considered his "greatest" work, it is yet perhaps the work by which he could best bear to be judged were he required to give his proofs of range and mastery in a single piece. And this is saying a great deal, seeing that much of what makes the power of the early *Overland* stories is excluded from this one. There is no tragedy; there is no pathos; there is the merest indication of a sentimental development; and if Nature intervenes it is not as the awful

Onlooker upon human sins and fates, but as an active nuisance getting in people's way. Less a transfigured anecdote than a compressed romance, it is in effect a hunting tale where man is the quarry and Nature and Woman queer the course. The action, which is varied and vivid, proceeds with a raking vigour of movement through a milieu panoramic and intimate, and the actors are as diverse in type and personality as each and all are true to life—to the fullness of life that is in them. Opening strongly, the story goes blithely as to a hunting-horn, save in the intimate scenes among the snow-bound ones, where it goes still and deep, right on till the arrival of the hunters at Eagle's Court, and therewith the return of the hitherto so formal John Hale, now little better than one of the disorderly, to his wife. At this point the full powers of the author seem to flow in upon the situation in a quiet flood of effortless comprehension that makes the end of what was a stirring tale, and something besides, luminous with perceptions, felicities, and humours,—not more luminous with perceptions, however, than the preceding chapter, the close of which illustrates Bret Harte's really marvellous awareness of every motion of the mind of his characters, from finest cause to most intangible effect on manner or relationship. Of that, and of his equally characteristic reticence exemplified in the same context, much might be said: but these qualities pervade his best work. The distinction of *Snow-Bound at Eagle's* lies rather in a certain bi-polar excellence and completeness belonging to it; in the fact that while it has all the substance and energy and interest of a tale of action, it yet leaves on the mind a predominant sense of moral observation and artistic accomplishment.

These are by no means all the works produced during 1882–85, and some of the others are fully as worthy of being dwelt upon. In the case of Bret Harte the temptation to linger over particular stories is very great, because almost any *one* in the wide range of his best will be found to exemplify some excellence which can hardly be too much praised, yet which is generally not even recognized as being within his competence. Also, be it confessed, because the mass and variety of his work makes an editor inclined to defer the enterprise of giving a summary

account of the whole. How much the whole amounts to is not generally understood. The *Collected Works* runs to ten substantial volumes, and is the mine where you must look for his main riches and his highest average value. But collections of stories not yet incorporated in that edition, and two or three longer works separately published, would together make, if uniformly produced, at least ten volumes more. This means a large body of literature and a great multitude of productions. Not all of these are of equal excellence (a thing possible only in the work of man's hand, never in the work of his mind), but practically all bear, whether the subject be slight or serious, the essential, unforgeable, inerasable sign-manual of a great writer's manner. They are not mere authorship, good or bad, but the better and worse work of a master. In the summary glance over the remaining productions of his third period which will now be attempted only the better works will be chosen for mention, and scarce one in five of these.

But first we must note a change in the conditions of his life dating from 1885. In that year, owing to political changes in America, and perhaps to some hostile influence besides, he lost his post as Consul. He then moved to London, fixed his headquarters at 74 Lancaster Gate, and henceforth devoted himself entirely to literary work. In no hermit spirit, however, nor without interpose of ease, for he was much seen thereafter in the best good company of several social worlds. "Nobody," says Justin M'Carthy in a well-known passage of his *Reminiscences*, "is made more cordially welcome in literary society, or indeed in society of any kind which he chooses to favour with his presence." No visitor to this country who was merely a man of letters ever had so much the run of English higher social life as Bret Harte. The fact is important, because it is clear that his vogue was not that of a lion but of a man personally known and heartily liked. Far from that world of marquises and mansions, however, he had warm friendships—the friendships of his life—in the region of more ordinary avocations and domesticities, the record of which is pleasant reading. And besides those social visitings in town and country, he made many excursions, so that few natives knew England so

well, or were so informed regarding her historical buildings and literary shrines, as the chronicler of Roaring Camp and of Rough and Ready. But through all this his literary work, to which he religiously devoted a part of every day, went on without a break and almost without a pause. As soon as one story was completed, the planning if not the writing of the next was begun. Even his steady industry could not produce enough to meet the demand for his work. It was well that he had this assured market, for he had "obligations in America," and these, added to his own requirements, called for a constant and considerable income. A pleasant diversion from the main track of his work was the writing of the drama *Sue*, which was founded on *The Judgment of Bolinas Plain*, and done with the expert collaboration of Mr. Pemberton. The play had a great success both in America (where it was produced by Charles Frohman in September 1896) and in this country, where it was presented to a distinguished and delighted audience at the Garrick Theatre in June 1898. The collaboration which yielded this happy result (making certainly one of the happiest and most grateful moments in Bret Harte's life) was perhaps above all fortunate because of the opportunities which it afforded to a future biographer. We see in Mr. Pemberton the deep affection which Bret Harte inspired in so many friends, and which seems to have been a sympathetic response in them to what was the essential principle of his own nature. Even the wit and gaiety of his letters expresses his prevailing kindness of intention, for it was clearly prompted by the desire to give happiness to the receiver. Nor was this intention relaxed even in his last days when he was suffering cruel pain and knew himself to be within the shadow of death. And first and last he had his secret portion of pain of another kind, "disappointments and sorrows," says Mr. Pemberton, "which he bore with the chivalry of a Bayard, and a silence as dignified as it was pathetic." In his own country the tradition of disparagement died slowly; his long stay abroad could easily be counted to him for bad patriotism. Also there was that in his situation after he came to Europe which made him a ready mark for the gibing paragraphist void of information and a soul. But

though his sensitive nature often writhed, he never retorted, openly or by parable. Into no single line of his writings can a personal meaning be read, whether accusation or defence. But he drew much comfort from the legend on the famous Inscribed Stone of Marischal College, Aberdeen: "*They say: What say they? Let them say*"[1]—and I have no doubt he liked Scotland a little better for it. So he spent the years down to the century's close, full of work and plans of work, yet living pleasantly in the world among his friends of every kind and degree, and well liked beyond the common measure of friendship. That friendship was as sincere in Belgravia as in Bohemia or the places between. For the same qualities went with him everywhere, and they were magically appealing in their naturalness, dignity, kindness, and charm. He was seen as habitué or guest at many noted houses in town and country: at Mrs. Henniker's, at Compton Wynyates, Newstead Abbey, and Crewe Hall. But one house which in his last years was almost a second home was that of his dear friends, the Van de Veldes, at Camberley in Surrey, where especially he was fain to seek the spring sunshine after a London winter, and where, he said, the balsamic scent from the pine-topped hills brought the early Californian days about him.

And now to glance rapidly at the more important productions after 1885. We must first note *Maruja*, written during the Glasgow period and too important to be passed in silence. The scene is mainly in and around the hacienda

[1] The legend is usually thus quoted and given (e.g. by Mr. Pemberton) as "the motto of the Earls Mareschal of Aberdeen," or as the motto of the College. Inquiry at an authoritative source has produced the following correct and corrective account:—

"In the vestibule or portal leading to the Mitchell Hall and Tower of Marischal College there is in the wall of the staircase the famous Stone with the Inscription: 'Thay haif said: quhat say thay; lat thame say.' This is almost the only remnant of the original College Buildings in the New Town (King's College, in the Old Town, dates from 1505). Marischal College was founded in 1593 by George Keith, fifth Earl Marischal; and the usual story is that, in answer to reproaches for having {become possessed / taken possession} of the Abbey of Deer, he inscribed the words (neither his motto nor ours) on a Tower at Deer and on the College." (Professor J. Arthur Thomson, in a letter to the Editor.)

or country house of a Spanish-Californian family of rank, and the Spanish atmosphere of thought, feeling, routine without and within, is convincingly reproduced. The heroine, Maruja, unites the racial qualities of her Spanish mother and her New England father in no ordinary alternation of characteristics, but in an organic unity of personality which replaces yet implies both groups. The chief character, however, is not Maruja, but the old major-domo Pereo, whose moods and acts contribute a metaphysical element of weirdness which makes the story linger in the imagination. Another striking character, seen only for a moment yet sculptured deeply on the memory, is Dr. West, the athletic ageing man, who rides forth subduing a horse, only to fall a victim to the lasso of a dotard. Altogether, although a little formal, it is strong work. So, assuredly, in its very different way, is *A Millionaire of Rough and Ready*, which accumulates a wonderful intensity towards its close. Bret Harte has done nothing more deeply felt, nothing more Shakespearian in its truth, or more to the honour of human nature than the conversation between the two lonely men, the one soured by suffering and wrongs, the other unshakably just. In *A Phyllis of the Sierras* the scene, aloft and apart, counts for a great deal, but the interest is that of intimate drama in which the characters are strongly contrasted yet subtly compared. Here we meet Minty Sharpe and her young brother Richelieu, as valuable and individual creations as their author ever achieved. *A Sappho of Green Springs* is a tale sympathetically conceived and as sympathetically rounded off by what seems an anti-climax. The quest of the secret poet is through a woodland world, and enriches the story with some passages of wonderful beauty. It also illustrates Bret Harte's intense sensitiveness to the finest, most minute and elusive effects of nature. So, in a degree, does *Through the Santa Clara Wheat*, which leaves an impression of wholesomeness and purity entirely fitting the title. But this effect is less due to the wheat, which we have the sensation of moving through and living among, or to the character of the heroine—a slightly conventional, somewhat foolish, but at the core brave and true young girl—than to the splendid American qualities of the workmen

who play the part of Providence in her hour of need. We are in a larger world in *A Ward of the Golden Gate*. The strange compact out of which the story grows is admirably introduced, and the consequences developed with imagination and restraint. The result is a long, sumptuous, and satisfying story, full of incident, full of character, and full of heart. Colonel Pendleton must rank as one of the author's grandest characters, far above the Starbottle of any period; and while it is hard to say, in a review of all Bret Harte's heroines, *who* among them shall bear the bell, certain it is there is none so winning as Yerba Buena.

We have passed, however, the first if not also the second of that trilogy of stories which is his best substitute for a satisfactory novel. All three are so good that one is reluctant to own that the first is also the best. *A Waif of the Plains* is full of movement and life and large air, has such variety of situation and such continuity of atmosphere, and works so naturally towards an ending which makes a fit starting-point for the next advance, that it must be considered his happiest work. Had the story never been carried beyond the opening chapters, these chapters would live on their own merits, so admirable is the writing and so unforgettably is the scene set before our eyes. Quite glorious, too, as a humorous creation, is lying Jim Hooker, who lies his way through the trilogy parallel with the hero and the false heroine. She gives its name to the second instalment, *Susy*, which, with less variety and spaciousness, has a central incident more moving than anything in *A Waif of the Plains*, and subtler observations of character and sensation. The third part, *Clarence*, was of considerably later date, and makes a worthy finish to the trilogy. It is not achieved without peril, but it is achieved; and the fine entrance which Abraham Lincoln makes into the story speaks eloquently of the comprehension, the resource, and the restraint of which Bret Harte was capable. And just here we may fitly mention a duologue of tales of the South during the Civil War. The first is *Colonel Starbottle's Client*, and the second is *Sally Dows*. Bret Harte's powers are at their fullest in both, working with perhaps greater gusto from the stimulating sense of a new scene. Be it said that of that

scene, social and physical, he has as full and organic cognizance as though his senses had been trained to it alone. Each of the stories is of important quality in content and manner, but it is the character of Sally Dows that links them and is the supreme enrichment of both. Sally is such a heroine as there are few in all literature, and yet there is nothing so sure about her as her reality and her truth to the regional type. Passing with a mere mention *The Ancestors of Peter Atherly* and *Two Americans* (the first profoundly thought and felt, the second admirably written but collapsing into a novelette at the end), we return to California to note *The Reformation of James Reddy*, strong in every way, not least in its finish. A special feature of this story is that, beyond any story of its length known to me, it leaves on the mind the impression of a long history or a full-length novel. This is partly due to the nature of the theme, but still more to the wonderful control in the telling, to the proportion held between discourse and action, and, in a word, to the rate of going. This term may serve to remind us of "*Chu Chu!*" the first in another trilogy of stories, which has the gay and whimsical Enriquez Saltello for its central figure. The second, *The Devotion of Enriquez*, is even more amusing (it could not be more delightful), because there a foil to his effervescence and audacity is supplied in the person of a Boston young lady of superlative superciliousness, culture, and calm—a study, a satire, and a creation all in one. To the publishers whose generosity enables us to include "*Chu Chu!*" in this collection, we are indebted also for *Johnson's Old Woman*, in which there is no satire, but the moment's harvest of a quiet eye which saw everything, even to the unconscious counting of the little ones by the mothering girl, and loved it because it was good.

All these titles[1] are from vols. vi-x of the *Collected Works*, and in nearly every case belong to stories of considerable length in which plot and action are the sub-

[1] Except three referred to on pp. lii-liv. *In the Carquinez Woods* is the title-story of a volume which contains also *A Blue Grass Penelope, A Ship of '49, Left out on Lone Star Mountain*, and others. The last-named is included in this selection by arrangement with Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co.

stantial element. Inferior to none of these, however, as a gauge of mastership or a gift of joy, are a few in which the outward event does little more than initiate and mark the progress of an inward history. Of this kind is *In the Tules*, a short story as intense as a poem and as inward as a prayer. Longer, but with the same psychological insight, not so much illuminating as forming the very stuff of an entrancing narrative, is *The Conspiracy of Mrs. Bunker*. These stories, it often occurs to one (and the remark is strictly relevant to half-a-score of others), would be well known to the critical and much acclaimed had they been written in French or Russian. To continue: no examples have been cited from the six volumes of stories representing the work of his last few years; during which his productivity increased, with some relaxation of strenuousness, perhaps, but certainly no real lessening of power. Instance the fact that it yielded such a masterpiece of writing, knowledge, and humour as *Unser Karl*; so deep and adept, and withal courteous and restrained, a study of national character and social difference (with a tragic consequence thrown in) as *The Desborough Connections*; such a realistic presentment of a morally stunted type and an awakening primitive nature as *Liberty Jones's Discovery*; finally such a joyous and valiant tale of man and maid as *Salomy Jane's Kiss*, the only prose equivalent of Jock of Hazeldean, but with fullness and qualities beyond any mere lyric. Lastly, there has been no reference to separate books, except *Clarence*. Our author was not to be trusted with a long work, and the fate even of *Clarence* wavers for a time. But the trend towards trivial intricacy of plot is arrested, and the book finishes on strong and simple lines. That cannot be said of some others; but *The Crusade of the Excelsior* must be excepted. It is an unusual sort of enterprise for Bret Harte, but thrillingly conducted and happily achieved. Then there is *Cressy*, the most redolent and the richest of his books (though injured, to my thinking, by an inspiration of freakishness at the close), as Cressy herself is the most radiant of all his heroines, and one of the most radiant in literature.

This roll-call of titles may be of use in directing readers to his later best (not all his best, by any means, but his

best only), a matter on which no existing book gives any guidance. But it is chiefly intended to indicate the grounds for the unusual claim here made that his third literary period was his greatest.[1] It was his greatest simply because it yielded much the greater volume and variety of work with the stamp of essential literature. If a contrary opinion widely prevails, it is due in part to the fixation of a first impression (facilitated by the action of the law of copyright) and partly to pure ignorance in those whose business it should be to know better. No one who has read the earlier pages of this Essay will suspect me of undervaluing the *Overland* stories. They would have made Bret Harte's fame lastingly secure had he written nothing further, and by them he will always be first and best and most widely known. They hold their position of absolute esteem by many credentials: by humour and pathos, by detachment and sympathy, by sentiment and sarcasm indistinguishably blending as never before, and by an entire relation of the mind towards the enactments described—a relation at once impersonally objective and intimately human—that is also without its equal in literature; by a style singular in its purity, its conciseness, and its rhythm; and, at the outer verge of observation, by an artistic sense, a perception of the subject in its isolation and totality—"that aerial detachment which is the beginning of art"—that is the enabling condition as it is also the subjective effect of all perfect work. For the gift of such works as these, whoever gives them, the due return is not merely admiration but gratitude. But in this case, while the admiration has been explicit enough, the gratitude seems to have been aborted (especially among American critics) by a disappointing arrest of further favours. Yet if Bret Harte wrote few or no stories afterwards with just that unexampled quality of

[1] At the time of writing the text I had not seen Madame Van de Velde's article in *The Gentleman's Magazine*. But I find that she there makes the same claim, in quiet disregard of critical custom. "I do not think it heresy to say that if the breathless episodes of *The Luck*, *Miggles*, or *Tennessee's Partner* had appeared fifteen years after instead of before some of Bret Harte's other works, they would have challenged unfavourable comparisons with *An Apostle of the Tules*, *Left out on Lone Star Mountain*, *Barker's Luck*, and *A Sappho of Green Springs*."

brevity and fullness, realism, and romance, neither did any one else ever write such stories at all. Therefore to depreciate his later work because it does not continuously reproduce this kind of miracle, this concentration of scene and society, of nature and man, in cameos of living art—but is only the good work, in more familiar forms and dimensions, of a man of genius and a master of letters—is either to make demands on him that are uncritical and childish, or to pass a severe judgement on the rest of literature. When appreciation has worked so paradoxically as that, it might be worth while to recover our sense of values by forgetting the early masterpieces altogether, and trying to estimate without prepossession the merits of a Bret Harte who did not write *The Luck of Roaring Camp* or *Tennessee's Partner* (there being no such stories), but who did write *Flip* and *A Blue Grass Penelope*, who did write *Cressy* and *A Sappho of Green Springs*, who did write *In the Carquinez Woods* and *An Apostle of the Tules*, *The Conspiracy of Mrs. Bunker* and *The Heir of the M'Hulishes*, *Dick Boyle's Business Card* and *Salomy Jane's Kiss*, *The Re-incarnation of Smith* and *The Pupil of Chestnut Ridge*, and forty more of the best.[1] Who can doubt that the author of these would have his place in literature as secure as it is now? There would be a difference in the connotations of his name, a difference also in the range of his audience; but with fit audience and fewer he would still be in excellent company of the living and the dead. The more certainly so because of two stories which have not yet been named, and which rise above the rest of this period or any other. Not as competing with his earlier masterpieces in simple appeal to any and every reader, but by the weight of meaning which they carry and the art which they express for those who know, *The Bell-Ringer of Angel's* and *The Judgment of Bolinas Plain* are the greatest things he ever wrote.

There is no room here to consider either of them as

[1] Among the forty would have to be counted *The Argonauts of North Liberty*, a book which for some insufficient reason has never been published in England. The development of this story proceeds on a lower level than that promised, and almost required, by the opening; but even with that defect it is one of the most remarkable of his works.

they deserve. But the art of the second will task and reward the highest discernments that can be brought to bear upon it. The more a reader is habitually sensitive to what is done and what is resisted in the making of a masterpiece, the more will he be astonished at the seeming miracle of maturity, precision, and inclusiveness of the whole presentment, from the first setting of the scene to the containing irony of the close. Nothing more perfect than *The Judgment of Bolinas Plain* is to be found in literature. Yet it is perhaps not so great a story as *The Bell-Ringer of Angel's*, which, with less perfection in the unfolding (especially of the scene), has greater imaginative immanence and more general speculation of the soul. The character of the Bell-Ringer is the profoundest conception of Bret Harte, and his insight into it is not less deep because he emphasizes so external a thing as a verbal mannerism. The Bell-Ringer's "You follow me? You know what I mean?" is not external, but the very expression of his struggling and obstructed soul. Men might write dissertations upon *The Bell-Ringer of Angel's* as they have done upon single great works of literature, sacred and profane, and find no lack of matter for philosophy. For it carries more meaning than there is room for on so small a surface of text, and is deeply fraught with the great issues and emotions of true tragic art.

And here we are reminded that he holds his position in literature also by his poetry, of which almost nothing has thus far been said. As a characteristic literary bequest it is not less individual and important than his prose, though so much less in amount and more unequal. Its best is marked by the same concrete originality, the same human sympathy and humour, and the same wonderful economy of expression which characterize his prose, with the something above and beyond which makes the result poetry. He is best known by the humorous examples, which it would indeed be difficult to over-praise, but he has his masterpieces in other moods and kinds also. The elegiac pieces give occasional expression to that element of personal thought and feeling so severely eliminated from his prose, in which the writer as far as possible withholds himself. The National poems are a possession of his country, and among them *The Réveillé*

may be considered a possession of ours. For it was reprinted by *The Times* twice (first in part, and then in its entirety) in the early weeks of the present conflict, and was thence copied into almost every newspaper in the United Kingdom. Nor can it be said that the native genius produced anything of its own so worthy of the occasion. Great in quite another way is *Relieving Guard*, so concise, so deeply felt, so full of implicit vision: a vision that for a moment sets the death of a man, the long wait of the Civil War, and the whole human drama itself, together in the void sweep of space. Not by conciseness, save in the last lines, is *Concepcion de Arguello* achieved: but what an achievement it is! The imagination of the poet makes us almost see the long procession of the empty years, makes us feel what their passage has meant to Concepcion, till with the silent dying out of her faintest final hopes there seems to be no more to tell. Yet the end comes upon us after that with the effect of an apparition, and renews the sense of tragedy as if it had been still untouched. Of a truth the critic had full warrant who contended that nobody but Bret Harte — nobody but a writer who had given the unparalleled and of whom the impossible was therefore expected — could have produced such a poem as *Concepcion de Arguello* and not have won "an immediate and wide acclaim." Near it we may place *Luke*, which has not indeed the same dignity nor the same quality of greatness, but which develops with rare sympathy and dramatic realization of character a conception none the less poetical for having been met in real life. Through it we make a transition to the poems which are sheerly dramatic, in which again, as in his stories, two seem to be supreme. As might be expected, they are among the shortest; for it seems to have been the crowning fairy gift to Bret Harte that he should be able to produce his greatest effects with scarce enough material to render them visible. "Beauty," says an old English writer, "makes greatest show being slightest substance." It sounds like disparagement; but what it means is that the work is greatest when the material disappears in the effect, being nowhere redundant. Economy of expression could go no further, nor could inclusiveness contain more,

than what we find in *In the Tunnel* and still more in *Jim*. The dramatic intensity in the latter, especially—the rapidity and complexity of the emotion, the sorrow and the passionate recoil, by which sorrow seeks to escape from or dissemble itself in a simulated anger, being simultaneous—it is wonderful beyond words. Yet perhaps *In the Tunnel* is the greater of the two. It has a heroic theme: the emotion is a nobler one and more continuous with itself. It is continuous also with the action. For the simple devotion of the man who wishes his friend to be remembered even by strangers is one in kind with that of him who gave his life.

For the rest, space is wanting in which to remark upon many examples of signal and different excellence. It may be said, in general characterization of Bret Harte's poetry, that if some twenty-five or thirty pieces alone were chosen from it, the small collection would be found to display more diverse effects and values of *literature*,—as distinguished from purely *poetic* value—more concrete originality, dramatic substance, variety in the kind and quality of direct human interest, and memorable individual character in matter and form, than could be found in the same amount of text from any other modern poet, however much "greater" on the whole record. But it is somewhat with his poetry as with his prose: the tyrannic obsession exerted by a few favourites (in this case two humorous pieces, and perhaps an inferior third) has virtually excluded the main body of his poems, and many of his best, from general recognition. At the same time it has to be owned that he preserved in his "Poetical Works" a good many trivialities that ought to have passed with the journalism of their hour. This fault is faithfully repeated in "Some Later Verses," published a few years before his death. But it contains some additions of value, especially *Jack of the Tules* (a most cunning and dramatic piece), *Artemis in Sierra* (in which, though it seems not to have been noticed, the poet has an irreverent eye upon *Love in the Valley*), and several important communications from Truthful James. In one of them there is a point worth noting. The incomparable *Plain Language from Truthful James* originated as an attempt to reproduce, with a comic theme, the rhythm of the chant of Meleager

in *Atalanta in Calydon*. To those who do not know the fact, the verses would not of themselves suggest a classical connexion. But in *The Thought-Reader of Angel's*, when Truthful James records an unprofitable attempt upon the Thought-Reader and ends by crying, "Alas

> For the days when the skill
> Of the keerds was no blind,
> When no effort of will
> Could beat four of a kind,
> When the thing wot you held in your hand, Pard, was
> worth more than the thing in your mind!"—

do we not seem to hear the prophesying plangent tones of the tragic Chorus?

When the century opened, Bret Harte was less seen in society or club-land, and it became known that his health was in some way amiss. How seriously amiss even his friends did not know, or that the evil root of much mischief was an advancing malady of the throat. Early in 1902 he went on a visit to Camberley, hoping to benefit by sunshine and air. In March he had to submit to an operation, "which only staved off the inevitable end," says Mr. Pemberton; "and in spite of his affected high spirits, I think he knew it." Though suffering a great deal, he still tried to write, and on April 17 wrote several draughts of the opening lines of a new story. He was unable to continue, and on subsequent days only wrote letters. He was seated at his writing-table for this friendly purpose on May 5 when an alarming hæmorrhage of the throat suddenly ensued. He went to his bedroom, doctors were summoned, and he partly rallied. But in the afternoon a second attack developed, under which he became unconscious and "passed peacefully away in the presence of his dear friend, Madame Van de Velde, and her attendants." He was buried in Frimley churchyard quietly, as he had wished, with only the members of his family and a few private friends around the grave.

Although all who knew him personally unite in testifying that Bret Harte as a social being was quite singularly simple, frank, and natural, yet he is so far a psychological enigma that the first easy assertion one ventures to make about him is likely to be imperfect until it has been

contradicted. There is of course a resolution of these and all contradictions if we carry the investigation far enough ; but they have first to be met in the way. Thus he lived twenty-four years in exile, the last seventeen without the inducement of an official position ; and yet an uncompromising patriotism was one of the three loyalties—" loyalty to his country, loyalty to his art, and loyalty to his friends "—described as the dominant trait of his character by one who knew him well and judged very wisely. It is but carrying the inevitable paradox a stage further, and gathering in a little more of the obvious truth, to add that it was according to the fitness of things that he should have died and been buried in England. For by divers tokens he belonged to it so inherently that one can imagine his life having been vexed by a vague nostalgia, like that which he describes in *A Drift from Redwood Camp*, had he never approached it. It gave to him more generously and received from him more gratefully than ever his own country did. Incomparably the most potent influence in the waking, inspiring, and directing of his genius had come to him from England in the works of Dickens ; and that great literature, that great name, were the objects of a devotion beginning in boyhood and growing stronger with the years. Later, when he was himself become a name, but a name questioned as well as acclaimed, it was in England that he received the most ungrudging recognition by men of letters of the first quality and highest standing, and from the whole body of readers an affectionate admiration and a place next to Dickens himself. English critical opinion never formed the foolish habit of asking how much in each new work could be belittled on the score of present faults or by past comparisons, but took each for what it professed to be : not an incident of the ages, perhaps, but a piece of sound contemporary literature of its kind and scale. But beyond these considerations there was a further fitness in his last home-bringing being to English earth. An intimate study of his psychology and character, as the whole range of his works and what is known of his personal life reveal them, makes one aware that there was much his nature needed for its ideal growth and fashioning—as a plant may have need of special elements for its prosperous development,

organic and formal—that was to be found in the air and soil of English life, but hardly in America, and least of all in California. It almost admits, indeed, of demonstration that the limitations which disable his talent at certain ranges are precisely due to the absence of these elements in the nurture of his formative period. Into that question I have not attempted to go. Partly for fear of the metaphysics that loom ahead, and partly because a generation which has not yet learned to recognize a great writer's obvious range and indubitable quality is not entitled to a discourse about his limitations or defects.

What he had, as his endowment for the career of literature, was an organization exquisitely sensitive to all impressions of the senses; an intuitive perception of character which made every human type a known page in an open book; a nature which was a disposition to goodwill; and a devotion to his art which was to him instead of philosophy and all the more serious concerns of the mind. Somewhere among these gifts comes his humour, in which his perceptiveness and his goodwill are united in a delicate, indefinable blend of happiness, knowledge, and kindness. It is a great power and charm of his literature; and surely it is saying much for his store of qualities to add, as one truthfully may, that some of his finest works owe almost nothing to it. Then, as the scene on which these powers, all so vital, so fluid, were to be exercised, he had the drifting phantasmagory of California's places and people, and it remains forever as indissolubly associated with his name as the Heroic Age with the name of Homer, or the romantic history of Scotland with the name of "The Author of Waverley." Yet nothing could be further astray than the assertion which is sometimes ventured, that he could achieve nothing with the subjects of any other soil. It would have been very strange indeed if a being equipped, as I have said earlier, to take the impression of the world, had been able to function only in relation to a particular region. And the region itself, be it remarked, was sufficiently large and various to have required a very wide specialization indeed in the artist who was to represent it, in all its aspects and contents, as he did, from the most urban domesticities to the wildest adventures, from primitive pan-mining to extensive agri-

culture, and from the seashore to the mountain summit. But as a fact he rendered equally good account of every region in which the scene of his stories was cast, and they were many and diverse, from New England to Todos Santos, and from the Plains to the "castle" of a Scottish landowner. And in all these scenes the characters are impeccably well found and reported, true habitants of their habitat. It has already been said that knowledge of character is, upon the whole, his most powerful faculty. And what is from some points of view a limitation—his want of anything like a metaphysic sense, and of the romantic element in style (which together are so great a power in the conceptions and the writing of Mr. Joseph Conrad, for instance)—here evaluates as a virtue. For his characters stand in the clear colourless light of common day, and their words came from them with no accent that is not absolutely their own, and as expressive as life could make them. His knowledge is so sure and immediate that its assumptions may sometimes mislead the reader who does not recognize all the antecedents of heredity and personal life that are summed up in the character as it is presented to him. Here the artistic virtue of Bret Harte is fairly absolute for a writer who is sometimes regarded as one who took an easy line to please the million. As a fact, he makes no concessions to the reader at any time. He never explains, never emphasizes, never underlines a point, however fine the indication, or however necessary for understanding either a character or a plot. I can think of no one who would have dared to present the Bell-Ringer's wife to English readers without some explanatory matter to convince them that she was a quite possible and real young woman of her region, the product of a re-traceable historical process in which far-back antecedents (probably in a Puritan home), a generation or two of frontier life, and finally the personal type and individual experience have all gone to make the woman as we find her. So, with due change of terms, in the case of Cressy, who almost beguiles one into a disquisition on social inheritance; and so also with the extreme precociousness (as it is called) of the sick boy in *Simpson's Bar*. This serene ignoring of the reader's imperfect knowledge, and presumably imperfect intelligence, is, however, only

a particular instance of that severe abstention—especially abstention of his own personality or judgement—in which he has few fellows among writers of English. It is one of the things which give his work its close-knit organic texture of thought and style and render it classic.

More important than its psychological richness is the idea of human nature which a writer's work expresses. For that is the ultimate revelation, and the moral measure of his influence. In the great range of characters which Bret Harte has presented there are many weak and foolish and erring, but hardly half a dozen men of evil will. Few writers have contrived so many dramas without the aid of a villain of the piece, and his most tragic endings, while they move us deeply, heighten rather than depress the pulse of life. Upon the whole he has, proportionately, more bad women (apart from merely ill-behaved ones) than bad men; partly because California revealed them in that proportion, and partly from a somewhat jejune idea that the woman disastrous or unkind was a powerful artistic device. But his better women come nearer to the sympathies and ideals of to-day than the women of either Dickens or Thackeray. And no one, surely, has such a galaxy of young girl heroines as he: to run over the list of them in thought is an indulgence which should be the reward only of special virtue. But California was predominantly a man's world, and it is the relations among these that are the dominating theme of his literature. His many illustrations of it have enriched the world with a gallery of memorable forms, romantic, pathetic, humorous, and heroic, through whom the truth has been made manifest, as it were, unawares. He would have been the last man of his time to set out to teach or preach anything, least of all a moral ideal. But the unconscious has always the last and most vital word with us, and therefore all his work is a parable in praise of sincerity and fearlessness in women, friendship, loyalty, honour, and courage in men. In this unperceived, accumulating, inevitable result his work revealed itself as drawn from the depths beyond his habitual ken, and expressed the ineliminable aspirations and convictions which it would have been impossible for his shy, humorous, and fugitive social personality to declare.

SPANISH CALIFORNIA

(THE BEGINNING—AND THE END)

THE LEGEND OF MONTE DEL DIABLO

THE cautious reader will detect a lack of authenticity in the following pages. I am not a cautious reader myself, yet I confess with some concern to the absence of much documentary evidence in support of the singular incident I am about to relate. Disjointed memoranda, the proceedings of *ayuntamientos* and early departmental *juntas*, with other records of a primitive and superstitious people, have been my inadequate authorities. It is but just to state, however, that though this particular story lacks corroboration, in ransacking the Spanish archives of Upper California I have met with many more surprising and incredible stories, attested and supported to a degree that would have placed this legend beyond a cavil or doubt. I have, also, never lost faith in the legend myself, and in so doing have profited much from the examples of divers grant-claimants, who have often jostled me in their more practical researches, and who have my sincere sympathy at the scepticism of a modern hard-headed and practical world.

For many years after Father Junipero Serro first rang his bell in the wilderness of Upper California, the spirit which animated that adventurous priest did not wane. The conversion of the heathen went on rapidly in the establishment of Missions throughout the land. So sedulously did the good Fathers set about their work, that around their isolated chapels there presently arose *adobe* huts, whose mud-plastered and savage tenants partook regularly of the provisions, and occasionally of the Sacrament, of their pious hosts. Nay, so great was their progress, that one zealous Padre is reported to have

administered the Lord's Supper one Sabbath morning to "over three hundred heathen Salvages." It was not to be wondered that the Enemy of Souls, being greatly incensed thereat, and alarmed at his decreasing popularity, should have grievously tempted and embarrassed these holy Fathers, as we shall presently see.

Yet they were happy, peaceful days for California. The vagrant keels of prying Commerce had not as yet ruffled the lordly gravity of her bays. No torn and ragged gulch betrayed the suspicion of golden treasure. The wild oats drooped idly in the morning heat or wrestled with the afternoon breezes. Deer and antelope dotted the plain. The watercourses brawled in their familiar channels, nor dreamed of ever shifting their regular tide. The wonders of the Yosemite and Calaveras were as yet unrecorded. The holy Fathers noted little of the landscape beyond the barbaric prodigality with which the quick soil repaid the sowing. A new conversion, the advent of a saint's day, or the baptism of an Indian baby, was at once the chronicle and marvel of their day.

At this blissful epoch there lived at the Mission of San Pablo Father José Antonio Haro, a worthy brother of the Society of Jesus. He was of tall and cadaverous aspect. A somewhat romantic history had given a poetic interest to his lugubrious visage. While a youth pursuing his studies at famous Salamanca, he had become enamoured of the charms of Doña Carmen de Torrencevara, as that lady passed to her matutinal devotions. Untoward circumstances, hastened, perhaps, by a wealthier suitor, brought this amour to a disastrous issue, and Father José entered a monastery, taking upon himself the vows of celibacy. It was here that his natural fervour and poetic enthusiasm conceived expression as a missionary. A longing to convert the uncivilized heathen succeeded his frivolous earthly passion, and a desire to explore and develop unknown fastnesses continually possessed him. In his flashing eye and sombre exterior was detected a singular commingling of the discreet Las Casas and the impetuous Balboa.

Fired by this pious zeal, Father José went forward in the van of Christian pioneers. On reaching Mexico, he obtained authority to establish the Mission of San Pablo.

Like the good Junipero, accompanied only by an acolyte and muleteer, he unsaddled his mules in a dusky cañon, and rang his bell in the wilderness. The savages — a peaceful, inoffensive, and inferior race—presently flocked around him. The nearest military post was far away, which contributed much to the security of these pious pilgrims, who found their open trustfulness and amiability better fitted to repress hostility than the presence of an armed, suspicious, and brawling soldiery. So the good Father José said matins and prime, mass and vespers, in the heart of sin and heathenism, taking no heed to himself, but looking only to the welfare of the Holy Church. Conversions soon followed, and on the 7th of July 1760, the first Indian baby was baptized,—an event which, as Father José piously records, "exceeds the richnesse of gold or precious jewels or the chancing upon the Ophir of Solomon." I quote this incident as best suited to show the ingenious blending of poetry and piety which distinguished Father José's record.

The Mission of San Pablo progressed and prospered, until the pious founder therof, like the infidel Alexander, might have wept that there were no more heathen worlds to conquer. But his ardent and enthusiastic spirit could not long brook an idleness that seemed begotten of sin; and one pleasant August morning, in the year of grace 1770, Father José issued from the outer court of the Mission building, equipped to explore the field for new missionary labours.

Nothing could exceed the quiet gravity and unpretentiousness of the little cavalcade. First rode a stout muleteer, leading a pack-mule laden with the provisions of the party, together with a few cheap crucifixes and hawks' bells. After him came the devout Padre José, bearing his breviary and cross, with a black *serapa* thrown around his shoulders; while on either side trotted a dusky convert, anxious to show a proper sense of their regeneration by acting as guides into the wilds of their heathen brethren. Their new condition was agreeably shown by the absence of the usual mud-plaster, which in their unconverted state they assumed to keep away vermin and cold. The morning was bright and propitious. Before their departure, mass had been said in the chapel, and the

protection of St. Ignatius invoked against all contingent evils, but especially against bears, which, like the fiery dragons of old, seemed to cherish unconquerable hostility to the Holy Church.

As they wound through the cañon, charming birds disported upon boughs and sprays, and sober quails piped from the alders; the willowy watercourses gave a musical utterance, and the long grass whispered on the hillside. On entering the deeper defiles, above them towered dark green masses of pine, and occasionally the *madroño* shook its bright scarlet berries. As they toiled up many a steep ascent, Father José sometimes picked up fragments of scoria, which spake to his imagination of direful volcanoes and impending earthquakes. To the less scientific mind of the muleteer Ignacio they had even a more terrifying significance; and he once or twice snuffed the air suspiciously, and declared that it smelt of sulphur. So the first day of their journey wore away, and at night they encamped without having met a single heathen face.

It was on this night that the Enemy of Souls appeared to Ignacio in an appalling form. He had retired to a secluded part of the camp and had sunk upon his knees in prayerful meditation, when he looked up and perceived the Arch-Fiend in the likeness of a monstrous bear. The Evil One was seated on his hind legs immediately before him, with his fore-paws joined together just below his black muzzle. Wisely conceiving this remarkable attitude to be in mockery and derision of his devotions, the worthy muleteer was transported with fury. Seizing an arquebuse, he instantly closed his eyes and fired. When he had recovered from the effects of the terrific discharge, the apparition had disappeared. Father José, awakened by the report, reached the spot only in time to chide the muleteer for wasting powder and ball in a contest with one whom a single ave would have been sufficient to utterly discomfit. What further reliance he placed on Ignacio's story is not known; but, in commemoration of a worthy Californian custom, the place was called *La Cañada de la Tentacion del Pio Muletero*, or "The Glen of the Temptation of the Pious Muleteer," a name which it retains to this day.

The next morning the party, issuing from a narrow gorge, came upon a long valley, sear and burnt with the shadeless heat. Its lower extremity was lost in a fading line of low hills, which, gathering might and volume toward the upper end of the valley, upheaved a stupendous bulwark against the breezy north. The peak of this awful spur was just touched by a fleecy cloud that shifted to and fro like a banneret. Father José gazed at it with mingled awe and admiration. By a singular coincidence, the muleteer Ignacio uttered the simple ejaculation "*Diablo!*"

As they penetrated the valley, they soon began to miss the agreeable life and companionable echoes of the cañon they had quitted. Huge fissures in the parched soil seemed to gape as with thirsty mouths. A few squirrels darted from the earth, and disappeared as mysteriously before the jingling mules. A grey wolf trotted leisurely along just ahead. But whichever way Father José turned, the mountain always asserted itself and arrested his wandering eye. Out of the dry and arid valley it seemed to spring into cooler and bracing life. Deep cavernous shadows dwelt along its base; rocky fastnesses appeared midway of its elevation; and on either side huge black hills diverged like massy roots from a central trunk. His lively fancy pictured these hills peopled with a majestic and intelligent race of savages; and looking into futurity, he already saw a monstrous cross crowning the dome-like summit. Far different were the sensations of the muleteer, who saw in those awful solitudes only fiery dragons, colossal bears, and breakneck trails. The converts, Concepcion and Incarnacion, trotting modestly beside the Padre, recognized, perhaps, some manifestation of their former weird mythology.

At nightfall they reached the base of the mountain. Here Father José unpacked his mules, said vespers, and, formally ringing his bell, called upon the Gentiles within hearing to come and accept the Holy Faith. The echoes of the black frowning hills around him caught up the pious invitation, and repeated it at intervals; but no Gentiles appeared that night. Nor were the devotions of the muleteer again disturbed, although he afterward asserted that,

when the Father's exhortation was ended, a mocking peal of laughter came from the mountain. Nothing daunted by these intimations of the near hostility of the Evil One, Father José declared his intention to ascend the mountain at early dawn, and before the sun rose the next morning he was leading the way.

The ascent was in many places difficult and dangerous. Huge fragments of rock often lay across the trail, and after a few hours' climbing they were forced to leave their mules in a little gully, and continue the ascent afoot. Unaccustomed to such exertion, Father José often stopped to wipe the perspiration from his thin cheeks. As the day wore on, a strange silence oppressed them. Except the occasional pattering of a squirrel, or a rustling in the *chimisal* bushes, there were no signs of life. The half-human print of a bear's foot sometimes appeared before them, at which Ignacio always crossed himself piously. The eye was sometimes cheated by a dripping from the rocks, which on closer inspection proved to be a resinous oily liquid with an abominable sulphurous smell. When they were within a short distance of the summit, the discreet Ignacio, selecting a sheltered nook for the camp, slipped aside and busied himself in preparations for the evening, leaving the holy Father to continue the ascent alone. Never was there a more thoughtless act of prudence, never a more imprudent piece of caution. Without noticing the desertion, buried in pious reflection, Father José pushed mechanically on, and, reaching the summit, cast himself down and gazed upon the prospect.

Below him lay a succession of valleys opening into each other like gentle lakes, until they were lost to the southward. Westerly the distant range hid the bosky *cañada* which sheltered the Mission of San Pablo. In the farther distance the Pacific Ocean stretched away, bearing a cloud of fog upon its bosom, which crept through the entrance of the bay, and rolled thickly between him and the north-eastward; the same fog hid the base of mountain and the view beyond. Still, from time to time the fleecy veil parted, and timidly disclosed charming glimpses of mighty rivers, mountain defiles, and rolling plains, sear with ripened oats, and bathed in the glow of the setting sun. As Father José gazed, he was penetrated with a pious

longing. Already his imagination, filled with enthusiastic conceptions, beheld all that vast expanse gathered under the mild sway of the Holy Faith, and peopled with zealous converts. Each little knoll in fancy became crowned with a chapel; from each dark cañon gleamed the white walls of a Mission building. Growing bolder in his enthusiasm and looking farther into futurity, he beheld a new Spain rising on these savage shores. He already saw the spires of stately cathedrals, the domes of palaces, vineyards, gardens, and groves. Convents, half hid among the hills, peeping from plantations of branching limes; and long processions of chanting nuns wound through the defiles. So completely was the good Father's conception of the future confounded with the past, that even in their choral strain the well-remembered accents of Cármen struck his ear. He was busied in these fanciful imaginings, when suddenly over that extended prospect the faint distant tolling of a bell rang sadly out and died. It was the Angelus. Father José listened with superstitious exaltation. The Mission of San Pablo was far away, and the sound must have been some miraculous omen. But never before, to his enthusiastic sense, did the sweet seriousness of this angelic symbol come with such strange significance. With the last faint peal, his glowing fancy seemed to cool; the fog closed in below him, and the good Father remembered he had not had his supper. He had risen and was wrapping his *serapa* around him, when he perceived for the first time that he was not alone.

Nearly opposite, and where should have been the faithless Ignacio, a grave and decorous figure was seated. His appearance was that of an elderly hidalgo, dressed in mourning, with moustaches of iron-grey carefully waxed and twisted around a pair of lantern-jaws. The monstrous hat and prodigious feather, the enormous ruff and exaggerated trunk-hose contrasted with a frame shrivelled and wizened, all belonged to a century previous. Yet Father José was not astonished. His adventurous life and poetic imagination, continually on the look-out for the marvellous, gave him a certain advantage over the practical and material minded. He instantly detected the diabolical quality of his visitant, and was prepared. With

equal coolness and courtesy he met the cavalier's obeisance.

"I ask your pardon, Sir Priest," said the stranger, "for disturbing your meditations. Pleasant they must have been, and right fanciful, I imagine, when occasioned by so fair a prospect."

"Worldly, perhaps, Sir Devil,—for such I take you to be," said the holy Father, as the stranger bowed his black plumes to the ground: "worldly, perhaps; for it hath pleased Heaven to retain even in our regenerated state much that pertaineth to the flesh, yet still, I trust, not without some speculation for the welfare of the Holy Church. In dwelling upon yon fair expanse, mine eyes have been graciously opened with prophetic inspiration, and the promise of the heathen as an inheritance hath marvellously recurred to me. For there can be none lack such diligence in the True Faith but may see that even the conversion of these pitiful salvages hath a meaning. As the blessed St. Ignatius discreetly observes," continued Father José, clearing his throat and slightly elevating his voice, "'the heathen is given to the warriors of Christ, even as the pearls of rare discovery which gladden the hearts of shipmen.' Nay, I might say——"

But here the stranger, who had been wrinkling his brows and twisting his moustaches with well-bred patience, took advantage of an oratorical pause.

"It grieves me, Sir Priest, to interrupt the current of your eloquence as discourteously as I have already broken your meditations; but the day already waneth to night. I have a matter of serious import to make with you, could I entreat your cautious consideration a few moments."

Father José hesitated. The temptation was great, and the prospect of acquiring some knowledge of the Great Enemy's plans not the least trifling object. And, if the truth must be told, there was a certain decorum about the stranger that interested the Padre. Though well aware of the Protean shapes the Arch-Fiend could assume, and though free from the weaknesses of the flesh, Father José was not above the temptations of the spirit. Had the Devil appeared, as in the case of the pious St. Anthony, in the likeness of a comely damsel, the good Father, with his certain experience of the deceitful sex,

would have whisked her away in the saying of a paternoster. But there was, added to the security of age, a grave sadness about the stranger,—a thoughtful consciousness, as of being at a great moral disadvantage,—which at once decided him on a magnanimous course of conduct.

The stranger then proceeded to inform him, that he had been diligently observing the holy Father's triumphs in the valley. That, far from being greatly exercised thereat, he had been only grieved to see so enthusiastic and chivalrous an antagonist wasting his zeal in a hopeless work. For, he observed, the issue of the great battle of Good and Evil had been otherwise settled, as he would presently show him. "It wants but a few moments of night," he continued, "and over this interval of twilight, as you know, I have been given complete control. Look to the west."

As the Padre turned, the stranger took his enormous hat from his head, and waved it three times before him. At each sweep of the prodigious feather the fog grew thinner, until it melted impalpably away, and the former landscape returned, yet warm with the glowing sun. As Father José gazed, a strain of martial music arose from the valley, and issuing from a deep cañon, the good Father beheld a long cavalcade of gallant cavaliers, habited like his companion. As they swept down the plain, they were joined by like processions, that slowly defiled from every ravine and cañon of the mysterious mountain. From time to time the peal of a trumpet swelled fitfully upon the breeze; the cross of Santiago glittered, and the royal banners of Castile and Aragon waved over the moving column. So they moved on solemnly toward the sea, where, in the distance, Father José saw stately caravels, bearing the same familiar banner, awaiting them. The good Padre gazed with conflicting emotions, and the serious voice of the stranger broke the silence.

"Thou hast beheld, Sir Priest, the fading footprints of adventurous Castile. Thou hast seen the declining glory of old Spain,—declining as yonder brilliant sun. The sceptre she hath wrested from the heathen is fast dropping from her decrepit and fleshless grasp. The children she hath fostered shall know her no longer.

The soil she hath acquired shall be lost to her as irrevocably as she herself hath thrust the Moor from her own Granada."

The stranger paused, and his voice seemed broken by emotion; at the same time, Father José, whose sympathizing heart yearned toward the departing banners, cried in poignant accents—

"Farewell, ye gallant cavaliers and Christian soldiers! Farewell, thou, Nuñes de Balboa! thou, Alonzo de Ojeda! and thou, most venerable Las Casas! farewell, and may Heaven prosper still the seed ye left behind!"

Then turning to the stranger, Father José beheld him gravely draw his pocket-handkerchief from the basket-hilt of his rapier and apply it decorously to his eyes.

"Pardon this weakness, Sir Priest," said the cavalier apologetically; "but these worthy gentlemen were ancient friends of mine, and have done me many a delicate service,—much more, perchance, than these poor sables may signify," he added, with a grim gesture toward the mourning suit he wore.

Father José was too much preoccupied in reflection to notice the equivocal nature of this tribute, and, after a few moments' silence, said, as if continuing his thought—

"But the seed they have planted shall thrive and prosper on this fruitful soil."

As if answering the interrogatory, the stranger turned to the opposite direction, and, again waving his hat, said, in the same serious tone—

"Look to the east!"

The Father turned, and, as the fog broke away before the waving plume, he saw that the sun was rising. Issuing with its bright beams through the passes of the snowy mountains beyond appeared a strange and motley crew. Instead of the dark and romantic visages of his last phantom train, the Father beheld with strange concern the blue eyes and flaxen hair of a Saxon race. In place of martial airs and musical utterance, there rose upon the ear a strange din of harsh gutturals and singular sibilation. Instead of the decorous tread and stately mien of the cavaliers of the former vision, they came pushing, bustling, panting, and swaggering. And as they passed, the good Father noticed that giant trees were prostrated as with

the breath of a tornado, and the bowels of the earth were torn and rent as with a convulsion. And Father José looked in vain for holy cross or Christian symbol; there was but one that seemed an ensign, and he crossed himself with holy horror as he perceived it bore the effigy of a bear.

"Who are these swaggering Ishmaelites?" he asked, with something of asperity in his tone.

The stranger was gravely silent.

"What do they here, with neither cross nor holy symbol?" he again demanded.

"Have you the courage to see, Sir Priest?" responded the stranger quietly.

Father José felt his crucifix, as a lonely traveller might his rapier, and assented.

"Step under the shadow of my plume," said the stranger.

Father José stepped beside him, and they instantly sank through the earth.

When he opened his eyes, which had remained closed in prayerful meditation during his rapid descent, he found himself in a vast vault, bespangled overhead with luminous points like the starred firmament. It was also lighted by a yellow glow that seemed to proceed from a mighty sea or lake that occupied the centre of the chamber. Around this subterranean sea dusky figures flitted, bearing ladles filled with the yellow fluid, which they had replenished from its depths. From this lake diverging streams of the same mysterious flood penetrated like mighty rivers the cavernous distance. As they walked by the banks of this glittering Styx, Father José perceived how the liquid stream at certain places became solid. The ground was strewn with glittering flakes. One of these the Padre picked up and curiously examined. It was virgin gold.

An expression of discomfiture overcast the good Father's face at this discovery; but there was trace neither of malice nor satisfaction in the stranger's air, which was still of serious and fateful contemplation. When Father José recovered his equanimity, he said, bitterly—

"This, then, Sir Devil, is your work! This is your

deceitful lure for the weak souls of sinful nations! So would you replace the Christian grace of Holy Spain!"

"This is what must be," returned the stranger gloomily. "But listen, Sir Priest. It lies with you to avert the issue for a time. Leave me here in peace. Go back to Castile, and take with you your bells, your images, and your missions. Continue here, and you only precipitate results. Stay! promise me you will do this, and you shall not lack that which will render your old age an ornament and a blessing"; and the stranger motioned significantly to the lake.

It was here, the legend discreetly relates, that the Devil showed—as he always shows sooner or later—his cloven hoof. The worthy Padre, sorely perplexed by this threefold vision, and, if the truth must be told, a little nettled at this wresting away of the glory of holy Spanish discovery, had shown some hesitation. But the unlucky bribe of the Enemy of Souls touched his Castilian spirit. Starting back in deep disgust, he brandished his crucifix in the face of the unmasked Fiend, and, in a voice that made the dusky vault resound, cried—

"Avaunt thee, Sathanas! Diabolus, I defy thee! What! wouldst thou bribe me,—me, a brother of the Sacred Society of the Holy Jesus, Licentiate of Cordova and Inquisitor of Guadalaxara? Thinkest thou to buy me with thy sordid treasure? Avaunt!"

What might have been the issue of this rupture, and how complete might have been the triumph of the holy Father over the Arch-Fiend, who was recoiling aghast at these sacred titles and the flourishing symbol, we can never know, for at that moment the crucifix slipped through his fingers.

Scarcely had it touched the ground before Devil and holy Father simultaneously cast themselves toward it. In the struggle they clinched, and the pious José, who was as much the superior of his antagonist in bodily as in spiritual strength, was about to treat the Great Adversary to a back somersault, when he suddenly felt the long nails of the stranger piercing his flesh. A new fear seized his heart, a numbing chillness crept through his body, and he struggled to free himself, but in vain. A strange roaring was in his ears; the lake and cavern danced before

his eyes and vanished; and with a loud cry he sank senseless to the ground.

When he recovered his consciousness, he was aware of a gentle swaying motion of his body. He opened his eyes, and saw it was high noon, and that he was being carried in a litter through the valley. He felt stiff, and, looking down, perceived that his arm was tightly bandaged to his side.

He closed his eyes, and after a few words of thankful prayer, thought how miraculously he had been preserved, and made a vow of candlesticks to the blessed Saint José. He then called in a faint voice, and presently the penitent Ignacio stood beside him.

The joy the poor fellow felt at his patron's returning consciousness for some time choked his utterance. He could only ejaculate, "A miracle! Blessed Saint José, he lives!" and kiss the Padre's bandaged hand. Father José, more intent on his last night's experience, waited for his emotion to subside, and asked where he had been found.

"On the mountain, your Reverence, but a few *varas* from where he attacked you."

"How?—you saw him then?" asked the Padre, in unfeigned astonishment.

"Saw him, your Reverence! Mother of God, I should think I did! And your Reverence shall see him too, if he ever comes again within range of Ignacio's arquebuse."

"What mean you, Ignacio?" said the Padre, sitting bolt-upright in his litter.

"Why, the bear, your Reverence,—the bear, holy Father, who attacked your worshipful person while you were meditating on the top of yonder mountain."

"Ah!" said the holy Father, lying down again. "Chut, child! I would be at peace."

When he reached the Mission he was tenderly cared for, and in a few weeks was enabled to resume those duties from which, as will be seen, not even the machinations of the Evil One could divert him. The news of his physical disaster spread over the country, and a letter to the Bishop of Guadalaxara contained a confidential and detailed account of the good Father's spiritual

temptation. But in some way the story leaked out; and long after José was gathered to his fathers, his mysterious encounter formed the theme of thrilling and whispered narrative. The mountain was generally shunned. It is true that Señor Joaquin Pedrillo afterward located a grant near the base of the mountain; but as Señora Pedrillo was known to be a termagant half-breed, the Señor was not supposed to be over-fastidious.

Such is the Legend of Monte del Diablo. As I said before, it may seem to lack essential corroboration. The discrepancy between the Father's narrative and the actual climax has given rise to some scepticism on the part of ingenious quibblers. All such I would simply refer to that part of the report of Señor Julio Serro, Sub-Prefect of San Pablo, before whom attest of the above was made. Touching this matter, the worthy Prefect observes, "That although the body of Father José doth show evidence of grievous conflict in the flesh, yet that is no proof that the Enemy of Souls, who could assume the figure of a decorous elderly *caballero*, could not at the same time transform himself into a bear for his own vile purposes."

THE RIGHT EYE OF THE COMMANDER

THE year of grace 1797 passed away on the coast of California in a south-westerly gale. The little bay of San Carlos, albeit sheltered by the headlands of the blessed Trinity, was rough and turbulent; its foam clung quivering to the seaward wall of the Mission garden; the air was filled with flying sand and spume, and as the Señor Comandante, Hermenegildo Salvatierra, looked from the deep embrasured window of the Presidio guard-room, he felt the salt breath of the distant sea buffet a colour into his smoke-dried cheeks.

The Commander, I have said, was gazing thoughtfully from the window of the guard-room. He may have been reviewing the events of the year now about to pass away. But, like the garrison at the Presidio, there was little to review; the year, like its predecessors, had been uneventful,—the days had slipped by in a delicious monotony of simple duties, unbroken by incident or interruption. The regularly recurring feasts and saints' days, the half-yearly courier from San Diego, the rare transport-ship and rarer foreign vessel, were the mere details of his patriarchal life. If there was no achievement, there was certainly no failure. Abundant harvests and patient industry amply supplied the wants of Presidio and Mission. Isolated from the family of nations, the wars which shook the world concerned them not so much as the last earthquake; the struggle that emancipated their sister colonies on the other side of the continent to them had no suggestiveness. In short, it was that glorious Indian summer of California history, around which so much poetical haze still lingers,—that bland, indolent autumn of Spanish

rule, so soon to be followed by the wintry storms of Mexican independence and the reviving spring of American conquest.

The Commander turned from the window and walked toward the fire that burned brightly on the deep oven-like hearth. A pile of copy-books, the work of the Presidio school, lay on the table. As he turned over the leaves with a paternal interest, and surveyed the fair round Scripture text,—the first pious pot-hooks of the pupils of San Carlos,—an audible commentary fell from his lips: "'Abimelech took her from Abraham'—ah, little one, excellent!—'Jacob sent to see his brother'—body of Christ! that up-stroke of thine, Paquita, is marvellous; the Governor shall see it!" A film of honest pride dimmed the Commander's left eye,—the right, alas! twenty years before had been sealed by an Indian arrow. He rubbed it softly with the sleeve of his leather jacket, and continued: "'The Ishmaclites having arrived——'"

He stopped, for there was a step in the courtyard, a foot upon the threshold, and a stranger entered. With the instinct of an old soldier, the Commander, after one glance at the intruder, turned quickly toward the wall, where his trusty Toledo hung, or should have been hanging. But it was not there, and as he recalled that the last time he had seen that weapon it was being ridden up and down the gallery by Pepito, the infant son of Bautista, the tortilio-maker, he blushed and then contented himself with frowning upon the intruder.

But the stranger's air, though irreverent, was decidedly peaceful. He was unarmed, and wore the ordinary cape of tarpaulin and sea-boots of a mariner. Except a villainous smell of codfish, there was little about him that was peculiar.

His name, as he informed the Commander, in Spanish that was more fluent than elegant or precise,—his name was Peleg Scudder. He was master of the schooner *General Court*, of the port of Salem, in Massachusetts, on a trading voyage to the South Seas, but now driven by stress of weather into the bay of San Carlos. He begged permission to ride out the gale under the headlands of the blessed Trinity, and no more. Water he did not need, having taken in a supply at Bodega. He knew the

strict surveillance of the Spanish port regulations in regard to foreign vessels, and would do nothing against the severe discipline and good order of the settlement. There was a slight tinge of sarcasm in his tone as he glanced toward the desolate parade-ground of the Presidio and the open unguarded gate. The fact was that the sentry, Felipe Gomez, had discreetly retired to shelter at the beginning of the storm, and was then sound asleep in the corridor.

The Commander hesitated. The port regulations were severe, but he was accustomed to exercise individual authority, and beyond an old order issued ten years before, regarding the American ship *Columbia*, there was no precedent to guide him. The storm was severe, and a sentiment of humanity urged him to grant the stranger's request. It is but just to the Commander to say, that his inability to enforce a refusal did not weigh with his decision. He would have denied with equal disregard of consequences that right to a seventy-four gun ship which he now yielded so gracefully to this Yankee trading schooner. He stipulated only that there should be no communication between the ship and shore. "For yourself, Señor Captain," he continued, "accept my hospitality. The fort is yours as long as you shall grace it with your distinguished presence"; and with old-fashioned courtesy, he made the semblance of withdrawing from the guard-room.

Master Peleg Scudder smiled as he thought of the half-dismantled fort, the two mouldy brass cannon, cast in Manila a century previous, and the shiftless garrison. A wild thought of accepting the Commander's offer literally, conceived in the reckless spirit of a man who never let slip an offer for trade, for a moment filled his brain, but a timely reflection of the commercial unimportance of the transaction checked him. He only took a capacious quid of tobacco, as the Commander gravely drew a settle before the fire, and in honour of his guest untied the black silk handkerchief that bound his grizzled brows.

What passed between Salvatierra and his guest that night it becomes me not, as a grave chronicler of the salient points of history, to relate. I have said that

Master Peleg Scudder was a fluent talker, and under the influence of divers strong waters, furnished by his host, he became still more loquacious. And think of a man with a twenty years' budget of gossip! The Commander learned, for the first time, how Great Britain lost her colonies; of the French Revolution; of the great Napoleon, whose achievements, perhaps, Peleg coloured more highly than the Commander's superiors would have liked. And when Peleg turned questioner, the Commander was at his mercy. He gradually made himself master of the gossip of the Mission and Presidio, the "small-beer" chronicles of that pastoral age, the conversion of the heathen, the Presidio schools, and even asked the Commander how he had lost his eye! It is said that at this point of the conversation Master Peleg produced from about his person divers small trinkets, kick-shaws, and new-fangled trifles, and even forced some of them upon his host. It is further alleged that under the malign influence of Peleg and several glasses of *aguardiente*, the Commander lost somewhat of his decorum, and behaved in a manner unseemly for one in his position, reciting high-flown Spanish poetry, and even piping in a thin, high voice, divers madrigals and heathen canzonets of an amorous complexion; chiefly in regard to a "little one" who was his, the Commander's, "soul!" These allegations, perhaps unworthy the notice of a serious chronicler, should be received with great caution, and are introduced here as simple hearsay. That the Commander, however, took a handkerchief, and attempted to show his guest the mysteries of the *sembi cuacua*, capering in an agile but indecorous manner about the apartment, has been denied. Enough for the purposes of this narrative, that at midnight Peleg assisted his host to bed with many protestations of undying friendship, and then, as the gale had abated, took his leave of the Presidio and hurried aboard the *General Court*. When the day broke the ship was gone.

I know not if Peleg kept his word with his host. It is said that the holy fathers at the Mission that night heard a loud chanting in the plaza, as of the heathens singing psalms through their noses; that for many days after an odour of salt codfish prevailed in the settlement;

that a dozen hard nutmegs, which were unfit for spice or seed, were found in the possession of the wife of the baker, and that several bushels of shoe-pegs, which bore a pleasing resemblance to oats, but were quite inadequate to the purposes of provender, were discovered in the stable of the blacksmith. But when the reader reflects upon the sacredness of a Yankee trader's word, the stringent discipline of the Spanish port regulations, and the proverbial indisposition of my countrymen to impose upon the confidence of a simple people, he will at once reject this part of the story.

A roll of drums, ushering in the year 1798, awoke the Commander. The sun was shining brightly, and the storm had ceased. He sat up in bed, and through the force of habit rubbed his left eye. As the remembrance of the previous night came back to him, he jumped from his couch and ran to the window. There was no ship in the bay. A sudden thought seemed to strike him, and he rubbed both of his eyes. Not content with this, he consulted the metallic mirror which hung beside his crucifix. There was no mistake; the Commander had a visible second eye,—a right one,—as good, save for the purposes of vision, as the left.

Whatever might have been the true secret of this transformation, but one opinion prevailed at San Carlos. It was one of those rare miracles vouchsafed a pious Catholic community as an evidence to the heathen, through the intercession of the blessed San Carlos himself. That their beloved Commander, the temporal defender of the Faith, should be the recipient of this miraculous manifestation was most fit and seemly. The Commander himself was reticent; he could not tell a falsehood,—he dared not tell the truth. After all, if the good folk of San Carlos believed that the powers of his right eye were actually restored, was it wise and discreet for him to undeceive them? For the first time in his life the Commander thought of policy,—for the first time he quoted that text which has been the lure of so many well-meaning but easy Christians, of being "all things to all men." Infeliz Hermenegildo Salvatierra!

For by degrees an ominous whisper crept through the little settlement. The Right Eye of the Commander, although miraculous, seemed to exercise a baleful effect upon the beholder. No one could look at it without winking. It was cold, hard, relentless, and unflinching. More than that, it seemed to be endowed with a dreadful prescience,—a faculty of seeing through and into the inarticulate thoughts of those it looked upon. The soldiers of the garrison obeyed the eye rather than the voice of their commander, and answered his glance rather than his lips in questioning. The servants could not evade the ever-watchful but cold attention that seemed to pursue them. The children of the Presidio School smirched their copy-books under the awful supervision, and poor Paquita, the prize pupil, failed utterly in that marvellous up-stroke when her patron stood beside her. Gradually distrust, suspicion, self-accusation, and timidity took the place of trust, confidence, and security throughout San Carlos. Whenever the Right Eye of the Commander fell, a shadow fell with it.

Nor was Salvatierra entirely free from the baleful influence of his miraculous acquisition. Unconscious of its effect upon others, he only saw in their actions evidence of certain things that the crafty Peleg had hinted on that eventful New Year's eve. His most trusty retainers stammered, blushed, and faltered before him. Self-accusations, confessions of minor faults and delinquencies, or extravagant excuses and apologies met his mildest inquiries. The very children that he loved — his pet pupil, Paquita—seemed to be conscious of some hidden sin. The result of this constant irritation showed itself more plainly. For the first half-year the Commander's voice and eye were at variance. He was still kind, tender, and thoughtful in speech. Gradually, however, his voice took upon itself the hardness of his glance and its sceptical impassive quality, and as the year again neared its close, it was plain that the Commander had fitted himself to the eye, and not the eye to the Commander.

It may be surmised that these changes did not escape the watchful solicitude of the Fathers. Indeed, the few who were first to ascribe the right eye of Salvatierra to

miraculous origin and the special grace of the blessed San Carlos, now talked openly of witchcraft and the agency of Luzbel, the evil one. It would have fared ill with Hermenegildo Salvatierra had he been aught but Commander or amenable to local authority. But the reverend father, Friar Manuel de Cortes, had no power over the political executive, and all attempts at spiritual advice failed signally. He retired baffled and confused from his first interview with the Commander, who seemed now to take a grim satisfaction in the fateful power of his glance. The holy father contradicted himself, exposed the fallacies of his own arguments, and even, it is asserted, committed himself to several undoubted heresies. When the Commander stood up at mass, if the officiating priest caught that sceptical and searching eye, the service was inevitably ruined. Even the power of the Holy Church seemed to be lost, and the last hold upon the affections of the people and the good order of the settlement departed from San Carlos.

As the long dry summer passed, the low hills that surrounded the white walls of the Presidio grew more and more to resemble in hue the leathern jacket of the Commander, and Nature herself seemed to have borrowed his dry, hard glare. The earth was cracked and seamed with drought; a blight had fallen upon the orchards and vineyards, and the rain, long delayed and ardently prayed for, came not. The sky was as tearless as the right eye of the Commander. Murmurs of discontent, insubordination, and plotting among the Indians reached his ears; he only set his teeth the more firmly, tightened the knot of his black silk handkerchief, and looked up his Toledo.

The last day of the year 1798 found the Commander sitting, at the hour of evening prayers, alone in the guard-room. He no longer attended the services of the Holy Church, but crept away at such times to some solitary spot, where he spent the interval in silent meditation. The firelight played upon the low beams and rafters, but left the bowed figure of Salvatierra in darkness. Sitting thus, he felt a small hand touch his arm, and, looking down, saw the figure of Paquita, his little Indian pupil, at his knee. "Ah, littlest of all," said the Commander, with something of his old tenderness, lingering over the

endearing diminutives of his native speech,—"sweet one, what doest thou here? Art thou not afraid of him whom every one shuns and fears?"

"No," said the little Indian, readily, "not in the dark. I hear your voice,—the old voice; I feel your touch,—the old touch; but I see not your eye, Señor Comandante. That only I fear,—and that, O Señor, O my father," said the child, lifting her little arms towards his,—"that I know is not thine own!"

The Commander shuddered and turned away. Then, recovering himself, he kissed Paquita gravely on the forehead and bade her retire. A few hours later, when silence had fallen upon the Presidio, he sought his own couch and slept peacefully.

At about the middle watch of the night a dusky figure crept through the low embrasure of the Commander's apartment. Other figures were flitting through the parade-ground, which the Commander might have seen had he not slept so quietly. The intruder stepped noiselessly to the couch and listened to the sleeper's deep-drawn inspiration. Something glittered in the firelight as the savage lifted his arm; another moment and the sore perplexities of Hermenegildo Salvatierra would have been over, when suddenly the savage started, and fell back in a paroxysm of terror. The Commander slept peacefully, but his right eye, widely opened, fixed and unaltered, glared coldly on the would-be assassin. The man fell to the earth in a fit, and the noise awoke the sleeper.

To rise to his feet, grasp his sword, and deal blows thick and fast upon the mutinous savages who now thronged the room, was the work of a moment. Help opportunely arrived, and the undisciplined Indians were speedily driven beyond the walls, but in the scuffle the Commander received a blow upon his right eye, and, lifting his hand to that mysterious organ, it was gone. Never again was it found, and never again, for bale or bliss, did it adorn the right orbit of the Commander.

With it passed away the spell that had fallen upon San Carlos. The rain returned to invigorate the languid soil, harmony was restored between priest and soldier, the green grass presently waved over the sere hillsides, the children flocked again to the side of their martial

preceptor, a *Te Deum* was sung in the Mission Church, and pastoral content once more smiled upon the gentle valleys of San Carlos. And far southward crept the *General Court* with its master, Peleg Scudder, trafficking in beads and peltries with the Indians, and offering glass eyes, wooden legs, and other Boston notions to the chiefs.

NOTES BY FLOOD AND FIELD

PART I.—IN THE FIELD

It was near the close of an October day that I began to be disagreeably conscious of the Sacramento Valley. I had been riding since sunrise, and my course, through the depressing monotony of the long level landscape, affected me more like a dull dyspeptic dream than a business journey, performed under that sincerest of natural phenomena,—a California sky. The recurring stretches of brown and baked fields, the gaping fissures in the dusty trail, the hard outline of the distant hills, and the herds of slowly moving cattle, seemed like features of some glittering stereoscopic picture that never changed. Active exercise might have removed this feeling, but my horse by some subtle instinct had long since given up all ambitious effort, and had lapsed into a dogged trot.

It was autumn, but not the season suggested to the Atlantic reader under that title. The sharply defined boundaries of the wet and dry seasons were prefigured in the clear outlines of the distant hills. In the dry atmosphere the decay of vegetation was too rapid for the slow hectic which overtakes an Eastern landscape, or else Nature was too practical for such thin disguises. She merely turned the Hippocratic face to the spectator, with the old diagnosis of Death in her sharp, contracted features.

In the contemplation of such a prospect there was little to excite any but a morbid fancy. There were no clouds in the flinty blue heavens, and the setting of the

sun was accompanied with as little ostentation as was consistent with the dryly practical atmosphere. Darkness soon followed, with a rising wind, which increased as the shadows deepened on the plain. The fringe of alder by the watercourse began to loom up as I urged my horse forward. A half-hour's active spurring brought me to a *corral*, and a little beyond a house, so low and broad it seemed at first sight to be half buried in the earth.

My second impression was that it had grown out of the soil, like some monstrous vegetable, its dreary proportions were so in keeping with the vast prospect. There were no recesses along its roughly boarded walls for vagrant and unprofitable shadows to lurk in the daily sunshine. No projection for the wind by night to grow musical over, to wail, whistle, or whisper to; only a long wooden shelf containing a chilly-looking tin basin, and a bar of soap. Its uncurtained windows were red with the sinking sun, as though bloodshot and inflamed from a too long unlidded existence. The tracks of cattle led to its front door, firmly closed against the rattling wind.

To avoid being confounded with this familiar element, I walked to the rear of the house, which was connected with a smaller building by a slight platform. A grizzled, hard-faced old man was standing there, and met my salutation with a look of inquiry, and, without speaking, led the way to the principal room. As I entered, four young men, who were reclining by the fire, slightly altered their attitudes of perfect repose, but beyond that betrayed neither curiosity nor interest. A hound started from a dark corner with a growl, but was immediately kicked by the old man into obscurity, and silenced again. I can't tell why, but I instantly received the impression that for a long time the group by the fire had not uttered a word or moved a muscle. Taking a seat, I briefly stated my business.

Was a United States surveyor. Had come on account of the Espíritu Santo Rancho. Wanted to correct the exterior boundaries of township lines, so as to connect with the near exteriors of private grants. There had been some intervention to the old survey by a Mr. Tryan who

had pre-empted adjacent—"settled land warrants," interrupted the old man. "Ah, yes! Land Warrants,—and then this was Mr. Tryan?"

I had spoken mechanically, for I was preoccupied in connecting other public lines with private surveys, as I looked in his face. It was certainly a hard face, and reminded me of the singular effect of that mining operation known as "ground sluicing"; the harder lines of underlying character were exposed, and what were once plastic curves and soft outlines were obliterated by some powerful agency.

There was a dryness in his voice not unlike the prevailing atmosphere of the valley, as he launched into an *ex parte* statement of the contest, with a fluency, which, like the wind without, showed frequent and unrestrained expression. He told me—what I had already learned—that the boundary line of the old Spanish grant was a creek, described in the loose phraseology of the *deseño* as beginning in the *valda* or skirt of the hill, its precise location long the subject of litigation. I listened and answered with little interest, for my mind was still distracted by the wind which swept violently by the house, as well as by his odd face, which was again reflected in the resemblance that the silent group by the fire bore toward him. He was still talking, and the wind was yet blowing, when my confused attention was aroused by a remark addressed to the recumbent figures.

"Now, then, which on ye'll see the stranger up the creek to Altascar's, to-morrow?"

There was a general movement of opposition in the group, but no decided answer.

"Kin you go, Kerg?"

"Who's to look up stock in Strarberry per-ar-ie?"

This seemed to imply a negative, and the old man turned to another hopeful, who was pulling the fur from a mangy bear-skin on which he was lying, with an expression as though it were somebody's hair.

"Well, Tom, wot's to hinder you from goin'?"

"Mam's goin' to Brown's store at sun-up, and I s'pose I've got to pack her and the baby agin."

I think the expression of scorn this unfortunate youth exhibited for the filial duty into which he had been

evidently beguiled, was one of the finest things I had ever seen.

"Wise?"

Wise deigned no verbal reply, but figuratively thrust a worn and patched boot into the discourse. The old man flushed quickly.

"I told ye to get Brown to give you a pair the last time you war down the river."

"Said he wouldn't 'without'en order. Said it was like pulling gum-teeth to get the money from you even then."

There was a grim smile at this local hit at the old man's parsimony, and Wise, who was clearly the privileged wit of the family, sank back in honourable retirement.

"Well, Joe, ef your boots are new, and you aren't pestered with wimmin and children, p'r'aps you'll go," said Tryan, with a nervous twitching, intended for a smile, about a mouth not remarkably mirthful.

Joe lifted a pair of bushy eyebrows, and said shortly,—

"Got no saddle."

"Wot's gone of your saddle?"

"Kerg, there,"—indicating his brother with a look such as Cain might have worn at the sacrifice.

"You lie!" returned Kerg, cheerfully.

Tryan sprang to his feet, seizing the chair, flourishing it around his head and gazing furiously in the hard young faces which fearlessly met his own. But it was only for a moment; his arm soon dropped by his side, and a look of hopeless fatality crossed his face. He allowed me to take the chair from his hand, and I was trying to pacify him by the assurance that I required no guide, when the irrepressible Wise again lifted his voice:—

"Theer's George comin'! why don't ye ask him? He'll go and introduce you to Don Fernandy's darter, too, ef you ain't pertickler."

The laugh which followed this joke, which evidently had some domestic allusion (the general tendency of rural pleasantry), was followed by a light step on the platform, and the young man entered. Seeing a stranger present, he stopped and coloured; made a shy salute and coloured again, and then, drawing a box from the corner, sat down, his hands clasped lightly together and

his very handsome bright blue eyes turned frankly on mine.

Perhaps I was in a condition to receive the romantic impression he made upon me, and I took it upon myself to ask his company as guide, and he cheerfully assented. But some domestic duty called him presently away.

The fire gleamed brightly on the hearth, and, no longer resisting the prevailing influence, I silently watched the spirting flame, listening to the wind which continually shook the tenement. Besides the one chair, which had acquired a new importance in my eyes, I presently discovered a crazy table in one corner, with an ink-bottle and pen ; the latter in that greasy state of decomposition peculiar to country taverns and farmhouses. A goodly array of rifles and double-barrelled guns stocked the corner ; half a dozen saddles and blankets lay near, with a mild flavour of the horse about them. Some deer and bear skins completed the inventory. As I sat there, with the silent group around me, the shadowy gloom within and the dominant wind without, I found it difficult to believe I had ever known a different existence. My profession had often led me to wilder scenes, but rarely among those whose unrestrained habits and easy unconsciousness made me feel so lonely and uncomfortable. I shrank closer to myself, not without grave doubts—which I think occur naturally to people in like situations—that this was the general rule of humanity, and I was a solitary and somewhat gratuitous exception.

It was a relief when a laconic announcement of supper by a weak-eyed girl caused a general movement in the family. We walked across the dark platform, which led to another low-ceiled room. Its entire length was occupied by a table, at the farther end of which a weak-eyed woman was already taking her repast, as she, at the same time, gave nourishment to a weak-eyed baby. As the formalities of introduction had been dispensed with, and as she took no notice of me, I was enabled to slip into a seat without discomposing or interrupting her. Tryan extemporized a grace, and the attention of the family became absorbed in bacon, potatoes, and dried apples.

The meal was a sincere one. Gentle gurglings at the upper end of the table often betrayed the presence

of the "well-spring of pleasure." The conversation generally referred to the labours of the day, and comparing notes as to the whereabouts of missing stock. Yet the supper was such a vast improvement upon the previous intellectual feast, that when a chance allusion of mine to the business of my visit brought out the elder Tryan, the interest grew quite exciting. I remember he inveighed bitterly against the system of ranch-holding by the "greasers," as he was pleased to term the native Californians. As the same ideas have been sometimes advanced under more pretentious circumstances, they may be worthy of record.

"Look at 'em holdin' the finest grazin' land that ever lay outer doors? Whar's the papers for it? Was it grants? Mighty fine grants,—most of 'em made arter the 'Merrikans got possession. More fools the 'Merrikans for lettin' 'em hold 'em. Wat paid for 'em? 'Merrikan blood and money.

"Didn't they oughter have suthin' out of their native country? Wot for? Did they ever improve? Got a lot of yaller-skinned diggers, not so sensible as niggers to look arter stock, and they a-sittin' home and smokin'. With their gold and silver candlesticks, and missions, and crucifixens, priests and graven idols, and sich? Them sort things wurent allowed in Mizzoori."

At the mention of improvements, I involuntarily lifted my eyes, and met the half-laughing, half-embarrassed look of George. The act did not escape detection, and I had at once the satisfaction of seeing that the rest of the family had formed an offensive alliance against us.

"It was agin Nater, and agin God," added Tryan. "God never intended gold in the rocks to be made into heathen candlesticks and crucifixens. That's why he sent 'Merrikins here. Nater never intended such a climate for lazy lopers. She never gin six months' sunshine to be slept and smoked away."

How long he continued, and with what further illustration, I could not say, for I took an early opportunity to escape to the sitting-room. I was soon followed by George, who called me to an open door leading to a smaller room, and pointed to a bed.

"You'd better sleep there to-night," he said; "you'll be more comfortable, and I'll call you early."

I thanked him, and would have asked him several questions which were then troubling me, but he shyly slipped to the door and vanished.

A shadow seemed to fall on the room when he had gone. The "boys" returned, one by one, and shuffled to their old places. A larger log was thrown on the fire, and the huge chimney glowed like a furnace, but it did not seem to melt or subdue a single line of the hard faces that it lit. In half an hour later, the furs which had served as chairs by day undertook the nightly office of mattresses, and each received its owner's full-length figure. Mr. Tryan had not returned, and I missed George. I sat there until, wakeful and nervous, I saw the fire fall and shadows mount the wall. There was no sound but the rushing of the wind and the snoring of the sleepers. At last, feeling the place insupportable, I seized my hat and, opening the door, ran out briskly into the night.

The acceleration of my torpid pulse in the keen fight with the wind, whose violence was almost equal to that of a tornado, and the familiar faces of the bright stars above me, I felt as a blessed relief. I ran not knowing whither, and when I halted, the square outline of the house was lost in the alder-bushes. An uninterrupted plain stretched before me, like a vast sea beaten flat by the force of the gale. As I kept on I noticed a slight elevation toward the horizon, and presently my progress was impeded by the ascent of an Indian mound. It struck me forcibly as resembling an island in the sea. Its height gave me a better view of the expanding plain. But even here I found no rest. The ridiculous interpretation Tryan had given the climate was somehow sung in my ears, and echoed in my throbbing pulse, as, guided by the star, I sought the house again.

But I felt fresher and more natural as I stepped upon the platform. The door of the lower building was open, and the old man was sitting beside the table, thumbing the leaves of a Bible with a look in his face as though he were hunting up prophecies against the "Greaser." I turned to enter, but my attention was attracted by a blanketed figure lying beside the house, on the platform

The broad chest heaving with healthy slumber, and the open, honest face were familiar. It was George, who had given up his bed to the stranger among his people. I was about to wake him, but he lay so peaceful and quiet, I felt awed and hushed. And I went to bed with a pleasant impression of his handsome face and tranquil figure soothing me to sleep.

I was awakened the next morning from a sense of lulled repose and grateful silence by the cheery voice of George, who stood beside my bed, ostentatiously twirling a "riata," as if to recall the duties of the day to my sleep-bewildered eyes. I looked around me. The wind had been magically laid, and the sun shone warmly through the windows. A dash of cold water, with an extra chill on from the tin basin, helped to brighten me. It was still early, but the family had already breakfasted and dispersed, and a wagon winding far in the distance showed that the unfortunate Tom had already "packed" his relatives away. I felt more cheerful,—there are few troubles Youth cannot distance with the start of a good night's rest. After a substantial breakfast, prepared by George, in a few moments we were mounted and dashing down the plain.

We followed the line of alder that defined the creek, now dry and baked with summer's heat, but which in winter, George told me, overflowed its banks. I still retain a vivid impression of that morning's ride, the far-off mountains, like *silhouettes*, against the steel-blue sky, the crisp dry air, and the expanding track before me, animated often by the well-knit figure of George Tryan, musical with jingling spurs, and picturesque with flying "riata." He rode a powerful native roan, wild-eyed, untiring in stride and unbroken in nature. Alas! the curves of beauty were concealed by the cumbrous *machillas* of the Spanish saddle, which levels all equine distinctions. The single rein lay loosely on the cruel bit that can gripe, and, if need be, crush the jaw it controls.

Again the illimitable freedom of the valley rises before me, as we again bear down into sunlit space. Can this be "Chu-Chu," staid and respectable filly of American pedigree,—"Chu-Chu," forgetful of plank-roads and

cobble-stones, wild with excitement, twinkling her small white feet beneath me? George laughs out of a cloud of dust, "Give her her head; don't you see she likes it?" and "Chu-Chu" seems to like it, and, whether bitten by native tarantula into native barbarism or emulous of the roan, "blood" asserts itself, and in a moment the peaceful servitude of years is beaten out in the music of her clattering hoofs. The creek widens to a deep gully. We dive into it and up on the opposite side, carrying a moving cloud of impalpable powder with us. Cattle are scattered over the plain, grazing quietly, or banded together in vast restless herds. George makes a wide, indefinite sweep with the "riata," as if to include them all in his *vaquero's* loop, and says, "Ours!"

"About how many, George?"

"Don't know."

"How many?"

"Well, p'r'aps three thousand head," says George, reflecting. "We don't know, takes five men to look 'em up and keep run."

"What are they worth?"

"About thirty dollars a head."

I make a rapid calculation, and look my astonishment at the laughing George. Perhaps a recollection of the domestic economy of the Tryan household is expressed in that look, for George averts his eye and says, apologetically,—

"I've tried to get the old man to sell and build, but you know he says it ain't no use to settle down, just yet. We must keep movin'. In fact, he built the shanty for that purpose, lest titles should fall through, and we'd have to get up and move stakes further down."

Suddenly his quick eye detects some unusual sight in a herd we are passing, and with an exclamation he puts his roan into the centre of the mass. I follow, or rather "Chu-Chu" darts after the roan, and in a few moments we are in the midst of apparently inextricable horns and hoofs. "Toro!" shouts George, with vaquero enthusiasm, and the band opens a way for the swinging "riata." I can feel their steaming breaths, and their spume is cast on "Chu-Chu's" quivering flank.

Wild, devilish-looking beasts are they; not such

shapes as Jove might have chosen to woo a goddess, nor such as peacefully range the downs of Devon, but lean and hungry Cassius-like bovines, economically got up to meet the exigencies of a six months' rainless climate, and accustomed to wrestle with the distracting wind and the blinding dust.

"That's not our brand," says George; "they're strange stock," and he points to what my scientific eye recognizes as the astrological sign of Venus deeply seared in the brown flanks of the bull he is chasing. But the herd are closing round us with low mutterings, and George has again recourse to the authoritative "Toro," and with swinging "riata" divides the "bossy bucklers" on either side. When we are free, and breathing somewhat more easily, I venture to ask George if they ever attack any one.

"Never horsemen,—sometimes footmen. Not through rage, you know, but curiosity. They think a man and his horse are one, and if they meet a chap afoot, they run him down and trample him under hoof, in the pursuit of knowledge. But," adds George, "here's the lower bench of the foot-hills, and here's Altascar's corral, and that white building you see yonder is the *casa*."

A whitewashed wall enclosed a court containing another adobe building, baked with the solar beams of many summers. Leaving our horses in the charge of a few peons in the courtyard, who were basking lazily in the sun, we entered a low doorway, where a deep shadow and an agreeable coolness fell upon us, as sudden and grateful as a plunge in cool water, from its contrast with the external glare and heat. In the centre of a low-ceiled apartment sat an old man with a black silk handkerchief tied about his head; the few grey hairs that escaped from its folds relieving his gamboge-coloured face. The odour of cigarritos was as incense added to the cathedral gloom of the building.

As Señor Altascar rose with well-bred gravity to receive us, George advanced with such a heightened colour, and such a blending of tenderness and respect in his manner, that I was touched to the heart by so much devotion in the careless youth. In fact, my eyes were still dazzled by the effect of the outer sunshine, and at

first I did not see the white teeth and black eyes of Pepita, who slipped into the corridor as we entered.

It was no pleasant matter to disclose particulars of business which would deprive the old Señor of the greater part of that land we had just ridden over, and I did it with great embarrassment. But he listened calmly, — not a muscle of his dark face stirring, — and the smoke, curling placidly from his lips, showed his regular respiration. When I had finished, he offered quietly to accompany us to the line of demarcation. George had meanwhile disappeared, but a suspicious conversation, in broken Spanish and English, in the corridor, betrayed his vicinity. When he returned again, a little absent-minded, the old man, by far the coolest and most self-possessed of the party, extinguished his black silk cap beneath that stiff, uncomely *sombrero* which all native Californians affect. A *serapa* thrown over his shoulders hinted that he was waiting. Horses are always ready saddled in Spanish ranchos, and in half an hour from the time of our arrival we were again " loping " in the staring sunlight.

But not as cheerfully as before. George and myself were weighed down by restraint, and Altascar was gravely quiet. To break the silence, and by way of a consolatory essay, I hinted to him that there might be further intervention or appeal, but the proffered oil and wine were returned with a careless shrug of the shoulders and a sententious " *Que bueno ?*—Your courts are always just."

The Indian mound of the previous night's discovery was a bearing monument of the new line, and there we halted. We were surprised to find the old man Tryan waiting us. For the first time during our interview the old Spaniard seemed moved, and the blood rose in his yellow cheek. I was anxious to close the scene, and pointed out the corner boundaries as clearly as my recollection served.

" The deputies will be here to-morrow to run the lines from this initial point, and there will be no further trouble, I believe, gentlemen."

Señor Altascar had dismounted and was gathering a few tufts of dried grass in his hands. George and I exchanged glances. He presently arose from his stoop-

ing posture, and, advancing to within a few paces of Joseph Tryan, said, in a voice broken with passion,—

"And I, Fernando Jesus Maria Altascar, put you in possession of my land in the fashion of my country."

He threw a sod to each of the cardinal points.

"I don't know your courts, your judges, or your *corregidores.* Take the *llano!*—and take this with it. May the drought seize your cattle till their tongues hang down as long as those of your lying lawyers! May it be the curse and torment of your old age, as you and yours have made it of mine!"

We stepped between the principal actors in this scene, which only the passion of Altascar made tragical, but Tryan, with a humility but ill concealing his triumph, interrupted,—

"Let him curse on. He'll find 'em coming home to him sooner than the cattle he has lost through his sloth and pride. The Lord is on the side of the just, as well as agin all slanderers and revilers."

Altascar but half guessed the meaning of the Missourian, yet sufficiently to drive from his mind all but the extravagant power of his native invective.

"Stealer of the Sacrament! Open not!—open not, I say, your lying, Judas lips to me! Ah! half-breed, with the soul of a cayote!—Car-r-r-ramba!"

With his passion reverberating among the consonants like distant thunder, he laid his hand upon the mane of his horse as though it had been the grey locks of his adversary, swung himself into the saddle, and galloped away.

George turned to me,—

"Will you go back with us to-night?"

I thought of the cheerless walls, the silent figures by the fire, and the roaring wind, and hesitated.

"Well then, good-bye."

"Good-bye, George."

Another wring of the hands, and we parted. I had not ridden far when I turned and looked back. The wind had risen early that afternoon, and was already sweeping across the plain. A cloud of dust travelled before it, and a picturesque figure occasionally emerging therefrom was my last indistinct impression of George Tryan.

PART II.—IN THE FLOOD

THREE months after the survey of the Espíritu Santo Rancho, I was again in the valley of the Sacramento. But a general and terrible visitation had erased the memory of that event as completely as I supposed it had obliterated the boundary monuments I had planted. The great flood of 1861–62 was at its height, when, obeying some indefinite yearning, I took my carpet-bag and embarked for the inundated valley.

There was nothing to be seen from the bright cabin windows of the *Golden City* but night deepening over the water. The only sound was the pattering rain, and that had grown monotonous for the past two weeks, and did not disturb the national gravity of my countrymen as they silently sat around the cabin stove. Some on errands of relief to friends and relatives wore anxious faces, and conversed soberly on the one absorbing topic. Others, like myself, attracted by curiosity, listened eagerly to newer details. But with that human disposition to seize upon any circumstance that might give chance event the exaggerated importance of instinct, I was half conscious of something more than curiosity as an impelling motive.

The dripping of rain, the low gurgle of water, and a leaden sky greeted us the next morning as we lay beside the half-submerged levee of Sacramento. Here, however, the novelty of boats to convey us to the hotels was an appeal that was irresistible. I resigned myself to a dripping rubber-cased mariner called "Joe," and, wrapping myself in a shining cloak of the like material, about as suggestive of warmth as court-plaster might have been, took my seat in the stern-sheets of his boat. It was no slight inward struggle to part from the steamer, that to most of the passengers was the only visible connecting link between us and the dry and habitable earth, but we pulled away and entered the city, stemming a rapid current as we shot the levee.

We glided up the long level of K Street,—once a cheerful, busy thoroughfare, now distressing in its silent

desolation. The turbid water which seemed to meet the horizon edge before us flowed at right angles in sluggish rivers through the streets. Nature had revenged herself on the local taste by disarraying the regular rectangles by huddling houses on street corners, where they presented abrupt gables to the current, or by capsizing them in compact ruin. Crafts of all kinds were gliding in and out of low-arched doorways. The water was over the top of the fences surrounding well-kept gardens, in the first stories of hotels and private dwellings, trailing its slime on velvet carpets as well as roughly boarded floors. And a silence quite as suggestive as the visible desolation was in the voiceless streets that no longer echoed to carriage-wheel or footfall. The low ripple of water, the occasional splash of oars, or the warning cry of boatmen were the few signs of life and habitation.

With such scenes before my eyes and such sounds in my ears, as I lie lazily in the boat, is mingled the song of my gondolier who sings to the music of his oars. It is not quite as romantic as his brother of the Lido might improvise, but my Yankee " Giuseppe " has the advantage of earnestness and energy, and gives a graphic description of the terrors of the past week and of noble deeds of self-sacrifice and devotion, occasionally pointing out a balcony from which some California Bianca or Laura had been snatched, half clothed and famished. Giuseppe is otherwise peculiar, and refuses the proffered fare, for—am I not a citizen of San Francisco, which was first to respond to the suffering cry of Sacramento ? and is not he, Giuseppe, a member of the Howard Society ? No ! Giuseppe is poor, but cannot take my money. Still, if I must spend it, there is the Howard Society, and the women and children without food and clothes at the Agricultural Hall.

I thank the generous gondolier, and we go to the Hall, —a dismal, bleak place, ghastly with the memories of last year's opulence and plenty, and here Giuseppe's fare is swelled by the stranger's mite. But here Giuseppe tells me of the " Relief Boat " which leaves for the flooded district in the interior, and here, profiting by the lesson he has taught me, I make the resolve to turn my curiosity to the account of others, and am accepted of those who

go forth to succour and help the afflicted. Giuseppe takes charge of my carpet-bag, and does not part from me until I stand on the slippery deck of "Relief Boat No. 3."

An hour later I am in the pilot-house, looking down upon what was once the channel of a peaceful river. But its banks are only defined by tossing tufts of willow washed by the long swell that breaks over a vast inland sea. Stretches of "tule" land fertilized by its once regular channel and dotted by flourishing ranchos are now cleanly erased. The cultivated profile of the old landscape had faded. Dotted lines in symmetrical perspective mark orchards that are buried and chilled in the turbid flood. The roofs of a few farm-houses are visible, and here and there the smoke curling from chimneys of half-submerged tenements show an undaunted life within. Cattle and sheep are gathered on Indian mounds waiting the fate of their companions whose carcasses drift by us, or swing in eddies with the wrecks of barns and out-houses. Wagons are stranded everywhere where the tide could carry them. As I wipe the moistened glass, I see nothing but water, pattering on the deck from the lowering clouds, dashing against the window, dripping from the willows, hissing by the wheels, everywhere washing, coiling, sapping, hurrying in rapids, or swelling at last into deeper and vaster lakes, awful in their suggestive quiet and concealment.

As day fades into night the monotony of this strange prospect grows oppressive. I seek the engine-room, and in the company of some of the few half-drowned sufferers we have already picked up from temporary rafts, I forget the general aspect of desolation in their individual misery. Later we meet the San Francisco packet, and transfer a number of our passengers. From them we learn how inward-bound vessels report to having struck the well-defined channel of the Sacramento, fifty miles beyond the bar. There is a voluntary contribution taken among the generous travellers for the use of our afflicted, and we part company with a hearty "God speed" on either side. But our signal-lights are not far distant before a familiar sound comes back to us,—an indomitable Yankee cheer,—which scatters the gloom.

Our course is altered, and we are steaming over the obliterated banks far in the interior. Once or twice black objects loom up near us,—the wrecks of houses floating by. There is a slight rift in the sky towards the north, and a few bearing stars to guide us over the waste. As we penetrate into shallower water, it is deemed advisable to divide our party into smaller boats, and diverge over the submerged prairie. I borrow a pea-coat of one of the crew, and in that practical disguise am doubtfully permitted to pass into one of the boats. We give way northerly. It is quite dark yet, although the rift of cloud has widened.

It must have been about three o'clock, and we were lying upon our oars in an eddy formed by a clump of cottonwood, and the light of the steamer is a solitary, bright star in the distance, when the silence is broken by the "bow oar,"—

"Light ahead."

All eyes are turned in that direction. In a few seconds a twinkling light appears, shines steadily, and again disappears as if by the shifting position of some black object apparently drifting close upon us.

"Stern, all; a steamer!"

"Hold hard there! Steamer be d—d!" is the reply of the coxswain. "It's a house, and a big one too."

It is a big one, looming in the starlight like a huge fragment of the darkness. The light comes from a single candle, which shines through a window as the great shape swings by. Some recollection is drifting back to me with it, as I listen with beating heart.

"There's some one in it, by Heavens! Give way, boys,—lay her alongside. Handsomely, now! The door's fastened; try the window; no! here's another!"

In another moment we are trampling in the water, which washes the floor to the depth of several inches. It is a large room, at the farther end of which an old man is sitting wrapped in a blanket, holding a candle in one hand, and apparently absorbed in the book he holds with the other. I spring toward him with an exclamation,—

"Joseph Tryan!"

He does not move. We gather closer to him, and I lay my hand gently on his shoulder, and say,—

" Look up, old man, look up ! Your wife and children, where are they ? The boys,—George ! Are they here ? are they safe ? "

He raises his head slowly, and turns his eyes to mine, and we involuntarily recoil before his look. It is a calm and quiet glance, free from fear, anger, or pain ; but it somehow sends the blood curdling through our veins. He bowed his head over his book again, taking no further notice of us. The men look at me compassionately, and hold their peace. I make one more effort :—

" Joseph Tryan, don't you know me ? the surveyor who surveyed your ranch,—the Espíritu Santo ? Look up, old man ! "

He shuddered, and wrapped himself closer in his blanket. Presently he repeated to himself, " The surveyor who surveyed your ranch,—Espíritu Santo," over and over again, as though it were a lesson he was trying to fix in his memory.

I was turning sadly to the boatmen, when he suddenly caught me fearfully by the hand and said,—

" Hush ! "

We were silent.

" Listen ! " He puts his arm around my neck and whispers in my ear, " I'm a-*moving off !* "

" Moving off ? "

" Hush ! Don't speak so loud. Moving off. Ah ! wot's that ? Don't you hear ?—there ! listen ! "

We listen, and hear the water gurgle and click beneath the floor.

" It's them wot he sent !—Old Altascar sent. They've been here all night. I heard 'em first in the creek, when they came to tell the old man to move farther off. They came nearer and nearer. They whispered under the door, and I saw their eyes on the step,—their cruel, hard eyes. Ah ! why don't they quit ? "

I tell the men to search the room and see if they can find any further traces of the family, while Tryan resumes his old attitude. It is so much like the figure I remember on the breezy night that a superstitious feeling is fast overcoming me. When they have returned, I tell them briefly what I know of him, and the old man murmurs again,—

"Why don't they quit, then? They have the stock, —all gone—gone, gone for the hides and hoofs," and he groans bitterly.

"There are other boats below us. The shanty cannot have drifted far, and perhaps the family are safe by this time," says the coxswain, hopefully.

We lift the old man up, for he is quite helpless, and carry him to the boat. He is still grasping the Bible in his right hand, though its strengthening grace is blank to his vacant eye, and he cowers in the stern as we pull slowly to the steamer, while a pale gleam in the sky shows the coming day.

I was weary with excitement, and when we reached the steamer, and I had seen Joseph Tryan comfortably bestowed, I wrapped myself in a blanket near the boiler and presently fell asleep. But even then the figure of the old man often started before me, and a sense of uneasiness about George made a strong undercurrent to my drifting dreams. I was awakened at about eight o'clock in the morning by the engineer, who told me one of the old man's sons had been picked up and was now on board.

"Is it George Tryan?" I ask quickly.

"Don't know; but he's a sweet one, whoever he is," adds the engineer, with a smile at some luscious remembrance. "You'll find him for'ard."

I hurry to the bow of the boat, and find, not George, but the irrepressible Wise, sitting on a coil of rope, a little dirtier and rather more dilapidated than I can remember having seen him.

He is examining, with apparent admiration, some rough, dry clothes that have been put out for his disposal. I cannot help thinking that circumstances have somewhat exalted his usual cheerfulness. He puts me at my ease by at once addressing me:—

"These are high old times, ain't they? I say, what do you reckon's become o' them thar bound'ry moniments you stuck? Ah!"

The pause which succeeds this outburst is the effect of a spasm of admiration at a pair of high boots, which, by great exertion, he has at last pulled on his feet.

"So you've picked up the ole man in the shanty,

clean crazy? He must have been soft to have stuck there instead o' leavin' with the old woman. Didn't know me from Adam; took me for George!"

At this affecting instance of paternal forgetfulness, Wise was evidently divided between amusement and chagrin. I took advantage of the contending emotions to ask about George.

"Don't know whar he is! If he'd tended stock instead of running about the prairie, packin' off wimmin and children, he might have saved suthin. He lost every hoof and hide, I'll bet a cookey. Say you," to a passing boatman, "when are you goin' to give us some grub? I'm hungry 'nough to skin and eat a hoss. Reckon I'll turn butcher when things is dried up, and save hides, horns, and taller."

I could not but admire this indomitable energy, which under softer climatic influences might have borne such goodly fruits.

"Have you any idea what you'll do, Wise?" I ask.

"Thar ain't much to do now," says the practical young man. "I'll have to lay over a spell, I reckon, till things comes straight. The land ain't worth much now, and won't be, I dessay, for some time. Wonder whar the ole man'll drive stakes next."

"I meant as to your father and George, Wise."

"O, the ole man and I'll go on to 'Miles's,' whar Tom packed the old woman and babies last week. George'll turn up somewhar atween this and Altascar's, ef he ain't thar now."

I ask how the Altascars have suffered.

"Well, I reckon he ain't lost much in stock. I shouldn't wonder if George helped him drive 'em up the foot-hills. And his 'casa' 's built too high. O, thar ain't any water thar, you bet. Ah," says Wise, with reflective admiration, "those greasers ain't the darned fools people thinks 'em. I'll bet thar ain't one swamped out in all 'er Californy." But the appearance of "grub" cut this rhapsody short.

"I shall keep on a little farther," I say, "and try to find George."

Wise stared a moment at this eccentricity until a new light dawned upon him.

"I don't think you'll save much. What's the percentage,—workin' on shares, eh!"

I answer that I am only curious, which I feel lessens his opinion of me, and with a sadder feeling than his assurance of George's safety might warrant, I walked away.

From others whom we picked up from time to time we heard of George's self-sacrificing devotion, with the praises of the many he had helped and rescued. But I did not feel disposed to return until I had seen him, and soon prepared myself to take a boat to the lower "valda" of the foot-hills, and visit Altascar. I soon perfected my arrangements, bade farewell to Wise, and took a last look at the old man, who was sitting by the furnace-fires quite passive and composed. Then our boat-head swung round, pulled by sturdy and willing hands.

It was again raining, and a disagreeable wind had risen. Our course lay nearly west, and we soon knew by the strong current that we were in the creek of the Espíritu Santo. From time to time the wrecks of barns were seen, and we passed many half-submerged willows hung with farming implements.

We emerge at last into a broad silent sea. It is the "llano de Espíritu Santo." As the wind whistles by me, piling the shallower fresh water into mimic waves, I go back, in fancy, to the long ride of October over that boundless plain, and recall the sharp outlines of the distant hills which are now lost in the lowering clouds. The men are rowing silently, and I find my mind, released from its tension, growing benumbed and depressed as then. The water, too, is getting more shallow as we leave the banks of the creek, and with my hand dipped listlessly over the thwarts, I detect the tops of chimisal, which shows the tide to have somewhat fallen. There is a black mound, bearing to the north of the line of alder, making an adverse current, which, as we sweep to the right to avoid, I recognize. We pull close alongside and I call to the men to stop.

There was a stake driven near its summit with the initials, "L. E. S. I." Tied half-way down was a curiously worked "riata." It was George's. It had been cut with some sharp instrument, and the loose gravelly soil

of the mound was deeply dented with horse's hoofs. The stake was covered with horse-hairs. It was a record, but no clue.

The wind had grown more violent, as we still fought our way forward, resting and rowing by turns, and oftener "poling" the shallower surface, but the old "valda," or bench, is still distant. My recollection of the old survey enables me to guess the relative position of the meanderings of the creek, and an occasional simple professional experiment to determine the distance gives my crew the fullest faith in my ability. Night overtakes us in our impeded progress. Our condition looks more dangerous than it really is, but I urge the men, many of whom are still new in this mode of navigation, to greater exertion by assurance of perfect safety and speedy relief ahead. We go on in this way until about eight o'clock, and ground by the willows. We have a muddy walk for a few hundred yards before we strike a dry trail, and simultaneously the white walls of Altascar's appear like a snow-bank before us. Lights are moving in the court-yard; but otherwise the old tomb-like repose characterizes the building.

One of the peons recognized me as I entered the court, and Altascar met me on the corridor.

I was too weak to do more than beg his hospitality for the men who had dragged wearily with me. He looked at my hand, which still unconsciously held the broken "riata." I began, wearily, to tell him about George and my fears, but with a gentler courtesy than was even his wont, he gravely laid his hand on my shoulder.

"*Poco a poco* Señor,—not now. You are tired, you have hunger, you have cold. Necessary it is you should have peace."

He took us into a small room and poured out some French cognac, which he gave to the men that had accompanied me. They drank and threw themselves before the fire in the larger room. The repose of the building was intensified that night, and I even fancied that the footsteps on the corridor were lighter and softer. The old Spaniard's habitual gravity was deeper; we might have been shut out from the world as well as the

whistling storm, behind those ancient walls with their time-worn inheritor.

Before I could repeat my inquiry he retired. In a few minutes two smoking dishes of "chupa" with coffee were placed before us, and my men ate ravenously. I drank the coffee, but my excitement and weariness kept down the instincts of hunger.

I was sitting sadly by the fire when he re-entered.

"You have eat?"

I said "Yes," to please him.

"*Bueno*, eat when you can,—food and appetite are not always."

He said this with that Sancho-like simplicity with which most of his countrymen utter a proverb, as though it were an experience rather than a legend, and, taking the "riata" from the floor, held it almost tenderly before him.

"It was made by me, Señor."

"I kept it as a clue to him, Don Altascar," I said. "If I could find him——"

"He is here."

"Here! and"—but I could not say, "well!" I understood the gravity of the old man's face, the hushed footfalls, the tomb-like repose of the building in an electric flash of consciousness; I held the clue to the broken riata at last. Altascar took my hand, and we crossed the corridor to a sombre apartment. A few tall candles were burning in sconces before the window.

In an alcove there was a deep bed with its counterpane, pillows, and sheets heavily edged with lace, in all that splendid luxury which the humblest of these strange people lavish upon this single item of their household. I stepped beside it and saw George lying, as I had seen him once before, peacefully at rest. But a greater sacrifice than that he had known was here, and his generous heart was stilled for ever.

"He was honest and brave," said the old man, and turned away.

There was another figure in the room; a heavy shawl drawn over her graceful outline, and her long black hair hiding the hands that buried her downcast face. I did

not seem to notice her, and, retiring presently, left the loving and loved together.

When we were again beside the crackling fire, in the shifting shadows of the great chamber, Altascar told me how he had that morning met the horse of George Tryan swimming on the prairie; how that, farther on, he found him lying, quite cold and dead, with no marks or bruises on his person; that he had probably become exhausted in fording the creek, and that he had as probably reached the mound only to die for want of that help he had so freely given to others; that, as a last act, he had freed his horse. These incidents were corroborated by many who collected in the great chamber that evening,—women and children,—most of them succoured through the devoted energies of him who lay cold and lifeless above.

He was buried in the Indian mound,—the single spot of strange perennial greenness, which the poor aborigines had raised above the dusty plain. A little slab of sandstone, with the initials "G. T.," is his monument, and one of the bearings of the initial corner of the new survey of the "Espíritu Santo Rancho."

THE MISSION BELLS OF MONTEREY

O BELLS that rang, O bells that sang
Above the martyrs' wilderness,
Till from that reddened coast-line sprang
The Gospel seed to cheer and bless,
What are your garnered sheaves to-day?
O Mission bells! Eleison bells!
O Mission bells of Monterey!

O bells that crash, O bells that clash
Above the chimney-crowded plain,
On wall and tower your voices dash,
But never with the old refrain
In mart and temple gone astray!
Ye dangle bells! Ye jangle bells!
Ye wrangle bells of Monterey!

O bells that die, so far, so nigh,
Come back once more across the sea,
Not with the zealot's furious cry,
Not with a creed's austerity,
Come with His love alone to stay.
O Mission bells! Eleison bells!
O Mission bells of Monterey!

TALES OF THE ARGONAUTS AND OTHERS

PREFACE

A SERIES of designs—suggested, I think, by Hogarth's familiar cartoons of the Industrious and Idle Apprentices—I remember as among the earliest efforts at moral teaching in California. They represented the respective careers of The Honest and Dissolute Miners: the one, as I recall him, retrograding through successive planes of dirt, drunkenness, disease, and death; the other advancing by corresponding stages to affluence and a white shirt. Whatever may have been the artistic defects of these drawings, the moral at least was obvious and distinct. That it failed, however,—as it did,—to produce the desired reform in mining morality may have been owing to the fact that the average miner refused to recognize himself in either of these positive characters; and that even he who might have sat for the model of the Dissolute Miner was perhaps dimly conscious of some limitations and circumstances which partly relieved him from responsibility. "Yer see," remarked such a critic to the writer, in the untranslatable poetry of his class, "it ain't no square game. They've just put up the keerds on that chap from the start."

With this lamentable example before me, I trust that in the following sketches I have abstained from any positive moral. I might have painted my villains of the blackest dye,—so black, indeed, that the originals thereof would have contemplated them with the glow of comparative virtue. I might have made it impossible for them to have performed a virtuous or generous action, and have thus avoided that moral confusion which is apt to arise in the contemplation of mixed motives and qualities.

But I should have burdened myself with the responsibility of their creation, which, as a humble writer of romance and entitled to no particular reverence, I did not care to do.

I fear I cannot claim, therefore, any higher motive than to illustrate an era of which Californian history has preserved the incidents more often than the character of the actors,—an era which the panegyrist was too often content to bridge over with a general compliment to its survivors,—an era still so recent that in attempting to revive its poetry, I am conscious also of awakening the more prosaic recollections of these same survivors,—and yet an era replete with a certain heroic Greek poetry, of which perhaps none were more unconscious than the heroes themselves. And I shall be quite content to have collected here merely the materials for the Iliad that is yet to be sung.

SAN FRANCISCO, *December* 24, 1869.

THE LUCK OF ROARING CAMP

THERE was commotion in Roaring Camp. It could not have been a fight, for in 1850 that was not novel enough to have called together the entire settlement. The ditches and claims were not only deserted, but "Tuttle's grocery" had contributed its gamblers, who, it will be remembered, calmly continued their game the day that French Pete and Kanaka Joe shot each other to death over the bar in the front room. The whole camp was collected before a rude cabin on the outer edge of the clearing. Conversation was carried on in a low tone, but the name of a woman was frequently repeated. It was a name familiar enough in the camp,—"Cherokee Sal."

Perhaps the less said of her the better. She was a coarse, and, it is to be feared, a very sinful woman. But at that time she was the only woman in Roaring Camp, and was just then lying in sore extremity, when she most needed the ministration of her own sex. Dissolute, abandoned, and irreclaimable, she was yet suffering a martyrdom hard enough to bear even when veiled by sympathizing womanhood, but now terrible in her loneliness. The primal curse had come to her in that original isolation which must have made the punishment of the first transgression so dreadful. It was, perhaps, part of the expiation of her sin, that, at a moment when she most lacked her sex's intuitive tenderness and care, she met only the half-contemptuous faces of her masculine associates. Yet a few of the spectators were, I think, touched by her sufferings. Sandy Tipton thought it was "rough on Sal," and, in the contemplation of her condition, for a moment rose superior to the fact that he had an ace and two bowers in his sleeve.

It will be seen, also, that the situation was novel. Deaths were by no means uncommon in Roaring Camp, but a birth was a new thing. People had been dismissed the camp effectively, finally, and with no possibility of return ; but this was the first time that anybody had been introduced *ab initio*. Hence the excitement.

" You go in there, Stumpy," said a prominent citizen known as " Kentuck," addressing one of the loungers. " Go in there, and see what you kin do. You've had experience in them things."

Perhaps there was a fitness in the selection. Stumpy, in other climes, had been the putative head of two families ; in fact, it was owing to some legal informality in these proceedings that Roaring Camp—a city of refuge—was indebted to his company. The crowd approved the choice, and Stumpy was wise enough to bow to the majority. The door closed on the extempore surgeon and midwife, and Roaring Camp sat down outside, smoked its pipe, and awaited the issue.

The assemblage numbered about a hundred men. One or two of these were actual fugitives from justice, some were criminal, and all were reckless. Physically, they exhibited no indication of their past lives and character. The greatest scamp had a Raphael face, with a profusion of blond hair ; Oakhurst, a gambler, had the melancholy air and intellectual abstraction of a Hamlet ; the coolest and most courageous man was scarcely over five feet in height, with a soft voice and an embarrassed, timid manner. The term " roughs " applied to them was a distinction rather than a definition. Perhaps in the minor details of fingers, toes, ears, etc., the camp may have been deficient ; but these slight omissions did not detract from their aggregate force. The strongest man had but three fingers on his right hand ; the best shot had but one eye.

Such was the physical aspect of the men that were dispersed around the cabin. The camp lay in a triangular valley, between two hills and a river. The only outlet was a steep trail over the summit of a hill that faced the cabin, now illuminated by the rising moon. The suffering woman might have seen it from the rude bunk whereon she lay,—seen it winding like a silver thread until it was lost in the stars above.

A fire of withered pine-boughs added sociability to the gathering. By degrees the natural levity of Roaring Camp returned. Bets were freely offered and taken regarding the result. Three to five that "Sal would get through with it"; even that the child would survive; side bets as to the sex and complexion of the coming stranger. In the midst of an excited discussion an exclamation came from those nearest the door, and the camp stopped to listen. Above the swaying and moaning of the pines, the swift rush of the river, and the crackling of the fire, rose a sharp, querulous cry —a cry unlike anything heard before in the camp. The pines stopped moaning, the river ceased to rush, and the fire to crackle. It seemed as if Nature had stopped to listen too.

The camp rose to its feet as one man! It was proposed to explode a barrel of gunpowder, but, in consideration of the situation of the mother, better counsels prevailed, and only a few revolvers were discharged; for, whether owing to the rude surgery of the camp, or some other reason, Cherokee Sal was sinking fast. Within an hour she had climbed, as it were, that rugged road that led to the stars, and so passed out of Roaring Camp, its sin and shame, for ever. I do not think that the announcement disturbed them much, except in speculation as to the fate of the child. "Can he live now?" was asked of Stumpy. The answer was doubtful. The only other being of Cherokee Sal's sex and maternal condition in the settlement was an ass. There was some conjecture as to fitness, but the experiment was tried. It was less problematical than the ancient treatment of Romulus and Remus, and apparently as successful.

When these details were completed, which exhausted another hour, the door was opened, and the anxious crowd of men who had already formed themselves into a queue, entered in single file. Beside the low bunk or shelf, on which the figure of the mother was starkly outlined below the blankets, stood a pine table. On this a candle-box was placed, and within it, swathed in staring red flannel, lay the last arrival at Roaring Camp. Beside the candle-box was placed a hat. Its use was soon indicated. "Gentlemen," said Stumpy, with a singular mixture of authority and *ex officio* complacency,— "Gentlemen will please pass in at the front door, round

the table, and out at the back door. Them as wishes to contribute anything toward the orphan will find a hat handy." The first man entered with his hat on; he uncovered, however, as he looked about him, and so, unconsciously, set an example to the next. In such communities good and bad actions are catching. As the procession filed in, comments were audible,—criticisms addressed, perhaps, rather to Stumpy, in the character of showman,—"Is that him?" "mighty small specimen"; "hasn't mor'n got the colour"; "ain't bigger nor a Derringer." The contributions were as characteristic: A silver tobacco-box; a doubloon; a navy revolver, silver mounted; a gold specimen; a very beautifully embroidered lady's handkerchief (from Oakhurst the gambler); a diamond breastpin; a diamond ring (suggested by the pin, with the remark from the giver that he "saw that pin and went two diamonds better"); a slung shot; a Bible (contributor not detected); a golden spur; a silver teaspoon (the initials, I regret to say, were not the giver's); a pair of surgeon's shears; a lancet; a Bank of England note for £5; and about $200 in loose gold and silver coin. During these proceedings Stumpy maintained a silence as impassive as the dead on his left, a gravity as inscrutable as that of the newly born on his right. Only one incident occurred to break the monotony of the curious procession. As Kentuck bent over the candle-box half curiously, the child turned, and, in a spasm of pain, caught at his groping finger, and held it fast for a moment. Kentuck looked foolish and embarrassed. Something like a blush tried to assert itself in his weather-beaten cheek. "The d—d little cuss!" he said, as he extricated his finger, with, perhaps, more tenderness and care than he might have been deemed capable of showing. He held that finger a little apart from its fellows as he went out, and examined it curiously. The examination provoked the same original remark in regard to the child. In fact, he seemed to enjoy repeating it. "He rastled with my finger," he remarked to Tipton, holding up the member, "the d—d little cuss!"

It was four o'clock before the camp sought repose. A light burnt in the cabin where the watchers sat, for Stumpy did not go to bed that night. Nor did Kentuck.

He drank quite freely, and related with great gusto his experience, invariably ending with his characteristic condemnation of the new-comer. It seemed to relieve him of any unjust implication of sentiment, and Kentuck had the weaknesses of the nobler sex. When everybody else had gone to bed, he walked down to the river, and whistled reflectingly. Then he walked up the gulch, past the cabin, still whistling with demonstrative unconcern. At a large red-wood tree he paused and retraced his steps, and again passed the cabin. Half-way down to the river's bank he again paused, and then returned and knocked at the door. It was opened by Stumpy. "How goes it?" said Kentuck, looking past Stumpy toward the candle-box. "All serene," replied Stumpy. "Anything up?" "Nothing." There was a pause—an embarrassing one—Stumpy still holding the door. Then Kentuck had recourse to his finger, which he held up to Stumpy. "Rastled with it,—the d—d little cuss," he said, and retired.

The next day Cherokee Sal had such rude sepulture as Roaring Camp afforded. After her body had been committed to the hill-side, there was a formal meeting of the camp to discuss what should be done with her infant. A resolution to adopt it was unanimous and enthusiastic. But an animated discussion in regard to the manner and feasibility of providing for its wants at once sprung up. It was remarkable that the argument partook of none of those fierce personalities with which discussions were usually conducted at Roaring Camp. Tipton proposed that they should send the child to Red Dog,—a distance of forty miles,—where female attention could be procured. But the unlucky suggestion met with fierce and unanimous opposition. It was evident that no plan which entailed parting from their new acquisition would for a moment be entertained. "Besides," said Tom Ryder, "them fellows at Red Dog would swap it, and ring in somebody else on us." A disbelief in the honesty of other camps prevailed at Roaring Camp as in other places.

The introduction of a female nurse in the camp also met with objection. It was argued that no decent woman could be prevailed to accept Roaring Camp as her home, and the speaker urged that "they didn't want

any more of the other kind." This unkind allusion to the defunct mother, harsh as it may seem, was the first spasm of propriety,—the first symptom of the camp's regeneration. Stumpy advanced nothing. Perhaps he felt a certain delicacy in interfering with the selection of a possible successor in office. But when questioned, he averred stoutly that he and "Jinny"—the mammal before alluded to—could manage to rear the child. There was something original, independent, and heroic about the plan that pleased the camp. Stumpy was retained. Certain articles were sent for to Sacramento. "Mind," said the treasurer, as he pressed a bag of gold-dust into the expressman's hand, "the best that can be got,—lace, you know, and filigree-work and frills—d—n the cost!"

Strange to say, the child thrived. Perhaps the invigorating climate of the mountain camp was compensation for material deficiencies. Nature took the foundling to her broader breast. In that rare atmosphere of the Sierra foot-hills,—that air pungent with balsamic odour, that ethereal cordial at once bracing and exhilarating,—he may have found food and nourishment, or a subtle chemistry that transmuted asses' milk to lime and phosphorus. Stumpy inclined to the belief that it was the latter and good nursing. "Me and that ass," he would say, "has been father and mother to him! Don't you," he would add, apostrophizing the helpless bundle before him, "never go back on us."

By the time he was a month old, the necessity of giving him a name became apparent. He had generally been known as "the Kid," "Stumpy's boy," "the Cayote" (an allusion to his vocal powers), and even by Kentuck's endearing diminutive of "the d—d little cuss." But these were felt to be vague and unsatisfactory, and were at last dismissed under another influence. Gamblers and adventurers are generally superstitious, and Oakhurst one day declared that the baby had brought "the luck" to Roaring Camp. It was certain that of late they had been successful. "Luck" was the name agreed upon, with the prefix of Tommy for greater convenience. No allusion was made to the mother, and the father was unknown. "It's better," said the philosophical Oakhurst, "to take a fresh deal all round. Call him Luck, and start

him fair." A day was accordingly set apart for the christening. What was meant by this ceremony the reader may imagine, who has already gathered some idea of the reckless irreverence of Roaring Camp. The master of ceremonies was one "Boston," a noted wag, and the occasion seemed to promise the greatest facetiousness. This ingenious satirist had spent two days in preparing a burlesque of the church service, with pointed local allusions. The choir was properly trained, and Sandy Tipton was to stand godfather. But after the procession had marched to the grove with music and banners, and the child had been deposited before a mock altar, Stumpy stepped before the expectant crowd. "It ain't my style to spoil fun, boys," said the little man, stoutly, eyeing the faces around him, "but it strikes me that this thing ain't exactly on the squar. It's playing it pretty low down on this yer baby to ring in fun on him that he ain't going to understand. And ef there's going to be any godfathers round, I'd like to see who's got any better rights than me." A silence followed Stumpy's speech. To the credit of all humorists be it said, that the first man to acknowledge its justice was the satirist, thus stopped of his fun. "But," said Stumpy, quickly, following up his advantage, "we're here for a christening, and we'll have it. I proclaim you Thomas Luck, according to the laws of the United States and the State of California, so help me God." It was the first time that the name of the Deity had been uttered otherwise than profanely in the camp. The form of christening was perhaps even more ludicrous than the satirist had conceived; but, strangely enough, nobody saw it, and nobody laughed. "Tommy" was christened as seriously as he would have been under a Christian roof, and cried and was comforted in as orthodox fashion.

And so the work of regeneration began in Roaring Camp. Almost imperceptibly a change came over the settlement. The cabin assigned to "Tommy Luck"—or "The Luck," as he was more frequently called—first showed signs of improvement. It was kept scrupulously clean and whitewashed. Then it was boarded, clothed, and papered. The rosewood cradle—packed eighty miles by mule—had, in Stumpy's way of putting it, "sorter

killed the rest of the furniture." So the rehabilitation of the cabin became a necessity. The men who were in the habit of lounging in at Stumpy's to see "how the Luck got on" seemed to appreciate the change, and, in self-defence, the rival establishment of "Tuttle's grocery" bestirred itself, and imported a carpet and mirrors. The reflections of the latter on the appearance of Roaring Camp tended to produce stricter habits of personal cleanliness. Again, Stumpy imposed a kind of quarantine upon those who aspired to the honour and privilege of holding "The Luck." It was a cruel mortification to Kentuck—who, in the carelessness of a large nature and the habits of frontier life, had begun to regard all garments as a second cuticle, which, like a snake's, only sloughed off through decay—to be debarred this privilege from certain prudential reasons. Yet such was the subtle influence of innovation that he thereafter appeared regularly every afternoon in a clean shirt, and face still shining from his ablutions. Nor were moral and social sanitary laws neglected. "Tommy," who was supposed to spend his whole existence in a persistent attempt to repose, must not be disturbed by noise. The shouting and yelling which had gained the camp its infelicitous title were not permitted within hearing distance of Stumpy's. The men conversed in whispers, or smoked with Indian gravity. Profanity was tacitly given up in these sacred precincts, and throughout the camp a popular form of expletive, known as "D—n the luck!" and "Curse the luck!" was abandoned, as having a new personal bearing. Vocal music was not interdicted, being supposed to have a soothing, tranquillizing quality, and one song, sung by "Man-o'-war Jack," an English sailor, from her Majesty's Australian colonies, was quite popular as a lullaby. It was a lugubrious recital of the exploits of "the Arethusa, Seventy-four," in a muffled minor, ending with a prolonged dying fall at the burden of each verse, "On b-o-o-o-ard of the Arethusa." It was a fine sight to see Jack holding The Luck, rocking from side to side as if with the motion of a ship, and crooning forth this naval ditty. Either through the peculiar rocking of Jack or the length of his song—it contained ninety stanzas, and was continued with conscientious deliberation to the bitter end—the

lullaby generally had the desired effect. At such times the men would lie at full length under the trees, in the soft summer twilight, smoking their pipes and drinking in the melodious utterances. An indistinct idea that this was pastoral happiness pervaded the camp. "This 'ere kind o' think," said the Cockney Simmons, meditatively reclining on his elbow, "is 'evingly." It reminded him of Greenwich.

On the long summer days The Luck was usually carried to the gulch, from whence the golden store of Roaring Camp was taken. There, on a blanket spread over pine-boughs, he would lie while the men were working in the ditches below. Latterly, there was a rude attempt to decorate this bower with flowers and sweet-smelling shrubs, and generally some one would bring him a cluster of wild honeysuckles, azaleas, or the painted blossoms of Las Mariposas. The men had suddenly awakened to the fact that there were beauty and significance in these trifles, which they had so long trodden carelessly beneath their feet. A flake of glittering mica, a fragment of variegated quartz, a bright pebble from the bed of the creek, became beautiful to eyes thus cleared and strengthened, and were invariably put aside for "The Luck." It was wonderful how many treasures the woods and hill-sides yielded that "would do for Tommy." Surrounded by playthings such as never child out of fairyland had before, it is to be hoped that Tommy was content. He appeared to be securely happy, albeit there was an infantine gravity about him, a contemplative light in his round grey eyes, that sometimes worried Stumpy. He was always tractable and quiet, and it is recorded that once, having crept beyond his "corral,"—a hedge of tessellated pine-boughs, which surrounded his bed,—he dropped over the bank on his head in the soft earth, and remained with his mottled legs in the air in that position for at least five minutes with unflinching gravity. He was extricated without a murmur. I hesitate to record the many other instances of his sagacity, which rest, unfortunately, upon the statements of prejudiced friends. Some of them were not without a tinge of superstition. "I crep' up the bank just now," said Kentuck one day, in a breathless state of excitement, "and dern my skin if he wasn't a-talking to

a jay-bird as was a-sittin' on his lap. There they was, just as free and sociable as anything you please, a-jawin' at each other just like two cherry-bums." Howbeit, whether creeping over the pine-boughs or lying lazily on his back blinking at the leaves above him, to him the birds sang, the squirrels chattered, and the flowers bloomed. Nature was his nurse and playfellow. For him she would let slip between the leaves golden shafts of sunlight that fell just within his grasp; she would send wandering breezes to visit him with the balm of bay and resinous gums; to him the tall red-woods nodded familiarly and sleepily, the bumble-bees buzzed, and the rooks cawed a slumbrous accompaniment.

Such was the golden summer of Roaring Camp. They were "flush times,"—and the Luck was with them. The claims had yielded enormously. The camp was jealous of its privileges and looked suspiciously on strangers. No encouragement was given to immigration, and, to make their seclusion more perfect, the land on either side of the mountain wall that surrounded the camp they duly pre-empted. This, and a reputation for singular proficiency with the revolver, kept the reserve of Roaring Camp inviolate. The expressman—their only connecting link with the surrounding world—sometimes told wonderful stories of the camp. He would say, "They've a street up there in 'Roaring,' that would lay over any street in Red Dog. They've got vines and flowers round their houses, and they wash themselves twice a day. But they're mighty rough on strangers, and they worship an Ingin baby."

With the prosperity of the camp came a desire for further improvement. It was proposed to build a hotel in the following spring, and to invite one or two decent families to reside there for the sake of "The Luck,"—who might perhaps profit by female companionship. The sacrifice that this concession to the sex cost these men, who were fiercely sceptical in regard to its general virtue and usefulness, can only be accounted for by their affection for Tommy. A few still held out. But the resolve could not be carried into effect for three months, and the minority meekly yielded in the hope that something might turn up to prevent it. And it did.

The winter of 1851 will long be remembered in the foot-hills. The snow lay deep on the Sierras, and every mountain creek became a river, and every river a lake. Each gorge and gulch was transformed into a tumultuous watercourse that descended the hill-sides, tearing down giant trees and scattering its drift and débris along the plain. Red Dog had been twice under water, and Roaring Camp had been forewarned. "Water put the gold into them gulches," said Stumpy. "It's been here once and will be here again!" And that night the North Fork suddenly leaped over its banks, and swept up the triangular valley of Roaring Camp.

In the confusion of rushing water, crushing trees, and crackling timber, and the darkness which seemed to flow with the water and blot out the fair valley, but little could be done to collect the scattered camp. When the morning broke, the cabin of Stumpy nearest the river-bank was gone. Higher up the gulch they found the body of its unlucky owner; but the pride, the hope, the joy, the Luck, of Roaring Camp had disappeared. They were returning with sad hearts, when a shout from the bank recalled them.

It was a relief-boat from down the river. They had picked up, they said, a man and an infant, nearly exhausted, about two miles below. Did anybody know them, and did they belong here?

It needed but a glance to show them Kentuck lying there, cruelly crushed and bruised, but still holding the Luck of Roaring Camp in his arms. As they bent over the strangely assorted pair, they saw that the child was cold and pulseless. "He is dead," said one. Kentuck opened his eyes. "Dead?" he repeated, feebly. "Yes, my man, and you are dying too." A smile lit the eyes of the expiring Kentuck. "Dying," he repeated, "he's a-taking me with him,—tell the boys I've got the Luck with me now"; and the strong man, clinging to the frail babe as a drowning man is said to cling to a straw, drifted away into the shadowy river that flows for ever to the unknown sea.

THE OUTCASTS OF POKER FLAT

As Mr. John Oakhurst, gambler, stepped into the main street of Poker Flat on the morning of the twenty-third of November, 1850, he was conscious of a change in its moral atmosphere since the preceding night. Two or three men, conversing earnestly together, ceased as he approached, and exchanged significant glances. There was a Sabbath lull in the air, which, in a settlement unused to Sabbath influences, looked ominous.

Mr. Oakhurst's calm, handsome face betrayed small concern in these indications. Whether he was conscious of any predisposing cause, was another question. "I reckon they're after somebody," he reflected; "likely it's me." He returned to his pocket the handkerchief with which he had been whipping away the red dust of Poker Flat from his neat boots, and quietly discharged his mind of any further conjecture.

In point of fact, Poker Flat was "after somebody." It had lately suffered the loss of several thousand dollars, two valuable horses, and a prominent citizen. It was experiencing a spasm of virtuous reaction, quite as lawless and ungovernable as any of the acts that had provoked it. A secret committee had determined to rid the town of all improper persons. This was done permanently in regard of two men who were then hanging from the boughs of a sycamore in the gulch, and temporarily in the banishment of certain other objectionable characters. I regret to say that some of these were ladies. It is but due to the sex, however, to state that their impropriety was professional, and it was only in such easily established standards of evil that Poker Flat ventured to sit in judgement.

Mr. Oakhurst was right in supposing that he was included in this category. A few of the committee had urged hanging him as a possible example, and a sure method of reimbursing themselves from his pockets of the sums he had won from them. "It's agin justice," said Jim Wheeler, "to let this yer young man from Roaring Camp—an entire stranger—carry away our money." But a crude sentiment of equity residing in the breasts of those who had been fortunate enough to win from Mr. Oakhurst overruled this narrower local prejudice.

Mr. Oakhurst received his sentence with philosophic calmness, none the less coolly that he was aware of the hesitation of his judges. He was too much of a gambler not to accept Fate. With him life was at best an uncertain game, and he recognized the usual percentage in favour of the dealer.

A body of armed men accompanied the deported wickedness of Poker Flat to the outskirts of the settlement. Besides Mr. Oakhurst, who was known to be a coolly desperate man, and for whose intimidation the armed escort was intended, the expatriated party consisted of a young woman familiarly known as "The Duchess"; another, who had won the title of "Mother Shipton"; and "Uncle Billy," a suspected sluice-robber and confirmed drunkard. The cavalcade provoked no comments from the spectators, nor was any word uttered by the escort. Only when the gulch which marked the uttermost limit of Poker Flat was reached, the leader spoke briefly and to the point. The exiles were forbidden to return at the peril of their lives.

As the escort disappeared, their pent-up feelings found vent in a few hysterical tears from the Duchess, some bad language from Mother Shipton, and a Parthian volley of expletives from Uncle Billy. The philosophic Oakhurst alone remained silent. He listened calmly to Mother Shipton's desire to cut somebody's heart out, to the repeated statements of the Duchess that she would die in the road, and to the alarming oaths that seemed to be bumped out of Uncle Billy as he rode forward. With the easy good-humour characteristic of his class, he insisted upon exchanging his own riding-horse, "Five Spot," for

the sorry mule which the Duchess rode. But even this act did not draw the party into any closer sympathy. The young woman readjusted her somewhat draggled plumes with a feeble, faded coquetry; Mother Shipton eyed the possessor of "Five Spot" with malevolence; and Uncle Billy included the whole party in one sweeping anathema.

The road to Sandy Bar—a camp that, not having as yet experienced the regenerating influences of Poker Flat, consequently seemed to offer some invitation to the emigrants—lay over a steep mountain range. It was distant a day's severe travel. In that advanced season, the party soon passed out of the moist, temperate regions of the foot-hills into the dry, cold, bracing air of the Sierras. The trail was narrow and difficult. At noon the Duchess, rolling out of her saddle upon the ground, declared her intention of going no farther, and the party halted.

The spot was singularly wild and impressive. A wooded amphitheatre, surrounded on three sides by precipitous cliffs of naked granite, sloped gently toward the crest of another precipice that overlooked the valley. It was, undoubtedly, the most suitable spot for a camp, had camping been advisable. But Mr. Oakhurst knew that scarcely half the journey to Sandy Bar was accomplished, and the party were not equipped or provisioned for delay. This fact he pointed out to his companions curtly, with a philosophic commentary on the folly of "throwing up their hand before the game was played out." But they were furnished with liquor, which in this emergency stood them in place of food, fuel, rest, and prescience. In spite of his remonstrances, it was not long before they were more or less under its influence. Uncle Billy passed rapidly from a bellicose state into one of stupor, the Duchess became maudlin, and Mother Shipton snored. Mr. Oakhurst alone remained erect, leaning against a rock, calmly surveying them.

Mr. Oakhurst did not drink. It interfered with a profession which required coolness, impassiveness, and presence of mind, and, in his own language, he "couldn't afford it." As he gazed at his recumbent fellow-exiles, the loneliness begotten of his pariah-trade, his habits of

life, his very vices, for the first time seriously oppressed him. He bestirred himself in dusting his black clothes, washing his hands and face, and other acts characteristic of his studiously neat habits, and for a moment forgot his annoyance. The thought of deserting his weaker and more pitiable companions never perhaps occurred to him. Yet he could not help feeling the want of that excitement which, singularly enough, was most conducive to that calm equanimity for which he was notorious. He looked at the gloomy walls that rose a thousand feet sheer above the circling pines around him; at the sky, ominously clouded; at the valley below, already deepening into shadow. And, doing so, suddenly he heard his own name called.

A horseman slowly ascended the trail. In the fresh, open face of the new-comer Mr. Oakhurst recognized Tom Simson, otherwise known as "The Innocent" of Sandy Bar. He had met him some months before over a "little game," and had, with perfect equanimity, won the entire fortune—amounting to some forty dollars—of that guileless youth. After the game was finished, Mr. Oakhurst drew the youthful speculator behind the door, and thus addressed him: "Tommy, you're a good little man, but you can't gamble worth a cent. Don't try it over again." He then handed him his money back, pushed him gently from the room, and so made a devoted slave of Tom Simson.

There was a remembrance of this in his boyish and enthusiastic greeting of Mr. Oakhurst. He had started, he said, to go to Poker Flat to seek his fortune. "Alone?" No, not exactly alone; in fact (a giggle), he had run away with Piney Woods. Didn't Mr. Oakhurst remember Piney? She that used to wait on the table at the Temperance House? They had been engaged a long time, but old Jake Woods had objected, and so they had run away, and were going to Poker Flat to be married, and here they were. And they were tired out, and how lucky it was they had found a place to camp and company. All this the Innocent delivered rapidly, while Piney, a stout, comely damsel of fifteen, emerged from behind the pine-tree, where she had been blushing unseen, and rode to the side of her lover.

Mr. Oakhurst seldom troubled himself with sentiment, still less with propriety; but he had a vague idea that the situation was not fortunate. He retained, however, his presence of mind sufficiently to kick Uncle Billy, who was about to say something, and Uncle Billy was sober enough to recognize in Mr. Oakhurst's kick a superior power that would not bear trifling. He then endeavoured to dissuade Tom Simson from delaying further, but in vain. He even pointed out the fact that there was no provision, nor means of making a camp. But, unluckily, the Innocent met this objection by assuring the party that he was provided with an extra mule loaded with provisions, and by the discovery of a rude attempt at a log-house near the trail. "Piney can stay with Mrs. Oakhurst," said the Innocent, pointing to the Duchess, "and I can shift for myself."

Nothing but Mr. Oakhurst's admonishing foot saved Uncle Billy from bursting into a roar of laughter. As it was, he felt compelled to retire up the cañon until he could recover his gravity. There he confided the joke to the tall pine-trees, with many slaps of his leg, contortions of his face, and the usual profanity. But when he returned to the party, he found them seated by a fire—for the air had grown strangely chill and the sky overcast—in apparently amicable conversation. Piney was actually talking in an impulsive, girlish fashion to the Duchess, who was listening with an interest and animation she had not shown for many days. The Innocent was holding forth, apparently with equal effect, to Mr. Oakhurst and Mother Shipton, who was actually relaxing into amiability. "Is this yer a d—d picnic?" said Uncle Billy, with inward scorn, as he surveyed the sylvan group, the glancing firelight, and the tethered animals in the foreground. Suddenly an idea mingled with the alcoholic fumes that disturbed his brain. It was apparently of a jocular nature, for he felt impelled to slap his leg again and cram his fist into his mouth.

As the shadows crept slowly up the mountain, a slight breeze rocked the tops of the pine-trees, and moaned through their long and gloomy aisles. The ruined cabin, patched and covered with pine-boughs, was set apart for the ladies. As the lovers parted, they unaffectedly

exchanged a kiss, so honest and sincere that it might have been heard above the swaying pines. The frail Duchess and the malevolent Mother Shipton were probably too stunned to remark upon this last evidence of simplicity, and so turned without a word to the hut. The fire was replenished, the men lay down before the door, and in a few minutes were asleep.

Mr. Oakhurst was a light sleeper. Toward morning he awoke benumbed and cold. As he stirred the dying fire, the wind, which was now blowing strongly, brought to his cheek that which caused the blood to leave it,—snow!

He started to his feet with the intention of awakening the sleepers, for there was no time to lose. But turning to where Uncle Billy had been lying, he found him gone. A suspicion leaped to his brain and a curse to his lips. He ran to the spot where the mules had been tethered; they were no longer there. The tracks were already rapidly disappearing in the snow.

The momentary excitement brought Mr. Oakhurst back to the fire with his usual calm. He did not waken the sleepers. The Innocent slumbered peacefully, with a smile on his good-humoured, freckled face; the virgin Piney slept beside her frailer sisters as sweetly as though attended by celestial guardians, and Mr. Oakhurst, drawing his blanket over his shoulders, stroked his moustaches and waited for the dawn. It came slowly in a whirling mist of snow-flakes, that dazzled and confused the eye. What could be seen of the landscape appeared magically changed. He looked over the valley, and summed up the present and future in two words—"snowed in!"

A careful inventory of the provisions, which, fortunately for the party, had been stored within the hut, and so escaped the felonious fingers of Uncle Billy, disclosed the fact that with care and prudence they might last ten days longer. "That is," said Mr. Oakhurst, *sotto voce* to the Innocent, "if you're willing to board us. If you ain't—and perhaps you'd better not—you can wait till Uncle Billy gets back with provisions." For some occult reason, Mr. Oakhurst could not bring himself to disclose Uncle Billy's rascality, and so offered the hypothesis that he had

wandered from the camp and had accidentally stampeded the animals. He dropped a warning to the Duchess and Mother Shipton, who of course knew the facts of their associate's defection. "They'll find out the truth about us *all* when they find out anything," he added, significantly, "and there's no good frightening them now."

Tom Simson not only put all his worldly store at the disposal of Mr. Oakhurst, but seemed to enjoy the prospect of their enforced seclusion. "We'll have a good camp for a week, and then the snow'll melt, and we'll all go back together." The cheerful gaiety of the young man and Mr. Oakhurst's calm infected the others. The Innocent, with the aid of pine-boughs, extemporized a thatch for the roofless cabin, and the Duchess directed Piney in the rearrangement of the interior with a taste and tact that opened the blue eyes of that provincial maiden to their fullest extent. "I reckon now you're used to fine things at Poker Flat," said Piney. The Duchess turned away sharply to conceal something that reddened her cheeks through its professional tint, and Mother Shipton requested Piney not to "chatter." But when Mr. Oakhurst returned from a weary search for the trail, he heard the sound of happy laughter echoed from the rocks. He stopped in some alarm, and his thoughts first naturally reverted to the whisky, which he had prudently *cachéd*. "And yet it don't somehow sound like whisky," said the gambler. It was not until he caught sight of the blazing fire through the still blinding storm and the group around it, that he settled to the conviction that it was "square fun."

Whether Mr. Oakhurst had *cachéd* his cards with the whisky as something debarred the free access of the community, I cannot say. It was certain that, in Mother Shipton's words, he "didn't say cards once" during that evening. Haply the time was beguiled by an accordion, produced somewhat ostentatiously by Tom Simson from his pack. Notwithstanding some difficulties attending the manipulation of this instrument, Piney Woods managed to pluck several reluctant melodies from its keys, to an accompaniment by the Innocent on a pair of bone castinets. But the crowning festivity of the evening was reached in a rude camp-meeting hymn, which

the lovers, joining hands, sang with great earnestness and vociferation. I fear that a certain defiant tone and Covenanter's swing to its chorus, rather than any devotional quality, caused it speedily to infect the others, who at last joined in the refrain :—

> " I'm proud to live in the service of the Lord,
> And I'm bound to die in His army."

The pines rocked, the storm eddied and whirled above the miserable group, and the flames of their altar leaped heavenward, as if in token of the vow.

At midnight the storm abated, the rolling clouds parted, and the stars glittered keenly above the sleeping camp. Mr. Oakhurst, whose professional habits had enabled him to live on the smallest possible amount of sleep, in dividing the watch with Tom Simson, somehow managed to take upon himself the greater part of that duty. He excused himself to the Innocent by saying that he had "often been a week without sleep." "Doing what ?" asked Tom. "Poker !" replied Oakhurst, sententiously ; "when a man gets a streak of luck - nigger-luck—he don't get tired. The luck gives in first. Luck," continued the gambler, reflectively, "is a mighty queer thing. All you know about it for certain is that it's bound to change. And it's finding out when it's going to change that makes you. We've had a streak of bad luck since we left Poker Flat—you come along, and slap you get into it, too. If you can hold your cards right along you're all right. For," added the gambler, with cheerful irrelevance—

> " ' I'm proud to live in the service of the Lord,
> And I'm bound to die in His army.' "

The third day came, and the sun, looking through the white-curtained valley, saw the outcasts divide their slowly decreasing store of provisions for the morning meal. It was one of the peculiarities of that mountain climate that its rays diffused a kindly warmth over the wintry landscape, as if in regretful commiseration of the past. But it revealed drift on drift of snow piled high around the hut—a hopeless, unchartered, trackless sea of white lying below the rocky shores to which the cast-

aways still clung. Through the marvellously clear air the smoke of the pastoral village of Poker Flat rose miles away. Mother Shipton saw it, and from a remote pinnacle of her rocky fastness, hurled in that direction a final malediction. It was her last vituperative attempt, and perhaps for that reason was invested with a certain degree of sublimity. It did her good, she privately informed the Duchess. "Just you go out there and cuss, and see." She then set herself to the task of amusing "the child," as she and the Duchess were pleased to call Piney. Piney was no chicken, but it was a soothing and original theory of the pair thus to account for the fact that she didn't swear and wasn't improper.

When night crept up again through the gorges, the reedy notes of the accordion rose and fell in fitful spasms and long-drawn gasps by the flickering camp-fire. But music failed to fill entirely the aching void left by insufficient food, and a new diversion was proposed by Piney—story-telling. Neither Mr. Oakhurst nor his female companions caring to relate their personal experiences, this plan would have failed, too, but for the Innocent. Some months before he had chanced upon a stray copy of Mr. Pope's ingenious translation of the *Iliad*. He now proposed to narrate the principal incidents of that poem—having thoroughly mastered the argument and fairly forgotten the words—in the current vernacular of Sandy Bar. And so for the rest of that night the Homeric demigods again walked the earth. Trojan bully and wily Greek wrestled in the winds, and the great pines in the cañon seemed to bow to the wrath of the son of Peleus. Mr. Oakhurst listened with quiet satisfaction. Most especially was he interested in the fate of "Ash-heels," as the Innocent persisted in denominating the "swift-footed Achilles."

So with small food and much of Homer and the accordion, a week passed over the heads of the outcasts. The sun again forsook them, and again from leaden skies the snowflakes were sifted over the land. Day by day closer around them drew the snowy circle, until at last they looked from their prison over drifted walls of dazzling white, that towered twenty feet above their heads. It became more and more difficult to replenish their fires, even from the fallen trees beside them, now half hidden

in the drifts. And yet no one complained. The lovers turned from the dreary prospect and looked into each other's eyes, and were happy. Mr. Oakhurst settled himself coolly to the losing game before him. The Duchess, more cheerful than she had been, assumed the care of Piney. Only Mother Shipton—once the strongest of the party—seemed to sicken and fade. At midnight on the tenth day she called Oakhurst to her side. "I'm going," she said, in a voice of querulous weakness, "but don't say anything about it. Don't waken the kids. Take the bundle from under my head and open it." Mr. Oakhurst did so. It contained Mother Shipton's rations for the last week, untouched. "Give 'em to the child," she said, pointing to the sleeping Piney. "You've starved yourself," said the gambler. "That's what they call it," said the woman, querulously, as she lay down again, and, turning her face to the wall, passed quietly away.

The accordion and the bones were put aside that day, and Homer was forgotten. When the body of Mother Shipton had been committed to the snow, Mr. Oakhurst took the Innocent aside, and showed him a pair of snow-shoes, which he had fashioned from the old pack-saddle. "There's one chance in a hundred to save her yet," he said, pointing to Piney; "but it's there," he added, pointing toward Poker Flat. "If you can reach there in two days she's safe." "And you?" asked Tom Simson. "I'll stay here," was the curt reply.

The lovers parted with a long embrace. "You are not going, too?" said the Duchess, as she saw Mr. Oakhurst apparently waiting to accompany him. "As far as the cañon," he replied. He turned suddenly, and kissed the Duchess, leaving her pallid face aflame, and her trembling limbs rigid with amazement.

Night came, but not Mr. Oakhurst. It brought the storm again and the whirling snow. Then the Duchess, feeding the fire, found that some one had quietly piled beside the hut enough fuel to last a few days longer. The tears rose to her eyes, but she hid them from Piney.

The women slept but little. In the morning, looking into each other's faces, they read their fate. Neither spoke; but Piney, accepting the position of the stronger, drew near and placed her arm around the Duchess's

waist. They kept this attitude for the rest of the day. That night the storm reached its greatest fury, and, rending asunder the protecting pines, invaded the very hut.

Toward morning they found themselves unable to feed the fire, which gradually died away. As the embers slowly blackened, the Duchess crept closer to Piney, and broke the silence of many hours: "Piney, can you pray?" "No, dear," said Piney, simply. The Duchess, without knowing exactly why, felt relieved, and, putting her head upon Piney's shoulder, spoke no more. And so reclining, the younger and purer pillowing the head of her soiled sister upon her virgin breast, they fell asleep.

The wind lulled as if it feared to waken them. Feathery drifts of snow, shaken from the long pine-boughs, flew like white-winged birds, and settled about them as they slept. The moon through the rifted clouds looked down upon what had been the camp. But all human stain, all trace of earthly travail, was hidden beneath the spotless mantle mercifully flung from above.

They slept all that day and the next, nor did they waken when voices and footsteps broke the silence of the camp. And when pitying fingers brushed the snow from their wan faces, you could scarcely have told, from the equal peace that dwelt upon them, which was she that had sinned. Even the law of Poker Flat recognized this, and turned away, leaving them still locked in each other's arms.

But at the head of the gulch, on one of the largest pine-trees, they found the deuce of clubs pinned to the bark with a bowie-knife. It bore the following, written in pencil, in a firm hand:—

†

BENEATH THIS TREE
LIES THE BODY
OF
JOHN OAKHURST,
WHO STRUCK A STREAK OF BAD LUCK
ON THE 23RD OF NOVEMBER, 1850,
AND
HANDED IN HIS CHECKS
ON THE 7TH DECEMBER, 1850

†

And pulseless and cold, with a Derringer by his side and a bullet in his heart, though still calm as in life, beneath the snow lay he who was at once the strongest and yet the weakest of the outcasts of Poker Flat.

A LONELY RIDE

As I stepped into the Slumgullion stage I saw that it was a dark night, a lonely road, and that I was the only passenger. Let me assure the reader that I have no ulterior design in making this assertion. A long course of light reading has forewarned me what every experienced intelligence must confidently look for from such a statement. The story-teller who wilfully tempts Fate by such obvious beginnings; who is to the expectant reader in danger of being robbed or half-murdered, or frightened by an escaped lunatic, or introduced to his lady-love for the first time, deserves to be detected. I am relieved to say that none of these things occurred to me. The road from Wingdam to Slumgullion knew no other banditti than the regularly licensed hotel-keepers; lunatics had not yet reached such depth of imbecility as to ride of their own free-will in California stages; and my Laura, amiable and long-suffering as she always is, could not, I fear, have borne up against these depressing circumstances long enough to have made the slightest impression on me.

I stood with my shawl and carpet-bag in hand, gazing doubtingly on the vehicle. Even in the darkness the red dust of Wingdam was visible on its roof and sides, and the red slime of Slumgullion clung tenaciously to its wheels. I opened the door; the stage creaked uneasily, and in the gloomy abyss the swaying straps beckoned me, like ghostly hands, to come in now, and have my sufferings out at once.

I must not omit to mention the occurrence of a circumstance which struck me as appalling and mysterious. A lounger on the steps of the hotel, whom I had reason to

suppose was not in any way connected with the stage company, gravely descended, and, walking toward the conveyance, tried the handle of the door, opened it, expectorated in the carriage, and returned to the hotel with a serious demeanour. Hardly had he resumed his position, when another individual, equally disinterested, impassively walked down the steps, proceeded to the back of the stage, lifted it, expectorated carefully on the axle, and returned slowly and pensively to the hotel. A third spectator wearily disengaged himself from one of the Ionic columns of the portico and walked to the box, remained for a moment in serious and expectorative contemplation of the boot, and then returned to his column. There was something so weird in this baptism that I grew quite nervous.

Perhaps I was out of spirits. A number of infinitesimal annoyances, winding up with the resolute persistency of the clerk at the stage-office to enter my name misspelt on the way-bill, had not predisposed me to cheerfulness. The inmates of the Eureka House, from a social view-point, were not attractive. There was the prevailing opinion—so common to many honest people—that a serious style of deportment and conduct toward a stranger indicates high gentility and elevated station. Obeying this principle, all hilarity ceased on my entrance to supper, and general remark merged into the safer and uncompromising chronicle of several bad cases of diphtheria, then epidemic at Wingdam. When I left the dining-room, with an odd feeling that I had been supping exclusively on mustard and tea-leaves, I stopped a moment at the parlour door. A piano, harmoniously related to the dinner-bell, tinkled responsive to a diffident and uncertain touch. On the white wall the shadow of an old and sharp profile was bending over several symmetrical and shadowy curls. "I sez to Mariar, Mariar, sez I, 'Praise to the face is open disgrace.'" I heard no more. Dreading some susceptibility to sincere expression on the subject of female loveliness, I walked away, checking the compliment that otherwise might have risen unbidden to my lips, and have brought shame and sorrow to the household.

It was with the memory of these experiences resting

heavily upon me, that I stood hesitatingly before the stage door. The driver, about to mount, was for a moment illuminated by the open door of the hotel. He had the wearied look which was the distinguishing expression of Wingdam. Satisfied that I was properly way-billed and receipted for, he took no further notice of me. I looked longingly at the box-seat, but he did not respond to the appeal. I flung my carpet-bag into the chasm, dived recklessly after it, and—before I was fairly seated—with a great sigh, a creaking of unwilling springs, complaining bolts, and harshly expostulating axle, we moved away. Rather the hotel door slipped behind, the sound of the piano sank to rest, and the night and its shadows moved solemnly upon us.

To say it was dark expressed but faintly the pitchy obscurity that encompassed the vehicle. The roadside trees were scarcely distinguishable as deeper masses of shadow; I knew them only by the peculiar sodden odour that from time to time sluggishly flowed in at the open window as we rolled by. We proceeded slowly; so leisurely that, leaning from the carriage, I more than once detected the fragrant sigh of some astonished cow, whose ruminating repose upon the highway we had ruthlessly disturbed. But in the darkness our progress, more the guidance of some mysterious instinct than any apparent volition of our own, gave an indefinable charm of security to our journey, that a moment's hesitation or indecision on the part of the driver would have destroyed.

I had indulged a hope that in the empty vehicle I might obtain that rest so often denied me in its crowded condition. It was a weak delusion. When I stretched out my limbs it was only to find that the ordinary conveniences for making several people distinctly uncomfortable were distributed throughout my individual frame. At last, resting my arms on the straps, by dint of much gymnastic effort I became sufficiently composed to be aware of a more refined species of torture. The springs of the stage, rising and falling regularly, produced a rhythmical beat, which began to painfully absorb my attention. Slowly this thumping merged into a senseless echo of the mysterious female of the hotel parlour, and shaped itself into this awful and benumbing axiom,—

"Praise-to-the-face-is-open-disgrace. Praise-to-the-face-is-open-disgrace." Inequalities of the road only quickened its utterance or drawled it to an exasperating length.

It was of no use to seriously consider the statement. It was of no use to except to it indignantly. It was of no use to recall the many instances where praise to the face had redounded to the everlasting honour of praiser and bepraised; of no use to dwell sentimentally on modest genius and courage lifted up and strengthened by open commendation; of no use to except to the mysterious female,—to picture her as rearing a thin-blooded generation on selfish and mechanically-repeated axioms,—all this failed to counteract the monotonous repetition of this sentence. There was nothing to do but to give in, and I was about to accept it weakly, as we too often treat other illusions of darkness and necessity, for the time being, when I became aware of some other annoyance that had been forcing itself upon me for the last few moments. How quiet the driver was!

Was there any driver? Had I any reason to suppose that he was not lying, gagged and bound on the roadside, and the highwayman, with blackened face, who did the thing so quietly, driving me—whither? The thing is perfectly feasible. And what is this fancy now being jolted out of me? A story? It's of no use to keep it back, particularly in this abysmal vehicle, and here it comes: I am a Marquis—a French Marquis; French, because the peerage is not so well known, and the country is better adapted to romantic incident—a Marquis, because the democratic reader delights in the nobility. My name is something *ligny*. I am coming from Paris to my country seat at St. Germain. It is a dark night, and I fall asleep and tell my honest coachman, André, not to disturb me, and dream of an angel. The carriage at last stops at the château. It is so dark that, when I alight, I do not recognize the face of the footman who holds the carriage-door. But what of that?—*peste!* I am heavy with sleep. The same obscurity also hides the old familiar indecencies of the statues on the terrace; but there is a door, and it opens and shuts behind me smartly. Then I find myself in a trap, in the presence of the brigand

who has quietly gagged poor André and conducted the carriage thither. There is nothing for me to do, as a gallant French Marquis, but to say, "*Parbleu!*" draw my rapier, and die valorously! I am found, a week or two after, outside a deserted *cabaret* near the barrier, with a hole through my ruffled linen, and my pockets stripped. No; on second thoughts, I am rescued,—rescued by the angel I have been dreaming of, who is the assumed daughter of the brigand, but the real daughter of an intimate friend.

Looking from the window again, in the vain hope of distinguishing the driver, I found my eyes were growing accustomed to the darkness. I could see the distant horizon, defined by India-inky woods, relieving a lighter sky. A few stars, widely spaced in this picture, glimmered sadly. I noticed again the infinite depth of patient sorrow in their serene faces; and I hope that the Vandal who first applied the flippant "twinkle" to them may not be driven melancholy mad by their reproachful eyes. I noticed again the mystic charm of space, that imparts a sense of individual solitude to each integer of the densest constellation, involving the smallest star with immeasurable loneliness. Something of this calm and solitude crept over me, and I dozed in my gloomy cavern. When I awoke the full moon was rising. Seen from my window, it had an indescribably unreal and theatrical effect. It was the full moon of Norma—that remarkable celestial phenomenon which rises so palpably to a hushed audience and a sublime *andante* chorus, until the *Casta Diva* is sung—the "inconstant moon" that then and thereafter remains fixed in the heavens as though it were a part of the solar system inaugurated by Joshua. Again the white-robed Druids filed past me, again I saw that improbable mistletoe cut from that impossible oak, and again cold chills ran down my back with the first strain of the recitative. The thumping springs essayed to beat time, and the private-box-like obscurity of the vehicle lent a cheap enchantment to the view. But it was a vast improvement upon my past experience, and I hugged the fond delusion.

My fears for the driver were dissipated with the rising moon. A familiar sound had assured me of his presence

in the full possession of at least one of his most important functions. Frequent and full expectoration convinced me that his lips were as yet not sealed by the gag of highwaymen, and soothed my anxious ear. With this load lifted from my mind, and assisted by the mild presence of Diana, who left, as when she visited Endymion, much of her splendour outside my cavern,—I looked around the empty vehicle. On the forward seat lay a woman's hair-pin. I picked it up with an interest that, however, soon abated. There was no scent of the roses to cling to it still, not even of hair-oil. No bend or twist in its rigid angles betrayed any trait of its wearer's character. I tried to think that it might have been "Mariar's." I tried to imagine that, confining the symmetrical curls of that girl, it might have heard the soft compliments whispered in her ears, which provoked the wrath of the aged female. But in vain. It was reticent and unswerving in its upright fidelity, and at last slipped listlessly through my fingers.

I had dozed repeatedly,—waked on the threshold of oblivion by contact with some of the angles of the coach, and feeling that I was unconsciously assuming, in imitation of a humble insect of my childish recollection, that spherical shape which could best resist those impressions, when I perceived that the moon, riding high in the heavens, had begun to separate the formless masses of the shadowy landscape. Trees isolated, in clumps and assemblages, changed places before my window. The sharp outlines of the distant hills came back, as in daylight, but little softened in the dry, cold, dewless air of a California summer night. I was wondering how late it was, and thinking that if the horses of the night travelled as slowly as the team before us, Faustus might have been spared his agonizing prayer, when a sudden spasm of activity attacked my driver. A succession of whip-snappings, like a pack of Chinese crackers, broke from the box before me. The stage leaped forward, and when I could pick myself from under the seat, a long white building had in some mysterious way rolled before my window. It must be Slumgullion! As I descended from the stage I addressed the driver:—

"I thought you changed horses on the road?"

"So we did. Two hours ago."

"That's odd. I didn't notice it."

"Must have been asleep, sir. Hope you had a pleasant nap. Bully place for a nice quiet snooze—empty stage, sir!"

MIGGLES

We were eight, including the driver. We had not spoken during the passage of the last six miles, since the jolting of the heavy vehicle over the roughening road had spoiled the Judge's last poetical quotation. The tall man beside the Judge was asleep, his arm passed through the swaying strap and his head resting upon it—altogether a limp, helpless-looking object, as if he had hanged himself and been cut down too late. The French lady on the back seat was asleep, too, yet in a half-conscious propriety of attitude, shown even in the disposition of the handkerchief which she held to her forehead, and which partially veiled her face. The lady from Virginia City, travelling with her husband, had long since lost all individuality in a wild confusion of ribbons, veils, furs, and shawls. There was no sound but the rattling of wheels and the dash of rain upon the roof. Suddenly the stage stopped, and we became dimly aware of voices. The driver was evidently in the midst of an exciting colloquy with some one in the road—a colloquy of which such fragments as "bridge gone," "twenty feet of water," "can't pass," were occasionally distinguishable above the storm. Then came a lull, and a mysterious voice from the road shouted the parting adjuration,—

"Try Miggles's."

We caught a glimpse of our leaders as the vehicle slowly turned, of a horseman vanishing through the rain, and we were evidently on our way to Miggles's.

Who and where was Miggles? The Judge, our authority, did not remember the name, and he knew the country thoroughly. The Washoe traveller thought Miggles must keep a hotel. We only knew that we were

stopped by high water in front and rear, and that Miggles was our rock of refuge. A ten minutes' splashing through a tangled by-road, scarcely wide enough for the stage, and we drew up before a barred and boarded gate in a wide stone wall or fence about eight feet high. Evidently Miggles's, and evidently Miggles did not keep a hotel.

The driver got down and tried the gate. It was securely locked.

"Miggles! O Miggles!"

No answer.

"Migg-ells! You Miggles!" continued the driver, with rising wrath.

"Migglesy!" joined in the expressman, persuasively. "O Miggy! Mig!"

But no reply came from the apparently insensate Miggles. The Judge, who had finally got the window down, put his head out and propounded a series of questions, which if answered categorically would have undoubtedly elucidated the whole mystery, but which the driver evaded by replying that "if we didn't want to sit in the coach all night, we had better rise up and sing out for Miggles."

So we rose up and called on Miggles in chorus; then separately. And when we had finished, a Hibernian fellow-passenger from the roof called for "Maygells!" whereat we all laughed. While we were laughing, the driver cried "Shoo!"

We listened. To our infinite amazement the chorus of "Miggles" was repeated from the other side of the wall, even to the final and supplemental "Maygells."

"Extraordinary echo," said the Judge.

"Extraordinary d—d skunk!" roared the driver, contemptuously. "Come out of that, Miggles, and show yourself! Be a man, Miggles! Don't hide in the dark; I wouldn't if I were you, Miggles," continued Yuba Bill, now dancing about in an excess of fury.

"Miggles!" continued the voice, "O Miggles!"

"My good man! Mr. Myghail!" said the Judge, softening the asperities of the name as much as possible. "Consider the inhospitality of refusing shelter from the inclemency of the weather to helpless females. Really,

my dear sir——" But a succession of "Miggles," ending in a burst of laughter, drowned his voice.

Yuba Bill hesitated no longer. Taking a heavy stone from the road, he battered down the gate, and with the expressman entered the enclosure. We followed. Nobody was to be seen. In the gathering darkness all that we could distinguish was that we were in a garden—from the rosebushes that scattered over us a minute spray from their dripping leaves—and before a long, rambling wooden building.

"Do you know this Miggles?" asked the Judge of Yuba Bill.

"No, nor don't want to," said Bill, shortly, who felt the Pioneer Stage Company insulted in his person by the contumacious Miggles.

"But, my dear sir," expostulated the Judge, as he thought of the barred gate.

"Lookee here," said Yuba Bill, with fine irony, "hadn't you better go back and sit in the coach till yer introduced? I'm going in," and he pushed open the door of the building.

A long room lighted only by the embers of a fire that was dying on the large hearth at its further extremity; the walls curiously papered, and the flickering firelight bringing out its grotesque pattern; somebody sitting in a large arm-chair by the fireplace. All this we saw as we crowded together into the room, after the driver and expressman.

"Hello, be you Miggles?" said Yuba Bill to the solitary occupant.

The figure neither spoke nor stirred. Yuba Bill walked wrathfully toward it, and turned the eye of his coach-lantern upon its face. It was a man's face, prematurely old and wrinkled, with very large eyes, in which there was that expression of perfectly gratuitous solemnity which I had sometimes seen in an owl's. The large eyes wandered from Bill's face to the lantern, and finally fixed their gaze on that luminous object, without further recognition.

Bill restrained himself with an effort.

"Miggles! Be you deaf? You ain't dumb anyhow, you know"; and Yuba Bill shook the insensate figure by the shoulder.

To our great dismay, as Bill removed his hand, the venerable stranger apparently collapsed,—sinking into half his size and an undistinguishable heap of clothing.

"Well, dern my skin," said Bill, looking appealingly at us, and hopelessly retiring from the contest.

The Judge now stepped forward, and we lifted the mysterious invertebrate back into his original position. Bill was dismissed with the lantern to reconnoitre outside, for it was evident that from the helplessness of this solitary man there must be attendants near at hand, and we all drew around the fire. The Judge, who had regained his authority, and had never lost his conversational amiability, —standing before us with his back to the hearth,—charged us, as an imaginary jury, as follows :—

"It is evident that either our distinguished friend here has reached that condition described by Shakespeare as 'the sere and yellow leaf,' or has suffered some premature abatement of his mental and physical faculties. Whether he is really the Miggles——"

Here he was interrupted by "Miggles! O Miggles! Migglesy! Mig!" and, in fact, the whole chorus of Miggles in very much the same key as it had once before been delivered unto us.

We gazed at each other for a moment in some alarm. The Judge, in particular, vacated his position quickly, as the voice seemed to come directly over his shoulder. The cause, however, was soon discovered in a large magpie who was perched upon a shelf over the fireplace, and who immediately relapsed into a sepulchral silence, which contrasted singularly with his previous volubility. It was, undoubtedly, his voice which we had heard in the road, and our friend in the chair was not responsible for the discourtesy. Yuba Bill, who re-entered the room after an unsuccessful search, was loath to accept the explanation, and still eyed the helpless sitter with suspicion. He had found a shed in which he had put up his horses, but he came back dripping and sceptical. "Thar ain't nobody but him within ten mile of the shanty, and that 'ar d—d old skeesicks knows it."

But the faith of the majority proved to be securely based. Bill had scarcely ceased growling before we heard a quick step upon the porch, the trailing of a wet

skirt, the door was flung open, and with a flash of white teeth, a sparkle of dark eyes, and an utter absence of ceremony or diffidence, a young woman entered, shut the door, and, panting, leaned back against it.

"O, if you please, I'm Miggles!"

And this was Miggles! this bright-eyed, full-throated young woman, whose wet gown of coarse blue stuff could not hide the beauty of the feminine curves to which it clung; from the chestnut crown of whose head, topped by a man's oilskin sou'-wester, to the little feet and ankles, hidden somewhere in the recesses of her boy's brogans, all was grace;—this was Miggles, laughing at us, too, in the most airy, frank, off-hand manner imaginable.

"You see, boys," said she, quite out of breath, and holding one little hand against her side, quite unheeding the speechless discomfiture of our party, or the complete demoralization of Yuba Bill, whose features had relaxed into an expression of gratuitous and imbecile cheerfulness, —"you see, boys, I was mor'n two miles away when you passed down the road. I thought you might pull up here, and so I ran the whole way, knowing nobody was home but Jim,—and—and—I'm out of breath—and—that lets me out."

And here Miggles caught her dripping oilskin hat from her head, with a mischievous swirl that scattered a shower of raindrops over us; attempted to put back her hair; dropped two hair-pins in the attempt; laughed and sat down beside Yuba Bill, with her hands crossed lightly on her lap.

The Judge recovered himself first, and essayed an extravagant compliment.

"I'll trouble you for that thar har-pin," said Miggles, gravely. Half a dozen hands were eagerly stretched forward; the missing hair-pin was restored to its fair owner; and Miggles, crossing the room, looked keenly in the face of the invalid. The solemn eyes looked back at hers with an expression we had never seen before. Life and intelligence seemed to struggle back into the rugged face. Miggles laughed again,—it was a singularly eloquent laugh,—and turned her black eyes and white teeth once more toward us.

"This afflicted person is——" hesitated the Judge.

"Jim," said Miggles.
"Your father?"
"No."
"Brother?"
"No."
"Husband?"

Miggles darted a quick, half-defiant glance at the two lady passengers who I had noticed did not participate in the general masculine admiration of Miggles, and said, gravely, "No; it's Jim."

There was an awkward pause. The lady passengers moved closer to each other; the Washoe husband looked abstractedly at the fire; and the tall man apparently turned his eyes inward for self-support at this emergency. But Miggles's laugh, which was very infectious, broke the silence. "Come," she said briskly, "you must be hungry. Who'll bear a hand to help me get tea?"

She had no lack of volunteers. In a few moments Yuba Bill was engaged like Caliban in bearing logs for this Miranda; the expressman was grinding coffee on the verandah; to myself the arduous duty of slicing bacon was assigned; and the Judge lent each man his good-humoured and voluble counsel. And when Miggles, assisted by the Judge and our Hibernian "deck passenger," set the table with all the available crockery, we had become quite joyous, in spite of the rain that beat against windows, the wind that whirled down the chimney, the two ladies who whispered together in the corner, or the magpie who uttered a satirical and croaking commentary on their conversation from his perch above. In the now bright, blazing fire we could see that the walls were papered with illustrated journals, arranged with feminine taste and discrimination. The furniture was extemporized, and adapted from candle-boxes and packing-cases, and covered with gay calico, or the skin of some animal. The arm-chair of the helpless Jim was an ingenious variation of a flour-barrel. There was neatness, and even a taste for the picturesque, to be seen in the few details of the long low room.

The meal was a culinary success. But more, it was a social triumph,—chiefly, I think, owing to the rare tact of Miggles in guiding the conversation, asking all the

questions herself, yet bearing throughout a frankness that rejected the idea of any concealment on her own part, so that we talked of ourselves, of our prospects, of the journey, of the weather, of each other,—of everything but our host and hostess. It must be confessed that Miggles's conversation was never elegant, rarely grammatical, and that at times she employed expletives, the use of which had generally been yielded to our sex. But they were delivered with such a lighting up of teeth and eyes, and were usually followed by a laugh—a laugh peculiar to Miggles—so frank and honest that it seemed to clear the moral atmosphere.

Once, during the meal, we heard a noise like the rubbing of a heavy body against the outer walls of the house. This was shortly followed by a scratching and sniffling at the door. "That's Joaquin," said Miggles, in reply to our questioning glances; "would you like to see him?" Before we could answer, she had opened the door, and disclosed a half-grown grizzly, who instantly raised himself on his haunches, with his forepaws hanging down in the popular attitude of mendicancy, and looked admiringly at Miggles, with a very singular resemblance in his manner to Yuba Bill. "That's my watch-dog," said Miggles, in explanation. "O, he don't bite," she added, as the two lady passengers fluttered into a corner. "Does he, old Toppy?" (the latter remark being addressed directly to the sagacious Joaquin). "I tell you what, boys," continued Miggles, after she had fed and closed the door on *Ursa Minor*, "you were in big luck that Joaquin wasn't hanging round when you dropped in to-night." "Where was he?" asked the Judge. "With me," said Miggles. "Lord love you; he trots round with me nights like as if he was a man."

We were silent for a few moments, and listened to the wind. Perhaps we all had the same picture before us,—of Miggles walking through the rainy woods, with her savage guardian at her side. The Judge, I remember, said something about Una and her lion; but Miggles received it as she did other compliments, with quiet gravity. Whether she was altogether unconscious of the admiration she excited,—she could hardly have been oblivious of Yuba Bill's adoration,—I know not; but

her very frankness suggested a perfect sexual equality that was cruelly humiliating to the younger members of our party.

The incident of the bear did not add anything in Miggles's favour to the opinions of those of her own sex who were present. In fact, the repast over, a chillness radiated from the two lady passengers that no pine-boughs brought in by Yuba Bill and cast as a sacrifice upon the hearth could wholly overcome. Miggles felt it; and, suddenly declaring that it was time to "turn in," offered to show the ladies to their bed in an adjoining room. "You, boys, will have to camp out here by the fire as well as you can," she added, "for thar ain't but the one room."

Our sex—by which, my dear sir, I allude of course to the stronger portion of humanity—has been generally relieved from the imputation of curiosity, or a fondness for gossip. Yet I am constrained to say that hardly had the door closed on Miggles than we crowded together, whispering, snickering, smiling, and exchanging suspicions, surmises, and a thousand speculations in regard to our pretty hostess and her singular companion. I fear that we even hustled that imbecile paralytic, who sat like a voiceless Memnon in our midst, gazing with the serene indifference of the Past in his passionless eyes upon our wordy counsels. In the midst of an exciting discussion the door opened again, and Miggles re-entered.

But not, apparently, the same Miggles who a few hours before had flashed upon us. Her eyes were downcast, and as she hesitated for a moment on the threshold, with a blanket on her arm, she seemed to have left behind her the frank fearlessness which had charmed us a moment before. Coming into the room, she drew a low stool beside the paralytic's chair, sat down, drew the blanket over her shoulders, and saying, "If it's all the same to you, boys, as we're rather crowded, I'll stop here to-night," took the invalid's withered hand in her own, and turned her eyes upon the dying fire. An instinctive feeling that this was only premonitory to more confidential relations, and perhaps some shame at our previous curiosity, kept us silent. The rain still beat upon the roof, wandering gusts of wind stirred the embers into momentary bright-

ness, until, in a lull of the elements, Miggles suddenly lifted up her head, and, throwing her hair over her shoulder, turned her face upon the group and asked,—

"Is there any of you that knows me?"

There was no reply.

"Think again! I lived at Marysville in '53. Everybody knew me there, and everybody had the right to know me. I kept the Polka Saloon until I came to live with Jim. That's six years ago. Perhaps I've changed some."

The absence of recognition may have disconcerted her. She turned her head to the fire again, and it was some seconds before she again spoke, and then more rapidly:—

"Well, you see, I thought some of you must have known me. There's no great harm done, anyway. What I was going to say was this: Jim here"—she took his hand in both of hers as she spoke—"used to know me, if you didn't, and spent a heap of money upon me. I reckon he spent all he had. And one day—it's six years ago this winter—Jim came into my back room, sat down on my sofy, like as you see him in that chair, and never moved again without help. He was struck all of a heap, and never seemed to know what ailed him. The doctors came and said as how it was caused all along of his way of life,—for Jim was mighty free and wild like,—and that he would never get better, and couldn't last long anyway. They advised me to send him to Frisco to the hospital, for he was no good to any one and would be a baby all his life. Perhaps it was something in Jim's eye, perhaps it was that I never had a baby, but I said 'No.' I was rich then, for I was popular with everybody,—gentlemen like yourself, sir, came to see me,—and I sold out my business and bought this yer place, because it was sort of out of the way of travel, you see, and I brought my baby here."

With a woman's intuitive tact and poetry, she had, as she spoke, slowly shifted her position so as to bring the mute figure of the ruined man between her and her audience, hiding in the shadow behind it, as if she offered it as a tacit apology for her actions. Silent and expressionless, it yet spoke for her; helpless, crushed, and smitten

with the Divine thunderbolt, it still stretched an invisible arm around her.

Hidden in the darkness, but still holding his hand, she went on:—

"It was a long time before I could get the hang of things about yer, for I was used to company and excitement. I couldn't get any woman to help me, and a man I dursent trust; but what with the Indians hereabout, who'd do odd jobs for me, and having everything sent from the North Fork, Jim and I managed to worry through. The Doctor would run up from Sacramento once in a while. He'd ask to see 'Miggles's baby,' as he called Jim, and when he'd go away, he'd say, 'Miggles, you're a trump,—God bless you'; and it didn't seem so lonely after that. But the last time he was here he said, as he opened the door to go, 'Do you know, Miggles, your baby will grow up to be a man yet and an honour to his mother; but not here, Miggles, not here!' And I thought he went away sad,—and—and——" and here Miggles's voice and head were somehow both lost completely in the shadow.

"The folks about here are very kind," said Miggles, after a pause, coming a little into the light again. "The men from the Fork used to hang around here, until they found they wasn't wanted, and the women are kind,—and don't call. I was pretty lonely until I picked up Joaquin in the woods yonder one day, when he wasn't so high, and taught him to beg for his dinner; and then thar's Polly—that's the magpie—she knows no end of tricks, and makes it quite sociable of evenings with her talk, and so I don't feel like as I was the only living being about the ranch. And Jim here," said Miggles, with her old laugh again, and coming out quite into the firelight, "Jim—why, boys, you would admire to see how much he knows for a man like him. Sometimes I bring him flowers, and he looks at 'em just as natural as if he knew 'em; and times, when we're sitting alone, I read him those things on the wall. Why, Lord!" said Miggles, with her frank laugh, "I've read him that whole side of the house this winter. There never was such a man for reading as Jim."

"Why," asked the Judge, "do you not marry

this man to whom you have devoted your youthful life?"

"Well, you see," said Miggles, "it would be playing it rather low down on Jim, to take advantage of his being so helpless. And then, too, if we were man and wife, now, we'd both know that I was *bound* to do what I do now of my own accord."

"But you are young yet, and attractive——"

"It's getting late," said Miggles, gravely, "and you'd better all turn in. Good-night, boys"; and, throwing the blanket over her head, Miggles laid herself down beside Jim's chair, her head pillowed on the low stool that held his feet, and spoke no more. The fire slowly faded from the hearth; we each sought our blankets in silence; and presently there was no sound in the long room but the pattering of the rain upon the roof, and the heavy breathing of the sleepers.

It was nearly morning when I awoke from a troubled dream. The storm had passed, the stars were shining, and through the shutterless window the full moon, lifting itself over the solemn pines without, looked into the room. It touched the lonely figure in the chair with an infinite compassion, and seemed to baptize with a shining flood the lowly head of the woman whose hair, as in the sweet old story, bathed the feet of him she loved. It even lent a kindly poetry to the rugged outline of Yuba Bill, half reclining on his elbow between them and his passengers, with savagely patient eyes keeping watch and ward. And then I fell asleep and only woke at broad day, with Yuba Bill standing over me, and "All aboard" ringing in my ears.

Coffee was waiting for us on the table, but Miggles was gone. We wandered about the house, and lingered long after the horses were harnessed, but she did not return. It was evident that she wished to avoid a formal leave-taking, and had so left us to depart as we had come. After we had helped the ladies into the coach, we returned to the house and solemnly shook hands with the paralytic Jim, as solemnly settling him back into position after each hand-shake. Then we looked for the last time around the long low room, at the stool where Miggles had sat, and slowly took our seats in the waiting coach. The whip cracked, and we were off!

But as we reached the high-road, Bill's dexterous hand laid the six horses back on their haunches, and the stage stopped with a jerk. For there, on a little eminence beside the road, stood Miggles, her hair flying, her eyes sparkling, her white handkerchief waving, and her white teeth flashing a last "good-bye." We waved our hats in return. And then Yuba Bill, as if fearful of further fascination, madly lashed his horses forward, and we sank back in our seats. We exchanged not a word until we reached the North Fork, and the stage drew up at the Independence House. Then, the Judge leading, we walked into the bar-room and took our places gravely at the bar.

"Are your glasses charged, gentlemen?" said the Judge, solemnly taking off his white hat.

They were.

"Well, then, here's to *Miggles*, GOD BLESS HER!"

Perhaps He had. Who knows?

TENNESSEE'S PARTNER

I DO not think that we ever knew his real name. Our ignorance of it certainly never gave us any social inconvenience, for at Sandy Bar in 1854 most men were christened anew. Sometimes these appellatives were derived from some distinctiveness of dress, as in the case of "Dungaree Jack"; or from some peculiarity of habit, as shown in "Saleratus Bill," so called from an undue proportion of that chemical in his daily bread; or from some unlucky slip, as exhibited in "The Iron Pirate," a mild, inoffensive man, who earned that baleful title by his unfortunate mispronunciation of the term "iron pyrites." Perhaps this may have been the beginning of a rude heraldry; but I am constrained to think that it was because a man's real name in that day rested solely upon his own unsupported statement. "Call yourself Clifford, do you?" said Boston, addressing a timid newcomer with infinite scorn; "hell is full of such Cliffords!" He then introduced the unfortunate man, whose name happened to be really Clifford, as "Jay-bird Charley,"—an unhallowed inspiration of the moment, that clung to him ever after.

But to return to Tennessee's Partner, whom we never knew by any other than this relative title; that he had ever existed as a separate and distinct individuality we only learned later. It seems that in 1853 he left Poker Flat to go to San Francisco, ostensibly to procure a wife. He never got any farther than Stockton. At that place he was attracted by a young person who waited upon the table at the hotel where he took his meals. One morning he said something to her which caused her to smile not unkindly, to somewhat coquettishly break a plate of

toast over his upturned, serious, simple face, and to retreat to the kitchen. He followed her, and emerged a few moments later, covered with more toast and victory. That day week they were married by a Justice of the Peace, and returned to Poker Flat. I am aware that something more might be made of this episode, but I prefer to tell it as it was current at Sandy Bar,—in the gulches and bar-rooms,—where all sentiment was modified by a strong sense of humour.

Of their married felicity but little is known, perhaps for the reason that Tennessee, then living with his partner, one day took occasion to say something to the bride on his own account, at which, it is said, she smiled not unkindly and chastely retreated,—this time as far as Marysville, where Tennessee followed her, and where they went to housekeeping without the aid of a Justice of the Peace. Tennessee's Partner took the loss of his wife simply and seriously, as was his fashion. But to everybody's surprise, when Tennessee one day returned from Marysville, without his partner's wife,—she having smiled and retreated with somebody else,—Tennessee's Partner was the first man to shake his hand and greet him with affection. The boys who had gathered in the cañon to see the shooting were naturally indignant. Their indignation might have found vent in sarcasm but for a certain look in Tennessee's Partner's eye that indicated a lack of humorous appreciation. In fact, he was a grave man, with a steady application to practical detail which was unpleasant in a difficulty.

Meanwhile a popular feeling against Tennessee had grown up on the Bar. He was known to be a gambler; he was suspected to be a thief. In these suspicions Tennessee's Partner was equally compromised; his continued intimacy with Tennessee after the affair above quoted could only be accounted for on the hypothesis of a copartnership of crime. At last Tennessee's guilt became flagrant. One day he overtook a stranger on his way to Red Dog. The stranger afterward related that Tennessee beguiled the time with interesting anecdote and reminiscence, but illogically concluded the interview in the following words: "And now, young man, I'll trouble you for your knife, your pistols, and your money. You see your weppings might get you into

trouble at Red Dog, and your money's a temptation to the evilly disposed. I think you said your address was San Francisco. I shall endeavour to call." It may be stated here that Tennessee had a fine flow of humour, which no business preoccupation could wholly subdue.

This exploit was his last. Red Dog and Sandy Bar made common cause against the highwayman. Tennessee was hunted in very much the same fashion as his prototype, the grizzly. As the toils closed around him, he made a desperate dash through the Bar, emptying his revolver at the crowd before the Arcade Saloon, and so on up Grizzly Cañon; but at its farther extremity he was stopped by a small man on a grey horse. The men looked at each other a moment in silence. Both were fearless, both self-possessed and independent; and both types of a civilization that in the seventeenth century would have been called heroic, but, in the nineteenth, simply "reckless." "What have you got there?—I call," said Tennessee, quietly. "Two bowers and an ace," said the stranger, as quietly, showing two revolvers and a bowie-knife. "That takes me," returned Tennessee; and with this gambler's epigram, he threw away his useless pistol, and rode back with his captor.

It was a warm night. The cool breeze which usually sprang up with the going down of the sun behind the *chaparral*-crested mountain was that evening withheld from Sandy Bar. The little cañon was stifling with heated resinous odours, and the decaying drift-wood on the Bar sent forth faint, sickening exhalations. The feverishness of day, and its fierce passions, still filled the camp. Lights moved restlessly along the bank of the river, striking no answering reflection from its tawny current. Against the blackness of the pines the windows of the old loft above the express-office stood out staringly bright; and through their curtainless panes the loungers below could see the forms of those who were even then deciding the fate of Tennessee. And above all this, etched on the dark firmament, rose the Sierra, remote and passionless, crowned with remoter passionless stars.

The trial of Tennessee was conducted as fairly as was consistent with a judge and jury who felt themselves to

some extent obliged to justify, in their verdict, the previous irregularities of arrest and indictment. The law of Sandy Bar was implacable, but not vengeful. The excitement and personal feeling of the chase were over; with Tennessee safe in their hands they were ready to listen patiently to any defence, which they were already satisfied was insufficient. There being no doubt in their own minds, they were willing to give the prisoner the benefit of any that might exist. Secure in the hypothesis that he ought to be hanged, on general principles, they indulged him with more latitude of defence than his reckless hardihood seemed to ask. The Judge appeared to be more anxious than the prisoner, who, otherwise unconcerned, evidently took a grim pleasure in the responsibility he had created. "I don't take any hand in this yer game," had been his invariable, but good-humoured reply to all questions. The Judge — who was also his captor — for a moment vaguely regretted that he had not shot him "on sight," that morning, but presently dismissed this human weakness as unworthy of the judicial mind. Nevertheless, when there was a tap at the door, and it was said that Tennessee's Partner was there on behalf of the prisoner, he was admitted at once without question. Perhaps the younger members of the jury, to whom the proceedings were becoming irksomely thoughtful, hailed him as a relief.

For he was not, certainly, an imposing figure. Short and stout, with a square face, sunburned into a preternatural redness, clad in a loose duck "jumper," and trousers streaked and splashed with red soil, his aspect under any circumstances would have been quaint, and was now even ridiculous. As he stooped to deposit at his feet a heavy carpet-bag he was carrying, it became obvious, from partially developed legends and inscriptions, that the material with which his trousers had been patched had been originally intended for a less ambitious covering. Yet he advanced with great gravity, and after having shaken the hand of each person in the room with laboured cordiality, he wiped his serious, perplexed face on a red bandanna handkerchief, a shade lighter than his complexion, laid his powerful hand upon the table to steady himself, and thus addressed the Judge :—

"I was passin' by," he began, by way of apology, "and I thought I'd just step in and see how things was gittin' on with Tennessee thar—my pardner. It's a hot night. I disremember any sich weather before on the Bar."

He paused a moment, but nobody volunteering any other meteorological recollection, he again had recourse to his pocket-handkerchief, and for some moments mopped his face diligently.

"Have you anything to say in behalf of the prisoner?" said the Judge, finally.

"Thet's it," said Tennessee's Partner, in a tone of relief. "I come yar as Tennessee's pardner—knowing him nigh on four year, off and on, wet and dry, in luck and out o' luck. His ways ain't allers my ways, but thar ain't any p'ints in that young man, thar ain't any liveliness as he's been up to, as I don't know. And you sez to me, sez you—confidential-like, and between man and man—sez you, 'Do you know anything in his behalf?' and I sez to you, sez I—confidential-like, as between man and man—'What should a man know of his pardner?'"

"Is this all you have to say?" asked the Judge, impatiently, feeling, perhaps, that a dangerous sympathy of humour was beginning to humanize the Court.

"Thet's so," continued Tennessee's Partner. "It ain't for me to say anything agin' him. And now, what's the case? Here's Tennessee wants money, wants it bad, and doesn't like to ask it of his old pardner. Well, what does Tennessee do? He lays for a stranger, and he fetches that stranger. And you lays for *him*, and you fetches *him*; and the honours is easy. And I put it to you, bein' a far-minded man, and to you, gentlemen, all, as far-minded men, ef this isn't so."

"Prisoner," said the Judge, interrupting, "have you any questions to ask this man?"

"No! no!" continued Tennessee's Partner, hastily. "I play this yer hand alone. To come down to the bed-rock, it's just this: Tennessee, thar, has played it pretty rough and expensive-like on a stranger, and on this yer camp. And now, what's the fair thing? Some would say more; some would say less. Here's seventeen

hundred dollars in coarse gold and a watch,—it's about all my pile,—and call it square!" And before a hand could be raised to prevent him, he had emptied the contents of the carpet-bag upon the table.

For a moment his life was in jeopardy. One or two men sprang to their feet, several hands groped for hidden weapons, and a suggestion to "throw him from the window" was only overridden by a gesture from the Judge. Tennessee laughed. And apparently oblivious of the excitement, Tennessee's Partner improved the opportunity to mop his face again with his handkerchief.

When order was restored, and the man was made to understand, by the use of forcible figures and rhetoric, that Tennessee's offence could not be condoned by money, his face took a more serious and sanguinary hue, and those who were nearest to him noticed that his rough hand trembled slightly on the table. He hesitated a moment as he slowly returned the gold to the carpet-bag, as if he had not yet entirely caught the elevated sense of justice which swayed the tribunal, and was perplexed with the belief that he had not offered enough. Then he turned to the Judge, and saying, "This yer is a lone hand, played alone, and without my pardner," he bowed to the jury and was about to withdraw, when the Judge called him back. "If you have anything to say to Tennessee, you had better say it now." For the first time that evening the eyes of the prisoner and his strange advocate met. Tennessee smiled, showed his white teeth, and saying, "Euchred, old man!" held out his hand. Tennessee's Partner took it in his own, and saying, "I just dropped in as I was passin' to see how things was gettin' on," let the hand passively fall, and adding that "it was a warm night," again mopped his face with his handkerchief, and without another word withdrew.

The two men never again met each other alive. For the unparalleled insult of a bribe offered to Judge Lynch —who, whether bigoted, weak, or narrow, was at least incorruptible—firmly fixed in the mind of that mythical personage any wavering determination of Tennessee's fate; and at the break of day he was marched, closely guarded, to meet it at the top of Marley's Hill.

How he met it, how cool he was, how he refused to

say anything, how perfect were the arrangements of the committee, were all duly reported, with the addition of a warning moral and example to all future evil-doers, in the *Red Dog Clarion*, by its editor, who was present, and to whose vigorous English I cheerfully refer the reader. But the beauty of that midsummer morning, the blessed amity of earth and air and sky, the awakened life of the free woods and hills, the joyous renewal and promise of Nature, and above all, the infinite Serenity that thrilled through each, was not reported, as not being a part of the social lesson. And yet, when the weak and foolish deed was done, and a life, with its possibilities and responsibilities, had passed out of the misshapen thing that dangled between earth and sky, the birds sang, the flowers bloomed, the sun shone, as cheerily as before; and possibly the *Red Dog Clarion* was right.

Tennessee's Partner was not in the group that surrounded the ominous tree. But as they turned to disperse, attention was drawn to the singular appearance of a motionless donkey-cart halted at the side of the road. As they approached, they at once recognized the venerable "Jenny" and the two-wheeled cart as the property of Tennessee's Partner,—used by him in carrying dirt from his claim; and a few paces distant the owner of the equipage himself, sitting under a buckeye-tree, wiping the perspiration from his glowing face. In answer to an inquiry, he said he had come for the body of the "diseased," "if it was all the same to the committee." He didn't wish to "hurry anything"; he could "wait." He was not working that day; and when the gentlemen were done with the "diseased," he would take him. "Ef thar is any present," he added, in his simple, serious way, "as would care to jine in the fun'l, they kin come." Perhaps it was from a sense of humour, which I have already intimated was a feature of Sandy Bar,—perhaps it was from something even better than that; but two-thirds of the loungers accepted the invitation at once.

It was noon when the body of Tennessee was delivered into the hands of his partner. As the cart drew up to the fatal tree, we noticed that it contained a rough oblong box,—apparently made from a section of sluicing,—and

half-filled with bark and the tassels of pine. The cart was further decorated with slips of willow, and made fragrant with buckeye-blossoms. When the body was deposited in the box, Tennessee's Partner drew over it a piece of tarred canvas, and gravely mounting the narrow seat in front, with his feet upon the shafts, urged the little donkey forward. The equipage moved slowly on, at that decorous pace which was habitual with "Jenny" even under less solemn circumstances. The men — half-curiously, half-jestingly, but all good-humouredly — strolled along beside the cart; some in advance, some a little in the rear of the homely catafalque. But, whether from the narrowing of the road or some present sense of decorum, as the cart passed on the company fell to the rear in couples, keeping step, and otherwise assuming the external show of a formal procession. Jack Folinsbee, who had at the outset played a funeral march in dumb show upon an imaginary trombone, desisted, from a lack of sympathy and appreciation, — not having, perhaps, your true humorist's capacity to be content with the enjoyment of his own fun.

The way led through Grizzly Cañon — by this time clothed in funereal drapery and shadows. The redwoods, burying their moccasined feet in the red soil, stood in Indian file along the track, trailing an uncouth benediction from their bending boughs upon the passing bier. A hare, surprised into helpless inactivity, sat upright and pulsating in the ferns by the roadside as the *cortège* went by. Squirrels hastened to gain a secure outlook from higher boughs; and the blue-jays, spreading their wings, fluttered before them like outriders, until the outskirts of Sandy Bar were reached, and the solitary cabin of Tennessee's Partner.

Viewed under more favourable circumstances, it would not have been a cheerful place. The unpicturesque site, the rude and unlovely outlines, the unsavoury details, which distinguish the nest-building of the California miner, were all here, with the dreariness of decay superadded. A few paces from the cabin there was a rough enclosure, which, in the brief days of Tennessee's Partner's matrimonial felicity, had been used as a garden, but was now overgrown with fern. As we approached it,

we were surprised to find that what we had taken for a recent attempt at cultivation was the broken soil about an open grave.

The cart was halted before the enclosure; and rejecting the offers of assistance with the same air of simple self-reliance he had displayed throughout, Tennessee's Partner lifted the rough coffin on his back, and deposited it, unaided, within the shallow grave. He then nailed down the board which served as a lid; and mounting the little mound of earth beside it, took off his hat, and slowly mopped his face with his handkerchief. This the crowd felt was a preliminary to speech; and they disposed themselves variously on stumps and boulders, and sat expectant.

"When a man," began Tennessee's Partner, slowly, "has been running free all day, what's the natural thing for him to do? Why, to come home. And if he ain't in a condition to go home, what can his best friend do? Why, bring him home! And here's Tennessee has been running free, and we brings him home from his wandering." He paused, and picked up a fragment of quartz, rubbed it thoughtfully on his sleeve, and went on: "It ain't the first time that I've packed him on my back, as you see'd me now. It ain't the first time that I brought him to this yer cabin when he couldn't help himself; it ain't the first time that I and 'Jinny' have waited for him on yon hill, and picked him up and so fetched him home, when he couldn't speak, and didn't know me. And now that it's the last time, why—" he paused, and rubbed the quartz gently on his sleeve—"you see it's sort of rough on his pardner. And now, gentlemen," he added, abruptly, picking up his long-handled shovel, "the fun'l's over; and my thanks, and Tennessee's thanks, to you for your trouble."

Resisting any proffers of assistance, he began to fill in the grave, turning his back upon the crowd, that after a few moments' hesitation gradually withdrew. As they crossed the little ridge that hid Sandy Bar from view, some, looking back, thought they could see Tennessee's Partner, his work done, sitting upon the grave, his shovel between his knees, and his face buried in his red bandanna handkerchief. But it was argued by others that you

couldn't tell his face from his handkerchief at that distance; and this point remained undecided.

In the reaction that followed the feverish excitement of that day, Tennessee's Partner was not forgotten. A secret investigation had cleared him of any complicity in Tennessee's guilt, and left only a suspicion of his general sanity. Sandy Bar made a point of calling on him, and proffering various uncouth, but well-meant kindnesses. But from that day his rude health and great strength seemed visibly to decline; and when the rainy season fairly set in, and the tiny grass-blades were beginning to peep from the rocky mound above Tennessee's grave, he took to his bed.

One night, when the pines beside the cabin were swaying in the storm, and trailing their slender fingers over the roof, and the roar and rush of the swollen river were heard below, Tennessee's Partner lifted his head from the pillow, saying, "It is time to go for Tennessee; I must put 'Jinny' in the cart"; and would have risen from his bed but for the restraint of his attendant. Struggling, he still pursued his singular fancy: "There, now, steady, 'Jinny,'—steady, old girl. How dark it is! Look out for the ruts,—and look out for him, too, old gal. Sometimes, you know, when he's blind drunk, he drops down right in the trail. Keep on straight up to the pine on the top of the hill. Thar—I told you so!—thar he is,—coming this way, too,—all by himself, sober, and his face a-shining. Tennessee! Pardner!"

And so they met.

THE IDYL OF RED GULCH

SANDY was very drunk. He was lying under an azalea-bush, in pretty much the same attitude in which he had fallen some hours before. How long he had been lying there he could not tell, and didn't care; how long he should lie there was a matter equally indefinite and unconsidered. A tranquil philosophy, born of his physical condition, suffused and saturated his moral being.

The spectacle of a drunken man, and of this drunken man in particular, was not, I grieve to say, of sufficient novelty in Red Gulch to attract attention. Earlier in the day some local satirist had erected a temporary tombstone at Sandy's head, bearing the inscription, "Effects of McCorkle's whisky, — kills at forty rods," with a hand pointing to McCorkle's saloon. But this, I imagine, was, like most local satire, personal; and was a reflection upon the unfairness of the process rather than a commentary upon the impropriety of the result. With this facetious exception, Sandy had been undisturbed. A wandering mule, released from his pack, had cropped the scant herbage beside him, and sniffed curiously at the prostrate man; a vagabond dog, with that deep sympathy which the species have for drunken men, had licked his dusty boots, and curled himself up at his feet, and lay there, blinking one eye in the sunlight, with a simulation of dissipation that was ingenious and dog-like in its implied flattery of the unconscious man beside him.

Meanwhile the shadows of the pine-trees had slowly swung around until they crossed the road, and their trunks barred the open meadow with gigantic parallels of black and yellow. Little puffs of red dust, lifted by the plunging hoofs of passing teams, dispersed in a grimy shower

upon the recumbent man. The sun sank lower and lower; and still Sandy stirred not. And then the repose of this philosopher was disturbed, as other philosophers have been, by the intrusion of an unphilosophical sex.

"Miss Mary," as she was known to the little flock that she had just dismissed from the log school-house beyond the pines, was taking her afternoon walk. Observing an unusually fine cluster of blossoms on the azalea bush opposite, she crossed the road to pluck it, —picking her way through the red dust, not without certain fierce little shivers of disgust, and some feline circumlocution. And then she came suddenly upon Sandy!

Of course she uttered the little *staccato* cry of her sex. But when she had paid that tribute to her physical weakness she became overbold, and halted for a moment, —at least six feet from this prostrate monster,—with her white skirts gathered in her hand, ready for flight. But neither sound nor motion came from the bush. With one little foot she then overturned the satirical head-board, and muttered "Beasts!"—an epithet which probably, at that moment, conveniently classified in her mind the entire male population of Red Gulch. For Miss Mary, being possessed of certain rigid notions of her own, had not, perhaps, properly appreciated the demonstrative gallantry for which the Californian has been so justly celebrated by his brother Californians, and had, as a new-comer, perhaps, fairly earned the reputation of being "stuck-up."

As she stood there she noticed, also, that the slant sunbeams were heating Sandy's head to what she judged to be an unhealthy temperature, and that his hat was lying uselessly at his side. To pick it up and to place it over his face was a work requiring some courage, particularly as his eyes were open. Yet she did it and made good her retreat. But she was somewhat concerned, on looking back, to see that the hat was removed, and that Sandy was sitting up and saying something.

The truth was, that in the calm depths of Sandy's mind he was satisfied that the rays of the sun were beneficial and healthful; that from childhood he had objected to lying down in a hat; that no people but

condemned fools, past redemption, ever wore hats; and that his right to dispense with them when he pleased was inalienable. This was the statement of his inner consciousness. Unfortunately, its outward expression was vague, being limited to a repetition of the following formula,—"Su'shine all ri'! Wasser maär, eh? Wass up, su'shine?"

Miss Mary stopped, and, taking fresh courage from her vantage of distance, asked him if there was anything that he wanted.

"Wass up? Wasser maär?" continued Sandy, in a very high key.

"Get up, you horrid man!" said Miss Mary, now thoroughly incensed; "get up, and go home."

Sandy staggered to his feet. He was six feet high, and Miss Mary trembled. He started forward a few paces and then stopped.

"Wass I go home for?" he suddenly asked, with great gravity.

"Go and take a bath," replied Miss Mary, eying his grimy person with great disfavour.

To her infinite dismay, Sandy suddenly pulled off his coat and vest, threw them on the ground, kicked off his boots, and, plunging wildly forward, darted headlong over the hill, in the direction of the river.

"Goodness Heavens!—the man will be drowned!" said Miss Mary; and then, with feminine inconsistency, she ran back to the school-house, and locked herself in.

That night, while seated at supper with her hostess, the blacksmith's wife, it came to Miss Mary to ask, demurely, if her husband ever got drunk. "Abner," responded Mrs. Stidger, reflectively, "let's see: Abner hasn't been tight since last 'lection." Miss Mary would have liked to ask if he preferred lying in the sun on these occasions, and if a cold bath would have hurt him; but this would have involved an explanation, which she did not then care to give. So she contented herself with opening her grey eyes widely at the red-cheeked Mrs. Stidger,—a fine specimen of South-western efflorescence,—and then dismissed the subject altogether. The next day she wrote to her dearest friend, in Boston: "I think I find the intoxicated portion of this community the least

objectionable. I refer, my dear, to the men, of course. I do not know anything that could make the women tolerable."

In less than a week Miss Mary had forgotten this episode, except that her afternoon walks took thereafter, almost unconsciously, another direction. She noticed, however, that every morning a fresh cluster of azalea-blossoms appeared among the flowers on her desk. This was not strange, as her little flock were aware of her fondness for flowers, and invariably kept her desk bright with anemones, syringas, and lupines; but, on questioning them, they, one and all, professed ignorance of the azaleas. A few days later, Master Johnny Stidger, whose desk was nearest to the window, was suddenly taken with spasms of apparently gratuitous laughter, that threatened the discipline of the school. All that Miss Mary could get from him was, that some one had been "looking in the winder." Irate and indignant, she sallied from her hive to do battle with the intruder. As she turned the corner of the school-house she came plump upon the quondam drunkard,—now perfectly sober, and inexpressibly sheepish and guilty-looking.

These facts Miss Mary was not slow to take a feminine advantage of, in her present humour. But it was somewhat confusing to observe, also, that the beast, despite some faint signs of past dissipation, was amiable-looking,—in fact, a kind of blond Samson, whose corn-coloured, silken beard apparently had never yet known the touch of barber's razor or Delilah's shears. So that the cutting speech which quivered on her ready tongue died upon her lips, and she contented herself with receiving his stammering apology with supercilious eyelids and the gathered skirts of uncontamination. When she re-entered the school-room, her eyes fell upon the azaleas with a new sense of revelation. And then she laughed, and the little people all laughed, and they were all unconsciously very happy.

It was on a hot day—and not long after this—that two short-legged boys came to grief on the threshold of the school with a pail of water, which they had laboriously brought from the spring, and that Miss Mary compassionately seized the pail and started for the spring

herself. At the foot of the hill a shadow crossed her path, and a blue-shirted arm dexterously, but gently, relieved her of her burden. Miss Mary was both embarrassed and angry. "If you carried more of that for yourself," she said, spitefully, to the blue arm, without deigning to raise her lashes to its owner, "you'd do better." In the submissive silence that followed she regretted the speech, and thanked him so sweetly at the door that he stumbled. Which caused the children to laugh again,—a laugh in which Miss Mary joined, until the colour came faintly into her pale cheek. The next day a barrel was mysteriously placed beside the door, and as mysteriously filled with fresh spring-water every morning.

Nor was this superior young person without other quiet attentions. "Profane Bill," driver of the Slumgullion Stage, widely known in the newspapers for his "gallantry" in invariably offering the box-seat to the fair sex, had excepted Miss Mary from this attention, on the ground that he had a habit of "cussin' on up grades," and gave her half the coach to herself. Jack Hamlin, a gambler, having once silently ridden with her in the same coach, afterward threw a decanter at the head of a confederate for mentioning her name in a bar-room. The over-dressed mother of a pupil whose paternity was doubtful had often lingered near this astute Vestal's temple, never daring to enter its sacred precincts, but content to worship the priestess from afar.

With such unconscious intervals the monotonous procession of blue skies, glittering sunshine, brief twilights, and starlit nights passed over Red Gulch. Miss Mary grew fond of walking in the sedate and proper woods. Perhaps she believed, with Mrs. Stidger, that the balsamic odours of the firs "did her chest good," for certainly her slight cough was less frequent and her step was firmer; perhaps she had learned the unending lesson which the patient pines are never weary of repeating to heedful or listless ears. And so, one day, she planned a picnic on Buckeye Hill, and took the children with her. Away from the dusty road, the straggling shanties, the yellow ditches, the clamour of restless engines, the cheap finery of shop-windows, the deeper glitter of paint and coloured glass, and the thin veneering which barbarism takes

upon itself in such localities,—what infinite relief was theirs! The last heap of ragged rock and clay passed, the last unsightly chasm crossed,—how the waiting woods opened their long files to receive them! How the children—perhaps because they had not yet grown quite away from the breast of the bounteous Mother—threw themselves face downward on her brown bosom with uncouth caresses, filling the air with their laughter; and how Miss Mary herself—felinely fastidious and intrenched as she was in the purity of spotless skirts, collar, and cuffs—forgot all, and ran like a crested quail at the head of her brood, until, romping, laughing, and panting, with a loosened braid of brown hair, a hat hanging by a knotted ribbon from her throat, she came suddenly and violently, in the heart of the forest, upon—the luckless Sandy!

The explanations, apologies, and not overwise conversation that ensued, need not be indicated here. It would seem, however, that Miss Mary had already established some acquaintance with this ex-drunkard. Enough that he was soon accepted as one of the party; that the children, with that quick intelligence which Providence gives the helpless, recognized a friend, and played with his blond beard, and long silken moustache, and took other liberties,—as the helpless are apt to do. And when he had built a fire against a tree, and had shown them other mysteries of wood-craft, their admiration knew no bounds. At the close of two such foolish, idle, happy hours he found himself lying at the feet of the schoolmistress, gazing dreamily in her face, as she sat upon the sloping hill-side, weaving wreaths of laurel and syringa, in very much the same attitude as he had lain when first they met. Nor was the similitude greatly forced. The weakness of an easy, sensuous nature, that had found a dreamy exaltation in liquor, it is to be feared was now finding an equal intoxication in love.

I think that Sandy was dimly conscious of this himself. I know that he longed to be doing something,—slaying a grizzly, scalping a savage, or sacrificing himself in some way for the sake of this sallow-faced, grey-eyed schoolmistress. As I should like to present him in a heroic attitude, I stay my hand with great difficulty at this

moment, being only withheld from introducing such an episode by a strong conviction that it does not usually occur at such times. And I trust that my fairest reader, who remembers that, in a real crisis, it is always some uninteresting stranger or unromantic policeman, and not Adolphus, who rescues, will forgive the omission.

So they sat there, undisturbed, — the woodpeckers chattering overhead, and the voices of the children coming pleasantly from the hollow below. What they said matters little. What they thought — which might have been interesting — did not transpire. The woodpeckers only learned how Miss Mary was an orphan; how she left her uncle's house, to come to California, for the sake of health and independence; how Sandy was an orphan, too; how he came to California for excitement; how he had lived a wild life, and how he was trying to reform; and other details, which, from a woodpecker's view-point, undoubtedly must have seemed stupid, and a waste of time. But even in such trifles was the afternoon spent; and when the children were again gathered, and Sandy, with a delicacy which the schoolmistress well understood, took leave of them quietly at the outskirts of the settlement, it had seemed the shortest day of her weary life.

As the long, dry summer withered to its roots, the school term of Red Gulch—to use a local euphuism—"dried up" also. In another day Miss Mary would be free; and for a season, at least, Red Gulch would know her no more. She was seated alone in the schoolhouse, her cheek resting on her hand, her eyes half closed in one of those day-dreams in which Miss Mary—I fear, to the danger of school discipline—was lately in the habit of indulging. Her lap was full of mosses, ferns, and other woodland memories. She was so preoccupied with these and her own thoughts that a gentle tapping at the door passed unheard, or translated itself into the remembrance of far-off woodpeckers. When at last it asserted itself more distinctly, she started up with a flushed cheek and opened the door. On the threshold stood a woman, the self-assertion and audacity of whose dress were in singular contrast to her timid, irresolute bearing.

Miss Mary recognized at a glance the dubious mother of her anonymous pupil. Perhaps she was disappointed, perhaps she was only fastidious; but as she coldly invited her to enter, she half unconsciously settled her white cuffs and collar, and gathered closer her own chaste skirts. It was, perhaps, for this reason that the embarrassed stranger, after a moment's hesitation, left her gorgeous parasol open and sticking in the dust beside the door, and then sat down at the farther end of a long bench. Her voice was husky as she began,—

"I heerd tell that you were goin' down to the Bay to-morrow, and I couldn't let you go until I came to thank you for your kindness to my Tommy."

Tommy, Miss Mary said, was a good boy, and deserved more than the poor attention she could give him.

"Thank you, miss; thank ye!" cried the stranger, brightening even through the colour which Red Gulch knew facetiously as her "war paint," and striving, in her embarrassment, to drag the long bench nearer the schoolmistress. "I thank you, miss, for that! and if I am his mother, there ain't a sweeter, dearer, better boy lives than him. And if I ain't much as says it, thar ain't a sweeter, dearer, angeler teacher lives than he's got."

Miss Mary, sitting primly behind her desk, with a ruler over her shoulder, opened her grey eyes widely at this, but said nothing.

"It ain't for you to be complimented by the like of me, I know," she went on, hurriedly. "It ain't for me to be comin' here, in broad day, to do it, either; but I come to ask a favour,—not for me, miss,—not for me, but for the darling boy."

Encouraged by a look in the young schoolmistress's eye, and putting her lilac-gloved hands together, the fingers downward, between her knees, she went on, in a low voice,—

"You see, miss, there's no one the boy has any claim on but me, and I ain't the proper person to bring him up. I thought some, last year, of sending him away to 'Frisco to school, but when they talked of bringing a schoolma'am here, I waited till I saw you, and then I knew it was all right, and I could keep my boy a little longer. And O,

miss, he loves you so much; and if you could hear him talk about you, in his pretty way, and if he could ask you what I ask you now, you couldn't refuse him.

"It is natural," she went on rapidly, in a voice that trembled strangely between pride and humility,—"it's natural that he should take to you, miss, for his father, when I first knew him, was a gentleman,—and the boy must forget me, sooner or later,—and so I ain't a-goin' to cry about that. For I come to ask you to take my Tommy,—God bless him for the bestest, sweetest boy that lives!—to—to—take him with you."

She had risen and caught the young girl's hand in her own, and had fallen on her knees beside her.

"I've money plenty, and it's all yours and his. Put him in some good school, where you can go and see him, and help him to—to—to forget his mother. Do with him what you like. The worst you can do will be kindness to what he will learn with me. Only take him out of this wicked life, this cruel place, this home of shame and sorrow. You will; I know you will,—won't you? You will,—you must not, you cannot say no! You will make him as pure, as gentle as yourself; and when he has grown up, you will tell him his father's name,—the name that hasn't passed my lips for years,—the name of Alexander Morton, whom they call here Sandy! Miss Mary!—do not take your hand away! Miss Mary, speak to me! You will take my boy? Do not put your face from me. I know it ought not to look on such as me. Miss Mary!—my God, be merciful!—she is leaving me!"

Miss Mary had risen, and, in the gathering twilight, had felt her way to the open window. She stood there, leaning against the casement, her eyes fixed on the last rosy tints that were fading from the western sky. There was still some of its light on her pure young forehead, on her white collar, on her clasped white hands, but all fading slowly away. The suppliant had dragged herself, still on her knees, beside her.

"I know it takes time to consider. I will wait here all night; but I cannot go until you speak. Do not deny me now. You will!—I see it in your sweet face,—

such a face as I have seen in my dreams. I see it in your eyes, Miss Mary !—you will take my boy ! "

The last red beam crept higher, suffused Miss Mary's eyes with something of its glory, flickered, and faded, and went out. The sun had set on Red Gulch. In the twilight and silence Miss Mary's voice sounded pleasantly.

" I will take the boy. Send him to me to-night."

The happy mother raised the hem of Miss Mary's skirts to her lips. She would have buried her hot face in its virgin folds, but she dared not. She rose to her feet.

" Does—this man—know of your intention ? " asked Miss Mary, suddenly.

" No, nor cares. He has never even seen the child to know it."

" Go to him at once, — to-night, — now ! Tell him what you have done. Tell him I have taken his child, and tell him—he must never see—see—the child again. Wherever it may be, he must not come ; wherever I may take it, he must not follow ! There, go now, please—I'm weary, and—have much yet to do ! "

They walked together to the door. On the threshold the woman turned.

" Good night."

She would have fallen at Miss Mary's feet. But at the same moment the young girl reached out her arms, caught the sinful woman to her own pure breast for one brief moment, and then closed and locked the door.

It was with a sudden sense of great responsibility that Profane Bill took the reins of the Slumgullion Stage the next morning, for the schoolmistress was one of his passengers. As he entered the high-road, in obedience to a pleasant voice from the " inside," he suddenly reined up his horses and respectfully waited, as " Tommy " hopped out at the command of Miss Mary.

" Not that bush, Tommy,—the next."

Tommy whipped out his new pocket-knife, and, cutting a branch from a tall azalea-bush, returned with it to Miss Mary.

" All right now ? "

" All right."

And the stage-door closed on the Idyl of Red Gulch.

WAITING FOR THE SHIP

A FORT POINT IDYL

ABOUT an hour's ride from the Plaza there is a high bluff with the ocean breaking uninterruptedly along its rocky beach. There are several cottages on the sands, which look as if they had recently been cast up by a heavy sea. The cultivated patch behind each tenement is fenced in by bamboos, broken spars, and drift-wood. With its few green cabbages and turnip-tops, each garden looks something like an aquarium with the water turned off. In fact you would not be surprised to meet a merman digging among the potatoes, or a mermaid milking a sea-cow hard by.

Near this place formerly arose a great semaphoric telegraph, with its gaunt arms tossed up against the horizon. It has been replaced by an observatory, connected with an electric nerve to the heart of the great commercial city. From this point the incoming ships are signalled, and again checked off at the City Exchange. And while we are here looking for the expected steamer, let me tell you a story.

Not long ago, a simple, hard-working mechanic had amassed sufficient by diligent labour in the mines to send home for his wife and two children. He arrived in San Francisco a month before the time the ship was due, for he was a Western man, and had made the overland journey, and knew little of ships or seas or gales. He procured work in the city, but as the time approached he would go to the shipping office regularly every day. The month passed, but the ship came not; then a month and a

week, two weeks, three weeks, two months, and then a year.

The rough, patient face, with soft lines overlying its hard features, which had become a daily apparition at the shipping agent's, then disappeared. It turned up one afternoon at the observatory as the setting sun relieved the operator from his duties. There was something so childlike and simple in the few questions asked by this stranger, touching his business, that the operator spent some time to explain. When the mystery of signals and telegraphs was unfolded, the stranger had one more question to ask. "How long might a vessel be absent before they would give up expecting her?" The operator couldn't tell; it would depend on circumstances. Would it be a year? Yes, it might be a year, and vessels had been given up for lost after two years and had come home. The stranger put his rough hand on the operator's, and thanked him for his "troubil," and went away.

Still the ship came not. Stately clippers swept into the Gate, and merchantmen went by with colours flying, and the welcoming gun of the steamer often reverberated among the hills. Then the patient face, with the old resigned expression, but a brighter, wistful look in the eye, was regularly met on the crowded decks of the steamer as she disembarked her living freight. He may have had a dimly defined hope that the missing ones might yet come this way, as only another road over that strange unknown expanse. But he talked with ship captains and sailors, and even this last hope seemed to fail. When the care-worn face and bright eyes were presented again at the observatory, the operator, busily engaged, could not spare time to answer foolish interrogatories, so he went away. But as night fell, he was seen sitting on the rocks with his face turned seaward, and was seated there all that night.

When he became hopelessly insane, for that was what the physicians said made his eyes so bright and wistful, he was cared for by a fellow-craftsman who had known his troubles. He was allowed to indulge his fancy of going out to watch for the ship, in which she "and the children" were, at night when no one else was watching. He had made up his mind that the ship would come in at

night. This, and the idea that he would relieve the operator, who would be tired with watching all day, seemed to please him. So he went out and relieved the operator every night!

For two years the ships came and went. He was there to see the outward-bound clipper, and greet her on her return. He was known only by a few who frequented the place. When he was missed at last from his accustomed spot, a day or two elapsed before any alarm was felt. One Sunday, a party of pleasure-seekers clambering over the rocks were attracted by the barking of a dog that had run on before them. When they came up they found a plainly dressed man lying there dead. There were a few papers in his pocket,—chiefly slips cut from different journals of old marine memoranda,—and his face was turned towards the distant sea.

BROWN OF CALAVERAS

A SUBDUED tone of conversation, and the absence of cigar-smoke and boot-heels at the windows of the Wingdam stage-coach, made it evident that one of the inside passengers was a woman. A disposition on the part of loungers at the stations to congregate before the window, and some concern in regard to the appearance of coats, hats, and collars, further indicated that she was lovely. All of which Mr. Jack Hamlin, on the box-seat, noted with the smile of cynical philosophy. Not that he depreciated the sex, but that he recognized therein a deceitful element, the pursuit of which sometimes drew mankind away from the equally uncertain blandishments of poker,—of which it may be remarked that Mr. Hamlin was a professional exponent.

So that, when he placed his narrow boot on the wheel and leaped down, he did not even glance at the window from which a green veil was fluttering, but lounged up and down with that listless and grave indifference of his class, which was, perhaps, the next thing to good-breeding. With his closely-buttoned figure and self-contained air he was a marked contrast to the other passengers, with their feverish restlessness and boisterous emotion; and even Bill Masters, a graduate of Harvard, with his slovenly dress, his overflowing vitality, his intense appreciation of lawlessness and barbarism, and his mouth filled with crackers and cheese, I fear cut but an unromantic figure beside this lonely calculator of chances, with his pale Greek face and Homeric gravity.

The driver called "All aboard!" and Mr. Hamlin returned to the coach. His foot was upon the wheel,

and his face raised to the level of the open window, when, at the same moment, what appeared to him to be the finest eyes in the world suddenly met his. He quietly dropped down again, addressed a few words to one of the inside passengers, effected an exchange of seats, and as quietly took his place inside. Mr. Hamlin never allowed his philosophy to interfere with decisive and prompt action.

I fear that this irruption of Jack cast some restraint upon the other passengers,—particularly those who were making themselves most agreeable to the lady. One of them leaned forward, and apparently conveyed to her information regarding Mr. Hamlin's profession in a single epithet. Whether Mr. Hamlin heard it, or whether he recognized in the informant a distinguished jurist, from whom, but a few evenings before, he had won several thousand dollars, I cannot say. His colourless face betrayed no sign; his black eyes, quietly observant, glanced indifferently past the legal gentleman, and rested on the much more pleasing features of his neighbour. An Indian stoicism—said to be an inheritance from his maternal ancestor—stood him in good service, until the rolling wheels rattled upon the river-gravel at Scott's Ferry, and the stage drew up at the International Hotel for dinner. The legal gentleman and a member of Congress leaped out, and stood ready to assist the descending goddess, while Colonel Starbottle, of Siskiyou, took charge of her parasol and shawl. In this multiplicity of attention there was a momentary confusion and delay. Jack Hamlin quietly opened the *opposite* door of the coach, took the lady's hand, with that decision and positiveness which a hesitating and undecided sex know how to admire, and in an instant had dexterously and gracefully swung her to the ground and again lifted her to the platform. An audible chuckle on the box, I fear, came from that other cynic, "Yuba Bill," the driver. "Look keerfully arter that baggage, Kernel," said the expressman, with affected concern, as he looked after Colonel Starbottle, gloomily bringing up the rear of the triumphant procession to the waiting-room.

Mr. Hamlin did not stay for dinner. His horse was already saddled and awaiting him. He dashed over the

ford, up the gravelly hill, and out into the dusty perspective of the Wingdam road, like one leaving an unpleasant fancy behind him. The inmates of dusty cabins by the roadside shaded their eyes with their hands, and looked after him, recognizing the man by his horse, and speculating what "was up with Comanche Jack." Yet much of this interest centred in the horse, in a community where the time made by "French Pete's" mare, in his run from the Sheriff of Calaveras, eclipsed all concern in the ultimate fate of that worthy.

The sweating flanks of his grey at length recalled him to himself. He checked his speed, and, turning into a by-road, sometimes used as a cut-off, trotted leisurely along, the reins hanging listlessly from his fingers. As he rode on, the character of the landscape changed, and became more pastoral. Openings in groves of pine and sycamore disclosed some rude attempts at cultivation,—a flowering vine trailed over the porch of one cabin, and a woman rocked her cradled babe under the roses of another. A little farther on Mr. Hamlin came upon some barelegged children, wading in the willowy creek, and so wrought upon them with a badinage peculiar to himself, that they were emboldened to climb up his horse's legs and over his saddle, until he was fain to develop an exaggerated ferocity of demeanour, and to escape, leaving behind some kisses and coin. And then, advancing deeper into the woods, where all signs of habitation failed, he began to sing,—uplifting a tenor so singularly sweet, and shaded by a pathos so subdued and tender, that I wot the robins and linnets stopped to listen. Mr. Hamlin's voice was not cultivated; the subject of his song was some sentimental lunacy, borrowed from the negro minstrels; but there thrilled through all some occult quality of tone and expression that was unspeakably touching. Indeed, it was a wonderful sight to see this sentimental blackleg, with a pack of cards in his pocket and a revolver at his back, sending his voice before him through the dim woods with a plaint about his "Nelly's grave," in a way that overflowed the eyes of the listener. A sparrow-hawk, fresh from his sixth victim, possibly recognizing in Mr. Hamlin a kindred spirit, stared at him in surprise, and was fain to confess

the superiority of man. With a superior predatory capacity, *he* couldn't sing.

But Mr. Hamlin presently found himself again on the high-road and at his former pace. Ditches and banks of gravel, denuded hillsides, stumps, and decayed trunks of trees, took the place of woodland and ravine, and indicated his approach to civilization. Then a church-steeple came in sight, and he knew that he had reached home. In a few moments he was clattering down the single narrow street, that lost itself in a chaotic ruin of races, ditches, and tailings at the foot of the hill, and dismounted before the gilded windows of the "Magnolia" saloon. Passing through the long bar-room, he pushed open a green-baize door, entered a dark passage, opened another door with a pass-key, and found himself in a dimly-lighted room, whose furniture, though elegant and costly for the locality, showed signs of abuse. The inlaid centre-table was overlaid with stained disks that were not contemplated in the original design. The embroidered arm-chairs were discoloured, and the green velvet lounge, on which Mr. Hamlin threw himself, was soiled at the foot with the red soil of Wingdam.

Mr. Hamlin did not sing in his cage. He lay still, looking at a highly coloured painting above him, representing a young creature of opulent charms. It occurred to him then, for the first time, that he had never seen exactly that kind of a woman, and that, if he should, he would not, probably, fall in love with her. Perhaps he was thinking of another style of beauty. But just then some one knocked at the door. Without rising, he pulled a cord that apparently shot back a bolt, for the door swung open, and a man entered.

The new-comer was broad-shouldered and robust,—a vigour not borne out in the face, which, though handsome, was singularly weak, and disfigured by dissipation. He appeared to be also under the influence of liquor, for he started on seeing Mr. Hamlin, and said, "I thought Kate was here"; stammered, and seemed confused and embarrassed.

Mr. Hamlin smiled the smile which he had before worn on the Wingdam coach, and sat up, quite refreshed and ready for business.

"You didn't come up on the stage," continued the new-comer, "did you?"

"No," replied Hamlin; "I left it at Scott's Ferry. It isn't due for half an hour yet. But how's luck, Brown?"

"D— bad," said Brown, his face suddenly assuming an expression of weak despair; "I'm cleaned out again. Jack," he continued, in a whining tone, that formed a pitiable contrast to his bulky figure, "can't you help me with a hundred till to-morrow's clean-up? You see I've got to send money home to the old woman, and— you've won twenty times that amount from me."

The conclusion was, perhaps, not entirely logical, but Jack overlooked it, and handed the sum to his visitor. "The old woman business is about played out, Brown," he added, by way of commentary; "why don't you say you want to buck agin' faro? You know you ain't married!"

"Fact, sir," said Brown, with a sudden gravity, as if the mere contact of the gold with the palm of the hand had imparted some dignity to his frame. "I've got a wife—a d— good one, too, if I do say it—in the States. It's three year since I've seen her, and a year since I've writ to her. When things is about straight, and we get down to the lead, I'm going to send for her."

"And Kate?" queried Mr. Hamlin, with his previous smile.

Mr. Brown, of Calaveras, essayed an archness of glance to cover his confusion, which his weak face and whisky-muddled intellect but poorly carried out, and said—

"D— it, Jack, a man must have a little liberty, you know. But come, what do you say to a little game? Give us a show to double this hundred."

Jack Hamlin looked curiously at his fatuous friend. Perhaps he knew that the man was predestined to lose the money, and preferred that it should flow back into his own coffers rather than any other. He nodded his head, and drew his chair toward the table. At the same moment there came a rap upon the door.

"It's Kate," said Mr. Brown.

Mr. Hamlin shot back the bolt, and the door opened. But, for the first time in his life, he staggered to his feet,

utterly unnerved and abashed, and for the first time in his life the hot blood crimsoned his colourless cheeks to his forehead. For before him stood the lady he had lifted from the Wingdam coach, whom Brown, dropping his cards with a hysterical laugh, greeted as—

"My old woman, by thunder!"

They say that Mrs. Brown burst into tears and reproaches of her husband. I saw her, in 1857, at Marysville, and disbelieve the story. And the *Wingdam Chronicle* of the next week, under the head of "Touching Reunion," said: "One of those beautiful and touching incidents, peculiar to California life, occurred last week in our city. The wife of one of Wingdam's eminent pioneers, tired of the effete civilization of the East and its inhospitable climate, resolved to join her noble husband upon these golden shores. Without informing him of her intention, she undertook the long journey, and arrived last week. The joy of the husband may be easier imagined than described. The meeting is said to have been indescribably affecting. We trust her example may be followed."

Whether owing to Mrs. Brown's influence, or to some more successful speculations, Mr. Brown's financial fortune from that day steadily improved. He bought out his partners in the "Nip and Tuck" lead, with money which was said to have been won at poker, a week or two after his wife's arrival, but which rumour, adopting Mrs. Brown's theory that Brown had forsworn the gaming-table, declared to have been furnished by Mr. Jack Hamlin. He built and furnished the "Wingdam House," which pretty Mrs. Brown's great popularity kept overflowing with guests. He was elected to the Assembly, and gave largess to churches. A street in Wingdam was named in his honour.

Yet it was noted that in proportion as he waxed wealthy and fortunate, he grew pale, thin, and anxious. As his wife's popularity increased, he became fretful and impatient. The most uxorious of husbands, he was absurdly jealous. If he did not interfere with his wife's social liberty, it was because it was maliciously whispered that his first and only attempt was met by an outburst from Mrs. Brown that terrified him into silence. Much

of this kind of gossip came from those of her own sex whom she had supplanted in the chivalrous attentions of Wingdam, which, like most popular chivalry, was devoted to an admiration of power, whether of masculine force or feminine beauty. It should be remembered, too, in her extenuation, that, since her arrival, she had been the unconscious priestess of a mythological worship, perhaps not more ennobling to her womanhood than that which distinguished an older Greek democracy. I think that Brown was dimly conscious of this. But his only confidant was Jack Hamlin, whose *infelix* reputation naturally precluded any open intimacy with the family, and whose visits were infrequent.

It was midsummer, and a moonlit night; and Mrs. Brown, very rosy, large-eyed, and pretty, sat upon the piazza, enjoying the fresh incense of the mountain breeze, and, it is to be feared, another incense which was not so fresh, nor quite as innocent. Beside her sat Colonel Starbottle and Judge Boompointer, and a later addition to her court, in the shape of a foreign tourist. She was in good spirits.

"What do you see down the road?" inquired the gallant Colonel, who had been conscious, for the last few minutes, that Mrs. Brown's attention was diverted.

"Dust," said Mrs. Brown, with a sigh. "Only Sister Anne's 'flock of sheep.'"

The Colonel, whose literary recollections did not extend farther back than last week's paper, took a more practical view. "It ain't sheep," he continued; "it's a horseman. Judge, ain't that Jack Hamlin's grey?"

But the Judge didn't know; and, as Mrs. Brown suggested the air was growing too cold for further investigations, they retired to the parlour.

Mr. Brown was in the stable, where he generally retired after dinner. Perhaps it was to show his contempt for his wife's companions; perhaps, like other weak natures, he found pleasure in the exercise of absolute power over inferior animals. He had a certain gratification in the training of a chestnut mare, whom he could beat or caress as pleased him, which he couldn't do with Mrs. Brown. It was here that he recognized a certain grey horse which had just come in, and, looking a little farther on, found

his rider. Brown's greeting was cordial and hearty; Mr. Hamlin's somewhat restrained. But, at Brown's urgent request, he followed him up the back-stairs to a narrow corridor, and thence to a small room looking out upon the stable-yard. It was plainly furnished with a bed, a table, a few chairs, and a rack for guns and whips.

"This yer's my home, Jack," said Brown, with a sigh, as he threw himself upon the bed, and motioned his companion to a chair. "Her room's t'other end of the hall. It's more'n six months since we've lived together, or met, except at meals. It's mighty rough papers on the head of the house, ain't it?" he said, with a forced laugh. "But I'm glad to see you, Jack, d— glad," and he reached from the bed, and again shook the unresponsive hand of Jack Hamlin.

"I brought ye up here, for I didn't want to talk in the stable; though, for the matter of that, it's all round town. Don't strike a light. We can talk here in the moonshine. Put up your feet on that winder, and sit here beside me. Thar's whisky in that jug."

Mr. Hamlin did not avail himself of the information. Brown, of Calaveras, turned his face to the wall, and continued—

"If I didn't love the woman, Jack, I wouldn't mind. But it's loving her, and seeing her, day arter day, goin' on at this rate, and no one to put down the brake; that's what gits me! But I'm glad to see ye, Jack, d— glad."

In the darkness he groped about until he had found and wrung his companion's hand again. He would have detained it, but Jack slipped it into the buttoned breast of his coat, and asked, listlessly, "How long has this been going on?"

"Ever since she came here; ever since the day she walked into the 'Magnolia.' I was a fool then; Jack, I'm a fool now; but I didn't know how much I loved her till then. And she hasn't been the same woman since.

"But that ain't all, Jack; and it's what I wanted to see you about, and I'm glad you've come. It ain't that she doesn't love me any more; it ain't that she fools with every chap that comes along, for, perhaps, I staked her love and lost it, as I did everything else at the 'Magnolia';

and, perhaps, foolin' is nateral to some women, and thar ain't no great harm done, 'cept to the fools. But, Jack, I think,—I think she loves somebody else. Don't move, Jack; don't move; if your pistol hurts ye, take it off.

"It's been more'n six months now that she's seemed unhappy and lonesome, and kinder nervous and scared like. And sometimes I've ketched her lookin' at me sort of timid and pitying. And she writes to somebody. And for the last week she's been gathering her own things,—trinkets, and furbelows, and jew'lry,—and, Jack, I think she's goin' off. I could stand all but that. To have her steal away like a thief—" He put his face downward to the pillow, and for a few moments there was no sound but the ticking of a clock on the mantel. Mr. Hamlin lit a cigar, and moved to the open window. The moon no longer shone into the room, and the bed and its occupant were in shadow. "What shall I do, Jack?" said the voice from the darkness.

The answer came promptly and clearly from the window-side,—"Spot the man, and kill him on sight."

"But, Jack?"

"He's took the risk!"

"But will that bring *her* back?"

Jack did not reply, but moved from the window towards the door.

"Don't go yet, Jack; light the candle, and sit by the table. It's a comfort to see ye, if nothin' else."

Jack hesitated, and then complied. He drew a pack of cards from his pocket and shuffled them, glancing at the bed. But Brown's face was turned to the wall. When Mr. Hamlin had shuffled the cards, he cut them, and dealt one card on the opposite side of the table and towards the bed, and another on his side of the table for himself. The first was a deuce; his own card, a king. He then shuffled and cut again. This time "dummy" had a queen, and himself a four-spot. Jack brightened up for the third deal. It brought his adversary a deuce, and himself a king again. "Two out of three," said Jack, audibly.

"What's that, Jack?" said Brown.

"Nothing."

Then Jack tried his hand with dice; but he always

threw sixes, and his imaginary opponent aces. The force of habit is sometimes confusing.

Meanwhile, some magnetic influence in Mr. Hamlin's presence, or the anodyne of liquor, or both, brought surcease of sorrow, and Brown slept. Mr. Hamlin moved his chair to the window, and looked out on the town of Wingdam, now sleeping peacefully,—its harsh outlines softened and subdued, its glaring colours mellowed and sobered in the moonlight that flowed over all. In the hush he could hear the gurgling of water in the ditches and the sighing of the pines beyond the hill. Then he looked up at the firmament, and as he did so a star shot across the twinkling field. Presently another, and then another. The phenomenon suggested to Mr. Hamlin a fresh augury. If in another fifteen minutes another star should fall—— He sat there, watch in hand, for twice that time, but the phenomenon was not repeated.

The clock struck two, and Brown still slept. Mr. Hamlin approached the table and took from his pocket a letter, which he read by the flickering candlelight. It contained only a single line, written in pencil, in a woman's hand,—

"Be at the corral with the buggy at three."

The sleeper moved uneasily and then awoke. "Are you there, Jack?"

"Yes."

"Don't go yet. I dreamed just now, Jack,—dreamed of old times. I thought that Sue and me was being married agin, and that the parson, Jack, was—who do you think?—you!"

The gambler laughed, and seated himself on the bed,—the paper still in his hand.

"It's a good sign, ain't it?" queried Brown.

"I reckon. Say, old man, hadn't you better get up?"

The "old man," thus affectionately appealed to, rose, with the assistance of Hamlin's outstretched hand.

"Smoke?"

Brown mechanically took the proffered cigar.

"Light?"

Jack had twisted the letter into a spiral, lit it, and held it for his companion. He continued to hold it until it was consumed, and dropped the fragment—a fiery star—

from the open window. He watched it as it fell, and then returned to his friend.

"Old man," he said, placing his hands upon Brown's shoulders, "in ten minutes I'll be on the road, and gone like that spark. We won't see each other agin; but, before I go, take a fool's advice: sell out all you've got, take your wife with you, and quit the country. It ain't no place for you nor her. Tell her she must go; make her go if she won't. Don't whine because you can't be a saint and she ain't an angel. Be a man, and treat her like a woman. Don't be a d— fool. Good-bye."

He tore himself from Brown's grasp and leaped down the stairs like a deer. At the stable-door he collared the half-sleeping hostler, and backed him against the wall. "Saddle my horse in two minutes, or I'll——" The ellipsis was frightfully suggestive.

"The missis said you was to have the buggy," stammered the man.

"D—n the buggy!"

The horse was saddled as fast as the nervous hands of the astounded hostler could manipulate buckle and strap.

"Is anything up, Mr. Hamlin?" said the man, who, like all his class, admired the *élan* of his fiery patron, and was really concerned in his welfare.

"Stand aside!"

The man fell back. With an oath, a bound, and clatter, Jack was into the road. In another moment, to the man's half-awakened eyes, he was but a moving cloud of dust in the distance, towards which a star just loosed from its brethren was trailing a stream of fire.

But early that morning the dwellers by the Wingdam turnpike, miles away, heard a voice, pure as a skylark's, singing afield. They who were asleep turned over on their rude couches to dream of youth and love and olden days. Hard-faced men and anxious gold-seekers, already at work, ceased their labours and leaned upon their picks to listen to a romantic vagabond ambling away against the rosy sunrise.

THE MAN OF NO ACCOUNT

His name was Fagg—David Fagg. He came to California in '52 with us, in the *Skyscraper*. I don't think he did it in an adventurous way. He probably had no other place to go to. When a knot of us young fellows would recite what splendid opportunities we resigned to go, and how sorry our friends were to have us leave, and show daguerreotypes and locks of hair, and talk of Mary and Susan, the man of no account used to sit by and listen with a pained, mortified expression on his plain face, and say nothing. I think he had nothing to say. He had no associates, except when we patronized him; and, in point of fact, he was a good deal of sport to us. He was always sea-sick whenever we had a capful of wind. He never got his sea-legs on either. And I never shall forget how we all laughed when Rattler took him the piece of pork on a string, and—— But you know that time-honoured joke. And then we had such a splendid lark with him. Miss Fanny Twinkler couldn't bear the sight of him, and we used to make Fagg think that she had taken a fancy to him, and send him little delicacies and books from the cabin. You ought to have witnessed the rich scene that took place when he came up, stammering and very sick, to thank her! Didn't she flash up grandly and beautifully and scornfully? So like "Medora," Rattler said,—Rattler knew Byron by heart,—and wasn't old Fagg awfully cut up? But he got over it, and when Rattler fell sick at Valparaiso, old Fagg used to nurse him. You see he was a good sort of fellow, but he lacked manliness and spirit.

He had absolutely no idea of poetry. I've seen him sit stolidly by, mending his old clothes, when Rattler

delivered that stirring apostrophe of Byron's to the ocean. He asked Rattler once, quite seriously, if he thought Byron was ever sea-sick. I don't remember Rattler's reply, but I know we all laughed very much, and I have no doubt it was something good, for Rattler was smart.

When the *Skyscraper* arrived at San Francisco we had a grand "feed." We agreed to meet every year and perpetuate the occasion. Of course we didn't invite Fagg. Fagg was a steerage-passenger, and it was necessary, you see, now we were ashore, to exercise a little discretion But Old Fagg, as we called him,—he was only about twenty-five years old, by the way,—was the source of immense amusement to us that day. It appeared that he had conceived the idea that he could walk to Sacramento, and actually started off afoot. We had a good time, and shook hands with one another all around, and so parted. Ah me! only eight years ago, and yet some of those hands then clasped in amity have been clenched at each other, or have dipped furtively in one another's pockets. I know that we didn't dine together the next year, because young Barker swore he wouldn't put his feet under the same mahogany with such a very contemptible scoundrel as that Mixer; and Nibbles, who borrowed money at Valparaiso of young Stubbs, who was then a waiter in a restaurant, didn't like to meet such people.

When I bought a number of shares in the Coyote Tunnel at Mugginsville, in '54, I thought I'd take a run up there and see it. I stopped at the Empire Hotel, and after dinner I got a horse and rode round the town and out to the claim. One of those individuals whom newspaper correspondents call "our intelligent informant," and to whom in all small communities the right of answering questions is tacitly yielded, was quietly pointed out to me. Habit had enabled him to work and talk at the same time, and he never pretermitted either. He gave me a history of the claim, and added: "You see, stranger" (he addressed the bank before him), "gold is sure to come out 'er that theer claim (he put in a comma with his pick), but the old pro-pri-e-tor (he wriggled out the word and the point of his pick) warn't of much account (a long

stroke of the pick for a period). He was green, and let the boys about here jump him."—and the rest of his sentence was confided to his hat, which he had removed to wipe his manly brow with his red bandanna.

I asked him who was the original proprietor.

"His name war Fagg."

I went to see him. He looked a little older and plainer. He had worked hard, he said, and was getting on "so, so." I took quite a liking to him, and patronized him to some extent. Whether I did so because I was beginning to have a distrust for such fellows as Rattler and Mixer is not necessary for me to state.

You remember how the Coyote Tunnel went in, and how awfully we shareholders were done! Well, the next thing I heard was that Rattler, who was one of the heaviest shareholders, was up at Mugginsville keeping bar for the proprietor of the Mugginsville Hotel, and that old Fagg had struck it rich, and didn't know what to do with his money. All this was told me by Mixer, who had been there, settling up matters, and likewise that Fagg was sweet upon the daughter of the proprietor of the aforesaid hotel. And so by hearsay and letter I eventually gathered that old Robins, the hotel man, was trying to get up a match between Nellie Robins and Fagg. Nellie was a pretty, plump, and foolish little thing, and would do just as her father wished. I thought it would be a good thing for Fagg if he should marry and settle down; that as a married man he might be of some account. So I ran up to Mugginsville one day to look after things.

It did me an immense deal of good to make Rattler mix my drinks for me,—Rattler! the gay, brilliant, and unconquerable Rattler, who had tried to snub me two years ago. I talked to him about old Fagg and Nellie, particularly as I thought the subject was distasteful. He never liked Fagg, and he was sure, he said, that Nellie didn't. Did Nellie like anybody else? He turned around to the mirror behind the bar and brushed up his hair! I understood the conceited wretch. I thought I'd put Fagg on his guard and get him to hurry up matters. I had a long talk with him. You could see by the way the poor fellow acted that he was badly struck. He sighed, and promised to pluck up courage to hurry matters to

a crisis. Nellie was a good girl, and I think had a sort of quiet respect for old Fagg's unobtrusiveness. But her fancy was already taken captive by Rattler's superficial qualities, which were obvious and pleasing. I don't think Nellie was any worse than you or I. We are more apt to take acquaintances at their apparent value than their intrinsic worth. It's less trouble, and, except when we want to trust them, quite as convenient. The difficulty with women is that their feelings are apt to get interested sooner than ours, and then, you know, reasoning is out of the question. This is what old Fagg would have known had he been of any account. But he wasn't. So much the worse for him.

It was a few months afterward, and I was sitting in my office, when in walked old Fagg. I was surprised to see him down, but we talked over the current topics in that mechanical manner of people who know that they have something else to say, but are obliged to get at it in that formal way. After an interval Fagg in his natural manner said,—

"I'm going home!"

"Going home?"

"Yes,—that is, I think I'll take a trip to the Atlantic States. I came to see you, as you know I have some little property, and I have executed a power of attorney for you to manage my affairs. I have some papers I'd like to leave with you. Will you take charge of them?"

"Yes," I said. "But what of Nellie?"

His face fell. He tried to smile, and the combination resulted in one of the most startling and grotesque effects I ever beheld. At length he said,—

"I shall not marry Nellie,—that is,"—he seemed to apologize internally for the positive form of expression,—"I think that I had better not."

"David Fagg," I said with sudden severity, "you're of no account!"

To my astonishment his face brightened. "Yes," said he, "that's it!—I'm of no account! But I always knew it. You see I thought Rattler loved that girl as well as I did, and I knew she liked him better than she did me, and would be happier I dare say with him. But then I knew that old Robins would have preferred me to him,

as I was better off,—and the girl would do as he said,—and, you see, I thought I was kinder in the way,—and so I left. But," he continued, as I was about to interrupt him, " for fear the old man might object to Rattler, I've lent him enough to set him up in business for himself in Dogtown. A pushing, active, brilliant fellow, you know, like Rattler, can get along, and will soon be in his old position again,—and you needn't be hard on him, you know, if he doesn't. Good-bye."

I was too much disgusted with his treatment of that Rattler to be at all amiable, but as his business was profitable, I promised to attend to it, and he left. A few weeks passed. The return steamer arrived, and a terrible incident occupied the papers for days afterward. People in all parts of the State conned eagerly the details of an awful shipwreck, and those who had friends aboard went away by themselves, and read the long list of the lost under their breath. I read of the gifted, the gallant, the noble, and loved ones who had perished, and among them I think I was the first to read the name of David Fagg. For the " man of no account " had " gone home ! "

MLISS

CHAPTER I

JUST where the Sierra Nevada begins to subside in gentler undulations, and the rivers grow less rapid and yellow, on the side of a great red mountain, stands "Smith's Pocket." Seen from the red road at sunset, in the red light and the red dust, its white houses look like the outcroppings of quartz on the mountain-side. The red stage topped with red-shirted passengers is lost to view half a dozen times in the tortuous descent, turning up unexpectedly in out-of-the-way places, and vanishing altogether within a hundred yards of the town. It is probably owing to this sudden twist in the road that the advent of a stranger at Smith's Pocket is usually attended with a peculiar circumstance. Dismounting from the vehicle at the stage-office, the too confident traveller is apt to walk straight out of town under the impression that it lies in quite another direction. It is related that one of the tunnel-men, two miles from town, met one of these self-reliant passengers with a carpet-bag, umbrella, *Harper's Magazine*, and other evidences of "Civilization and Refinement," plodding along over the road he had just ridden, vainly endeavouring to find the settlement of Smith's Pocket.

An observant traveller might have found some compensation for his disappointment in the weird aspect of that vicinity. There were huge fissures on the hill-side, and displacements of the red soil, resembling more the chaos of some primary elemental upheaval than the work of man; while, half-way down, a long flume straddled

its narrow body and disproportionate legs over the chasm, like an enormous fossil of some forgotten antediluvian. At every step smaller ditches crossed the road, hiding in their sallow depths unlovely streams that crept away to a clandestine union with the great yellow torrent below, and here and there were the ruins of some cabin with the chimney alone left intact and the hearthstone open to the skies.

The settlement of Smith's Pocket owed its origin to the finding of a "pocket" on its site by a veritable Smith. Five thousand dollars were taken out of it in one half-hour by Smith. Three thousand dollars were expended by Smith and others in erecting a flume and in tunnelling. And then Smith's Pocket was found to be only a pocket, and subject like other pockets to depletion. Although Smith pierced the bowels of the great red mountain, that five thousand dollars was the first and last return of his labour. The mountain grew reticent of its golden secrets, and the flume steadily ebbed away the remainder of Smith's fortune. Then Smith went into quartz-mining; then into quartz-milling; then into hydraulics and ditching, and then by easy degrees into saloon-keeping. Presently it was whispered that Smith was drinking a great deal; then it was known that Smith was a habitual drunkard, and then people began to think, as they are apt to, that he had never been anything else. But the settlement of Smith's Pocket, like that of most discoveries, was happily not dependent on the fortune of its pioneer, and other parties projected tunnels and found pockets. So Smith's Pocket became a settlement with its two fancy stores, its two hotels, its one express-office, and its two first families. Occasionally its one long straggling street was overawed by the assumption of the latest San Francisco fashions, imported per express, exclusively to the first families; making outraged Nature, in the ragged outline of her furrowed surface, look still more homely, and putting personal insult on that greater portion of the population to whom the Sabbath, with a change of linen, brought merely the necessity of cleanliness, without the luxury of adornment. Then there was a Methodist Church, and hard by a Monte Bank, and a little beyond, on the mountain-side, a graveyard; and then a little schoolhouse.

"The Master," as he was known to his little flock, sat alone one night in the schoolhouse, with some open copy-books before him, carefully making those bold and full characters which are supposed to combine the extremes of chirographical and moral excellence, and had got as far as "Riches are deceitful," and was elaborating the noun with an insincerity of flourish that was quite in the spirit of his text, when he heard a gentle tapping. The woodpeckers had been busy about the roof during the day, and the noise did not disturb his work. But the opening of the door, and the tapping continuing from the inside, caused him to look up. He was slightly startled by the figure of a young girl, dirty and shabbily clad. Still, her great black eyes, her coarse, uncombed, lustreless black hair falling over her sun-burned face, her red arms and feet streaked with the red soil, were all familiar to him. It was Melissa Smith,—Smith's motherless child.

"What can she want here?" thought the master. Everybody knew "Mliss," as she was called, throughout the length and height of Red Mountain. Everybody knew her as an incorrigible girl. Her fierce, ungovernable disposition, her mad freaks and lawless character, were in their way as proverbial as the story of her father's weaknesses, and as philosophically accepted by the townsfolk. She wrangled with and fought the schoolboys with keener invective and quite as powerful arm. She followed the trails with a woodman's craft, and the master had met her before, miles away, shoeless, stockingless, and bareheaded on the mountain road. The miners' camps along the stream supplied her with subsistence during these voluntary pilgrimages, in freely offered alms. Not but that a larger protection had been previously extended to Mliss. The Rev. Joshua McSnagley, "stated" preacher, had placed her in the hotel as servant, by way of preliminary refinement, and had introduced her to his scholars at Sunday-school. But she threw plates occasionally at the landlord, and quickly retorted to the cheap witticisms of the guests, and created in the Sabbath-school a sensation that was so inimical to the orthodox dullness and placidity of that institution, that, with a decent regard for the starched frocks and unblemished morals of the two pink-and-white-faced children of the first families,

the reverend gentleman had her ignominiously expelled. Such were the antecedents, and such the character of Mliss, as she stood before the master. It was shown in the ragged dress, the unkempt hair, and bleeding feet, and asked his pity. It flashed from her black, fearless eyes, and commanded his respect.

"I come here to-night," she said rapidly and boldly, keeping her hard glance on his, "because I knew you was alone. I wouldn't come here when them gals was here. I hate 'em and they hates me. That's why. You keep school, don't you? I want to be teached!"

If to the shabbiness of her apparel and uncomeliness of her tangled hair and dirty face she had added the humility of tears, the master would have extended to her the usual moiety of pity, and nothing more. But with the natural, though illogical instincts of his species, her boldness awakened in him something of that respect which all original natures pay unconsciously to one another in any grade. And he gazed at her the more fixedly as she went on still rapidly, her hand on that door-latch and her eyes on his:—

"My name's Mliss,—Mliss Smith! You can bet your life on that. My father's Old Smith,—Old Bummer Smith,—that's what's the matter with him. Mliss Smith,—and I'm coming to school!"

"Well?" said the master.

Accustomed to be thwarted and opposed, often wantonly and cruelly, for no other purpose than to excite the violent impulses of her nature, the master's phlegm evidently took her by surprise. She stopped; she began to twist a lock of her hair between her fingers; and the rigid line of upper lip, drawn over the wicked little teeth, relaxed and quivered slightly. Then her eyes dropped, and something like a blush struggled up to her cheek, and tried to assert itself through the splashes of redder soil, and the sunburn of years. Suddenly she threw herself forward, calling on God to strike her dead, and fell quite weak and helpless, with her face on the master's desk, crying and sobbing as if her heart would break.

The master lifted her gently and waited for the paroxysm to pass. When with face still averted, she was repeating between her sobs the *mea culpa* of childish

penitence,—that "she'd be good, she didn't mean to," etc., it came to him to ask her why she had left Sabbath-school.

Why had she left the Sabbath-school?—why? O yes. What did he (McSnagley) want to tell her she was wicked for? What did he tell her that God hated her for? If God hated her, what did she want to go to Sabbath-school for? *She* didn't want to be "beholden" to anybody who hated her.

Had she told McSnagley this?

Yes, she had.

The master laughed. It was a hearty laugh, and echoed so oddly in the little schoolhouse, and seemed so inconsistent and discordant with the sighing of the pines without, that he shortly corrected himself with a sigh. The sigh was quite as sincere in its way, however, and after a moment of serious silence he asked about her father.

Her father? What father? Whose father? What had he ever done for her? Why did the girls hate her? Come now! what made the folks say, "Old Bummer Smith's Mliss!" when she passed? Yes; O yes. She wished he was dead,—she was dead,—everybody was dead; and her sobs broke forth anew.

The master then, leaning over her, told her as well as he could what you or I might have said after hearing such unnatural theories from childish lips; only bearing in mind perhaps better than you or I the unnatural facts of her ragged dress, her bleeding feet, and the omnipresent shadow of her drunken father. Then, raising her to her feet, he wrapped his shawl around her, and, bidding her come early in the morning, he walked with her down the road. There he bade her "good night." The moon shone brightly on the narrow path before them. He stood and watched the bent little figure as it staggered down the road, and waited until it had passed the little graveyard and reached the curve of the hill, where it turned and stood for a moment, a mere atom of suffering outlined against the far-off patient stars. Then he went back to his work. But the lines of the copy-book thereafter faded into long parallels of never-ending road, over which childish figures seemed to pass sobbing and crying into

the night. Then, the little schoolhouse seeming lonelier than before, he shut the door and went home.

The next morning Mliss came to school. Her face had been washed, and her coarse black hair bore evidence of recent struggles with the comb, in which both had evidently suffered. The old defiant look shone occasionally in her eyes, but her manner was tamer and more subdued. Then began a series of little trials and self-sacrifices, in which master and pupil bore an equal part, and which increased the confidence and sympathy between them. Although obedient under the master's eye, at times during recess, if thwarted or stung by a fancied slight, Mliss would rage in ungovernable fury, and many a palpitating young savage, finding himself matched with his own weapons of torment, would seek the master with torn jacket and scratched face, and complaints of the dreadful Mliss. There was a serious division among the townspeople on the subject; some threatening to withdraw their children from such evil companionship, and others as warmly upholding the course of the master in his work of reclamation. Meanwhile, with a steady persistence that seemed quite astonishing to him on looking back afterward, the master drew Mliss gradually out of the shadow of her past life, as though it were but her natural progress down the narrow path on which he had set her feet the moonlit night of their first meeting. Remembering the experience of the evangelical McSnagley, he carefully avoided that Rock of Ages on which that unskilful pilot had shipwrecked her young faith. But if, in the course of her reading, she chanced to stumble upon those few words which have lifted such as she above the level of the older, the wiser, and the more prudent,—if she learned something of a faith that is symbolized by suffering, and the old light softened in her eyes, it did not take the shape of a lesson. A few of the plainer people had made up a little sum by which the ragged Mliss was enabled to assume the garments of respect and civilization; and often a rough shake of the hand, and words of homely commendation from a red-shirted and burly figure, sent a glow to the cheek of the young master, and set him to thinking if it was altogether deserved.

Three months had passed from the time of their first

meeting, and the master was sitting late one evening over the moral and sententious copies, when there came a tap at the door, and again Mliss stood before him. She was neatly clad and clean-faced, and there was nothing, perhaps, but the long black hair and bright black eyes to remind him of his former apparition. "Are you busy?" she asked. "Can you come with me?"—and on his signifying his readiness, in her old wilful way she said, "Come, then, quick!"

They passed out of the door together and into the dark road. As they entered the town the master asked her whither she was going. She replied, "To see my father."

It was the first time he had heard her call him by that filial title, or indeed anything more than "Old Smith" or the "Old Man." It was the first time in three months that she had spoken of him at all, and the master knew she had kept resolutely aloof from him since her great change. Satisfied from her manner that it was fruitless to question her purpose, he passively followed. In out-of-the-way places, low groggeries, restaurants, and saloons; in gambling-hells and dance-houses, the master, preceded by Mliss, came and went. In the reeking smoke and blasphemous outcries of low dens, the child, holding the master's hand, stood and anxiously gazed, seemingly unconscious of all in the one absorbing nature of her pursuit. Some of the revellers, recognizing Mliss, called to the child to sing and dance for them, and would have forced liquor upon her but for the interference of the master. Others, recognizing him mutely, made way for them to pass. So an hour slipped by. Then the child whispered in his ear that there was a cabin on the other side of the creek crossed by the long flume, where she thought he still might be. Thither they crossed,—a toilsome half-hour's walk,—but in vain. They were returning by the ditch at the abutment of the flume, gazing at the lights of the town on the opposite bank, when, suddenly, sharply, a quick report rang out on the clear night air. The echoes caught it, and carried it round and round Red Mountain, and set the dogs to barking all along the streams. Lights seemed to dance and move quickly on the outskirts of the town for a few moments, the stream rippled quite audibly beside them, a few stones loosened themselves

from the hill-side, and splashed into the stream, a heavy wind seemed to surge the branches of the funereal pines, and then the silence seemed to fall thicker, heavier, and deadlier. The master turned towards Mliss with an unconscious gesture of protection, but the child had gone. Oppressed by a strange fear, he ran quickly down the trail to the river's bed, and, jumping from boulder to boulder, reached the base of Red Mountain and the outskirts of the village. Midway of the crossing he looked up and held his breath in awe. For high above him, on the narrow flume, he saw the fluttering little figure of his late companion crossing swiftly in the darkness.

He climbed the bank, and, guided by a few lights moving about a central point on the mountain, soon found himself breathless among a crowd of awe-stricken and sorrowful men. Out from among them the child appeared, and, taking the master's hand, led him silently before what seemed a ragged hole in the mountain. Her face was quite white, but her excited manner gone, and her look that of one to whom some long-expected event had at last happened,—an expression that, to the master in his bewilderment, seemed almost like relief. The walls of the cavern were partly propped by decaying timbers. The child pointed to what appeared to be some ragged cast-off clothes left in the hole by the late occupant. The master approached nearer with his flaming dip, and bent over them. It was Smith, already cold, with a pistol in his hand, and a bullet in his heart, lying beside his empty "pocket."

CHAPTER II

THE opinion which McSnagley expressed in reference to a "change of heart" supposed to be experienced by Mliss was more forcibly described in the gulches and tunnels. It was thought there that Mliss had "struck a good lead." So when there was a new grave added to the little enclosure, and at the expense of the master a little board and inscription put above it, the *Red Mountain Banner* came out quite handsomely, and did the fair thing to the memory of one of "our oldest Pioneers," alluding

gracefully to that "bane of noble intellects," and otherwise genteelly shelving our dear brother with the past. "He leaves an only child to mourn his loss," says the *Banner*, "who is now an exemplary scholar, thanks to the efforts of the Rev. Mr. McSnagley." The Rev. McSnagley, in fact, made a strong point of Mliss's conversion, and, indirectly attributing to the unfortunate child the suicide of her father, made affecting allusions in Sunday-school to the beneficial effects of the "silent tomb," and in this cheerful contemplation drove most of the children into speechless horror, and caused the pink-and-white scions of the first families to howl dismally and refuse to be comforted.

The long dry summer came. As each fierce day burned itself out in little whiffs of pearl-grey smoke on the mountain summits, and the upspringing breeze scattered its red embers over the landscape, the green wave which in early spring upheaved above Smith's grave grew sere and dry and hard. In those days the master, strolling in the little churchyard of a Sabbath afternoon, was sometimes surprised to find a few wild-flowers plucked from the damp pine-forests scattered there, and oftener rude wreaths hung upon the little pine cross. Most of these wreaths were formed of a sweet-scented grass, which the children loved to keep in their desks, intertwined with the plumes of the buckeye, the syringa, and the wood-anemone; and here and there the master noticed the dark-blue cowl of the monk's-hood, or deadly aconite. There was something in the odd association of this noxious plant with these memorials which occasioned a painful sensation to the master deeper than his aesthetic sense. One day, during a long walk, in crossing a wooded ridge he came upon Mliss in the heart of the forest, perched upon a prostrate pine, on a fantastic throne formed by the hanging plumes of lifeless branches, her lap full of grasses and pine-burrs, and crooning to herself one of the negro melodies of her younger life. Recognizing him at a distance, she made room for him on her elevated throne, and with a grave assumption of hospitality and patronage that would have been ridiculous had it not been so terribly earnest, she fed him with pine-nuts and crab-apples. The master took that opportunity to point out to her the noxious and deadly

qualities of the monk's-hood, whose dark blossoms he saw in her lap, and extorted from her a promise not to meddle with it as long as she remained his pupil. This done,—as the master had tested her integrity before,—he rested satisfied, and the strange feeling which had overcome him on seeing them died away.

Of the homes that were offered Mliss when her conversion became known, the master preferred that of Mrs. Morpher, a womanly and kind-hearted specimen of South-western efflorescence, known in her maidenhood as the "Per-rairie Rose." Being one of those who contend resolutely against their own natures, Mrs. Morpher, by a long series of self-sacrifices and struggles, had at last subjugated her naturally careless disposition to principles of "order," which she considered, in common with Mr. Pope, as "Heaven's first law." But she could not entirely govern the orbits of her satellites, however regular her own movements, and even her own "Jeemes" sometimes collided with her. Again her old nature asserted itself in her children. Lycurgus dipped into the cupboard "between meals," and Aristides came home from school without shoes, leaving those important articles on the threshold, for the delight of a barefooted walk down the ditches. Octavia and Cassandra were "keerless" of their clothes. So with but one exception, however much the "Prairie Rose" might have trimmed and pruned and trained her own matured luxuriance, the little shoots came up defiantly wild and straggling. That one exception was Clytemnestra Morpher, aged fifteen. She was the realization of her mother's immaculate conception,—neat, orderly, and dull.

It was an amiable weakness of Mrs. Morpher to imagine that "Clytie" was a consolation and model for Mliss. Following this fallacy, Mrs. Morpher threw Clytie at the head of Mliss when she was "bad," and set her up before the child for adoration in her penitential moments. It was not, therefore, surprising to the master to hear that Clytie was coming to school, obviously as a favour to the master and as an example for Mliss and others. For "Clytie" was quite a young lady. Inheriting her mother's physical peculiarities, and in obedience to the climatic laws of the Red Mountain region, she was an

early bloomer. The youth of Smith's Pocket, to whom this kind of flower was rare, sighed for her in April and languished in May. Enamoured swains haunted the schoolhouse at the hour of dismissal. A few were jealous of the master.

Perhaps it was this latter circumstance that opened the master's eyes to another. He could not help noticing that Clytie was romantic; that in school she required a great deal of attention; that her pens were uniformly bad and wanted fixing; that she usually accompanied the request with a certain expectation in her eye that was somewhat disproportionate to the quality of service she verbally required; that she sometimes allowed the curves of a round, plump white arm to rest on his when he was writing her copies; that she always blushed and flung back her blond curls when she did so. I don't remember whether I have stated that the master was a young man,—it's of little consequence, however; he had been severely educated in the school in which Clytie was taking her first lesson, and, on the whole, withstood the flexible curves and factitious glance like the fine young Spartan that he was. Perhaps an insufficient quality of food may have tended to this asceticism. He generally avoided Clytie; but one evening, when she returned to the schoolhouse after something she had forgotten, and did not find it until the master walked home with her, I hear that he endeavoured to make himself particularly agreeable,—partly from the fact, I imagine, that his conduct was adding gall and bitterness to the already overcharged hearts of Clytemnestra's admirers.

The morning after this affecting episode Mliss did not come to school. Noon came, but not Mliss. Questioning Clytie on the subject, it appeared that they had left for school together, but the wilful Mliss had taken another road. The afternoon brought her not. In the evening he called on Mrs. Morpher, whose motherly heart was really alarmed. Mr. Morpher had spent all day in search of her, without discovering a trace that might lead to her discovery. Aristides was summoned as a probable accomplice, but that equitable infant succeeded in impressing the household with his innocence. Mrs. Morpher entertained a vivid impression that the child would yet

be found drowned in a ditch, or, what was almost as terrible, muddied and soiled beyond the redemption of soap and water. Sick at heart, the master returned to the schoolhouse. As he lit his lamp and seated himself at his desk, he found a note lying before him addressed to himself, in Mliss's handwriting. It seemed to be written on a leaf torn from some old memorandum-book, and, to prevent sacrilegious trifling, had been sealed with six broken wafers. Opening it almost tenderly, the master read as follows :—

RESPECTED SIR,—When you read this, I am run away. Never to come back. *Never*, NEVER, NEVER. You can give my beeds to Mary Jennings, and my Amerika's Pride [a highly coloured lithograph from a tobacco-box] to Sally Flanders. But don't you give anything to Clytie Morpher. Don't you dare to. Do you know what my opinion is of her, it is this, she is perfekly disgustin. That is all and no more at present from

Yours respectfully,
MELISSA SMITH.

The master sat pondering on this strange epistle till the moon lifted its bright face above the distant hills, and illuminated the trail that led to the schoolhouse, beaten quite hard with the coming and going of little feet. Then, more satisfied in mind, he tore the missive into fragments and scattered them along the road.

At sunrise the next morning he was picking his way through the palm-like fern and thick underbrush of the pine-forest, starting the hare from its form, and awakening a querulous protest from a few dissipated crows, who had evidently been making a night of it, and so came to the wooded ridge where he had once found Mliss. There he found the prostrate pine and tasselled branches, but the throne was vacant. As he drew nearer, what might have been some frightened animal started through the crackling limbs. It ran up the tossed arms of the fallen monarch, and sheltered itself in some friendly foliage. The master, reaching the old seat, found the nest still warm ; looking up in the intertwining branches, he met the black eyes of the errant Mliss. They gazed at each other without speaking. She was first to break the silence.

" What do you want ? " she asked curtly.

The master had decided on a course of action. "I want some crab-apples," he said, humbly.

"Shan't have 'em! go away. Why don't you get 'em of Clytemnerestera?" (It seemed to be a relief to Mliss to express her contempt in additional syllables to that classical young woman's already long-drawn title.) "O you wicked thing!"

"I am hungry, Lissy. I have eaten nothing since dinner yesterday. I am famished!" and the young man, in a state of remarkable exhaustion, leaned against the tree.

Melissa's heart was touched. In the bitter days of her gipsy life she had known the sensation he so artfully simulated. Overcome by his heart-broken tone, but not entirely divested of suspicion, she said,—

"Dig under the tree near the roots, and you'll find lots; but mind you don't tell," for Mliss had *her* hoards as well as the rats and squirrels.

But the master, of course, was unable to find them; the effects of hunger probably blinding his senses. Mliss grew uneasy. At length she peered at him through the leaves in an elfish way, and questioned,—

"If I come down and give you some, you'll promise you won't touch me?"

The master promised.

"Hope you'll die if you do!"

The master accepted instant dissolution as a forfeit. Mliss slid down the tree. For a few moments nothing transpired but the munching of the pine-nuts. "Do you feel better?" she asked, with some solicitude. The master confessed to a recuperated feeling, and then, gravely thanking her, proceeded to retrace his steps. As he expected, he had not gone far before she called him. He turned. She was standing there quite white, with tears in her widely opened orbs. The master felt that the right moment had come. Going up to her, he took both her hands, and, looking in her tearful eyes, said, gravely, "Lissy, do you remember the first evening you came to see me?"

Lissy remembered.

"You asked me if you might come to school, for you wanted to learn something and be better, and I said——"

"Come," responded the child, promptly.

"What would *you* say if the master now came to you and said that he was lonely without his little scholar, and that he wanted her to come and teach him to be better?"

The child hung her head for a few moments in silence. The master waited patiently. Tempted by the quiet, a hare ran close to the couple, and raising her bright eyes and velvet forepaws, sat and gazed at them. A squirrel ran half-way down the furrowed bark of the fallen tree, and there stopped.

"We are waiting, Lissy," said the master, in a whisper, and the child smiled. Stirred by a passing breeze, the tree-tops rocked, and a long pencil of light stole through their interlaced boughs full on the doubting face and irresolute little figure. Suddenly she took the master's hand in her quick way. What she said was scarcely audible, but the master, putting the black hair back from her forehead, kissed her; and so, hand in hand, they passed out of the damp aisles and forest odours into the open sunlit road.

CHAPTER III

SOMEWHAT less spiteful in her intercourse with other scholars, Mliss still retained an offensive attitude in regard to Clytemnestra. Perhaps the jealous element was not entirely lulled in her passionate little breast. Perhaps it was only that the round curves and plump outline offered more extended pinching surface. But while such ebullitions were under the master's control, her enmity occasionally took a new and irrepressible form.

The master in his first estimate of the child's character could not conceive that she had ever possessed a doll. But the master, like many other professed readers of character, was safer in *a posteriori* than *a priori* reasoning. Mliss had a doll, but then it was emphatically Mliss's doll, —a smaller copy of herself. Its unhappy existence had been a secret discovered accidentally by Mrs. Morpher. It had been the old-time companion of Mliss's wanderings, and bore evident marks of suffering. Its original complexion

was long since washed away by the weather and anointed by the slime of ditches. It looked very much as Mliss had in days past. Its one gown of faded stuff was dirty and ragged as hers had been. Mliss had never been known to apply to it any childish term of endearment. She never exhibited it in the presence of other children. It was put severely to bed in a hollow tree near the schoolhouse, and only allowed exercise during Mliss's rambles. Fulfilling a stern duty to her doll, as she would to herself, it knew no luxuries.

Now Mrs. Morpher, obeying a commendable impulse, bought another doll and gave it to Mliss. The child received it gravely and curiously. The master on looking at it one day fancied he saw a slight resemblance in its round red cheeks and mild blue eyes to Clytemnestra. It became evident before long that Mliss had also noticed the same resemblance. Accordingly she hammered its waxen head on the rocks when she was alone, and sometimes dragged it with a string round its neck to and from school. At other times, setting it up on her desk, she made a pin-cushion of its patient and inoffensive body. Whether this was done in revenge of what she considered a second figurative obtrusion of Clytie's excellences upon her, or whether she had an intuitive appreciation of the rites of certain other heathens, and, indulging in that "Fetish" ceremony, imagined that the original of her wax model would pine away and finally die, is a metaphysical question I shall not now consider.

In spite of these moral vagaries, the master could not help noticing in her different tasks the working of a quick, restless, and vigorous perception. She knew neither the hesitancy nor the doubts of childhood. Her answers in class were always slightly dashed with audacity. Of course she was not infallible. But her courage and daring in passing beyond her own depth and that of the floundering little swimmers around her, in their minds outweighed all errors of judgement. Children are not better than grown people in this respect, I fancy; and whenever the little red hand flashed above her desk, there was a wondering silence, and even the master was sometimes oppressed with a doubt of his own experience and judgement.

Nevertheless, certain attributes which at first amused

and entertained his fancy began to afflict him with grave doubts. He could not but see that Mliss was revengeful, irreverent, and wilful. That there was but one better quality which pertained to her semi-savage disposition,—the faculty of physical fortitude and self-sacrifice, and another, though not always an attribute of the noble savage, —Truth. Mliss was both fearless and sincere; perhaps in such a character the adjectives were synonymous.

The master had been doing some hard thinking on this subject, and had arrived at that conclusion quite common to all who think sincerely, that he was generally the slave of his own prejudices, when he determined to call on the Rev. McSnagley for advice. This decision was somewhat humiliating to his pride, as he and McSnagley were not friends. But he thought of Mliss, and the evening of their first meeting; and perhaps with a pardonable superstition that it was not chance alone that had guided her wilful feet to the schoolhouse, and perhaps with a complacent consciousness of the rare magnanimity of the act, he choked back his dislike and went to McSnagley.

The reverend gentleman was glad to see him. Moreover, he observed that the master was looking "peartish," and hoped he had got over the "neuralgy" and "rheumatiz." He himself had been troubled with a dumb "ager" since last conference. But he had learned to "rastle and pray."

Pausing a moment to enable the master to write his certain method of curing the dumb "ager" upon the book and volume of his brain, Mr. McSnagley proceeded to inquire after Sister Morpher. "She is an adornment to Chris*tew*anity, and has a likely growin' young family," added Mr. McSnagley; "and there's that mannerly young gal,—so well behaved,—Miss Clytie." In fact, Clytie's perfections seemed to affect him to such an extent that he dwelt for several minutes upon them. The master was doubly embarrassed. In the first place, there was an enforced contrast with poor Mliss in all this praise of Clytie. Secondly, there was something unpleasantly confidential in his tone of speaking of Mrs. Morpher's earliest born. So that the master, after a few futile efforts to say something natural, found it convenient to recall another engagement, and left without asking the informa-

tion required, but in his after reflections somewhat unjustly giving the Rev. Mr. McSnagley the full benefit of having refused it.

Perhaps this rebuff placed the master and pupil once more in the close communion of old. The child seemed to notice the change in the master's manner, which had of late been constrained, and in one of their long post-prandial walks she stopped suddenly, and, mounting a stump, looked full in his face with big, searching eyes. "You ain't mad?" said she, with an interrogative shake of the black braids. "No." "Nor bothered?" "No." "Nor hungry?" (Hunger was to Mliss a sickness that might attack a person at any moment.) "No." "Nor thinking of her?" "Of whom, Lissy?" "That white girl." (This was the latest epithet invented by Mliss, who was a very dark brunette, to express Clytemnestra.) "No." "Upon your word?" (A substitute for "Hope you'll die!" proposed by the master.) "Yes." "And sacred honour?" "Yes." Then Mliss gave him a fierce little kiss, and, hopping down, fluttered off. For two or three days after that she condescended to appear more like other children, and be, as she expressed it, "good."

Two years had passed since the master's advent at Smith's Pocket, and as his salary was not large, and the prospects of Smith's Pocket eventually becoming the capital of the State not entirely definite, he contemplated a change. He had informed the school trustees privately of his intentions, but, educated young men of unblemished moral character being scarce at that time, he consented to continue his school term through the winter to early spring. None else knew of his intention except his one friend, a Dr. Duchesne, a young Creole physician known to the people of Wingdam as "Duchesny." He never mentioned it to Mrs. Morpher, Clytie, or any of his scholars. His reticence was partly the result of a constitutional indisposition to fuss, partly a desire to be spared the questions and surmises of vulgar curiosity, and partly that he never really believed he was going to do anything before it was done.

He did not like to think of Mliss. It was a selfish instinct, perhaps, which made him try to fancy his feeling

for the child was foolish, romantic, and unpractical. He even tried to imagine that she would do better under the control of an older and sterner teacher. Then she was nearly eleven, and in a few years, by the rules of Red Mountain, would be a woman. He had done his duty. After Smith's death he addressed letters to Smith's relatives, and received one answer from a sister of Melissa's mother. Thanking the master, she stated her intention of leaving the Atlantic States for California with her husband in a few months. This was a slight superstructure for the airy castle which the master pictured for Mliss's home, but it was easy to fancy that some loving sympathetic woman, with the claims of kindred, might better guide her wayward nature. Yet, when the master had read the letter, Mliss listened to it carelessly, received it submissively, and afterwards cut figures out of it with her scissors, supposed to represent Clytemnestra, labelled "the white girl," to prevent mistakes, and impaled them upon the outer walls of the schoolhouse.

When the summer was about spent, and the last harvest had been gathered in the valleys, the master bethought him of gathering in a few ripened shoots of the young idea, and of having his Harvest-Home, or Examination. So the savants and professionals of Smith's Pocket were gathered to witness that time-honoured custom of placing timid children in a constrained position, and bullying them as in a witness-box. As usual in such cases, the most audacious and self-possessed were the lucky recipients of the honours. The reader will imagine that in the present instance Mliss and Clytie were pre-eminent, and divided public attention; Mliss with her clearness of material perception and self-reliance, Clytie with her placid self-esteem and saint-like correctness of deportment. The other little ones were timid and blundering. Mliss's readiness and brilliancy, of course, captivated the greatest number and provoked the greatest applause. Mliss's antecedents had unconsciously awakened the strongest sympathies of a class whose athletic forms were ranged against the walls, or whose handsome bearded faces looked in at the windows. But Mliss's popularity was overthrown by an unexpected circumstance.

McSnagley had invited himself, and had been going

through the pleasing entertainment of frightening the more timid pupils by the vaguest and most ambiguous questions delivered in an impressive funereal tone; and Mliss had soared into Astronomy, and was tracking the course of our spotted ball through space, and keeping time with the music of the spheres, and defining the tethered orbits of the planets, when McSnagley impressively arose. "Meelissy! ye were speaking of the revolutions of this yere yearth and the move-*ments* of the sun, and I think ye said it had been a-doing of it since the creashun, eh?" Mliss nodded a scornful affirmative. "Well, war that the truth?" said McSnagley, folding his arms. "Yes," said Mliss, shutting up her little red lips tightly. The handsome outlines at the windows peered further in the schoolroom, and a saintly Raphael-face, with blond beard and soft blue eyes, belonging to the biggest scamp in the diggings, turned toward the child and whispered, "Stick to it, Mliss!" The reverend gentleman heaved a deep sigh, and cast a compassionate glance at the master, then at the children, and then rested his look on Clytie. That young woman softly elevated her round, white arm. Its seductive curves were enhanced by a gorgeous and massive specimen bracelet, the gift of one of her humblest worshippers, worn in honour of the occasion. There was a momentary silence. Clytie's round cheeks were very pink and soft. Clytie's big eyes were very bright and blue. Clytie's low-necked white book-muslin rested softly on Clytie's white, plump shoulders. Clytie looked at the master, and the master nodded. Then Clytie spoke softly:—

"Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, and it obeyed him!" There was a low hum of applause in the schoolroom, a triumphant expression on McSnagley's face, a grave shadow on the master's, and a comical look of disappointment reflected from the windows. Mliss skimmed rapidly over her Astronomy, and then shut the book with a loud snap. A groan burst from McSnagley, an expression of astonishment from the schoolroom, a yell from the windows, as Mliss brought her red fist down on the desk, with the emphatic declaration—

"It's a d—n lie. I don't believe it!"

CHAPTER IV

THE long wet season had drawn near its close. Signs of spring were visible in the swelling buds and rushing torrents. The pine-forests exhaled the fresher spicery. The azaleas were already budding, the Ceanothus getting ready its lilac livery for spring. On the green upland which climbed Red Mountain at its southern aspect the long spike of the monk's-hood shot up from its broad-leaved stool, and once more shook its dark-blue bells. Again the billow above Smith's grave was soft and green, its crest just tossed with the foam of daisies and buttercups. The little graveyard had gathered a few new dwellers in the past year, and the mounds were placed two by two by the little paling until they reached Smith's grave, and there there was but one. General superstition had shunned it, and the plot beside Smith was vacant.

There had been several placards posted about the town, intimating that, at a certain period, a celebrated dramatic company would perform, for a few days, a series of "side-splitting" and "screaming farces"; that, alternating pleasantly with this, there would be some melodrama and a grand divertisement, which would include singing, dancing, etc. These announcements occasioned a great fluttering among the little folk, and were the theme of much excitement and great speculation among the master's scholars. The master had promised Mliss, to whom this sort of thing was sacred and rare, that she should go, and on that momentous evening the master and Mliss "assisted."

The performance was the prevalent style of heavy mediocrity; the melodrama was not bad enough to laugh at nor good enough to excite. But the master, turning wearily to the child, was astonished, and felt something like self-accusation in noticing the peculiar effect upon her excitable nature. The red blood flushed in her cheeks at each stroke of her panting little heart. Her small passionate lips were slightly parted to give vent to her hurried breath. Her widely opened lids threw up and arched her black eyebrows. She did not laugh at the

dismal comicalities of the funny man, for Mliss seldom laughed. Nor was she discreetly affected to the delicate extremes of the corner of a white handkerchief, as was the tender-hearted "Clytie," who was talking with her "feller" and ogling the master at the same moment. But when the performance was over, and the green curtain fell on the little stage, Mliss drew a long deep breath, and turned to the master's grave face with a half-apologetic smile and wearied gesture. Then she said, "Now take me home!" and dropped the lids of her black eyes, as if to dwell once more in fancy on the mimic stage.

On their way to Mrs. Morpher's the master thought proper to ridicule the whole performance. Now he shouldn't wonder if Mliss thought that the young lady who acted so beautifully was really in earnest, and in love with the gentleman who wore such fine clothes. Well, if she were in love with him, it was a very unfortunate thing! "Why?" said Mliss, with an upward sweep of the drooping lid. "Oh! well, he couldn't support his wife at his present salary, and pay so much a week for his fine clothes, and then they wouldn't receive as much wages if they were married as if they were merely lovers,—that is," added the master, "if they are not already married to somebody else; but I think the husband of the pretty young countess takes the tickets at the door, or pulls up the curtain, or snuffs the candles, or does something equally refined and elegant. As to the young man with nice clothes, which are really nice now, and must cost at least two and a half or three dollars, not to speak of that mantle of red drugget which I happen to know the price of, for I bought some of it for my room once,—as to this young man, Lissy, he is a pretty good fellow, and if he does drink occasionally, I don't think people ought to take advantage of it and give him black eyes, and throw him in the mud. Do you? I am sure he might owe me two dollars and a half a long time, before I would throw it up in his face, as the fellow did the other night at Wingdam."

Mliss had taken his hand in both of hers and was trying to look in his eyes, which the young man kept as resolutely averted. Mliss had a faint idea of irony, indulging herself sometimes in a species of sardonic

humour, which was equally visible in her actions and her speech. But the young man continued in this strain until they had reached Mrs. Morpher's, and he had deposited Mliss in her maternal charge. Waiving the invitation of Mrs. Morpher to refreshment and rest, and shading his eyes with his hand to keep out the blue-eyed Clytemnestra's siren glances, he excused himself, and went home.

For two or three days after the advent of the dramatic company, Mliss was late at school, and the master's usual Friday afternoon ramble was for once omitted, owing to the absence of his trustworthy guide. As he was putting away his books and preparing to leave the schoolhouse, a small voice piped at his side, "Please, sir?" The master turned, and there stood Aristides Morpher.

"Well, my little man," said the master, impatiently, "what is it? quick!"

"Please, sir, me and 'Kerg' thinks that Mliss is going to run away agin."

"What's that, sir?" said the master, with that unjust testiness with which we always receive disagreeable news.

"Why, sir, she don't stay home any more, and 'Kerg' and me see her talking with one of those actor fellers, and she's with him now; and please, sir, yesterday she told 'Kerg' and me she could make a speech as well as Miss Cellerstina Montmoressy, and she spouted right off by heart," and the little fellow paused in a collapsed condition.

"What actor?" asked the master.

"Him as wears the shiny hat. And hair. And gold pin. And gold chain," said the just Aristides, putting periods for commas to eke out his breath.

The master put on his gloves and hat, feeling an unpleasant tightness in his chest and thorax, and walked out in the road. Aristides trotted along by his side, endeavouring to keep pace with his short legs to the master's strides, when the master stopped suddenly, and Aristides bumped up against him. "Where were they talking?" asked the master, as if continuing the conversation.

"At the Arcade," said Aristides.

When they reached the main street the master paused. "Run down home," said he to the boy. "If Mliss is there, come to the Arcade and tell me. If she isn't there,

stay home; run!" And off trotted the short-legged Aristides.

The Arcade was just across the way,—a long, rambling building containing a bar-room, billiard-room, and restaurant. As the young man crossed the plaza he noticed that two or three of the passers-by turned and looked after him. He looked at his clothes, took out his handkerchief and wiped his face, before he entered the bar-room. It contained the usual number of loungers, who stared at him as he entered. One of them looked at him so fixedly, and with such a strange expression, that the master stopped and looked again, and then saw it was only his own reflection in a large mirror. This made the master think that perhaps he was a little excited, and so he took up a copy of the *Red Mountain Banner* from one of the tables, and tried to recover his composure by reading the column of advertisements.

He then walked through the bar-room, through the restaurant, and into the billiard-room. The child was not there. In the latter apartment a person was standing by one of the tables with a broad-brimmed glazed hat on his head. The master recognized him as the agent of the dramatic company; he had taken a dislike to him at their first meeting, from the peculiar fashion of wearing his beard and hair. Satisfied that the object of his search was not there, he turned to the man with the glazed hat. He had noticed the master, but tried that common trick of unconsciousness, in which vulgar natures always fail. Balancing a billiard-cue in his hand, he pretended to play with a ball in the centre of the table. The master stood opposite to him until he raised his eyes; when their glances met, the master walked up to him.

He had intended to avoid a scene or quarrel, but when he began to speak, something kept rising in his throat and retarded his utterance, and his own voice frightened him, it sounded so distant, low, and resonant. "I understand," he began, "that Melissa Smith, an orphan, and one of my scholars, has talked with you about adopting your profession. Is that so?"

The man with the glazed hat leaned over the table, and made an imaginary shot, that sent the ball spinning round the cushions. Then walking round the table he

recovered the ball, and placed it upon the spot. This duty discharged, getting ready for another shot, he said,—

"S'pose she has?"

The master choked up again, but, squeezing the cushion of the table in his gloved hand, he went on :—

"If you are a gentleman, I have only to tell you that I am her guardian, and responsible for her career. You know as well as I do the kind of life you offer her. As you may learn of any one here, I have already brought her out of an existence worse than death,—out of the streets and the contamination of vice. I am trying to do so again. Let us talk like men. She has neither father, mother, sister, or brother. Are you seeking to give her an equivalent for these?"

The man with the glazed hat examined the point of his cue, and then looked around for somebody to enjoy the joke with him.

"I know that she is a strange, wilful girl," continued the master, "but she is better than she was. I believe that I have some influence over her still. I beg and hope, therefore, that you will take no further steps in this matter, but as a man, as a gentleman, leave her to me. I am willing——" But here something rose again in the master's throat, and the sentence remained unfinished.

The man with the glazed hat, mistaking the master's silence, raised his head with a coarse, brutal laugh, and said in a loud voice,—

"Want her yourself, do you? That cock won't fight here, young man!"

The insult was more in the tone than the words, more in the glance than tone, and more in the man's instinctive nature than all these. The best appreciable rhetoric to this kind of animal is a blow. The master felt this, and, with his pent-up, nervous energy finding expression in the one act, he struck the brute full in his grinning face. The blow sent the glazed hat one way and the cue another, and tore the glove and skin from the master's hand from knuckle to joint. It opened up the corners of the fellow's mouth, and spoilt the peculiar shape of his beard for some time to come.

There was a shout, an imprecation, a scuffle, and the trampling of many feet. Then the crowd parted right

and left, and two sharp quick reports followed each other in rapid succession. Then they closed again about his opponent, and the master was standing alone. He remembered picking bits of burning wadding from his coat-sleeve with his left hand. Some one was holding his other hand. Looking at it, he saw it was still bleeding from the blow, but his fingers were clenched around the handle of a glittering knife. He could not remember when or how he got it.

The man who was holding his hand was Mr. Morpher. He hurried the master to the door, but the master held back, and tried to tell him as well as he could with his parched throat about "Mliss." "It's all right, my boy," said Mr. Morpher. "She's home!" And they passed out into the street together. As they walked along Mr. Morpher said that Mliss had come running into the house a few moments before, and had dragged him out, saying that somebody was trying to kill the master at the Arcade. Wishing to be alone, the master promised Mr. Morpher that he would not seek the agent again that night, and parted from him, taking the road toward the schoolhouse. He was surprised in nearing it to find the door open — still more surprised to find Mliss sitting there.

The master's nature, as I have hinted before, had, like most sensitive organizations, a selfish basis. The brutal taunt thrown out by his late adversary still rankled in his heart. It was possible, he thought, that such a construction might be put upon his affection for the child, which at best was foolish and Quixotic. Besides, had she not voluntarily abnegated his authority and affection? And what had everybody else said about her? Why should he alone combat the opinion of all, and be at last obliged tacitly to confess the truth of all they had predicted? And he had been a participant in a low bar-room fight with a common boor, and risked his life, to prove what? What had he proved? Nothing! What would the people say? What would his friends say? What would McSnagley say?

In his self-accusation the last person he should have wished to meet was Mliss. He entered the door, and, going up to his desk, told the child, in a few cold words, that he was busy, and wished to be alone. As she rose

he took her vacant seat, and, sitting down, buried his head in his hands. When he looked up again she was still standing there. She was looking at his face with an anxious expression.

"Did you kill him?" she asked.

"No!" said the master.

"That's what I gave you the knife for!" said the child, quickly.

"Gave me the knife?" repeated the master, in bewilderment.

"Yes, gave you the knife. I was there under the bar. Saw you hit him. Saw you both fall. He dropped his old knife. I gave it to you. Why didn't you stick him?" said Mliss rapidly, with an expressive twinkle of the black eyes and a gesture of the little red hand.

The master could only look his astonishment.

"Yes," said Mliss. "If you'd asked me, I'd told you I was off with the play-actors. Why was I off with the play-actors? Because you wouldn't tell me you was going away. I knew it. I heard you tell the Doctor so. I wasn't a-goin' to stay here alone with those Morphers. I'd rather die first."

With a dramatic gesture, which was perfectly consistent with her character, she drew from her bosom a few limp green leaves, and, holding them out at arm's length, said in her quick vivid way, and in the queer pronunciation of her old life, which she fell into when unduly excited,—

"That's the poison plant you said would kill me. I'll go with the play-actors, or I'll eat this and die here. I don't care which. I won't stay here, where they hate and despise me! Neither would you let me, if you didn't hate and despise me too!"

The passionate little breast heaved, and two big tears peeped over the edge of Mliss's eyelids, but she whisked them away with the corner of her apron as if they had been wasps.

"If you lock me up in jail," said Mliss fiercely, "to keep me from the play-actors, I'll poison myself. Father killed himself,—why shouldn't I? You said a mouthful of that root would kill me, and I always carry it here," and she struck her breast with her clenched fist.

The master thought of the vacant plot beside Smith's

grave, and of the passionate little figure before him. Seizing her hands in his and looking full into her truthful eyes, he said,—

"Lissy, will you go with *me*?"

The child put her arms around his neck, and said joyfully, "Yes."

"But now—to-night?"

"To-night."

And, hand in hand, they passed into the road,—the narrow road that had once brought her weary feet to the master's door, and which it seemed she should not tread again alone. The stars glittered brightly above them. For good or ill the lesson had been learned, and behind them the school of Red Mountain closed upon them for ever.

THE ILIAD OF SANDY BAR

BEFORE nine o'clock it was pretty well known all along the river that the two parties of the "Amity Claim" had quarrelled and separated at daybreak. At that time the attention of their nearest neighbour had been attracted by the sounds of altercations and two consecutive pistol-shots. Running out, he had seen, dimly, in the grey mist that rose from the river, the tall form of Scott, one of the partners, descending the hill toward the cañon; a moment later, York, the other partner, had appeared from the cabin, and walked in an opposite direction toward the river, passing within a few feet of the curious watcher. Later it was discovered that a serious Chinaman, cutting wood before the cabin, had witnessed part of the quarrel. But John was stolid, indifferent, and reticent. "Me choppee wood, me no fightee," was his serene response to all anxious queries. "But what did they *say*, John?" John did not "*sabe*." Colonel Starbottle deftly ran over the various popular epithets which a generous public sentiment might accept as reasonable provocation for an assault. But John did not recognize them. "And this yer's the cattle," said the Colonel, with some severity, "that some thinks oughter be allowed to testify agin' a White Man! Git—you heathen!"

Still the quarrel remained inexplicable. That two men, whose amiability and grave tact had earned for them the title of "The Peacemakers," in a community not greatly given to the passive virtues—that these men, singularly devoted to each other, should suddenly and violently quarrel, might well excite the curiosity of the camp. A few of the more inquisitive visited the late scene of conflict,

now deserted by its former occupants. There was no trace of disorder or confusion in the neat cabin. The rude table was arranged as if for breakfast; the pan of yellow biscuit still sat upon that hearth whose dead embers might have typified the evil passions that had raged there but an hour before. But Colonel Starbottle's eye—albeit somewhat bloodshot and rheumy—was more intent on practical details. On examination, a bullet-hole was found in the doorpost, and another, nearly opposite, in the casing of the window. The Colonel called attention to the fact that the one "agreed with" the bore of Scott's revolver, and the other with that of York's derringer. "They must hev stood about yer," said the Colonel, taking position; "not mor'n three feet apart, and—missed!" There was a fine touch of pathos in the falling inflexion of the Colonel's voice, which was not without effect. A delicate perception of wasted opportunity thrilled his auditors.

But the Bar was destined to experience a greater disappointment. The two antagonists had not met since the quarrel, and it was vaguely rumoured that, on the occasion of a second meeting, each had determined to kill the other "on sight." There was, consequently, some excitement—and, it is to be feared, no little gratification—when, at ten o'clock, York stepped from the Magnolia Saloon into the one long, straggling street of the camp, at the same moment that Scott left the blacksmith's shop at the forks of the road. It was evident, at a glance, that a meeting could only be avoided by the actual retreat of one or the other.

In an instant the doors and windows of the adjacent saloons were filled with faces. Heads unaccountably appeared above the river-banks and from behind boulders. An empty wagon at the cross-road was suddenly crowded with people, who seemed to have sprung from the earth. There was much running and confusion on the hill-side. On the mountain-road, Mr. Jack Hamlin had reined up his horse, and was standing upright on the seat of his buggy. And the two objects of this absorbing attention approached each other.

"York's got the sun," "Scott'll line him on that tree," "He's waiting to draw his fire," came from the cart; and

then it was silent. But above this human breathlessness the river rushed and sang, and the wind rustled the tree-tops with an indifference that seemed obtrusive. Colonel Starbottle felt it, and, in a moment of sublime preoccupation, without looking around, waved his cane behind him, warningly to all nature, and said, "Shu!"

The men were now within a few feet of each other. A hen ran across the road before one of them. A feathery seed-vessel, wafted from a way-side tree, fell at the feet of the other. And, unheeding this irony of nature, the two opponents came nearer, erect and rigid, looked in each other's eyes, and—passed!

Colonel Starbottle had to be lifted from the cart. "This yer camp is played out," he said, gloomily, as he affected to be supported into the "Magnolia." With what further expression he might have indicated his feelings it was impossible to say, for at that moment Scott joined the group. "Did you speak to me?" he asked of the Colonel, dropping his hand, as if with accidental familiarity, on that gentleman's shoulder. The Colonel, recognizing some occult quality in the touch, and some unknown quantity in the glance of his questioner, contented himself by replying, "No, sir," with dignity. A few rods away, York's conduct was as characteristic and peculiar. "You had a mighty fine chance; why didn't you plump him?" said Jack Hamlin, as York drew near the buggy. "Because I hate him," was the reply, heard only by Jack. Contrary to popular belief, this reply was not hissed between the lips of the speaker, but was said in an ordinary tone. But Jack Hamlin, who was an observer of mankind, noticed that the speaker's hands were cold, and his lips dry, as he helped him into the buggy, and accepted the seeming paradox with a smile.

When Sandy Bar became convinced that the quarrel between York and Scott could not be settled after the usual local methods, it gave no further concern thereto. But presently it was rumoured that the "Amity Claim" was in litigation, and that its possession would be expensively disputed by each of the partners. As it was well known that the claim in question was "worked out" and worthless, and that the partners, whom it had already

enriched, had talked of abandoning it but a day or two before the quarrel, this proceeding could only be accounted for as gratuitous spite. Later, two San Francisco lawyers made their appearance in this guileless Arcadia, and were eventually taken into the saloons, and—what was pretty much the same thing—the confidences of the inhabitants. The results of this unhallowed intimacy were many subpoenas; and, indeed, when the "Amity Claim" came to trial, all of Sandy Bar that was not in compulsory attendance at the county-seat came there from curiosity. The gulches and ditches for miles around were deserted. I do not propose to describe that already famous trial. Enough that, in the language of the plaintiff's counsel, "it was one of no ordinary significance, involving the inherent rights of that untiring industry which had developed the Pactolian resources of this golden land"; and, in the homelier phrase of Colonel Starbottle, "A fuss that gentlemen might hev settled in ten minutes over a social glass, ef they meant business; or in ten seconds with a revolver, ef they meant fun." Scott got a verdict, from which York instantly appealed. It was said that he had sworn to spend his last dollar in the struggle.

In this way Sandy Bar began to accept the enmity of the former partners as a lifelong feud, and the fact that they had ever been friends was forgotten. The few who expected to learn from the trial the origin of the quarrel were disappointed. Among the various conjectures, that which ascribed some occult feminine influence as the cause was naturally popular, in a camp given to dubious compliment of the sex. "My word for it, gentlemen," said Colonel Starbottle, who had been known in Sacramento as a Gentleman of the Old School, "there's some lovely creature at the bottom of this." The gallant Colonel then proceeded to illustrate his theory, by divers sprightly stories, such as Gentlemen of the Old School are in the habit of repeating, but which, from deference to the prejudices of gentlemen of a more recent school, I refrain from transcribing here. But it would appear that even the Colonel's theory was fallacious. The only woman who personally might have exercised any influence over the partners was the pretty daughter of "old man Folinsbee," of Poverty Flat, at whose hospitable house—

which exhibited some comforts and refinements rare in that crude civilization—both York and Scott were frequent visitors. Yet into this charming retreat York strode one evening, a month after the quarrel, and, beholding Scott sitting there, turned to the fair hostess with the abrupt query, "Do you love this man?" The young woman thus addressed returned that answer—at once spirited and evasive—which would occur to most of my fair readers in such an exigency. Without another word, York left the house. "Miss Jo" heaved the least possible sigh as the door closed on York's curls and square shoulders, and then, like a good girl, turned to her insulted guest. "But would you believe it, dear?" she afterward related to an intimate friend, "the other creature, after glowering at me for a moment, got upon its hind legs, took its hat, and left, too; and that's the last I've seen of either."

The same hard disregard of all other interests or feelings in the gratification of their blind rancour characterized all their actions. When York purchased the land below Scott's new claim, and obliged the latter, at a great expense, to make a long détour to carry a "tail-race" around it, Scott retaliated by building a dam that overflowed York's claim on the river. It was Scott, who, in conjunction with Colonel Starbottle, first organized that active opposition to the Chinamen which resulted in the driving off of York's Mongolian labourers; it was York who built the wagon-road and established the express which rendered Scott's mules and pack-trains obsolete; it was Scott who called into life the Vigilance Committee which expatriated York's friend, Jack Hamlin; it was York who created the *Sandy Bar Herald*, which characterized the act as "a lawless outrage" and Scott as a "Border Ruffian"; it was Scott, at the head of twenty masked men, who, one moonlight night, threw the offending "formes" into the yellow river, and scattered the types in the dusty road. These proceedings were received in the distant and more civilized outlying towns as vague indications of progress and vitality. I have before me a copy of the *Poverty Flat Pioneer* for the week ending August 12, 1856, in which the editor, under the head of "County Improvements," says: "The new Presbyterian

Church on C Street, at Sandy Bar, is completed. It stands upon the lot formerly occupied by the 'Magnolia' Saloon, which was so mysteriously burnt last month. The temple, which now rises like a Phœnix from the ashes of the Magnolia, is virtually the free gift of H. J. York, Esq., of Sandy Bar, who purchased the lot and donated the lumber. Other buildings are going up in the vicinity, but the most noticeable is the 'Sunny South Saloon,' erected by Captain Mat. Scott, nearly opposite the church. Captain Scott has spared no expense in the furnishing of this saloon, which promises to be one of the most agreeable places of resort in old Tuolumne. He has recently imported two new, first-class billiard-tables, with cork cushions. Our old friend, 'Mountain Jimmy,' will dispense liquors at the bar. We refer our readers to the advertisement in another column. Visitors to Sandy Bar cannot do better than give 'Jimmy' a call." Among the local items occurred the following: "H. J. York, Esq., of Sandy Bar, has offered a reward of $100 for the detection of the parties who hauled away the steps of the new Presbyterian Church, C Street, Sandy Bar, during divine service on Sabbath evening last. Captain Scott adds another hundred for the capture of the miscreants who broke the magnificent plate-glass windows of the new saloon on the following evening. There is some talk of reorganizing the old Vigilance Committee at Sandy Bar."

When, for many months of cloudless weather, the hard, unwinking sun of Sandy Bar had regularly gone down on the unpacified wrath of these men, there was some talk of mediation. In particular, the pastor of the church to which I have just referred—a sincere, fearless, but perhaps not fully-enlightened man—seized gladly upon the occasion of York's liberality to attempt to reunite the former partners. He preached an earnest sermon on the abstract sinfulness of discord and rancour. But the excellent sermons of the Rev. Mr. Daws were directed to an ideal congregation that did not exist at Sandy Bar—a congregation of beings of unmixed vices and virtues, of single impulses, and perfectly logical motives, of preternatural simplicity, of childlike faith, and grown-up responsibilities. As, unfortunately, the people who actually attended Mr. Daws' church were mainly very

human, somewhat artful, more self-excusing than self-accusing, rather good-natured, and decidedly weak, they quietly shed that portion of the sermon which referred to themselves, and accepting York and Scott—who were both in defiant attendance—as curious examples of those ideal beings above referred to, felt a certain satisfaction—which, I fear, was not altogether Christian-like—in their "raking-down." If Mr. Daws expected York and Scott to shake hands after the sermon, he was disappointed. But he did not relax his purpose. With that quiet fearlessness and determination which had won for him the respect of men who were too apt to regard piety as synonymous with effeminacy, he attacked Scott in his own house. What he said has not been recorded, but it is to be feared that it was part of his sermon. When he had concluded, Scott looked at him, not unkindly, over the glasses of his bar, and said, less irreverently than the words might convey, "Young man, I rather like your style; but when you know York and me as well as you do God Almighty, it'll be time to talk."

And so the feud progressed; and so, as in more illustrious examples, the private and personal enmity of two representative men led gradually to the evolution of some crude, half-expressed principle or belief. It was not long before it was made evident that those beliefs were identical with certain broad principles laid down by the founders of the American Constitution, as expounded by the statesmanlike A.; or were the fatal quicksands, on which the ship of state might be wrecked, warningly pointed out by the eloquent B. The practical result of all which was the nomination of York and Scott to represent the opposite factions of Sandy Bar in legislative councils.

For some weeks past, the voters of Sandy Bar and the adjacent camps had been called upon, in large type, to "RALLY!" In vain the great pines at the cross-roads—whose trunks were compelled to bear this and other legends—moaned and protested from their windy watch-towers. But one day, with fife and drum, and flaming transparency, a procession filed into the triangular grove at the head of the gulch. The meeting was called to order

by Colonel Starbottle, who, having once enjoyed legislative functions, and being vaguely known as a "war-horse," was considered to be a valuable partisan of York. He concluded an appeal for his friend, with an enunciation of principles, interspersed with one or two anecdotes so gratuitously coarse that the very pines might have been moved to pelt him with their cast-off cones, as he stood there. But he created a laugh, on which his candidate rode into popular notice; and when York rose to speak, he was greeted with cheers. But, to the general astonishment, the new speaker at once launched into bitter denunciation of his rival. He not only dwelt upon Scott's deeds and example, as known to Sandy Bar, but spoke of facts connected with his previous career, hitherto unknown to his auditors. To great precision of epithet and directness of statement, the speaker added the fascination of revelation and exposure. The crowd cheered, yelled, and were delighted, but when this astounding philippic was concluded, there was a unanimous call for "Scott!" Colonel Starbottle would have resisted this manifest impropriety, but in vain. Partly from a crude sense of justice, partly from a meaner craving for excitement, the assemblage was inflexible; and Scott was dragged, pushed, and pulled upon the platform.

As his frowzy head and unkempt beard appeared above the railing, it was evident that he was drunk. But it was also evident, before he opened his lips, that the orator of Sandy Bar—the one man who could touch their vagabond sympathies (perhaps because he was not above appealing to them)—stood before them. A consciousness of this power lent a certain dignity to his figure, and I am not sure but that his very physical condition impressed them as a kind of regal unbending and large condescension. Howbeit, when this unexpected Hector arose from this ditch, York's myrmidons trembled.

"There's naught, gentlemen," said Scott, leaning forward on the railing,—"there's naught as that man hez said as isn't true. I was run outer Cairo; I did belong to the Regulators; I did desert from the army; I did leave a wife in Kansas. But thar's one thing he didn't charge me with, and, maybe, he's forgotten. For three years, gentlemen, I was that man's pardner!——"

Whether he intended to say more, I cannot tell; a burst of applause artistically rounded and enforced the climax, and virtually elected the speaker. That fall he went to Sacramento, York went abroad; and for the first time in many years, distance and a new atmosphere isolated the old antagonists.

With little of change in the green wood, grey rock, and yellow river, but with much shifting of human landmarks, and new faces in its habitations, three years passed over Sandy Bar. The two men, once so identified with its character, seemed to have been quite forgotten. "You will never return to Sandy Bar," said Miss Folinsbee, the "Lily of Poverty Flat," on meeting York in Paris, "for Sandy Bar is no more. They call it Riverside now; and the new town is built higher up on the river-bank. By the by, 'Jo' says that Scott has won his suit about the 'Amity Claim,' and that he lives in the old cabin, and is drunk half his time. O, I beg your pardon," added the lively lady, as a flush crossed York's sallow cheek; "but, bless me, I really thought that old grudge was made up. I'm sure it ought to be."

It was three months after this conversation, and a pleasant summer evening, that the Poverty Flat coach drew up before the veranda of the Union Hotel at Sandy Bar. Among its passengers was one, apparently a stranger, in the local distinction of well-fitting clothes and closely shaven face, who demanded a private room and retired early to rest. But before sunrise next morning he arose, and, drawing some clothes from his carpet-bag, proceeded to array himself in a pair of white duck trousers, a white duck overshirt, and straw hat. When his toilet was completed, he tied a red bandanna handkerchief in a loop and threw it loosely over his shoulders. The transformation was complete. As he crept softly down the stairs and stepped into the road, no one would have detected in him the elegant stranger of the previous night, and but few have recognized the face and figure of Henry York of Sandy Bar.

In the uncertain light of that early hour, and in the change that had come over the settlement, he had to pause for a moment to recall where he stood. The Sandy

Bar of his recollection lay below him, nearer the river; the buildings around him were of later date and newer fashion. As he strode toward the river, he noticed here a schoolhouse and there a church. A little farther on, "The Sunny South" came in view, transformed into a restaurant, its gilding faded and its paint rubbed off. He now knew where he was; and, running briskly down a declivity, crossed a ditch, and stood upon the lower boundary of the Amity Claim.

The grey mist was rising slowly from the river, clinging to the tree-tops and drifting up the mountain-side, until it was caught among these rocky altars, and held a sacrifice to the ascending sun. At his feet the earth, cruelly gashed and scarred by his forgotten engines, had, since the old days, put on a show of greenness here and there, and now smiled forgivingly up at him, as if things were not so bad after all. A few birds were bathing in the ditch with a pleasant suggestion of its being a new and special provision of Nature, and a hare ran into an inverted sluice-box, as he approached, as if it were put there for that purpose.

He had not yet dared to look in a certain direction. But the sun was now high enough to paint the little eminence on which the cabin stood. In spite of his self-control, his heart beat faster as he raised his eyes toward it. Its window and door were closed, no smoke came from its *adobe* chimney, but it was else unchanged. When within a few yards of it, he picked up a broken shovel, and, shouldering it with a smile, strode toward the door and knocked. There was no sound from within. The smile died upon his lips as he nervously pushed the door open.

A figure started up angrily and came toward him, —a figure whose bloodshot eyes suddenly fixed into a vacant stare, whose arms were at first outstretched and then thrown up in warning gesticulation,—a figure that suddenly gasped, choked, and then fell forward in a fit.

But before he touched the ground, York had him out into the open air and sunshine. In the struggle, both fell and rolled over on the ground. But the next moment York was sitting up, holding the convulsed frame of his former partner on his knee, and wiping the foam from his inarticulate lips. Gradually the tremor became less

frequent, and then ceased; and the strong man lay unconscious in his arms.

For some moments York held him quietly thus, looking in his face. Afar, the stroke of a woodman's axe—a mere phantom of sound—was all that broke the stillness. High up the mountain, a wheeling hawk hung breathlessly above them. And then came voices, and two men joined them.

"A fight?" No, a fit; and would they help him bring the sick man to the hotel?

And there, for a week, the stricken partner lay, unconscious of aught but the visions wrought by disease and fear. On the eighth day, at sunrise, he rallied, and, opening his eyes, looked upon York, and pressed his hand; then he spoke:—

"And it's you. I thought it was only whisky."

York replied by taking both of his hands, boyishly working them backward and forward, as his elbow rested on the bed, with a pleasant smile.

"And you've been abroad. How did you like Paris?"

"So, so. How did *you* like Sacramento?"

"Bully."

And that was all they could think to say. Presently Scott opened his eyes again.

"I'm mighty weak."

"You'll get better soon."

"Not much."

A long silence followed, in which they could hear the sounds of wood-chopping, and that Sandy Bar was already astir for the coming day. Then Scott slowly and with difficulty turned his face to York, and said,—

"I might hev killed you once."

"I wish you had."

They pressed each other's hands again, but Scott's grasp was evidently failing. He seemed to summon his energies for a special effort.

"Old man!"

"Old chap."

"Closer!"

York bent his head toward the slowly-fading face.

"Do ye mind that morning?"

"Yes."

A gleam of fun slid into the corner of Scott's blue eye, as he whispered,—

"Old man, thar *was* too much saleratus in that bread."

It is said that these were his last words. For when the sun, which had so often gone down upon the idle wrath of these foolish men, looked again upon them reunited, it saw the hand of Scott fall cold and irresponsive from the yearning clasp of his former partner, and it knew that the feud of Sandy Bar was at an end.

A NIGHT AT WINGDAM

I HAD been stage-ridden and bewildered all day, and when we swept down with the darkness into the Arcadian hamlet of "Wingdam," I resolved to go no farther, and rolled out in a gloomy and dyspeptic state. The effects of a mysterious pie, and some sweetened carbonic acid known to the proprietor of the "Half-Way House" as "lemming sody," still oppressed me. Even the facetiae of the gallant expressman who knew everybody's Christian name along the route, who rained letters, newspapers, and bundles from the top of the stage, whose legs frequently appeared in frightful proximity to the wheels, who got on and off while we were going at full speed, whose gallantry, energy, and superior knowledge of travel crushed all us other passengers to envious silence, and who just then was talking with several persons and manifestly doing something else at the same time,—even this had failed to interest me. So I stood gloomily, clutching my shawl and carpet-bag, and watched the stage roll away, taking a parting look at the gallant expressman as he hung on the top rail with one leg, and lit his cigar from the pipe of a running footman. I then turned toward the Wingdam Temperance Hotel.

It may have been the weather, or it may have been the pie, but I was not impressed favourably with the house. Perhaps it was the name extending the whole length of the building, with a letter under each window, making the people who looked out dreadfully conspicuous. Perhaps it was that "Temperance" always suggested to my mind rusks and weak tea. It was uninviting. It might have been called the "Total Abstinence" Hotel, from the lack

of anything to intoxicate or enthrall the senses. It was designed with an eye to artistic dreariness. It was so much too large for the settlement, that it appeared to be a very slight improvement on outdoors. It was unpleasantly new. There was the forest flavour of dampness about it, and a slight spicing of pine. Nature outraged, but not entirely subdued, sometimes broke out afresh in little round, sticky, resinous tears on the doors and windows. It seemed to me that boarding there must seem like a perpetual picnic. As I entered the door, a number of the regular boarders rushed out of a long room, and set about trying to get the taste of something out of their mouths, by the application of tobacco in various forms. A few immediately ranged themselves around the fire-place, with their legs over each other's chairs, and in that position silently resigned themselves to indigestion. Remembering the pie, I waived the invitation of the landlord to supper, but suffered myself to be conducted into the sitting-room. "Mine host" was a magnificent-looking, heavily bearded specimen of the animal man. He reminded me of somebody or something connected with the drama. I was sitting beside the fire, mutely wondering what it could be, and trying to follow the particular chord of memory thus touched, into the intricate past, when a little delicate-looking woman appeared at the door, and, leaning heavily against the casing, said in an exhausted tone, "Husband!" As the landlord turned toward her, that particular remembrance flashed before me, in a single line of blank verse. It was this: "Two souls with but one single thought, two hearts that beat as one."

It was Ingomar and Parthenia his wife. I imagined a different *dénouement* from the play. Ingomar had taken Parthenia back to the mountains, and kept a hotel for the benefit of the Alemanni, who resorted there in large numbers. Poor Parthenia was pretty well fagged out, and did all the work without "help." She had two "young barbarians," a boy and a girl. She was faded, but still good-looking.

I sat and talked with Ingomar, who seemed perfectly at home and told me several stories of the Alemanni, all bearing a strong flavour of the wilderness, and being

perfectly in keeping with the house. How he, Ingomar, had killed a certain dreadful "bar," whose skin was just up "yar," over his bed. How he, Ingomar, had killed several "bucks," whose skins had been prettily fringed and embroidered by Parthenia, and even now clothed him. How he, Ingomar, had killed several "Injins," and was once nearly scalped himself. All this with that ingenious candour which is perfectly justifiable in a barbarian, but which a Greek might feel inclined to look upon as "blowing." Thinking of the wearied Parthenia, I began to consider for the first time that perhaps she had better married the old Greek. Then she would at least have always looked neat. Then she would not have worn a woollen dress flavoured with all the dinners of the past year. Then she would not have been obliged to wait on the table with her hair half down. Then the two children would not have hung about her skirts with dirty fingers, palpably dragging her down day by day. I suppose it was the pie which put such heartless and improper ideas in my head, and so I rose up and told Ingomar I believed I'd go to bed. Preceded by that redoubtable barbarian and a flaring tallow candle, I followed him upstairs to my room. It was the only single room he had, he told me; he had built it for the convenience of married parties who might stop here, but that event not happening yet, he had left it half furnished. It had cloth on one side, and large cracks on the other. The wind, which always swept over Wingdam at night-time, puffed through the apartment from different apertures. The window was too small for the hole in the side of the house where it hung, and rattled noisily. Everything looked cheerless and dispiriting. Before Ingomar left me, he brought that "bar-skin," and throwing it over the solemn bier which stood in one corner, told me he reckoned that would keep me warm, and then bade me good night. I undressed myself, the light blowing out in the middle of that ceremony, crawled under the "bar-skin," and tried to compose myself to sleep.

But I was staringly wide awake. I heard the wind sweep down the mountain-side, and toss the branches of the melancholy pine, and then enter the house, and try all the doors along the passage. Sometimes strong

currents of air blew my hair all over the pillow, as with strange whispering breaths. The green timber along the walls seemed to be sprouting, and sent a dampness even through the "bar-skin." I felt like Robinson Crusoe in his tree, with the ladder pulled up—or like the rocked baby of the nursery song. After lying awake half an hour, I regretted having stopped at "Wingdam"; at the end of the third quarter, I wished I had not gone to bed; and when a restless hour passed, I got up and dressed myself. There had been a fire down in the big room. Perhaps it was still burning. I opened the door and groped my way along the passage, vocal with the snores of the Alemanni and the whistling of the night wind; I partly fell downstairs, and at last entering the big room, saw the fire still burning. I drew a chair toward it, poked it with my foot, and was astonished to see, by the upspringing flash, that Parthenia was sitting there also, holding a faded-looking baby.

I asked her why she was sitting up.

'She did not go to bed on Wednesday night before the mail arrived, and then she awoke her husband, and there were passengers to 'tend to.'

"Did she not get tired, sometimes?"

"A little, but Abner"—the Barbarian's Christian name—"had promised to get her more help next spring, if business was good."

"How many boarders had she?"

"She believed about forty came to regular meals, and there was transient custom, which was as much as she and her husband could 'tend to. But *he* did a great deal of work."

"What work?"

"Oh! bringing in the wood, and looking after the traders' things."

"How long had she been married?"

"About nine years. She had lost a little girl and boy. Three children living. *He* was from Illinois. She from Boston. Had an education (Boston Female High School—Geometry, Algebra, a little Latin and Greek). Mother and father died. Came to Illinois alone, to teach school. Saw *him*—yes—a love match." ("Two souls," etc., etc.) "Married and emigrated to Kansas. Thence across the

Plains to California. Always on the outskirts of civilization. *He* liked it."

"She might sometimes have wished to go home. Would like to, on account of her children. Would like to give them an education. Had taught them a little herself, but couldn't do much on account of other work. Hoped that the boy would be like his father, strong and hearty. Was fearful the girl would be more like her. Had often thought she was not fit for a pioneer's wife."

"Why?"

"Oh, she was not strong enough, and had seen some of his friends' wives in Kansas who could do more work. But he never complained—he was so kind." ("Two souls," etc.)

Sitting there with her head leaning pensively on one hand, holding the poor, wearied, and limp-looking baby wearily on the other arm — dirty, drabbled and forlorn, with the fire-light playing upon her features no longer fresh or young, but still refined and delicate, and even in her grotesque slovenliness still bearing a faint reminiscence of birth and breeding, it was not to be wondered that I did not fall into excessive raptures over the barbarian's kindness. Emboldened by my sympathy, she told me how she had given up, little by little, what she imagined to be the weakness of her early education, until she found that she acquired but little strength in her new experience. How, translated to a backwoods' society, she was hated by the women, and called proud and "fine," and how her dear husband lost popularity on that account with his fellows. How, led partly by his roving instincts, and partly from other circumstances, he started with her to California. An account of that tedious journey. How it was a dreary, dreary waste in her memory, only a blank plain marked by a little cairn of stones—a child's grave. How she had noticed that little Willie failed. How she had called Abner's attention to it, but, man-like, he knew nothing about children, and pooh-poohed it, and was worried by the stock. How it happened that after they had passed Sweetwater, she was walking beside the wagon one night, and looking at the western sky, and she heard a little voice say "Mother." How she looked into the wagon and saw that little Willie was

sleeping comfortably, and did not wish to wake him. How that in a few moments more she heard the same voice saying "Mother." How she came back to the wagon and leaned down over him, and felt his breath upon her face, and again covered him up tenderly, and once more resumed her weary journey beside him, praying to God for his recovery. How, with her face turned to the sky, she heard the same voice saying "Mother," and directly a great, bright star shot away from its brethren and expired. And how she knew what had happened, and ran to the wagon again only to pillow a little pinched and cold white face upon her weary bosom. The thin red hands went up to her eyes here, and for a few moments she sat still. The wind tore round the house and made a frantic rush at the front door, and from his couch of skins in the inner room, Ingomar, the barbarian, snored peacefully.

"Of course she always found a protector from insult and outrage in the great courage and strength of her husband?"

"Oh yes; when Ingomar was with her she feared nothing. But she was nervous, and had been frightened once!"

"How?"

"They had just arrived in California. They kept house then, and had to sell liquor to traders. Ingomar was hospitable, and drank with everybody, for the sake of popularity and business, and Ingomar got to like liquor, and was easily affected by it. And how one night there was a boisterous crowd in the bar-room; she went in and tried to get him away, but only succeeded in awakening the coarse gallantry of the half-crazed revellers. And how, when she had at last got him in the room with her frightened children, he sank down on the bed in a stupor, which made her think the liquor was drugged. And how she sat beside him all night, and near morning heard a step in the passage, and looking toward the door, saw the latch slowly moving up and down, as if somebody were trying it. And how she shook her husband, and tried to waken him, but without effect. And how at last the door yielded slowly at the top (it was bolted below), as if by a gradual pressure without; and how a

hand protruded through the opening. And how, as quick as lightning, she nailed that hand to the wall with her scissors (her only weapon), but the point broke, and somebody got away with a fearful oath. How she never told her husband of it, for fear he would kill that somebody; but how on one day a stranger called here, and as she was handing him his coffee, she saw a queer triangular scar on the back of his hand."

She was still talking, and the wind was still blowing, and Ingomar was still snoring from his couch of skins, when there was a shout high up the straggling street, and a clattering of hoofs, and rattling of wheels. The mail had arrived. Parthenia ran with the faded baby to awaken Ingomar, and almost simultaneously the gallant expressman stood again before me, addressing me by my Christian name, and inviting me to drink out of a mysterious black bottle. The horses were speedily watered, and the business of the gallant expressman concluded, and bidding Parthenia good-bye, I got on the stage, and immediately fell asleep, and dreamt of calling on Parthenia and Ingomar, and being treated with pie to an unlimited extent, until I woke up the next morning in Sacramento. I have some doubts as to whether all this was not a dyspeptic dream, but I never witness the drama, and hear that noble sentiment concerning "Two souls," etc., without thinking of Wingdam and poor Parthenia.

A MONTE FLAT PASTORAL

HOW OLD MAN PLUNKETT WENT HOME

I THINK we all loved him. Even after he mismanaged the affairs of the Amity Ditch Company, we commiserated him, although most of us were stockholders and lost heavily. I remember that the blacksmith went so far as to say that "them chaps as put that responsibility on the old man oughter be lynched." But the blacksmith was not a stockholder, and the expression was looked upon as the excusable extravagance of a large, sympathizing nature, that, when combined with a powerful frame, was unworthy of notice. At least, that was the way they put it. Yet I think there was a general feeling of regret that this misfortune would interfere with the old man's long-cherished plan of "going home."

Indeed, for the last ten years he had been "going home." He was going home after a six months' sojourn at Monte Flat. He was going home after the first rains. He was going home when the rains were over. He was going home when he had cut the timber on Buckeye Hill, when there was pasture on Dow's Flat, when he struck pay-dirt on Eureka Hill, when the Amity Company paid its first dividend, when the election was over, when he had received an answer from his wife. And so the years rolled by, the spring rains came and went, the woods of Buckeye Hill were level with the ground, the pasture on Dow's Flat grew sere and dry, Eureka Hill yielded its pay-dirt and swamped its owner, the first dividends of the Amity Company were made from the assessments of stockholders, there were new county officers at Monte

Flat, his wife's answer had changed into a persistent question, and still old man Plunkett remained.

It is only fair to say that he had made several distinct essays towards going. Five years before he had bidden good-bye to Monte Hill with much effusion and hand-shaking. But he never got any farther than the next town. Here he was induced to trade the sorrel colt he was riding for a bay mare—a transaction that at once opened to his lively fancy a vista of vast and successful future speculation. A few days after, Abner Dean of Angel's received a letter from him stating that he was going to Visalia to buy horses. "I am satisfied," wrote Plunkett, with that elevated rhetoric for which his correspondence was remarkable, "I am satisfied that we are at last developing the real resources of California. The world will yet look to Dow's Flat as the great stock-raising centre. In view of the interests involved, I have deferred my departure for a month." It was two before he again returned to us, penniless. Six months later he was again enabled to start for the Eastern States, and this time he got as far as San Francisco. I have before me a letter which I received a few days after his arrival, from which I venture to give an extract: "You know, my dear boy, that I have always believed that gambling, as it is absurdly called, is still in its infancy in California. I have always maintained that a perfect system might be invented, by which the game of poker may be made to yield a certain percentage to the intelligent player. I am not at liberty at present to disclose the system, but before leaving this city I intend to perfect it." He seems to have done so, and returned to Monte Flat with two dollars and thirty-seven cents, the absolute remainder of his capital after such perfection.

It was not until 1868 that he appeared to have finally succeeded in going home. He left us by the overland route—a route which he declared would give great opportunity for the discovery of undeveloped resources. His last letter was dated Virginia City. He was absent three years. At the close of a very hot day in midsummer he alighted from the Wingdam stage with hair and beard powdered with dust and age. There was a certain shyness about his greeting, quite different from his usual frank

volubility, that did not, however, impress us as any accession of character. For some days he was reserved regarding his recent visit, contenting himself with asserting, with more or less aggressiveness, that he had "always said he was going home, and now he had been there." Later, he grew more communicative, and spoke freely and critically of the manners and customs of New York and Boston, commented on the social changes in the years of his absence, and, I remember, was very hard upon what he deemed the follies incidental to a high state of civilization. Still later, he darkly alluded to the moral laxity of the higher planes of Eastern society, but it was not long before he completely tore away the veil and revealed the naked wickedness of New York social life in a way I even now shudder to recall. Vinous intoxication, it appeared, was a common habit of the first ladies of the city; immoralities which he scarcely dared name were daily practised by the refined of both sexes; niggardliness and greed were the common vices of the rich. "I have always asserted," he continued, "that corruption must exist where luxury and riches are rampant, and capital is not used to develop the natural resources of the country. Thank you—I will take mine without sugar." It is possible that some of these painful details crept into the local journals. I remember an editorial in the *Monte Flat Monitor*, entitled "The Effete East," in which the fatal decadence of New York and New England was elaborately stated, and California offered as a means of natural salvation. "Perhaps," said the *Monitor*, "we might add that Calaveras County offers superior inducements to the Eastern visitor with capital."

Later he spoke of his family. The daughter he had left a child had grown into beautiful womanhood; the son was already taller and larger than his father, and in a playful trial of strength, "the young rascal," added Plunkett, with a voice broken with paternal pride and humorous objurgation, had twice thrown his doting parent to the ground. But it was of his daughter he chiefly spoke. Perhaps emboldened by the evident interest which masculine Monte Flat held in feminine beauty, he expatiated at some length on her various charms and accomplishments, and finally produced her

photograph—that of a very pretty girl—to their infinite peril. But his account of his first meeting with her was so peculiar that I must fain give it after his own methods, which were, perhaps, some shades less precise and elegant than his written style.

"You see, boys, it's always been my opinion that a man oughter be able to tell his own flesh and blood by instinct. It's ten years since I'd seen my Melindy, and she was then only seven, and about so high. So, when I went to New York, what did I do? Did I go straight to my house and ask for my wife and daughter, like other folks? No, sir! I rigged myself up as a pedlar, as a pedlar, sir, and I rung the bell. When the servant came to the door, I wanted—don't you see—to show the ladies some trinkets. Then there was a voice over the banister, says, 'Don't want anything—send him away.' 'Some nice laces, ma'am, smuggled,' I says, looking up. 'Get out, you wretch,' says she. I knew the voice, boys: it was my wife, sure as a gun. Thar wasn't any instinct thar. 'Maybe the young ladies want somethin',' I said. 'Did you hear me!' says she, and with that she jumps forward and I left. It's ten years, boys, since I've seen the old woman, but somehow, when she fetched that leap, I naterally left."

He had been standing beside the bar—his usual attitude—when he made this speech, but at this point he half-faced his auditors with a look that was very effective. Indeed, a few who had exhibited some signs of scepticism and lack of interest, at once assumed an appearance of intense gratification and curiosity as he went on.

"Well, by hangin' round there for a day or two. I found out at last it was to be Melindy's birthday next week, and that she was goin' to have a big party. I tell ye what, boys, it weren't no slouch of a reception. The whole house was bloomin' with flowers, and blazin' with lights, and there was no end of servants and plate and refreshments and fixin's——"

"Uncle Joe."

"Well?"

"Where did they get the money?"

Plunkett faced his interlocutor with a severe glance. "I always said," he replied slowly, "that when I went

home, I'd send on ahead of me a draft for ten thousand dollars. I always said that, didn't I? Eh? And I said I was goin' home—and I've been home—haven't I? Well?"

Either there was something irresistibly conclusive in this logic, or else the desire to hear the remainder of Plunkett's story was stronger; but there was no more interruption. His ready good humour quickly returned, and, with a slight chuckle, he went on,—

"I went to the biggest jewellery shop in town, and I bought a pair of diamond ear-rings and put them in my pocket, and went to the house. 'What name?' says the chap who opened the door, and he looked like a cross 'twixt a restaurant waiter and a parson. 'Skeesicks,' said I. He takes me in, and pretty soon my wife comes sailin' into the parlour, and says, 'Excuse me, but I don't think I recognize the name.' She was mighty polite, for I had on a red wig and side-whiskers. 'A friend of your husband's from California, ma'am, with a present for your daughter, Miss——,' and I made as I had forgot the name. But all of a sudden a voice said, 'That's too thin,' and in walked Melindy. 'It's playin' it rather low down, father, to pretend you don't know your daughter's name—ain't it now? How are you, old man?' And with that she tears off my wig and whiskers, and throws her arms around my neck,—instinct, sir, pure instinct!"

Emboldened by the laughter which followed his description of the filial utterances of Melinda, he again repeated her speech, with more or less elaboration, joining in with, and indeed often leading, the hilarity that accompanied it, and returning to it with more or less incoherency, several times during the evening.

And so at various times, and at various places—but chiefly in bar-rooms—did this Ulysses of Monte Flat recount the story of his wanderings. There were several discrepancies in his statement, there was sometimes considerable prolixity of detail, there was occasional change of character and scenery, there was once or twice an absolute change in the *dénouement*, but always the fact of his having visited his wife and children remained. Of course in a sceptical community like that of Monte Flat—a community accustomed to great expectation and small

realization—a community wherein, to use the local dialect, "they got the colour and struck hardpan," more frequently than any other mining camp—in such a community the fullest credence was not given to old man Plunkett's facts. There was only one exception to the general unbelief—Henry York of Sandy Bar. It was he who was always an attentive listener; it was his scant purse that had often furnished Plunkett with means to pursue his unprofitable speculations; it was to him that the charms of Melinda were more frequently rehearsed; it was he that had borrowed her photograph; and it was he that, sitting alone in his little cabin one night, kissed that photograph until his honest, handsome face glowed again in the firelight.

It was dusty in Monte Flat. The ruins of the long, dry season were crumbling everywhere; everywhere the dying summer had strewn its red ashes a foot deep, or exhaled its last breath in a red cloud above the troubled highways. The alders and cotton-woods that marked the line of the water-courses were grimy with dust, and looked as if they might have taken root in the open air; the gleaming stones of the parched water-courses themselves were as dry bones in the valley of death. The dusty sunset at times painted the flanks of the distant hills a dull, coppery hue; on other days there was an odd, indefinable earthquake halo on the volcanic cones of the farther coast spurs; again, an acrid, resinous smoke from the burning wood on Heavytree Hill smarted the eyes and choked the free breath of Monte Flat, or a fierce wind, driving everything—including the shrivelled summer like a curled leaf—before it, swept down the flanks of the Sierras and chased the inhabitants to the doors of their cabins, and shook its red fist in at their windows. And on such a night as this—the dust having, in some way, choked the wheels of material progress in Monte Flat—most of the inhabitants were gathered listlessly in the gilded bar-room of the Moquelumne Hotel, spitting silently at the red-hot stove that tempered the mountain winds to the shorn lambs of Monte Flat, and waiting for the rain.

Every method known to the Flat of beguiling the time until the advent of this long-looked-for phenomenon had

been tried. It is true the methods were not many, being limited chiefly to that form of popular facetiae known as practical joking; and even this had assumed the seriousness of a business pursuit. Tommy Roy, who had spent two hours in digging a ditch in front of his own door—into which a few friends casually dropped during the evening—looked *ennuyé* and dissatisfied; the four prominent citizens, who, disguised as footpads, had stopped the County Treasurer on the Wingdam road, were jaded from their playful efforts next morning; the principal physician and lawyer of Monte Flat, who had entered into an unhallowed conspiracy to compel the Sheriff of Calaveras and his *posse* to serve a writ of ejectment on a grizzly bear, feebly disguised under the name of "one Major Ursus," who haunted the groves of Heavytree Hill, wore an expression of resigned weariness. Even the editor of the *Monte Flat Monitor*, who had that morning written a glowing account of a battle with the Wipneck Indians for the benefit of Eastern readers—even *he* looked grave and worn. When, at last, Abner Dean of Angel's, who had been on a visit to San Francisco, walked into the room, he was, of course, victimized in the usual way by one or two apparently honest questions which ended in his answering them, and then falling into the trap of asking another to his utter and complete shame and mortification—but that was all. Nobody laughed, and Abner, although a victim, did not lose his good humour. He turned quietly on his tormentors and said—

"I've got something better than that—you know old man Plunkett?"

Everybody simultaneously spat at the stove and nodded his head.

"You know he went home three years ago?" Two or three changed the position of their legs from the backs of different chairs, and one man said "Yes."

"Had a good time home?"

Everybody looked cautiously at the man who had said "Yes," and he, accepting the responsibility with a faint-hearted smile, said "Yes" again, and breathed hard.

"Saw his wife and child—purty gal?" said Abner cautiously.

"Yes," answered the man doggedly.

"Saw her photograph, perhaps?" continued Abner Dean quietly.

The man looked hopelessly around for support. Two or three who had been sitting near him and evidently encouraging him with a look of interest, now shamelessly abandoned him and looked another way. Henry York flushed a little and veiled his brown eyes. The man hesitated, and then with a sickly smile that was intended to convey the fact that he was perfectly aware of the object of this questioning, and was only humouring it from abstract good feeling, returned "Yes," again.

"Sent home—let's see—ten thousand dollars, wasn't it?" Abner Dean went on.

"Yes," reiterated the man, with the same smile.

"Well, I thought so," said Abner quietly; "but the fact is, you see, that he never went home at all—nary time."

Everybody stared at Abner in genuine surprise and interest, as with provoking calmness and a half-lazy manner he went on.

"You see, thar was a man down in 'Frisco as knowed him and saw him in Sonora during the whole of that three years. He was herding sheep or tending cattle, or spekilating all that time, and hadn't a red cent. Well, it 'mounts to this—that 'ar Plunkett ain't been east of the Rocky Mountains since '49."

The laugh which Abner Dean had the right to confidently expect came, but it was bitter and sardonic. I think indignation was apparent in the minds of his hearers. It was felt, for the first time, that there was a limit to practical joking. A deception carried on for a year, compromising the sagacity of Monte Flat, was deserving the severest reprobation. Of course nobody had believed Plunkett; but then the supposition that it might be believed in adjacent camps that they *had* believed him was gall and bitterness. The lawyer thought that an indictment for obtaining money under false pretences might be found; the physician had long suspected him of insanity, and was not certain but that he ought to be confined. The four prominent merchants thought that the business interests of Monte Flat demanded that something should be done. In the midst of an excited

and angry discussion the door slowly opened, and old man Plunkett staggered into the room.

He had changed pitifully in the last six months. His hair was a dusty yellowish-grey, like the chimisal on the flanks of Heavytree Hill; his face was waxen-white and blue and puffy under the eyes; his clothes were soiled and shabby—streaked in front with the stains of hurried luncheons eaten standing, and fluffy behind with the wool and hair of hurriedly extemporized couches. In obedience to that odd law, that, the more seedy and soiled a man's garments become, the less does he seem inclined to part with them, even during that portion of the twenty-four hours when they are deemed least essential, Plunkett's clothes had gradually taken on the appearance of a kind of bark, or an outgrowth from within, for which their possessor was not entirely responsible. Howbeit, as he entered the room he attempted to button his coat over a dirty shirt, and passed his fingers, after the manner of some animal, over his cracker-strewn beard—in recognition of a cleanly public sentiment. But even as he did so the weak smile faded from his lips, and his hand, after fumbling aimlessly around a button, dropped helplessly at his side. For, as he leaned his back against the bar and faced the group, he for the first time became aware that every eye but one was fixed upon him. His quick, nervous apprehension at once leaped to the truth. His miserable secret was out and abroad in the very air about him. As a last resort, he glanced despairingly at Henry York, but his flushed face was turned toward the windows.

No word was spoken. As the bar-keeper silently swung a decanter and glass before him, he took a cracker from a dish and mumbled it with affected unconcern. He lingered over his liquor, until its potency stiffened his relaxed sinews and dulled the nervous edge of his apprehension, and then he suddenly faced around. "It don't look as if we were goin' to hev any rain much afore Christmas," he said with defiant ease.

No one made any reply.

"Just like this in '52, and again in '60. It's always been my opinion that these dry seasons come reg'lar. I've said it afore. I say it again. It's jist as I said

about going home, you know," he added with desperate recklessness.

"Thar's a man," said Abner Dean lazily, "ez sez you never went home. Thar's a man ez sez you've been three years in Sonora. Thar's a man ez sez you haint seen your wife and daughter since '49. Thar's a man ez sez you've been playin' this camp for six months."

There was a dead silence. Then a voice said, quite as quietly—

"That man lies."

It was not the old man's voice. Everybody turned as Henry York slowly rose, stretching out his six feet of length, and, brushing away the ashes that had fallen from his pipe upon his breast, deliberately placed himself beside Plunkett, and faced the others.

"That man ain't here," continued Abner Dean, with listless indifference of voice and a gentle preoccupation of manner, as he carelessly allowed his right hand to rest on his hip near his revolver. "That man ain't here, but if I'm called upon to make good what he says, why, I'm on hand."

All rose as the two men—perhaps the least externally agitated of them all—approached each other. The lawyer stepped in between them.

"Perhaps there's some mistake here. York, do you *know* that the old man has been home?"

"Yes."

"How do you know it?"

York turned his clear, honest, frank eyes on his questioner, and without a tremor told the only direct and unmitigated lie of his life. "Because I've seen him there."

The answer was conclusive. It was known that York had been visiting the East during the old man's absence. The colloquy had diverted attention from Plunkett, who, pale and breathless, was staring at his unexpected deliverer. As he turned again toward his tormentors, there was something in the expression of his eye that caused those that were nearest to him to fall back, and sent a strange, indefinable thrill through the boldest and most reckless. As he made a step forward the physician almost unconsciously raised his hand with a warning gesture, and old man Plunkett, with his eyes fixed upon the red-hot

stove, and an odd smile playing about his mouth, began—

"Yes—of course you did. Who says you didn't? It ain't no lie; I said I was goin' home, and I've been home. Haven't I? My God! I have. Who says I've been lyin'? Who says I'm dreamin'? Is it true—why don't you speak? It is true, after all. You say you saw me there, why don't you speak again? Say, say!—is it true? It's going now. O my God—it's going again. It's going now. Save me!" and with a fierce cry he fell forward in a fit upon the floor.

When the old man regained his senses he found himself in York's cabin. A flickering fire of pine boughs lit up the rude rafters, and fell upon a photograph tastefully framed with fir-cones and hung above the brush whereon he lay. It was the portrait of a young girl. It was the first object to meet the old man's gaze, and it brought with it a flush of such painful consciousness that he started and glanced quickly around. But his eyes only encountered those of York—clear, brown, critical, and patient, and they fell again.

"Tell me, old man," said York, not unkindly, but with the same cold, clear tone in his voice that his eye betrayed a moment ago, "tell me, is *that* a lie too?" and he pointed to the picture.

The old man closed his eyes and did not reply. Two hours before, the question would have stung him into some evasion or bravado. But the revelation contained in the question, as well as the tone of York's voice, was to him now, in his pitiable condition, a relief. It was plain, even to his confused brain, that York had lied when he had endorsed his story in the bar-room—it was clear to him now that he had not been home—that he was not, as he had begun to fear, going mad. It was such a relief that, with characteristic weakness, his former recklessness and extravagance returned. He began to chuckle—finally, to laugh uproariously.

York, with his eyes still fixed on the old man, withdrew the hand with which he had taken his.

"Didn't we fool 'em nicely, eh, Yorky! He! he! The biggest thing yet ever played in this camp! I always said I'd play 'em all some day, and I have—played 'em

for six months. Ain't it rich—ain't it the richest thing you ever seed? Did you see Abner's face when he spoke 'bout that man as seed me in Sonora?—warn't it good as the minstrels? Oh, it's too much!" and striking his leg with the palm of his hand, he almost threw himself from the bed in a paroxysm of laughter—a paroxysm that, nevertheless, appeared to be half real and half affected.

"Is that photograph hers?" said York in a low voice, after a slight pause.

"Hers? No! It's one of the San Francisco actresses, he! he! Don't you see? I bought it for two bits in one of the book-stores. I never thought they'd swaller *that* too! but they did! Oh, but the old man played 'em this time, didn't he—eh?" and he peered curiously in York's face.

"Yes, and he played *me* too," said York, looking steadily in the old man's eye.

"Yes, of course," interposed Plunkett hastily, "but you know, Yorky, you got out of it well! You've sold 'em too. We've both got 'em on a string now—you and me—got to stick together now. You did it well, Yorky: you did it well. Why, when you said you'd seen me in York City, I'm d—d if I didn't——"

"Didn't what?" said York gently, for the old man had stopped with a pale face and wandering eye.

"Eh?"

"You say when I said I had seen you in New York you thought——"

"You lie!" said the old man fiercely, "I didn't say I thought anything. What are you trying to go back on me for? Eh?" His hands were trembling as he rose, muttering, from the bed and made his way toward the hearth.

"Gimme some whisky," he said presently, "and dry up. You oughter treat, anyway. Them fellows oughter treated last night. By hookey, I'd made 'em—only I fell sick."

York placed the liquor and a tin cup on the table beside him, and, going to the door, turned his back upon his guest, and looked out on the night. Although it was clear moonlight the familiar prospect never to him seemed so dreary. The dead waste of the broad Wingdam

highway never seemed so monotonous—so like the days that he had passed and were to come to him—so like the old man in its suggestion of going sometime and never getting there. He turned, and going up to Plunkett put his hand upon his shoulder and said—

"I want you to answer one question fairly and squarely."

The liquor seemed to have warmed the torpid blood in the old man's veins and softened his acerbity, for the face he turned up to York was mellowed in its rugged outline and more thoughtful in expression, as he said—

"Go on, my boy."

"Have you a wife and—daughter?"

"Before God, I have!"

The two men were silent for a moment, both gazing at the fire. Then Plunkett began rubbing his knees slowly.

"The wife, if it comes to that, ain't much," he began cautiously, "being a little on the shoulder, you know, and wantin', so to speak, a liberal California education—which makes, you know, a bad combination. It's always been my opinion that there ain't any worse. Why, she's as ready with her tongue as Abner Dean is with his revolver, only with the difference that she shoots from principle, as she calls it, and the consequence is, she's always layin' for you. It's the effete East, my boy, that's ruinin' her. It's them ideas she gets in New York and Boston that's made her and me what we are. I don't mind her havin' 'em if she didn't shoot. But havin' that propensity, them principles oughtn't to be lying round loose no more'n firearms."

"But your daughter?" said York.

The old man's hands went up to his eyes here, and then both hands and head dropped forward on the table. "Don't say anything 'bout her, my boy, don't ask me now." With one hand concealing his eyes, he fumbled about with the other in his pockets for his handkerchief—but vainly. Perhaps it was owing to this fact that he repressed his tears, for when he removed his hand from his eyes they were quite dry. Then he found his voice.

"She's a beautiful girl, beautiful, though I say it; and you shall see her, my boy, you shall see her, sure. I've got things about fixed now. I shall have my plan for

reducin' ores perfected in a day or two, and I've got proposals from all the smeltin' works here "—here he hastily produced a bundle of papers that fell upon the floor—" and I'm goin' to send for 'em. I've got the papers here as will give me ten thousand dollars clear in the next month," he added, as he strove to collect the valuable documents again. " I'll have 'em here by Christmas, if I live, and you shall eat your Christmas dinner with me, York, my boy—you shall, sure."

With his tongue now fairly loosened by liquor and the suggestive vastness of his prospects, he rambled on more or less incoherently, elaborating and amplifying his plans—occasionally even speaking of them as already accomplished, until the moon rode high in the heavens, and York led him again to his couch. Here he lay for some time muttering to himself, until at last he sank into a heavy sleep. When York had satisfied himself of the fact, he gently took down the picture and frame, and, going to the hearth, tossed them on the dying embers, and sat down to see them burn.

The fir-cones leaped instantly into flame; then the features that had entranced San Francisco audiences nightly, flashed up and passed away—as such things are apt to pass—and even the cynical smile on York's lips faded too. And then there came a supplemental and unexpected flash as the embers fell together, and by its light York saw a paper upon the floor. It was one that had fallen from the old man's pocket. As he picked it up listlessly, a photograph slipped from its folds. It was the portrait of a young girl, and on its reverse was written, in a scrawling hand, " Melinda to Father."

It was at best a cheap picture, but, ah me! I fear even the deft graciousness of the highest art could not have softened the rigid angularities of that youthful figure, its self-complacent vulgarity, its cheap finery, its expressionless ill-favour. York did not look at it a second time. He turned to the letter for relief.

It was misspelled, it was unpunctuated, it was almost illegible, it was fretful in tone and selfish in sentiment. It was not, I fear, even original in the story of its woes. It was the harsh recital of poverty, of suspicion, of mean makeshifts and compromises, of low pains and lower

longings, of sorrows that were degrading, of a grief that was pitiable. Yet it was sincere in a certain kind of vague yearning for the presence of the degraded man to whom it was written—an affection that was more like a confused instinct than a sentiment.

York folded it again carefully, and placed it beneath the old man's pillow. Then he returned to his seat by the fire. A smile that had been playing upon his face, deepening the curves behind his moustache and gradually overrunning his clear brown eyes, presently faded away. It was last to go from his eyes, and it left there—oddly enough to those who did not know him—a tear.

He sat there for a long time, leaning forward, his head upon his hands. The wind that had been striving with the canvas roof all at once lifted its edges, and a moonbeam slipped suddenly in, and lay for a moment like a shining blade upon his shoulder. And knighted by its touch, straightway plain Henry York arose — sustained, high-purposed, and self-reliant!

The rains had come at last. There was already a visible greenness on the slopes of Heavytree Hill, and the long white track of the Wingdam road was lost in outlying pools and ponds a hundred rods from Monte Flat. The spent water-courses, whose white bones had been sinuously trailed over the flat, like the vertebrae of some forgotten saurian, were full again; the dry bones moved once more in the valley, and there was joy in the ditches, and a pardonable extravagance in the columns of the *Monte Flat Monitor*. "Never before in the history of the county has the yield been so satisfactory. Our contemporary of the *Hillside Beacon*, who yesterday facetiously alluded to the fact (?) that our best citizens were leaving town, in 'dug-outs,' on account of the flood, will be glad to hear that our distinguished fellow-townsman, Mr. Henry York, now on a visit to his relatives in the East, lately took with him, in his 'dug-out,' the modest sum of fifty thousand dollars, the result of one week's clean-up. We can imagine," continued that sprightly journal, "that no such misfortune is likely to overtake Hillside this season. And yet we believe the *Beacon* man wants a railroad." A few journals broke out into poetry. The operator at Simpson's Crossing telegraphed to the Sacra-

mento *Universe*: "All day the low clouds have shook their garnered fullness down." A San Francisco journal lapsed into noble verse, thinly disguised as editorial prose: "Rejoice, the gentle rain has come, the bright and pearly rain, which scatters blessings on the hills, and sifts them o'er the plain. Rejoice," etc. Indeed, there was only one to whom the rain had not brought blessing, and that was Plunkett. In some mysterious and darksome way, it had interfered with the perfection of his new method of reducing ores, and thrown the advent of that invention back another season. It had brought him down to an habitual seat in the bar-room, where, to heedless and inattentive ears, he sat and discoursed of the East and his family.

No one disturbed him. Indeed, it was rumoured that some funds had been lodged with the landlord, by a person or persons unknown, whereby his few wants were provided for. His mania—for that was the charitable construction which Monte Flat put upon his conduct—was indulged, even to the extent of Monte Flat's accepting his invitation to dine with his family on Christmas Day—an invitation extended frankly to every one with whom the old man drank or talked. But one day, to everybody's astonishment, he burst into the bar-room, holding an open letter in his hand. It read as follows:—

> Be ready to meet your family at the new cottage on Heavytree Hill on Christmas Day. Invite what friends you choose. HENRY YORK.

The letter was handed round in silence. The old man, with a look alternating between hope and fear, gazed in the faces of the group. The Doctor looked up significantly, after a pause. "It's a forgery, evidently," he said in a low voice; "he's cunning enough to conceive it—they always are—but you'll find he'll fail in executing it. Watch his face! Old man," he said suddenly, in a loud, peremptory tone, "this is a trick—a forgery—and you know it. Answer me squarely, and look me in the eye. Isn't it so?"

The eyes of Plunkett stared a moment, and then dropped weakly. Then, with a feebler smile, he said, "You're too many for me, boys. The Doc's right. The

little game's up. You can take the old man's hat"; and so, tottering, trembling, and chuckling, he dropped into silence and his accustomed seat. But the next day he seemed to have forgotten this episode, and talked as glibly as ever of the approaching festivity.

And so the days and weeks passed until Christmas—a bright, clear day, warmed with south winds, and joyous with the resurrection of springing grasses—broke upon Monte Flat. And then there was a sudden commotion in the hotel bar-room, and Abner Dean stood beside the old man's chair, and shook him out of a slumber to his feet. "Rouse up, old man. York is here, with your wife and daughter at the cottage on Heavytree. Come, old man. Here, boys, give him a lift"; and in another moment a dozen strong and willing hands had raised the old man, and bore him in triumph to the street, up the steep grade of Heavytree Hill, and deposited him, struggling and confused, in the porch of a little cottage. At the same instant, two women rushed forward, but were restrained by a gesture from Henry York. The old man was struggling to his feet. With an effort, at last, he stood erect, trembling, his eye fixed, a grey pallor on his cheek, and a deep resonance in his voice.

"It's all a trick, and a lie! They ain't no flesh and blood or kin o' mine. It ain't my wife, nor child. My daughter's a beautiful girl—a beautiful girl—d'ye hear? She's in New York, with her mother, and I'm going to fetch her here. I said I'd go home, and I've been home—d'ye hear me?—I've been home! It's a mean trick you're playin' on the old man. Let me go: d'ye hear? Keep them women off me! Let me go! I'm going—I'm going home!"

His hands were thrown up convulsively in the air, and, half turning round, he fell sideways on the porch, and so to the ground. They picked him up hurriedly; but too late. He had gone home.

MR. THOMPSON'S PRODIGAL

We all knew that Mr. Thompson was looking for his son, and a pretty bad one at that. That he was coming to California for this sole object was no secret to his fellow-passengers; and the physical peculiarities, as well as the moral weaknesses, of the missing prodigal were made equally plain to us through the frank volubility of the parent. "You was speaking of a young man which was hung at Red Dog for sluice-robbing," said Mr. Thompson to a steerage passenger one day; "be you aware of the colour of his eyes?" "Black," responded the passenger. "Ah!" said Mr. Thompson, referring to some mental memoranda, "Char-les's eyes was blue." He then walked away. Perhaps it was from this unsympathetic mode of inquiry, perhaps it was from that Western predilection to take a humorous view of any principle or sentiment persistently brought before them, that Mr. Thompson's quest was the subject of some satire among the passengers. A gratuitous advertisement of the missing Charles, addressed to "Jailers and Guardians," circulated privately among them; everybody remembered to have met Charles under distressing circumstances. Yet it is but due to my countrymen to state that when it was known that Thompson had embarked some wealth in this visionary project, but little of this satire found its way to his ears, and nothing was uttered in his hearing that might bring a pang to a father's heart, or imperil a possible pecuniary advantage of the satirist. Indeed, Mr. Bracy Tibbets's jocular proposition to form a joint-stock company to "prospect" for the missing youth received at one time quite serious entertainment.

Perhaps to superficial criticism Mr. Thompson's nature was not picturesque nor lovable. His history, as imparted at dinner one day by himself, was practical even in its singularity. After a hard and wilful youth and maturity, in which he had buried a broken-spirited wife and driven his son to sea, he suddenly experienced religion. "I got it in New Orleans in '59," said Mr. Thompson, with the general suggestion of referring to an epidemic. "Enter ye the narrer gate. Parse me the beans." Perhaps this practical quality upheld him in his apparently hopeless search. He had no clue to the whereabouts of his runaway son; indeed, scarcely a proof of his present existence. From his indifferent recollection of the boy of twelve, he now expected to identify the man of twenty-five.

It would seem that he was successful. How he succeeded was one of the few things he did not tell. There are, I believe, two versions of the story. One, that Mr. Thompson, visiting a hospital, discovered his son by reason of a peculiar hymn, chanted by the sufferer in a delirious dream of his boyhood. This version, giving as it did wide range to the finer feelings of the heart, was quite popular; and as told by the Rev. Mr. Gushington on his return from his California tour, never failed to satisfy an audience. The other was less simple, and, as I shall adopt it here, deserves more elaboration.

It was after Mr. Thompson had given up searching for his son among the living, and had taken to the examination of cemeteries and a careful inspection of the "cold *hic jacets* of the dead." At this time he was a frequent visitor of "Lone Mountain," a dreary hill-top, bleak enough in its original isolation, and bleaker for the white-faced marbles by which San Francisco anchored her departed citizens, and kept them down in a shifting sand that refused to cover them, and against a fierce and persistent wind that strove to blow them utterly away. Against this wind the old man opposed a will quite as persistent, a grizzled hard face, and a tall crape-bound hat drawn tightly over his eyes,—and so spent days in reading the mortuary inscriptions audibly to himself. The frequency of Scriptural quotation pleased him, and he was fond of corroborating them by a pocket Bible. "That's from Psalms," he said one day to an adjacent

gravedigger. The man made no reply. Not at all rebuffed, Mr. Thompson at once slid down into the open grave with a more practical inquiry, "Did you ever, in your profession, come across Char-les Thompson?" "Thompson be d—d!" said the gravedigger, with great directness. "Which, if he hadn't religion, I think he is," responded the old man, as he clambered out of the grave.

It was perhaps on this occasion that Mr. Thompson stayed later than usual. As he turned his face toward the city, lights were beginning to twinkle ahead, and a fierce wind, made visible by fog, drove him forward, or, lying in wait, charged him angrily from the corners of deserted suburban streets. It was on one of these corners that something else, quite as indistinct and malevolent, leaped upon him with an oath, a presented pistol, and a demand for money. But it was met by a will of iron and a grip of steel. The assailant and assailed rolled together on the ground. But the next moment the old man was erect; one hand grasping the captured pistol, the other clutching at arm's length the throat of a figure, surly, youthful, and savage.

"Young man," said Mr. Thompson, setting his thin lips together, "what might be your name?"

"Thompson!"

The old man's hand slid from the throat to the arm of his prisoner, without relaxing its firmness.

"Char-les Thompson, come with me," he said presently, and marched his captive to the hotel. What took place there has not transpired, but it was known the next morning that Mr. Thompson had found his son.

It is proper to add to the above improbable story, that there was nothing in the young man's appearance or manners to justify it. Grave, reticent, and handsome, devoted to his newly found parent, he assumed the emoluments and responsibilities of his new condition with a certain serious ease that more nearly approached that which San Francisco society lacked and—rejected. Some chose to despise this quality as a tendency to "psalm-singing"; others saw in it the inherited qualities of the parent, and were ready to prophesy for the son the same hard old age. But all agreed that it was not inconsistent with the habits of money-getting for which father and son were respected.

And yet the old man did not seem to be happy. Perhaps it was that the consummation of his wishes left him without a practical mission; perhaps—and it is the more probable—he had little love for the son he had regained. The obedience he exacted was freely given, the reform he had set his heart upon was complete; and yet somehow it did not seem to please him. In reclaiming his son he had fulfilled all the requirements that his religious duty required of him, and yet the act seemed to lack sanctification. In this perplexity he read again the parable of the Prodigal Son, which he had long ago adopted for his guidance, and found that he had omitted the final feast of reconciliation. This seemed to offer the proper quality of ceremoniousness in the sacrament between himself and his son; and so, a year after the appearance of Charles, he set about giving him a party. "Invite everybody, Char-les," he said dryly; "everybody who knows that I brought you out of the wine-husks of iniquity and the company of harlots; and bid them eat, drink, and be merry."

Perhaps the old man had another reason, not yet clearly analysed. The fine house he had built on the sandhills sometimes seemed lonely and bare. He often found himself trying to reconstruct, from the grave features of Charles, the little boy whom he but dimly remembered in the past, and of whom lately he had been thinking a great deal. He believed this to be a sign of impending old age and childishness; but coming one day, in his formal drawing-room, upon a child of one of the servants, who had strayed therein, he would have taken him in his arms, but the child fled from before his grizzled face. So that it seemed eminently proper to invite a number of people to his house, and, from the array of San Francisco maidenhood, to select a daughter-in-law. And then there would be a child—a boy, whom he could "rare up" from the beginning, and—love—as he did not love Charles.

We were all at the party. The Smiths, Joneses, Browns, and Robinsons also came, in that fine flow of animal spirits, unchecked by any respect for the entertainer, which most of us are apt to find so fascinating. The proceedings would have been somewhat riotous but

for the social position of the actors. In fact, Mr. Bracy Tibbets, having naturally a fine appreciation of a humorous situation, but further impelled by the bright eyes of the Jones girls, conducted himself so remarkably as to attract the serious regard of Mr. Charles Thompson, who approached him, saying quietly, "You look ill, Mr. Tibbets; let me conduct you to your carriage. Resist, you hound, and I'll throw you through that window. This way, please; the room is close and distressing." It is hardly necessary to say that but a part of this speech was audible to the company, and that the rest was not divulged by Mr. Tibbets, who afterward regretted the sudden illness which kept him from witnessing a certain amusing incident, which the fastest Miss Jones characterized as the "richest part of the blow-out," and which I hasten to record.

It was at supper. It was evident that Mr. Thompson had overlooked much lawlessness in the conduct of the younger people, in his abstract contemplation of some impending event. When the cloth was removed, he rose to his feet and grimly tapped upon the table. A titter, that broke out among the Jones girls, became epidemic on one side of the board. Charles Thompson, from the foot of the table, looked up in tender perplexity. "He's going to sing a Doxology," "He's going to pray," "Silence for a speech," ran round the room.

"It's one year to-day, Christian brothers and sisters," said Mr. Thompson with grim deliberation,—"one year to-day since my son came home from eating of wine-husks and spending of his substance on harlots." (The tittering suddenly ceased.) "Look at him now. Char-les Thompson, stand up." (Charles Thompson stood up.) "One year ago to-day,—and look at him now."

He was certainly a handsome prodigal, standing there in his cheerful evening-dress,—a repentant prodigal, with sad obedient eyes turned upon the harsh and unsympathetic glance of his father. The youngest Miss Smith, from the pure depths of her foolish little heart, moved unconsciously toward him.

"It's fifteen years ago since he left my house," said Mr. Thompson, "a rovier and a prodigal. I was myself a man of sin, O Christian friends,—a man of wrath and

bitterness" ("Amen," from the eldest Miss Smith)—"but praise be God, I've fled the wrath to come. It's five years ago since I got the peace that passeth understanding. Have you got it, friends?" (A general sub-chorus of "No, no," from the girls, and, "Pass the word for it," from Midshipman Coxe, of the U.S. sloop *Wethersfield*.) "Knock, and it shall be opened to you.

"And when I found the error of my ways, and the preciousness of grace," continued Mr. Thompson, "I came to give it to my son. By sea and land I sought him far, and fainted not. I did not wait for him to come to me, which the same I might have done, and justified myself by the Book of books, but I sought him out among his husks, and—" (the rest of the sentence was lost in the rustling withdrawal of the ladies). "Works, Christian friends, is my motto. By their works shall ye know them, and there is mine."

The particular and accepted work to which Mr. Thompson was alluding had turned quite pale, and was looking fixedly toward an open door leading to the veranda, lately filled by gaping servants, and now the scene of some vague tumult. As the noise continued, a man, shabbily dressed and evidently in liquor, broke through the opposing guardians, and staggered into the room. The transition from the fog and darkness without to the glare and heat within evidently dazzled and stupefied him. He removed his battered hat, and passed it once or twice before his eyes, as he steadied himself, but unsuccessfully, by the back of a chair. Suddenly his wandering glance fell upon the pale face of Charles Thompson; and with a gleam of childlike recognition, and a weak falsetto laugh, he darted forward, caught at the table, upset the glasses, and literally fell upon the prodigal's breast.

"Sha'ly! yo' d—d ol' scoun'rel, hoo rar ye!"

"Hush!—sit down!—hush!" said Charles Thompson, hurriedly endeavouring to extricate himself from the embrace of his unexpected guest.

"Look at 'm!" continued the stranger, unheeding the admonition, but suddenly holding the unfortunate Charles at arm's length, in loving and undisguised admiration of his festive appearance. "Look at 'm! Ain't he nasty? Sha'ls, I'm prow of yer!"

"Leave the house!" said Mr. Thompson, rising, with a dangerous look in his cold grey eye. "Char-les, how dare you?"

"Simmer down, ole man! Sha'ls, who's th' ol' bloat? Eh?"

"Hush, man; here, take this!" With nervous hands, Charles Thompson filled a glass with liquor. "Drink it and go—until to-morrow—any time, but—leave us!—go now!" But even then, ere the miserable wretch could drink, the old man, pale with passion, was upon him. Half carrying him in his powerful arms, half dragging him through the circling crowd of frightened guests, he had reached the door, swung open by the waiting servants, when Charles Thompson started from a seeming stupor, crying—

"Stop!"

The old man stopped. Through the open door the fog and wind drove chilly. "What does this mean?" he asked, turning a baleful face on Charles.

"Nothing—but stop—for God's sake. Wait till to-morrow, but not to-night. Do not, I implore you—do this thing."

There was something in the tone of the young man's voice, something, perhaps, in the contact of the struggling wretch he held in his powerful arms; but a dim, indefinite fear took possession of the old man's heart. "Who," he whispered hoarsely, "is this man?"

Charles did not answer.

"Stand back, there, all of you," thundered Mr. Thompson, to the crowding guests around him. "Char-les—come here! I command you—I—I—I—beg you—tell me *who* is this man?"

Only two persons heard the answer that came faintly from the lips of Charles Thompson—

"YOUR SON."

When day broke over the bleak sandhills, the guests had departed from Mr. Thompson's banquet-halls. The lights still burned dimly and coldly in the deserted rooms, —deserted by all but three figures, that huddled together in the chill drawing-room, as if for warmth. One lay in drunken slumber on a couch; at his feet sat he who had been known as Charles Thompson; and beside them,

haggard and shrunken to half his size, bowed the figure of Mr. Thompson, his grey eye fixed, his elbows upon his knees, and his hands clasped over his ears, as if to shut out the sad, entreating voice that seemed to fill the room.

"God knows I did not set about to wilfully deceive. The name I gave that night was the first that came into my thought,—the name of one whom I thought dead,—the dissolute companion of my shame. And when you questioned further, I used the knowledge that I gained from him to touch your heart to set me free; only, I swear, for that! But when you told me who you were, and I first saw the opening of another life before me—then—then— O, sir, if I was hungry, homeless, and reckless, when I would have robbed you of your gold, I was heart-sick, helpless, and desperate, when I would have robbed you of your love!"

The old man stirred not. From his luxurious couch the newly found prodigal snored peacefully.

"I had no father I could claim. I never knew a home but this. I was tempted. I have been happy,—very happy."

He rose and stood before the old man.

"Do not fear that I shall come between your son and his inheritance. To-day I leave this place, never to return. The world is large, sir, and, thanks to your kindness, I now see the way by which an honest livelihood is gained. Good-bye. You will not take my hand? Well, well! Good-bye."

He turned to go. But when he had reached the door he suddenly came back, and, raising with both hands the grizzled head, he kissed it once and twice.

"Char-les!"

There was no reply.

"Char-les!"

The old man rose with a frightened air, and tottered feebly to the door. It was open. There came to him the awakened tumult of a great city, in which the prodigal's footsteps were lost for ever.

HOW SANTA CLAUS CAME TO SIMPSON'S BAR

It had been raining in the valley of the Sacramento. The North Fork had overflowed its banks, and Rattlesnake Creek was impassable. The few boulders that had marked the summer ford at Simpson's Crossing were obliterated by a vast sheet of water stretching to the foothills. The up-stage was stopped at Grangers; the last mail had been abandoned in the *tules*, the rider swimming for his life. "An area," remarked the *Sierra Avalanche*, with pensive local pride, "as large as the State of Massachusetts is now under water."

Nor was the weather any better in the foothills. The mud lay deep on the mountain road; wagons that neither physical force nor moral objurgation could move from the evil ways into which they had fallen, encumbered the track, and the way to Simpson's Bar was indicated by broken-down teams and hard swearing. And farther on, cut off and inaccessible, rained upon and bedraggled, smitten by high winds and threatened by high water, Simpson's Bar, on the eve of Christmas Day, 1862, clung like a swallow's nest to the rocky entablature and splintered capitals of Table Mountain, and shook in the blast.

As night shut down on the settlement, a few lights gleamed through the mist from the windows of cabins on either side of the highway now crossed and gullied by lawless streams and swept by marauding winds. Happily most of the population were gathered at Thompson's store, clustered around a red-hot stove, at which they silently spat in some accepted sense of social communion

that perhaps rendered conversation unnecessary. Indeed, most methods of diversion had long since been exhausted on Simpson's Bar; high water had suspended the regular occupations on gulch and on river, and a consequent lack of money and whisky had taken the zest from most illegitimate recreation. Even Mr. Hamlin was fain to leave the Bar with fifty dollars in his pocket—the only amount actually realised of the large sums won by him in the successful exercise of his arduous profession. "Ef I was asked," he remarked somewhat later,—"ef I was asked to pint out a purty little village where a retired sport as didn't care for money could exercise hisself, frequent and lively, I'd say Simpson's Bar; but for a young man with a large family depending on his exertions, it don't pay." As Mr Hamlin's family consisted mainly of female adults, this remark is quoted rather to show the breadth of his humour than the exact extent of his responsibilities.

Howbeit, the unconscious objects of this satire sat that evening in the listless apathy begotten of idleness and lack of excitement. Even the sudden splashing of hoofs before the door did not arouse them. Dick Bullen alone paused in the act of scraping out his pipe, and lifted his head, but no other one of the group indicated any interest in, or recognition of, the man who entered.

It was a figure familiar enough to the company, and known in Simpson's Bar as "The Old Man." A man of perhaps fifty years; grizzled and scant of hair, but still fresh and youthful of complexion. A face full of ready but not very powerful sympathy, with a chameleon-like aptitude for taking on the shade and colour of contiguous moods and feelings. He had evidently just left some hilarious companions, and did not at first notice the gravity of the group, but clapped the shoulder of the nearest man jocularly, and threw himself into a vacant chair.

"Jest heard the best thing out, boys! Ye know Smiley, over yar—Jim Smiley—funniest man in the Bar? Well, Jim was jest telling the richest yarn about——"

"Smiley's a —— fool," interrupted a gloomy voice.

"A particular —— skunk," added another in sepulchral accents.

A silence followed these positive statements. The Old Man glanced quickly around the group. Then his face slowly changed. "That's so," he said reflectively, after a pause, "certingly a sort of a skunk and suthin' of a fool. In course." He was silent for a moment as in painful contemplation of the unsavouriness and folly of the unpopular Smiley. "Dismal weather, ain't it?" he added, now fully embarked on the current of prevailing sentiment. "Mighty rough papers on the boys, and no show for money this season. And to-morrow's Christmas."

There was a movement among the men at this announcement, but whether of satisfaction or disgust was not plain. "Yes," continued the Old Man in the lugubrious tone he had, within the last few moments, unconsciously adopted,—"yes, Christmas, and to-night's Christmas Eve. Ye see, boys, I kinder thought—that is, I sorter had an idee, jest passin' like, you know—that maybe ye'd all like to come over to my house to-night and have a sort of tear round. But I suppose, now, you wouldn't? Don't feel like it, maybe?" he added with anxious sympathy, peering into the faces of his companions.

"Well, I don't know," responded Tom Flynn with some cheerfulness. "P'r'aps we may. But how about your wife, Old Man? What does *she* say to it?"

The Old Man hesitated. His conjugal experience had not been a happy one, and the fact was known to Simpson's Bar. His first wife, a delicate, pretty little woman, had suffered keenly and secretly from the jealous suspicions of her husband, until one day he invited the whole Bar to his house to expose her infidelity. On arriving, the party found the shy, *petite* creature quietly engaged in her household duties, and retired abashed and discomfited. But the sensitive woman did not easily recover from the shock of this extraordinary outrage. It was with difficulty she regained her equanimity sufficiently to release her lover from the closet in which he was concealed, and escape with him. She left a boy of three years to comfort her bereaved husband. The Old Man's present wife had been his cook. She was large, loyal, and aggressive.

Before he could reply, Joe Dimmick suggested with great directness that it was the "Old Man's house," and

that, invoking the Divine Power, if the case were his own, he would invite whom he pleased, even if in so doing he imperilled his salvation. The Powers of Evil, he further remarked, should contend against him vainly. All this delivered with a terseness and vigour lost in this necessary translation.

"In course. Certainly. Thet's it," said the Old Man with a sympathetic frown. "Thar's no trouble about *thet*. It's my own house, built every stick on it myself. Don't you be afeard o' her, boys. She *may* cut up a trifle rough—ez wimmin do—but she'll come round." Secretly the Old Man trusted to the exaltation of liquor and the power of courageous example to sustain him in such an emergency.

As yet, Dick Bullen, the oracle and leader of Simpson's Bar, had not spoken. He now took his pipe from his lips. "Old Man, how's that yer Johnny gettin' on? Seems to me he didn't look so peart last time I seed him on the bluff heavin' rocks at Chinamen. Didn't seem to take much interest in it. Thar was a gang of 'em by yar yesterday—drownded out up the river—and I kinder thought o' Johnny, and how he'd miss 'em! Maybe now, we'd be in the way ef he wus sick?"

The father, evidently touched not only by this pathetic picture of Johnny's deprivation, but by the considerate delicacy of the speaker, hastened to assure him that Johnny was better and that a "little fun might 'liven him up." Whereupon Dick arose, shook himself, and saying, "I'm ready. Lead the way, Old Man: here goes," himself led the way with a leap, a characteristic howl, and darted out into the night. As he passed through the outer room he caught up a blazing brand from the hearth. The action was repeated by the rest of the party, closely following and elbowing each other, and before the astonished proprietor of Thompson's grocery was aware of the intention of his guests, the room was deserted.

The night was pitchy dark. In the first gust of wind their temporary torches were extinguished, and only the red brands dancing and flitting in the gloom like drunken will-o'-the-wisps indicated their whereabouts. Their way led up Pine-Tree Cañon, at the head of which a broad, low, bark-thatched cabin burrowed in the mountain-side. It

was the home of the Old Man, and the entrance to the tunnel in which he worked when he worked at all. Here the crowd paused for a moment, out of delicate deference to their host, who came up panting in the rear.

"P'r'aps ye'd better hold on a second out yer, whilst I go in and see thet things is all right," said the Old Man, with an indifference he was far from feeling. The suggestion was graciously accepted, the door opened and closed on the host, and the crowd, leaning their backs against the wall and cowering under the eaves, waited and listened.

For a few moments there was no sound but the dripping of water from the eaves, and the stir and rustle of wrestling boughs above them. Then the men became uneasy, and whispered suggestion and suspicion passed from the one to the other. "Reckon she's caved in his head the first lick!" "Decoyed him inter the tunnel and barred him up, likely." "Got him down and sittin' on him." "Prob'ly biling suthin' to heave on us: stand clear the door, boys!" For just then the latch clicked, the door slowly opened, and a voice said, "Come in out o' the wet."

The voice was neither that of the Old Man nor of his wife. It was the voice of a small boy, its weak treble broken by that preternatural hoarseness which only vagabondage and the habit of premature self-assertion can give. It was the face of a small boy that looked up at theirs,—a face that might have been pretty, and even refined, but that it was darkened by evil knowledge from within, and dirt and hard experience from without. He had a blanket around his shoulders, and had evidently just risen from his bed. "Come in," he repeated, "and don't make no noise. The Old Man's in there talking to mar," he continued, pointing to an adjacent room which seemed to be a kitchen, from which the Old Man's voice came in deprecating accents. "Let me be," he added querulously, to Dick Bullen, who had caught him up, blanket and all, and was affecting to toss him into the fire, "let go o' me, you d—d old fool, d'ye hear?"

Thus adjured, Dick Bullen lowered Johnny to the ground with a smothered laugh, while the men, entering quietly, ranged themselves around a long table of rough boards which occupied the centre of the room. Johnny then gravely proceeded to a cupboard and brought out

several articles, which he deposited on the table. "Thar's whisky. And crackers. And red herons. And cheese." He took a bite of the latter on his way to the table. "And sugar." He scooped up a mouthful *en route* with a small and very dirty hand. "And terbacker. Thar's dried appils too on the shelf, but I don't admire 'em. Appils is swellin'. Thar," he concluded, "now wade in, and don't be afeard. *I* don't mind the old woman. She don't b'long to *me*. S'long."

He had stepped to the threshold of a small room, scarcely larger than a closet, partitioned off from the main apartment, and holding in its dim recess a small bed. He stood there a moment looking at the company, his bare feet peeping from the blanket, and nodded.

"Hello, Johnny! You ain't goin' to turn in agin, are ye?" said Dick.

"Yes, I are," responded Johnny decidedly.

"Why, wot's up, old fellow?"

"I'm sick."

"How sick?"

"I've got a fevier. And childblains. And roomatiz," returned Johnny, and vanished within. After a moment's pause, he added in the dark, apparently from under the bed-clothes,—"And biles!"

There was an embarrassing silence. The men looked at each other and at the fire. Even with the appetising banquet before them, it seemed as if they might again fall into the despondency of Thompson's grocery, when the voice of the Old Man, incautiously lifted, came deprecatingly from the kitchen.

"Certainly! Thet's so. In course they is. A gang o' lazy, drunken loafers, and that ar Dick Bullen's the ornariest of all. Didn't hev no more *sabe* than to come round yar with sickness in the house and no provision. Thet's what I said: 'Bullen,' sez I, 'it's crazy drunk you are, or a fool,' sez I, 'to think o' such a thing.' 'Staples,' I sez, 'be you a man, Staples, and 'spect to raise h—ll under my roof and invalids lyin' round?' But they would come,—they would. Thet's wot you must 'spect o' such trash as lays round the Bar."

A burst of laughter from the men followed this unfortunate exposure. Whether it was overheard in the kitchen,

or whether the Old Man's irate companion had just then exhausted all other modes of expressing her contemptuous indignation, I cannot say, but a back door was suddenly slammed with great violence. A moment later and the Old Man reappeared, haply unconscious of the cause of the late hilarious outburst, and smiled blandly.

"The old woman thought she'd jest run over to Mrs. McFadden's for a sociable call," he explained, with jaunty indifference, as he took a seat at the board.

Oddly enough it needed this untoward incident to relieve the embarrassment that was beginning to be felt by the party, and their natural audacity returned with their host. I do not propose to record the convivialities of that evening. The inquisitive reader will accept the statement that the conversation was characterized by the same intellectual exaltation, the same cautious reverence, the same fastidious delicacy, the same rhetorical precision, and the same logical and coherent discourse somewhat later in the evening, which distinguish similar gatherings of the masculine sex in more civilized localities and under more favourable auspices. No glasses were broken in the absence of any; no liquor was uselessly spilt on the floor or table in the scarcity of that article.

It was nearly midnight when the festivities were interrupted. "Hush," said Dick Bullen, holding up his hand. It was the querulous voice of Johnny from his adjacent closet: "O dad!"

The Old Man arose hurriedly and disappeared in the closet. Presently he reappeared. "His rheumatiz is coming on agin bad," he explained, "and he wants rubbin'." He lifted the demijohn of whisky from the table and shook it. It was empty. Dick Bullen put down his tin cup with an embarrassed laugh. So did the others. The Old Man examined their contents and said hopefully, "I reckon that's enough; he don't need much. You hold on all o' you for a spell, and I'll be back"; and vanished in the closet with an old flannel shirt and the whisky. The door closed but imperfectly, and the following dialogue was distinctly audible:—

"Now, sonny, whar does she ache worst?"

"Sometimes over yar and sometimes under yer; but it's most powerful from yer to yer. Rub yer, dad."

A silence seemed to indicate a brisk rubbing. Then Johnny:

"Hevin' a good time out yer, dad?"

"Yes, sonny."

"To-morrer's Chrismiss,—ain't it?"

"Yes, sonny. How does she feel now?"

"Better. Rub a little furder down. Wot's Chrismiss, anyway? Wot's it all about?"

"Oh, it's a day."

This exhaustive definition was apparently satisfactory, for there was a silent interval of rubbing. Presently Johnny again:

"Mar sez that everywhere else but yer everybody gives things to everybody Chrismiss, and then she jist waded inter you. She sez thar's a man they call Sandy Claws, not a white man, you know, but a kind o' Chinemin, comes down the chimbley night afore Chrismiss and gives things to chillern,—boys like me. Puts 'em in their butes! Thet's what she tried to play upon me. Easy now, pop, whar are you rubbin' to,—thet's a mile from the place. She jest made that up, didn't she, jest to aggrewate me and you? Don't rub thar. . . . Why, dad!"

In the great quiet that seemed to have fallen upon the house the sigh of the near pines and the drip of leaves without was very distinct. Johnny's voice, too, was lowered as he went on, "Don't you take on now, fur I'm gettin' all right fast. Wot's the boys doin' out thar?"

The Old Man partly opened the door and peered through. His guests were sitting there sociably enough, and there were a few silver coins and a lean buckskin purse on the table. "Bettin' on suthin'—some little game or 'nother. They're all right," he replied to Johnny, and recommenced his rubbing.

"I'd like to take a hand and win some money," said Johnny reflectively after a pause.

The Old Man glibly repeated what was evidently a familiar formula, that if Johnny would wait until he struck it rich in the tunnel he'd have lots of money, etc., etc.

"Yes," said Johnny, "but you don't. And whether you strike it or I win it, it's about the same. It's all luck.

But it's mighty cur'o's about Chrismiss—ain't it? Why do they call it Chrismiss?"

Perhaps from some instinctive deference to the overhearing of his guests, or from some vague sense of incongruity, the Old Man's reply was so low as to be inaudible beyond the room.

"Yes," said Johnny, with some slight abatement of interest, "I've heerd o' *him* before. Thar, that'll do, dad. I don't ache near so bad as I did. Now wrap me tight in this yer blanket. So. Now," he added in a muffled whisper, "sit down yer by me till I go asleep." To assure himself of obedience, he disengaged one hand from the blanket and, grasping his father's sleeve, again composed himself to rest.

For some moments the Old Man waited patiently. Then the unwonted stillness of the house excited his curiosity, and without moving from the bed he cautiously opened the door with his disengaged hand, and looked into the main room. To his infinite surprise it was dark and deserted. But even then a smouldering log on the hearth broke, and by the upspringing blaze he saw the figure of Dick Bullen sitting by the dying embers.

"Hello!"

Dick started, rose, and came somewhat unsteadily toward him.

"Whar's the boys?" said the Old Man.

"Gone up the cañon on a little *pasear*. They're coming back for me in a minit. I'm waitin' round for 'em. What are you starin' at, Old Man?" he added with a forced laugh; "do you think I'm drunk?"

The Old Man might have been pardoned the supposition, for Dick's eyes were humid and his face flushed. He loitered and lounged back to the chimney, yawned, shook himself, buttoned up his coat and laughed. "Liquor ain't so plenty as that, Old Man. Now don't you git up," he continued, as the Old Man made a movement to release his sleeve from Johnny's hand. "Don't you mind manners. Sit jest whar you be; I'm goin' in a jiffy. Thar, that's them now."

There was a low tap at the door. Dick Bullen opened it quickly, nodded "Good night" to his host, and disappeared. The Old Man would have followed him but for

the hand that still unconsciously grasped his sleeve. He could have easily disengaged it: it was small, weak, and emaciated. But perhaps because it *was* small, weak, and emaciated, he changed his mind, and, drawing his chair closer to the bed, rested his head upon it. In this defenceless attitude the potency of his earlier potations surprised him. The room flickered and faded before his eyes, reappeared, faded again, went out, and left him—asleep.

Meantime Dick Bullen, closing the door, confronted his companions. "Are you ready?" said Staples. "Ready," said Dick; "what's the time?" "Past twelve," was the reply; "can you make it?—it's nigh on fifty miles, the round trip hither and yon." "I reckon," returned Dick shortly. "Whar's the mare?" "Bill and Jack's holdin' her at the crossin'." "Let 'em hold on a minit longer," said Dick.

He turned and re-entered the house softly. By the light of the guttering candle and dying fire he saw that the door of the little room was open. He stepped toward it on tiptoe and looked in. The Old Man had fallen back in his chair, snoring, his helpless feet thrust out in a line with his collapsed shoulders, and his hat pulled over his eyes. Beside him, on a narrow wooden bedstead, lay Johnny, muffled tightly in a blanket that hid all save a strip of forehead and a few curls damp with perspiration. Dick Bullen made a step forward, hesitated, and glanced over his shoulder into the deserted room. Everything was quiet. With a sudden resolution he parted his huge moustaches with both hands and stooped over the sleeping boy. But even as he did so a mischievous blast, lying in wait, swooped down the chimney, rekindled the hearth, and lit up the room with a shameless glow from which Dick fled in bashful terror.

His companions were already waiting for him at the crossing. Two of them were struggling in the darkness with some strange misshapen bulk, which as Dick came nearer took the semblance of a great yellow horse.

It was the mare. She was not a pretty picture. From her Roman nose to her rising haunches, from her arched spine hidden by the stiff *machillas* of a Mexican saddle, to her thick, straight, bony legs, there was not a line of equine grace. In her half-blind but wholly vicious white

eyes, in her protruding under-lip, in her monstrous colour, there was nothing but ugliness and vice.

"Now then," said Staples, "stand cl'ar of her heels, boys, and up with you. Don't miss your first hold of her mane, and mind ye get your off stirrup *quick*. Ready!"

There was a leap, a scrambling struggle, a bound, a wild retreat of the crowd, a circle of flying hoofs, two springless leaps that jarred the earth, a rapid play and jingle of spurs, a plunge, and then the voice of Dick somewhere in the darkness, "All right!"

"Don't take the lower road back onless you're hard pushed for time! Don't hold her in down hill. We'll be at the ford at five. G'lang! Hoopa! Mula! GO!"

A splash, a spark struck from the ledge in the road, a clatter in the rocky cut beyond, and Dick was gone.

. . . . . .

Sing, O Muse, the ride of Richard Bullen! Sing, O Muse, of chivalrous men! the sacred quest, the doughty deeds, the battery of low churls, the fearsome ride and gruesome perils of the Flower of Simpson's Bar! Alack! she is dainty, this Muse! She will have none of this bucking brute and swaggering, ragged rider, and I must fain follow him in prose, afoot!

It was one o'clock, and yet he had only gained Rattlesnake Hill. For in that time Jovita had rehearsed to him all her imperfections and practised all her vices. Thrice had she stumbled. Twice had she thrown up her Roman nose in a straight line with the reins, and, resisting bit and spur, struck out madly across country. Twice had she reared, and, rearing, fallen backward; and twice had the agile Dick, unharmed, regained his seat before she found her vicious legs again. And a mile beyond them, at the foot of a long hill, was Rattlesnake Creek. Dick knew that here was the crucial test of his ability to perform his enterprise, set his teeth grimly, put his knees well into her flanks, and changed his defensive tactics to brisk aggression. Bullied and maddened, Jovita began the descent of the hill. Here the artful Richard pretended to hold her in with ostentatious objurgation and well-feigned cries of alarm. It is unnecessary to add that Jovita instantly ran away. Nor need I state the time made in the descent; it is written in the chronicles of Simpson's Bar. Enough

that in another moment, as it seemed to Dick, she was splashing on the overflowed banks of Rattlesnake Creek. As Dick expected, the momentum she had acquired carried her beyond the point of balking, and, holding her well together for a mighty leap, they dashed into the middle of the swiftly flowing current. A few moments of kicking, wading, and swimming, and Dick drew a long breath on the opposite bank.

The road from Rattlesnake Creek to Red Mountain was tolerably level. Either the plunge in Rattlesnake Creek had dampened her baleful fire, or the art which led to it had shown her the superior wickedness of her rider, for Jovita no longer wasted her surplus energy in wanton conceits. Once she bucked, but it was from force of habit; once she shied, but it was from a new, freshly-painted meeting-house at the crossing of the county road. Hollows, ditches, gravelly deposits, patches of freshly-springing grasses, flew from beneath her rattling hoofs. She began to smell unpleasantly, once or twice she coughed slightly, but there was no abatement of her strength or speed. By two o'clock he had passed Red Mountain and begun the descent to the plain. Ten minutes later the driver of the fast Pioneer coach was overtaken and passed by a "man on a Pinto hoss,"—an event sufficiently notable for remark. At half-past two Dick rose in his stirrups with a great shout. Stars were glittering through the rifted clouds, and beyond him, out of the plain, rose two spires, a flagstaff, and a straggling line of black objects. Dick jingled his spurs and swung his *riata*, Jovita bounded forward, and in another moment they swept into Tuttleville, and drew up before the wooden piazza of "The Hotel of All Nations."

What transpired that night at Tuttleville is not strictly a part of this record. Briefly I may state, however, that after Jovita had been handed over to a sleepy ostler, whom she at once kicked into unpleasant consciousness, Dick sallied out with the bar-keeper for a tour of the sleeping town. Lights still gleamed from a few saloons and gambling-houses; but, avoiding these, they stopped before several closed shops, and by persistent tapping and judicious outcry roused the proprietors from their beds, and made them unbar the doors of their magazines and

expose their wares. Sometimes they were met by curses, but oftener by interest and some concern in their needs, and the interview was invariably concluded by a drink. It was three o'clock before this pleasantry was given over, and with a small waterproof bag of indiarubber strapped on his shoulders Dick returned to the hotel. But here he was waylaid by Beauty,—Beauty opulent in charms, affluent in dress, persuasive in speech, and Spanish in accent! In vain she repeated the invitation in "Excelsior," happily scorned by all Alpine-climbing youth, and rejected by this child of the Sierras,—a rejection softened in this instance by a laugh and his last gold coin. And then he sprang to the saddle and dashed down the lonely street and out into the lonelier plain, where presently the lights, the black line of houses, the spires, and the flagstaff sank into the earth behind him again and were lost in the distance.

The storm had cleared away, the air was brisk and cold, the outlines of adjacent landmarks were distinct, but it was half-past four before Dick reached the meeting-house and the crossing of the county road. To avoid the rising grade he had taken a longer and more circuitous road, in whose viscid mud Jovita sank fetlock deep at every bound. It was a poor preparation for a steady ascent of five miles more; but Jovita, gathering her legs under her, took it with her usual blind, unreasoning fury, and a half-hour later reached the long level that led to Rattlesnake Creek. Another half-hour would bring him to the creek. He threw the reins lightly upon the neck of the mare, chirruped to her, and began to sing.

Suddenly Jovita shied with a bound that would have unseated a less practised rider. Hanging to her rein was a figure that had leaped from the bank, and at the same time from the road before her arose a shadowy horse and rider. "Throw up your hands," commanded the second apparition, with an oath.

Dick felt the mare tremble, quiver, and apparently sink under him. He knew what it meant and was prepared.

"Stand aside, Jack Simpson. I know you, you d—d thief! Let me pass, or——"

He did not finish the sentence. Jovita rose straight in

the air with a terrific bound, throwing the figure from her bit with a single shake of her vicious head, and charged with deadly malevolence down on the impediment before her. An oath, a pistol-shot, horse and highwayman rolled over in the road, and the next moment Jovita was a hundred yards away. But the good right arm of her rider, shattered by a bullet, dropped helplessly at his side.

Without slacking his speed he shifted the reins to his left hand. But a few moments later he was obliged to halt and tighten the saddle-girths that had slipped in the onset. This in his crippled condition took some time. He had no fear of pursuit, but looking up he saw that the eastern stars were already paling, and that the distant peaks had lost their ghostly whiteness, and now stood out blackly against a lighter sky. Day was upon him. Then completely absorbed in a single idea, he forgot the pain of his wound, and mounting again dashed on toward Rattlesnake Creek. But now Jovita's breath came broken by gasps, Dick reeled in his saddle, and brighter and brighter grew the sky.

Ride, Richard; run, Jovita; linger, O day!

For the last few rods there was a roaring in his ears. Was it exhaustion from loss of blood, or what? He was dazed and giddy as he swept down the hill, and did not recognize his surroundings. Had he taken the wrong road, or was this Rattlesnake Creek?

It was. But the brawling creek he had swam a few hours before had risen, more than doubled its volume, and now rolled a swift and resistless river between him and Rattlesnake Hill. For the first time that night Richard's heart sank within him. The river, the mountain, the quickening east, swam before his eyes. He shut them to recover his self-control. In that brief interval, by some fantastic mental process, the little room at Simpson's Bar and the figures of the sleeping father and son rose upon him. He opened his eyes wildly, cast off his coat, pistol, boots, and saddle, bound his precious pack tightly to his shoulders, grasped the bare flanks of Jovita with his bared knees, and with a shout dashed into the yellow water. A cry rose from the opposite bank as the head of a man and horse struggled for a few moments against the battling

current, and then were swept away amidst uprooted trees and whirling driftwood.

. . . . . .

The Old Man started and woke. The fire on the hearth was dead, the candle in the outer room flickering in its socket, and somebody was rapping at the door. He opened it, but fell back with a cry before the dripping, half-naked figure that reeled against the doorpost.

"Dick?"

"Hush! Is he awake yet?"

"No,—but, Dick?——"

"Dry up, you old fool! Get me some whisky, *quick!*" The Old Man flew and returned with—an empty bottle! Dick would have sworn, but his strength was not equal to the occasion. He staggered, caught at the handle of the door, and motioned to the Old Man.

"Thar's suthin' in my pack yer for Johnny. Take it off. I can't."

The Old Man unstrapped the pack, and laid it before the exhausted man.

"Open it, quick!"

He did so with trembling fingers. It contained only a few poor toys,—cheap and barbaric enough, goodness knows, but bright with paint and tinsel. One of them was broken; another, I fear, was irretrievably ruined by water; and on the third—ah me! there was a cruel spot.

"It don't look like much, that's a fact," said Dick ruefully. . . . "But it's the best we could do. . . . Take 'em, Old Man, and put 'em in his stocking, and tell him—tell him, you know—hold me, Old Man——" The Old Man caught at his sinking figure. "Tell him," said Dick, with a weak little laugh,—"tell him Sandy Claus has come."

And even so, bedraggled, ragged, unshaven, and unshorn, with one arm hanging helplessly at his side, Santa Claus came to Simpson's Bar and fell fainting on the first threshold. The Christmas dawn came slowly after, touching the remoter peaks with the rosy warmth of ineffable love. And it looked so tenderly on Simpson's Bar that the whole mountain, as if caught in a generous action, blushed to the skies.

"WHO WAS MY QUIET FRIEND?"

"STRANGER!"

The voice was not loud, but clear and penetrating. I looked vainly up and down the narrow, darkening trail. No one in the fringe of alder ahead; no one on the gullied slope behind.

"O! stranger!"

This time a little impatiently. The Californian classical vocative, "O," always meant business.

I looked up, and perceived for the first time on the ledge, thirty feet above me, another trail parallel with my own, and looking down upon me through the buckeye bushes a small man on a black horse.

Five things to be here noted by the circumspect mountaineer. *First*, the locality,—lonely and inaccessible, and away from the regular faring of teamsters and miners. *Secondly*, the stranger's superior knowledge of the road, from the fact that the other trail was unknown to the ordinary traveller. *Thirdly*, that he was well armed and equipped. *Fourthly*, that he was better mounted. *Fifthly*, that any distrust or timidity arising from the contemplation of these facts had better be kept to oneself.

All this passed rapidly through my mind as I returned his salutation.

"Got any tobacco?" he asked.

I had, and signified the fact, holding up the pouch inquiringly.

"All right, I'll come down. Ride on, and I'll jine ye on the slide."

"The slide?" Here was a new geographical discovery

as odd as the second trail. I had ridden over the trail a dozen times, and seen no communication between the ledge and trail. Nevertheless, I went on a hundred yards or so, when there was a sharp crackling in the underbrush, a shower of stones on the trail, and my friend plunged through the bushes to my side, down a grade that I should scarcely have dared to lead my horse. There was no doubt he was an accomplished rider,—another fact to be noted.

As he ranged beside me, I found I was not mistaken as to his size; he was quite under the medium height, and, but for a pair of cold, grey eyes, was rather commonplace in feature.

"You've got a good horse there," I suggested.

He was filling his pipe from my pouch, but looked up a little surprised, and said, "Of course." He then puffed away with the nervous eagerness of a man long deprived of that sedative. Finally, between the puffs, he asked me whence I came.

I replied, "From Lagrange."

He looked at me a few moments curiously, but on my adding that I had only halted there for a few hours, he said: "I thought I knew every man between Lagrange and Indian Spring, but somehow I sorter disremember your face and your name."

Not particularly caring that he should remember either, I replied, half laughingly, that, as I lived the other side of Indian Spring, it was quite natural. He took the rebuff, if such it was, so quietly, that as an act of mere perfunctory politeness I asked him where he came from.

"Lagrange."

"And are you going to——"

"Well! that depends pretty much on how things pan out, and whether I can make the riffle." He let his hand rest quite unconsciously on the leathern holster of his dragoon revolver, yet with a strong suggestion to me of his ability "to make the riffle" if he wanted to, and added: "But just now I was reck'nin' on taking a little *pasear* with you."

There was nothing offensive in his speech, save its familiarity, and the reflection, perhaps, that whether I

objected or not, he was quite able to do as he said. I only replied that if our *pasear* was prolonged beyond Heavytree Hill, I should have to borrow his beast. To my surprise he replied quietly, "That's so," adding that the horse was at my disposal when he wasn't using it, and *half* of it when he was. "Dick has carried double many a time before this," he continued, "and kin do it again; when your mustang gives out I'll give you a lift, and room to spare."

I could not help smiling at the idea of appearing before the boys at Red Gulch *en croupe* with the stranger; but neither could I help being oddly affected by the suggestion that his horse had done double duty before. "On what occasion, and why?" was a question I kept to myself. We were ascending the long, rocky flank of the Divide; the narrowness of the trail obliged us to proceed slowly, and in file, so that there was little chance for conversation, had he been disposed to satisfy my curiosity.

We toiled on in silence, the buckeye giving way to chimisal, the westering sun, reflected again from the blank walls beside us, blinding our eyes with its glare. The pines in the cañon below were olive gulfs of heat, over which a hawk here and there drifted lazily, or, rising to our level, cast a weird and gigantic shadow of slowly moving wings on the mountain-side. The superiority of the stranger's horse led him often far in advance, and made me hope that he might forget me entirely, or push on, growing weary of waiting. But regularly he would halt by a boulder, or reappear from some chimisal, where he had patiently halted. I was beginning to hate him mildly, when at one of those reappearances he drew up to my side, and asked me how I liked Dickens!

Had he asked my opinion of Huxley or Darwin, I could not have been more astonished. Thinking it were possible that he referred to some local celebrity of Lagrange, I said, hesitatingly:—

"You mean——"

"Charles Dickens. Of course you've read him? Which of his books do you like best?"

I replied with considerable embarrassment that I liked them all,—as I certainly did.

He grasped my hand for a moment with a fervour

quite unlike his usual phlegm, and said, "That's me, old man. Dickens ain't no slouch. You can count on him pretty much all the time."

With this rough preface, he launched into a criticism of the novelist, which for intelligent sympathy and hearty appreciation I had rarely heard equalled. Not only did he dwell upon the exuberance of his humour, but upon the power of his pathos and the all-pervading element of his poetry. I looked at the man in astonishment. I had considered myself a rather diligent student of the great master of fiction, but the stranger's felicity of quotation and illustration staggered me. It is true, that his thought was not always clothed in the best language, and often appeared in the slouching, slangy undress of the place and period, yet it never was rustic nor homespun, and sometimes struck me with its precision and fitness. Considerably softened toward him, I tried him with other literature. But vainly. Beyond a few of the lyrical and emotional poets, he knew nothing. Under the influence and enthusiasm of his own speech, he himself had softened considerably; offered to change horses with me, readjusted my saddle with professional skill, transferred my pack to his own horse, insisted upon my sharing the contents of his whisky flask, and, noticing that I was unarmed, pressed upon me a silver-mounted derringer, which he assured me he could "warrant." These various offices of goodwill and the diversion of his talk beguiled me from noticing the fact that the trail was beginning to become obscure and unrecognizable. We were evidently pursuing a route unknown before to me. I pointed out the fact to my companion, a little impatiently. He instantly resumed his old manner and dialect.

"Well, I reckon one trail's as good as another, and what hev ye got to say about it?"

I pointed out, with some dignity, that I preferred the old trail.

"Mebbe you did. But you're jiss now takin' a *pasear* with *me*. This yer trail will bring you right into Indian Spring, and *onnoticed*, and no questions asked. Don't you mind now, I'll see you through."

It was necessary here to make some stand against my strange companion. I said firmly, yet as politely as I

could, that I had proposed stopping over night with a friend.

"Whar?"

I hesitated. The friend was an eccentric Eastern man, well known in the locality for his fastidiousness and his habits as a recluse. A misanthrope, of ample family and ample means, he had chosen a secluded but picturesque valley in the Sierras, where he could rail against the world without opposition. "Lone Valley," or "Boston Ranch" as it was familiarly called, was the one spot that the average miner both respected and feared. Mr. Sylvester, its proprietor, had never affiliated with "the boys," nor had he ever lost their respect by any active opposition to their ideas. If seclusion had been his object, he certainly was gratified. Nevertheless, in the darkening shadows of the night, and on a lonely and unknown trail, I hesitated a little at repeating his name to a stranger of whom I knew so little. But my mysterious companion took the matter out of my hands.

"Look yar," he said, suddenly, "thar ain't but one place 'twixt yer and Indian Spring whar ye can stop, and that's Sylvester's."

I assented, a little sullenly.

"Well," said the stranger, quietly, and with a slight suggestion of conferring a favour on me, "ef you're pointed for Sylvester's—why—*I don't mind stopping thar with ye.* It's a little off the road—I'll lose some time—but taking it by and large, I don't much mind."

I stated, as rapidly and as strongly as I could, that my acquaintance with Mr. Sylvester did not justify the introduction of a stranger to his hospitality; that he was unlike most of the people here,—in short, that he was a queer man, etc., etc.

To my surprise my companion answered quietly: "O, that's all right. I've heerd of him. Ef you don't feel like checking me through, or if you'd rather put 'C. O. D' on my back, why it's all the same to me. I'll play it alone. Only you just count me in. Say 'Sylvester' all the time. That's me!"

What could I oppose to this man's quiet assurance? I felt myself growing red with anger and nervous with embarrassment. What would the correct Sylvester say

to me? What would the girls,—I was a young man then, and had won an entrée to their domestic circle by my reserve, known by a less complimentary adjective among "the boys,"—what would they say to my new acquaintance? Yet I certainly could not object to his assuming all risks on his own personal recognizances, nor could I resist a certain feeling of shame at my embarrassment.

We were beginning to descend. In the distance below us already twinkled the lights in the solitary rancho of Lone Valley. I turned to my companion. "But you have forgotten that I don't even know your name. What am I to call you?"

"Thet's so," he said, musingly. "Now, let's see. 'Kearney' would be a good name. It's short and easy like. Thar's a street in 'Frisco the same title; Kearney it is."

"But——" I began impatiently.

"Now you leave all that to me," he interrupted, with a superb self-confidence that I could not but admire. "The name ain't no account. It's the man that's responsible. Ef I was to lay for a man that I reckoned was named Jones, and after I fetched him I found out on the inquest that his real name was Smith, that wouldn't make no matter, as long as I got the man."

The illustration, forcible as it was, did not strike me as offering a prepossessing introduction, but we were already at the rancho. The barking of dogs brought Sylvester to the door of the pretty little cottage which his taste had adorned.

I briefly introduced Mr. Kearney. "Kearney will do—Kearney's good enough for me," commented the *soi-disant* Kearney half-aloud, to my own horror and Sylvester's evident mystification, and then he blandly excused himself for a moment that he might personally supervise the care of his own beast. When he was out of ear-shot I drew the puzzled Sylvester aside.

"I have picked up—I mean I have been picked up on the road by a gentle maniac, whose name is not Kearney. He is well armed and quotes Dickens. With care, acquiescence in his views on all subjects, and general submission to his commands, he may be placated. Doubtless the spectacle of your helpless family, the contemplation

of your daughter's beauty and innocence, may touch his fine sense of humour and pathos. Meanwhile, Heaven help you, and forgive me."

I ran upstairs to the little den that my hospitable host had kept always reserved for me in my wanderings. I lingered some time over my ablutions, hearing the languid, gentlemanly drawl of Sylvester below, mingled with the equally cool, easy slang of my mysterious acquaintance. When I came down to the sitting-room I was surprised, however, to find the self-styled Kearney quietly seated on the sofa, the gentle May Sylvester, the "Lily of Lone Valley," sitting with maidenly awe and unaffected interest on one side of him, while on the other that arrant flirt, her cousin Kate, was practising the pitiless archery of her eyes, with an excitement that seemed almost real.

"Who is your deliciously cool friend?" she managed to whisper to me at supper, as I sat utterly dazed and bewildered between the enrapt May Sylvester, who seemed to hang upon his words, and this giddy girl of the period, who was emptying the battery of her charms in active rivalry upon him. "Of course we know his name isn't Kearney. But how romantic! And isn't he perfectly lovely? And who is he?"

I replied with severe irony that I was not aware what foreign potentate was then travelling incognito in the Sierras of California, but that when his royal highness was pleased to inform me, I should be glad to introduce him properly. "Until then," I added, "I fear the acquaintance must be Morganatic."

"You're only jealous of him," she said pertly. "Look at May—she is completely fascinated. And her father, too." And actually, the languid, world-sick, cynical Sylvester was regarding him with a boyish interest and enthusiasm almost incompatible with his nature. Yet I submit honestly to the clear-headed reason of my own sex, that I could see nothing more in the man than I have already delivered to the reader.

In the middle of an exciting story of adventure, of which he, to the already prejudiced mind of his fair auditors, was evidently the hero, he stopped suddenly.

"It's only some pack train passing the bridge on the lower trail," explained Sylvester; "go on."

"It may be my horse is a trifle oneasy in the stable," said the alleged Kearney; "he ain't used to boards and covering." Heaven only knows what wild and delicious revelation lay in the statement of this fact, but the girls looked at each other with cheeks pink with excitement as Kearney arose, and with quiet absence of ceremony quitted the table.

"Ain't he just lovely!" said Kate, gasping for breath, "and so witty."

"Witty!" said the gentle May, with just the slightest trace of defiance in her sweet voice; "witty, my dear? why, don't you see that his heart is just breaking with pathos? Witty, indeed; why, when he was speaking of that poor Mexican woman that was hung, I saw the tears gather in his eyes. Witty, indeed!"

"Tears," laughed the cynical Sylvester, "tears, idle tears. Why, you silly children, the man is a man of the world—a philosopher, quiet, observant, unassuming."

"Unassuming!" Was Sylvester intoxicated, or had the mysterious stranger mixed the "insane herb" with the family pottage? He returned before I could answer this self-asked inquiry, and resumed coolly his broken narrative. Finding myself forgotten in the man I had so long hesitated to introduce to my friends, I retired to rest early, only to hear, through the thin partitions, two hours later, enthusiastic praises of the new guest from the voluble lips of the girls, as they chatted together in the next room before retiring.

At midnight I was startled by the sound of horses' hoofs and the jingling of spurs below. A conversation between my host and some mysterious personage in the darkness was carried on in such a low tone that I could not learn its import. As the cavalcade rode away, I raised the window.

"What's the matter?"

"Nothing," said Sylvester, coolly, "only another one of those playful homicidal freaks peculiar to the country. A man was shot by Cherokee Jack over at Lagrange this morning, and that was the sheriff of Calaveras and his posse hunting him. I told him I'd seen nobody but you and your friend. By the way, I hope the cursed noise

hasn't disturbed him. The poor fellow looked as if he wanted rest."

I thought so too. Nevertheless, I went softly to his room. It was empty. My impression was that he had distanced the sheriff of Calaveras about two hours.

THE ROMANCE OF MADROÑO HOLLOW

THE latch on the garden gate of the Folinsbee Ranch clicked twice. The gate itself was so much in shadow that lovely night, that "old man Folinsbee," sitting on his porch, could distinguish nothing but a tall white hat and beside it a few fluttering ribbons, under the pines that marked the entrance. Whether because of this fact, or that he considered a sufficient time had elapsed since the clicking of the latch for more positive disclosure, I do not know; but after a few moments' hesitation he quietly laid aside his pipe and walked slowly down the winding path toward the gate. At the Ceanothus hedge he stopped and listened.

There was not much to hear. The hat was saying to the ribbons that it was a fine night, and remarking generally upon the clear outline of the Sierras against the blue-black sky. The ribbons, it so appeared, had admired this all the way home, and asked the hat if it had ever seen anything half so lovely as the moonlight on the summit. The hat never had; it recalled some lovely nights in the South in Alabama ("in the South in Ahlabahm" was the way the old man heard it), but then there were other things that made this night seem so pleasant. The ribbons could not possibly conceive what the hat could be thinking about. At this point there was a pause, of which Mr. Folinsbee availed himself to walk very grimly and craunchingly down the gravel-walk toward the gate. Then the hat was lifted, and disappeared in the shadow, and Mr. Folinsbee confronted only the half-foolish, half-mischievous, but wholly pretty face of his daughter.

It was afterward known to Madroño Hollow that sharp

words passed between "Miss Jo" and the old man, and that the latter coupled the names of one Culpepper Starbottle and his uncle, Colonel Starbottle, with certain uncomplimentary epithets, and that Miss Jo retaliated sharply. "Her father's blood before her father's face boiled up and proved her truly of his race," quoted the blacksmith, who leaned toward the noble verse of Byron. "She saw the old man's bluff and raised him," was the direct comment of the college-bred Masters.

Meanwhile the subject of these animadversions proceeded slowly along the road to a point where the Folinsbee mansion came in view,—a long, narrow, white building, unpretentious, yet superior to its neighbours, and bearing some evidences of taste and refinement in the vines that clambered over its porch, in its French windows, and the white muslin curtains that kept out the fierce California sun by day, and were now touched with silver in the gracious moonlight. Culpepper leaned against the low fence, and gazed long and earnestly at the building. Then the moonlight vanished ghostlike from one of the windows, a material glow took its place, and a girlish figure, holding a candle, drew the white curtains together. To Culpepper it was a vestal virgin standing before a hallowed shrine; to the prosaic observer I fear it was only a fair-haired young woman, whose wicked black eyes still shone with unfilial warmth. Howbeit, when the figure had disappeared he stepped out briskly into the moonlight of the high road. Here he took off his distinguishing hat to wipe his forehead, and the moon shone full upon his face.

It was not an unprepossessing one, albeit a trifle too thin and lank and bilious to be altogether pleasant. The cheek-bones were prominent, and the black eyes sunken in their orbits. Straight black hair fell slantwise off a high but narrow forehead, and swept part of a hollow cheek. A long black moustache followed the perpendicular curves of his mouth. It was on the whole a serious, even Quixotic face, but at times it was relieved by a rare smile of such tender and even pathetic sweetness, that Miss Jo is reported to have said that, if it would only last through the ceremony, she would have married its possessor on the spot. "I once told him so," added that shameless

young woman; "but the man instantly fell into a settled melancholy, and hasn't smiled since."

A half-mile below the Folinsbee Ranch the white road dipped and was crossed by a trail that ran through Madroño Hollow. Perhaps because it was a near cut-off to the settlement, perhaps from some less practical reason, Culpepper took this trail, and in a few moments stood among the rarely beautiful trees that gave their name to the valley. Even in that uncertain light the weird beauty of these harlequin masqueraders was apparent; their red trunks—a blush in the moonlight, a deep blood-stain in the shadow—stood out against the silvery green foliage. It was as if Nature in some gracious moment had here caught and crystallized the gipsy memories of the transplanted Spaniard, to cheer him in his lonely exile.

As Culpepper entered the grove he heard loud voices. As he turned toward a clump of trees, a figure so bizarre and characteristic that it might have been a resident Daphne—a figure over-dressed in crimson silk and lace, with bare brown arms and shoulders, and a wreath of honeysuckle—stepped out of the shadow. It was followed by a man. Culpepper started. To come to the point briefly, he recognized in the man the features of his respected uncle, Colonel Starbottle; in the female, a lady who may be briefly described as one possessing absolutely no claim to an introduction to the polite reader. To hurry over equally unpleasant details, both were evidently under the influence of liquor.

From the excited conversation that ensued, Culpepper gathered that some insult had been put upon the lady at a public ball which she had attended that evening; that the Colonel, her escort, had failed to resent it with the sanguinary completeness that she desired. I regret that, even in a liberal age, I may not record the exact and even picturesque language in which this was conveyed to her hearers. Enough that at the close of a fiery peroration, with feminine inconsistency she flew at the gallant Colonel and would have visited her delayed vengeance upon his luckless head, but for the prompt interference of Culpepper. Thwarted in this, she threw herself upon the ground, and then into unpicturesque hysterics. There was a fine moral lesson, not only in this grotesque performance of

a sex which cannot afford to be grotesque, but in the ludicrous concern with which it inspired the two men. Culpepper, to whom woman was more or less angelic, was pained and sympathetic; the Colonel, to whom she was more or less improper, was exceedingly terrified and embarrassed. Howbeit the storm was soon over, and after Mistress Dolores had returned a little dagger to its sheath (her garter), she quietly took herself out of Madroño Hollow, and happily out of these pages for ever. The two men, left to themselves, conversed in low tones. Dawn stole upon them before they separated: the Colonel quite sobered and in full possession of his usual jaunty self-assertion; Culpepper with a baleful glow in his hollow cheek, and in his dark eyes a rising fire.

The next morning the general ear of Madroño Hollow was filled with rumours of the Colonel's mishap. It was asserted that he had been invited to withdraw his female companion from the floor of the Assembly Ball at the Independence Hotel, and that, failing to do this, both were expelled. It is to be regretted that in 1854 public opinion was divided in regard to the propriety of this step, and that there was some discussion as to the comparative virtue of the ladies who were not expelled; but it was generally conceded that the real *casus belli* was political. "Is this a dashed Puritan meeting?" had asked the Colonel, savagely. "It's no Pike County shindig," had responded the floor-manager, cheerfully. "You're a Yank!" had screamed the Colonel, profanely qualifying the noun. "Get! you border ruffian," was the reply. Such at least was the substance of the reports. As, at that sincere epoch, expressions like the above were usually followed by prompt action, a fracas was confidently looked for.

Nothing, however, occurred. Colonel Starbottle made his appearance next day upon the streets with somewhat of his usual pomposity, a little restrained by the presence of his nephew, who accompanied him, and who, as a universal favourite, also exercised some restraint upon the curious and impertinent. But Culpepper's face wore a look of anxiety quite at variance with his usual grave repose. "The Don don't seem to take the old man's set-back kindly," observed the sympathizing blacksmith.

" P'r'aps he was sweet on Dolores himself," suggested the sceptical expressman.

It was a bright morning, a week after this occurrence, that Miss Jo Folinsbee stepped from her garden into the road. This time the latch did not click as she cautiously closed the gate behind her. After a moment's irresolution, which would have been awkward but that it was charmingly employed, after the manner of her sex, in adjusting a bow under a dimpled but rather prominent chin, and in pulling down the fingers of a neatly fitting glove, she tripped toward the settlement. Small wonder that a passing teamster drove his six mules into the wayside ditch and imperilled his load, to keep the dust from her spotless garments; small wonder that the " Lightning Express " withheld its speed and flash to let her pass, and that the expressman, who had never been known to exchange more than rapid monosyllables with his fellow man, gazed after her with breathless admiration. For she was certainly attractive. In a country where the ornamental sex followed the example of youthful Nature, and were prone to overdress and glaring efflorescence, Miss Jo's simple and tasteful raiment added much to the physical charm of, if it did not actually suggest a sentiment to, her presence. It is said that Euchre-deck Billy, working in the gulch at the crossing, never saw Miss Folinsbee pass but that he always remarked apologetically to his partner, that " he believed he *must* write a letter home." Even Bill Masters, who saw her in Paris presented to the favourable criticism of that most fastidious man, the late Emperor, said that she was stunning, but a big discount on what she was at Madroño Hollow.

It was still early morning, but the sun, with California extravagance, had already begun to beat hotly on the little chip hat and blue ribbons, and Miss Jo was obliged to seek the shade of a bypath. Here she received the timid advances of a vagabond yellow dog graciously, until, emboldened by his success, he insisted upon accompanying her, and, becoming slobberingly demonstrative, threatened her spotless skirt with his dusty paws, when she drove him from her with some slight acerbity, and a stone which haply fell within fifty feet of its destined mark. Having thus proved her ability to defend herself, with character-

istic inconsistency she took a small panic, and, gathering her white skirts in one hand, and holding the brim of her hat over her eyes with the other, she ran swiftly at least a hundred yards before she stopped. Then she began picking some ferns and a few wild-flowers still spared to the withered fields, and then a sudden distrust of her small ankles seized her, and she inspected them narrowly for those burrs and bugs and snakes which are supposed to lie in wait for helpless womanhood. Then she plucked some golden heads of wild oats, and with a sudden inspiration placed them in her black hair, and then came quite unconsciously upon the trail leading to Madroño Hollow.

Here she hesitated. Before her ran the little trail, vanishing at last into the bosky depths below. The sun was very hot. She must be very far from home. Why should she not rest awhile under the shade of a madroño?

She answered these questions by going there at once. After thoroughly exploring the grove, and satisfying herself that it contained no other living human creature, she sat down under one of the largest trees, with a satisfactory little sigh. Miss Jo loved the madroño. It was a cleanly tree; no dust ever lay upon its varnished leaves; its immaculate shade never was known to harbour grub or insect.

She looked up at the rosy arms interlocked and arched above her head. She looked down at the delicate ferns and cryptogams at her feet. Something glittered at the root of the tree. She picked it up; it was a bracelet. She examined it carefully for cipher or inscription; there was none. She could not resist a natural desire to clasp it on her arm, and to survey it from that advantageous view-point. This absorbed her attention for some moments; and when she looked up again she beheld at a little distance Culpepper Starbottle.

He was standing where he had halted, with instinctive delicacy, on first discovering her. Indeed, he had even deliberated whether he ought not to go away without disturbing her. But some fascination held him to the spot. Wonderful power of humanity! Far beyond jutted an outlying spur of the Sierra, vast, compact, and silent. Scarcely a hundred yards away, a league-long chasm dropped its sheer walls of granite a thousand feet. On

every side rose up the serried ranks of pine-trees, in whose close-set files centuries of storm and change had wrought no breach. Yet all this seemed to Culpepper to have been planned by an all-wise Providence as the natural background to the figure of a pretty girl in a yellow dress.

Although Miss Jo had confidently expected to meet Culpepper somewhere in her ramble, now that he came upon her suddenly, she felt disappointed and embarrassed. His manner, too, was more than usually grave and serious, and more than ever seemed to jar upon that audacious levity which was this giddy girl's power and security in a society where all feeling was dangerous. As he approached her she rose to her feet, but almost before she knew it he had taken her hand and drawn her to a seat beside him. This was not what Miss Jo had expected, but nothing is so difficult to predicate as the exact preliminaries of a declaration of love.

What did Culpepper say? Nothing, I fear, that will add anything to the wisdom of the reader; nothing, I fear, that Miss Jo had not heard substantially from other lips before. But there was a certain conviction, fire-speed, and fury in the manner that was deliciously novel to the young lady. It was certainly something to be courted in the nineteenth century with all the passion and extravagance of the sixteenth; it was something to hear, amid the slang of a frontier society, the language of knight-errantry poured into her ear by this lantern-jawed, dark-browed descendant of the Cavaliers.

I do not know that there was anything more in it. The facts, however, go to show that at a certain point Miss Jo dropped her glove, and that in recovering it Culpepper possessed himself first of her hand and then her lips. When they stood up to go, Culpepper had his arm around her waist, and her black hair, with its sheaf of golden oats, rested against the breast-pocket of his coat. But even then I do not think her fancy was entirely captive. She took a certain satisfaction in this demonstration of Culpepper's splendid height, and mentally compared it with a former flame, one Lieutenant McMirk, an active but under-sized Hector, who subsequently fell a victim to the incautiously composed and monotonous beverages

of a frontier garrison. Nor was she so much preoccupied but that her quick eyes, even while absorbing Culpepper's glances, were yet able to detect, at a distance, the figure of a man approaching. In an instant she slipped out of Culpepper's arm, and, whipping her hands behind her said, "There's that horrid man!"

Culpepper looked up and beheld his respected uncle panting and blowing over the hill. His brow contracted as he turned to Miss Jo: "You don't like my uncle!"

"I hate him!" Miss Jo was recovering her ready tongue.

Culpepper blushed. He would have liked to enter upon some details of the Colonel's pedigree and exploits, but there was not time. He only smiled sadly. The smile melted Miss Jo. She held out her hand quickly, and said with even more than her usual effrontery, "Don't let that man get you into any trouble. Take care of yourself, dear, and don't let anything happen to you."

Miss Jo intended this speech to be pathetic; the tenure of life among her lovers had hitherto been very uncertain. Culpepper turned toward her, but she had already vanished in the thicket.

The Colonel came up panting. "I've looked all over town for you, and be dashed to you, sir. Who was that with you?"

"A lady." (Culpepper never lied, but he was discreet.)

"D—m 'em all! Look yar, Culp, I've spotted the man who gave the order to put me off the floor" ("flo" was what the Colonel said) "the other night!"

"Who was it?" asked Culpepper, listlessly.

"Jack Folinsbee."

"Who?"

"Why, the son of that dashed nigger-worshipping, psalm-singing Puritan Yankee. What's the matter, now? Look yar, Culp, you ain't goin' back on your blood, ar' ye? You ain't goin' back on your word? Ye ain't going down at the feet of this trash, like a whipped hound?"

Culpepper was silent. He was very white. Presently he looked up and said quietly, "No."

Culpepper Starbottle had challenged Jack Folinsbee, and the challenge was accepted. The cause alleged was

the expelling of Culpepper's uncle from the floor of the Assembly Ball by the order of Folinsbee. This much Madroño Hollow knew and could swear to; but there were other strange rumours afloat, of which the blacksmith was an able expounder. "You see, gentlemen," he said to the crowd gathered around his anvil, "I ain't got no theory of this affair, I only give a few facts as have come to my knowledge. Culpepper and Jack meets quite accidental like in Bob's saloon. Jack goes up to Culpepper and says, 'A word with you.' Culpepper bows and steps aside in this way, Jack standing about *here*." (The blacksmith demonstrates the position of the parties with two old horse-shoes on the anvil.) "Jack pulls a bracelet from his pocket and says, 'Do you know that bracelet?' Culpepper says, 'I do not,' quite cool-like and easy. Jack says, 'You gave it to my sister.' Culpepper says, still cool as you please, 'I did not.' Jack says, 'You lie, G—d d—mn you,' and draws his derringer. Culpepper jumps forward about here" (reference is made to the diagram) "and Jack fires. Nobody hit. It's a mighty cur'o's thing, gentlemen," continued the blacksmith, dropping suddenly into the abstract, and leaning meditatively on his anvil,—"it's a mighty cur'o's thing that nobody gets hit so often. You and me empties our revolvers sociably at each other over a little game, and the room full, and nobody gets hit! That's what gets me."

"Never mind, Thompson," chimed in Bill Masters; "there's another and a better world where we shall know all that, and—become better shots. Go on with your story."

"Well, some grabs Culpepper and some grabs Jack, and so separates them. Then Jack tells 'em as how he had seen his sister wear a bracelet which he knew was one that had been given to Dolores by Colonel Starbottle. That Miss Jo wouldn't say where she got it, but owned up to having seen Culpepper that day. Then, the most cur'o's thing of it yet, what does Culpepper do but rise up and takes all back that he said, and allows that he *did* give her the bracelet. Now my opinion, gentlemen, is that he lied; it ain't like that man to give a gal that he respects anything off of that piece, Dolores. But

it's all the same now, and there's but one thing to be done."

The way this one thing was done belongs to the record of Madroño Hollow. The morning was bright and clear; the air was slightly chill, but that was from the mist which arose along the banks of the river. As early as six o'clock the designated ground—a little opening in the madroño grove—was occupied by Culpepper Starbottle, Colonel Starbottle, his second, and the surgeon. The Colonel was exalted and excited, albeit in a rather imposing, dignified way, and pointed out to the surgeon the excellence of the ground, which at that hour was wholly shaded from the sun, whose steady stare is more or less discomposing to your duellist. The surgeon threw himself on the grass and smoked his cigar. Culpepper, quiet and thoughtful, leaned against a tree and gazed up the river. There was a strange suggestion of a picnic about the group, which was heightened when the Colonel drew a bottle from his coat-tails, and, taking a preliminary draught, offered it to the others. "Cocktails, sir," he explained with dignified precision. "A gentleman, sir, should never go out without 'em. Keeps off the morning chill. I remember going out in '53 with Hank Boompirater. Good ged, sir, the man had to put on his overcoat, and was shot in it. Fact!"

But the noise of wheels drowned the Colonel's reminiscences, and a rapidly driven buggy, containing Jack Folinsbee, Calhoun Bungstarter, his second, and Bill Masters, drew up on the ground. Jack Folinsbee leaped out gaily. "I had the jolliest work to get away without the governor's hearing," he began, addressing the group before him with the greatest volubility. Calhoun Bungstarter touched his arm, and the young man blushed. It was his first duel.

"If you are ready, gentlemen," said Mr. Bungstarter, "we had better proceed to business. I believe it is understood that no apology will be offered or accepted. We may as well settle preliminaries at once, or I fear we shall be interrupted. There is a rumour in town that the Vigilance Committee are seeking our friends the Starbottles, and I believe, as their fellow countryman, I have the honour to be included in their warrant."

At this probability of interruption, that gravity which

had hitherto been wanting fell upon the group. The preliminaries were soon arranged and the principals placed in position. Then there was a silence.

To a spectator from the hill, impressed with the picnic suggestion, what might have been the popping of two champagne corks broke the stillness.

Culpepper had fired in the air. Colonel Starbottle uttered a low curse. Jack Folinsbee sulkily demanded another shot.

Again the parties stood opposed to each other. Again the word was given, and what seemed to be the simultaneous report of both pistols rose upon the air. But after an interval of a few seconds all were surprised to see Culpepper slowly raise his unexploded weapon and fire it harmlessly above his head. Then throwing the pistol upon the ground, he walked to a tree and leaned silently against it.

Jack Folinsbee flew into a paroxysm of fury. Colonel Starbottle raved and swore. Mr. Bungstarter was properly shocked at their conduct. "Really, gentlemen, if Mr. Culpepper Starbottle declines another shot, I do not see how we can proceed."

But the Colonel's blood was up, and Jack Folinsbee was equally implacable. A hurried consultation ensued, which ended by Colonel Starbottle taking his nephew's place as principal, Bill Masters acting as second, *vice* Mr. Bungstarter, who declined all further connexion with the affair.

Two distinct reports rang through the Hollow. Jack Folinsbee dropped his smoking pistol, took a step forward, and then dropped heavily upon his face.

In a moment the surgeon was at his side. The confusion was heightened by the trampling of hoofs, and the voice of the blacksmith bidding them flee for their lives before the coming storm. A moment more and the ground was cleared, and the surgeon, looking up, beheld only the white face of Culpepper bending over him.

"Can you save him?"

"I cannot say. Hold up his head a moment, while I run to the buggy."

Culpepper passed his arm tenderly around the neck of the insensible man. Presently the surgeon returned with some stimulants.

"There, that will do, Mr. Starbottle, thank you. Now my advice is to get away from here while you can. I'll look after Folinsbee. Do you hear?"

Culpepper's arm was still round the neck of his late foe, but his head had dropped and fallen on the wounded man's shoulder. The surgeon looked down, and, catching sight of his face, stooped and lifted him gently in his arms. He opened his coat and waistcoat. There was blood upon his shirt and a bullet-hole in his breast. He had been shot unto death at the first fire.

THE POET OF SIERRA FLAT

As the enterprising editor of the *Sierra Flat Record* stood at his case setting type for his next week's paper, he could not help hearing the woodpeckers who were busy on the roof above his head. It occurred to him that possibly the birds had not yet learned to recognize in the rude structure any improvement on Nature, and this idea pleased him so much that he incorporated it in the editorial article which he was then doubly composing. For the editor was also printer of the *Record*; and although that remarkable journal was reputed to exert a power felt through all Calaveras and a greater part of Tuolumne County, strict economy was one of the conditions of its beneficent existence.

Thus preoccupied, he was startled by the sudden irruption of a small roll of manuscript, which was thrown through the open door and fell at his feet. He walked quickly to the threshold and looked down the tangled trail which led to the high road. But there was nothing to suggest the presence of his mysterious contributor. A hare limped slowly away, a green-and-gold lizard paused upon a pine stump, the woodpeckers ceased their work. So complete had been his sylvan seclusion, that he found it difficult to connect any human agency with the act; rather the hare seemed to have an inexpressibly guilty look, the woodpeckers to maintain a significant silence, and the lizard to be conscience-stricken into stone.

An examination of the manuscript, however, corrected this injustice to defenceless Nature. It was evidently of human origin,—being verse, and of exceeding bad quality. The editor laid it aside. As he did so he thought he saw

a face at the window. Sallying out in some indignation, he penetrated the surrounding thicket in every direction, but his search was as fruitless as before. The poet, if it were he, was gone.

A few days after this the editorial seclusion was invaded by voices of alternate expostulation and entreaty. Stepping to the door, the editor was amazed at beholding Mr. Morgan McCorkle, a well-known citizen of Angels, and a subscriber to the *Record*, in the act of urging, partly by force and partly by argument, an awkward young man toward the building. When he had finally effected his object, and, as it were, safely landed his prize in a chair, Mr. McCorkle took off his hat, carefully wiped the narrow isthmus of forehead which divided his black brows from his stubby hair, and, with an explanatory wave of his hand toward his reluctant companion, said, "A borned poet, and the cussedest fool you ever seed!"

Accepting the editor's smile as a recognition of the introduction, Mr. McCorkle panted and went on: "Didn't want to come! 'Mister Editor don't want to see me, Morg,' sez he. 'Milt,' sez I, 'he do; a borned poet like you and a gifted genius like he oughter come together sociable!' And I fetched him. Ah, will yer?" The born poet had, after exhibiting signs of great distress, started to run. But Mr. McCorkle was down upon him instantly, seizing him by his long linen coat, and settled him back in his chair. "'Tain't no use stampeding. Yer ye are and yer ye stays. For yer a borned poet,—ef ye are as shy as a jackass rabbit. Look at 'im now!"

He certainly was not an attractive picture. There was hardly a notable feature in his weak face, except his eyes, which were moist and shy, and not unlike the animal to which Mr. McCorkle had compared him. It was the face that the editor had seen at the window.

"Knowed him for fower year,—since he war a boy," continued Mr. McCorkle in a loud whisper. "Allers the same, bless you! Can jerk a rhyme as easy as turnin' jack. Never had any eddication; lived out in Missooray all his life. But he's chock full o' poetry. On'y this mornin' sez I to him,—he camps along o' me,—'Milt!' sez I, 'are breakfast ready?' and he up and answers back quite peart and chipper, 'The breakfast it is ready, and the birds is

singing free, and it's risin' in the dawnin' light is happiness to me ! ' When a man," said Mr. McCorkle, dropping his voice with deep solemnity, " gets off things like them, without any call to do it, and handlin' flapjacks over a cook-stove at the same time,—that man's a borned poet."

There was an awkward pause. Mr. McCorkle beamed patronizingly on his protégé. The born poet looked as if he were meditating another flight,—not a metaphorical one. The editor asked if he could do anything for them.

" In course you can," responded Mr. McCorkle, " that's jest it. Milt, where's that poetry ? "

The editor's countenance fell as the poet produced from his pocket a roll of manuscript. He, however, took it mechanically and glanced over it. It was evidently a duplicate of the former mysterious contribution.

The editor then spoke briefly but earnestly. I regret that I cannot recall his exact words, but it appeared that never before, in the history of the *Record*, had the pressure been so great upon its columns. Matters of paramount importance, deeply affecting the material progress of Sierra, questions touching the absolute integrity of Calaveras and Tuolumne as social communities, were even now waiting expression. Weeks, nay, months, must elapse before that pressure would be removed, and the *Record* could grapple with any but the sternest of topics. Again, the editor had noticed with pain the absolute decline of poetry in the foot-hills of the Sierras. Even the works of Byron and Moore attracted no attention in Dutch Flat, and a prejudice seemed to exist against Tennyson in Grass Valley. But the editor was not without hope for the future. In the course of four or five years, when the country was settled—

" What would be the cost to print this yer ? " interrupted Mr. McCorkle, quietly.

" About fifty dollars, as an advertisement," responded the editor with cheerful alacrity.

Mr. McCorkle placed the sum in the editor's hand. " Yer see thet's what I sez to Milt, ' Milt,' sez I, ' pay as you go, for you are a borned poet. Hevin' no call to write, but doin' it free and spontaneous like, in course you pays. Thet's why Mr. Editor never printed your poetry.' "

" What name shall I put to it ? " asked the editor.

"Milton."

It was the first word that the born poet had spoken during the interview, and his voice was so very sweet and musical that the editor looked at him curiously, and wondered if he had a sister.

"Milton; is that all?"

"Thet's his furst name," exclaimed Mr. McCorkle.

The editor here suggested that as there had been another poet of that name—

"Milt might be took for him! Thet's bad," reflected Mr. McCorkle with simple gravity. "Well, put down his hull name,—Milton Chubbuck."

The editor made a note of the fact. "I'll set it up now," he said. This was also a hint that the interview was ended. The poet and patron, arm in arm, drew towards the door. "In next week's paper," said the editor smilingly, in answer to the childlike look of inquiry in the eyes of the poet, and in another moment they were gone.

The editor was as good as his word. He straightway betook himself to his case, and, unrolling the manuscript, began his task. The woodpeckers on the roof recommenced theirs, and in a few moments the former sylvan seclusion was restored. There was no sound in the barren, barn-like room but the birds above, and below the click of the composing-rule as the editor marshalled the types into lines in his stick, and arrayed them in solid column on the galley. Whatever might have been his opinion of the copy before him, there was no indication of it in his face, which wore the stolid indifference of his craft. Perhaps this was unfortunate, for as the day wore on and the level rays of the sun began to pierce the adjacent thicket, they sought out and discovered an anxious ambushed figure drawn up beside the editor's window,—a figure that had sat there motionless for hours. Within, the editor worked on as steadily and impassively as Fate. And without, the born poet of Sierra Flat sat and watched him as waiting its decree.

The effect of the poem on Sierra Flat was remarkable and unprecedented. The absolute vileness of its doggerel, the gratuitous imbecility of its thought, and above all the

crowning audacity of the fact that it was the work of a citizen and published in the county paper, brought it instantly into popularity. For many months Calaveras had languished for a sensation; since the last Vigilance Committee nothing had transpired to dispel the listless ennui begotten of stagnant business and growing civilization. In more prosperous moments the office of the *Record* would have been simply gutted and the editor deported; at present the paper was in such demand that the edition was speedily exhausted. In brief, the poem of Mr. Milton Chubbuck came like a special providence to Sierra Flat. It was read by camp-fires, in lonely cabins, in flaring bar-rooms and noisy saloons, and declaimed from the boxes of stage-coaches. It was sung in Poker Flat with the addition of a local chorus, and danced as an unhallowed rhythmic dance by the Pyrrhic phalanx of One Horse Gulch, known as "The Festive Stags of Calaveras." Some unhappy ambiguities of expression gave rise to many new readings, notes, and commentaries, which, I regret to state, were more often marked by ingenuity than delicacy of thought or expression.

Never before did poet acquire such sudden local reputation. From the seclusion of McCorkle's cabin and the obscurity of culinary labours he was haled forth into the glowing sunshine of Fame. The name of Chubbuck was written in letters of chalk on unpainted walls and carved with a pick on the sides of tunnels. A drink known variously as "The Chubbuck Tranquillizer" or "The Chubbuck Exalter" was dispensed at the bars. For some weeks a rude design for a Chubbuck statue, made up of illustrations from circus and melodeon posters, representing the genius of Calaveras in brief skirts on a flying steed in the act of crowning the poet Chubbuck, was visible at Keeler's Ferry. The poet himself was overborne with invitations to drink, and extravagant congratulations. The meeting between Colonel Starbottle of Siskyion and Chubbuck, as previously arranged by our "Boston," late of Roaring Camp, is said to have been indescribably affecting. The Colonel embraced him unsteadily. "I could not return to my constituents at Siskyion, sir, if this hand, which has grasped that of the gifted Prentice and the lamented Poe, should not have been honoured by the

touch of the godlike Chubbuck. Gentlemen, American literature is looking up. Thank you, I will take sugar in mine." It was "Boston" who indited letters of congratulations from H. W. Longfellow, Tennyson, and Browning, to Mr. Chubbuck, deposited them in the Sierra Flat post office, and obligingly consented to dictate the replies.

The simple faith and unaffected delight with which these manifestations were received by the poet and his patron might have touched the hearts of these grim masters of irony, but for the sudden and equal development in both of the variety of weak natures. Mr. McCorkle basked in the popularity of his protégé, and became alternately supercilious or patronizing toward the dwellers of Sierra Flat; while the poet, with hair carefully oiled and curled, and bedecked with cheap jewellery and flaunting neck-handkerchief, paraded himself before the single hotel. As may be imagined, this new disclosure of weakness afforded intense satisfaction to Sierra Flat, gave another lease of popularity to the poet, and suggested another idea to the facetious "Boston."

At that time a young lady popularly and professionally known as the "California Pet" was performing to enthusiastic audiences in the interior. Her speciality lay in the personation of youthful masculine character; as a *gamin* of the street she was irresistible, as a negro-dancer she carried the honest miner's heart by storm. A saucy, pretty brunette, she had preserved a wonderful moral reputation even under the Jove-like advances of showers of gold that greeted her appearance on the stage at Sierra Flat. A prominent and delighted member of that audience was Milton Chubbuck. He attended every night. Every day he lingered at the door of the Union Hotel for a glimpse of the "California Pet." It was not long before he received a note from her,—in "Boston's" most popular and approved female hand,—acknowledging his admiration. It was not long before "Boston" was called upon to indite a suitable reply. At last, in furtherance of his facetious design, it became necessary for "Boston" to call upon the young actress herself and secure her personal participation. To her he unfolded a plan, the successful carrying out of which he felt would

secure his fame to posterity as a practical humorist. The "California Pet's" black eyes sparkled approvingly and mischievously. She only stipulated that she should see the man first,—a concession to her feminine weakness which years of dancing Juba and wearing trousers and boots had not wholly eradicated from her wilful breast. By all means, it should be done. And the interview was arranged for the next week.

It must not be supposed that during this interval of popularity Mr. Chubbuck had been unmindful of his poetic qualities. A certain portion of each day he was absent from town,—"a communin' with natur'," as Mr. McCorkle expressed it,—and actually wandering in the mountain trails, or lying on his back under the trees, or gathering fragrant herbs and the bright-coloured berries of the Marzanita. These and his company he generally brought to the editor's office late in the afternoon, often to that enterprising journalist's infinite weariness. Quiet and uncommunicative, he would sit there patiently watching him at his work until the hour for closing the office arrived, when he would as quietly depart. There was something so humble and unobtrusive in these visits, that the editor could not find it in his heart to deny them, and accepting them, like the woodpeckers, as a part of his sylvan surroundings, often forgot even his presence. Once or twice, moved by some beauty of expression in the moist, shy eyes, he felt like seriously admonishing his visitor of his idle folly; but his glance falling upon the oiled hair and the gorgeous necktie, he invariably thought better of it. The case was evidently hopeless.

The interview between Mr. Chubbuck and the "California Pet" took place in a private room of the Union Hotel; propriety being respected by the presence of that arch-humorist, "Boston." To this gentleman we are indebted for the only true account of the meeting. However reticent Mr. Chubbuck might have been in the presence of his own sex, toward the fairer portion of humanity he was, like most poets, exceedingly voluble. Accustomed as the "California Pet" had been to excessive compliment, she was fairly embarrassed by the extravagant praises of her visitor. Her personation of boy characters, her dancing of the "champion jig," were

particularly dwelt upon with fervid but unmistakable admiration. At last, recovering her audacity and emboldened by the presence of "Boston," the "California Pet" electrified her hearers by demanding, half jestingly, half viciously, if it were as a boy or a girl that she was the subject of his flattering admiration.

"That knocked him out o' time," said the delighted "Boston," in his subsequent account of the interview. "But do you believe the d—d fool actually asked her to take him with her; wanted to engage in the company."

The plan, as briefly unfolded by "Boston," was to prevail upon Mr. Chubbuck to make his appearance in costume (already designed and prepared by the inventor) before a Sierra Flat audience, and recite an original poem at the Hall immediately on the conclusion of the "California Pet's" performance. At a given signal the audience were to rise and deliver a volley of unsavoury articles (previously provided by the originator of the scheme); then a select few were to rush on the stage, seize the poet, and, after marching him in triumphal procession through the town, were to deposit him beyond its uttermost limits, with strict injunctions never to enter it again. To the first part of the plan the poet was committed; for the latter portion it was easy enough to find participants.

The eventful night came, and with it an audience that packed the long narrow room with one dense mass of human beings. The "California Pet" never had been so joyous, so reckless, so fascinating and audacious before. But the applause was tame and weak compared to the ironical outburst that greeted the second rising of the curtain and the entrance of the born poet of Sierra Flat. Then there was a hush of expectancy, and the poet stepped to the footlights and stood with his manuscript in his hand.

His face was deadly pale. Either there was some suggestion of his fate in the faces of his audience, or some mysterious instinct told him of his danger. He attempted to speak, but faltered, tottered, and staggered to the wings.

Fearful of losing his prey, "Boston" gave the signal and leaped upon the stage. But at the same moment a light figure darted from behind the scenes, and delivering a kick that sent the discomfited humorist back among

the musicians, cut a pigeon-wing, executed a double-shuffle, and then advancing to the footlights with that inimitable look, that audacious swagger and utter *abandon* which had so thrilled and fascinated them a moment before, uttered the characteristic speech, "Wot are you goin' to hit a man fur, when he's down, s-a-a-y?"

The look, the drawl, the action, the readiness, and above all the downright courage of the little woman, had its effect. A roar of sympathetic applause followed the act. "Cut and run while you can," she whispered hurriedly over her one shoulder, without altering the other's attitude of pert and saucy defiance toward the audience. But even as she spoke, the poet tottered and sank fainting upon the stage. Then she threw a despairing whisper behind the scenes, "Ring down the curtain."

There was a slight movement of opposition in the audience, but among them rose the burly shoulders of Yuba Bill, the tall, erect figure of Henry York of Sandy Bar, and the colourless, determined face of John Oakhurst. The curtain came down.

Behind it knelt the "California Pet" beside the prostrate poet. "Bring me some water. Run for a doctor. Stop!! CLEAR OUT, ALL OF YOU!"

She had unloosed the gaudy cravat and opened the shirt-collar of the insensible figure before her. Then she burst into an hysterical laugh.

"Manuela!"

Her tiring-woman, a Mexican half-breed, came toward her.

"Help me with him to my dressing-room, quick; then stand outside and wait. If any one questions you, tell them he's gone. Do you hear? HE's gone."

The old woman did as she was bade. In a few moments the audience had departed. Before morning so also had the "California Pet," Manuela, and—the poet of Sierra Flat.

But, alas! with them also had departed the fair fame of the "California Pet." Only a few, and these, it is to be feared, of not the best moral character themselves, still had faith in the stainless honour of their favourite actress. "It was a mighty foolish thing to do, but it'll all come out right yet." On the other hand, a majority gave her

full credit and approbation for her undoubted pluck and gallantry, but deplored that she should have thrown it away upon a worthless object. To elect for a lover the despised and ridiculed vagrant of Sierra Flat, who had not even the manliness to stand up in his own defence, was not only evidence of inherent moral depravity, but was an insult to the community. Colonel Starbottle saw in it only another instance of extreme frailty of the sex; he had known similar cases; and remembered distinctly, sir, how a well-known Philadelphia heiress, one of the finest women that ever rode in her kerridge, that, gad, sir! had thrown over a Southern member of Congress to consort with a d—d nigger. The Colonel had also noticed a singular look in the dog's eye which he did not entirely fancy. He would not say anything against the lady, sir, but he had noticed—— And here haply the Colonel became so mysterious and darkly confidential as to be unintelligible and inaudible to the bystanders.

A few days after the disappearance of Mr. Chubbuck a singular report reached Sierra Flat, and it was noticed that "Boston," who since the failure of his elaborate joke had been even more depressed in spirits than is habitual with great humorists, suddenly found that his presence was required in San Francisco. But as yet nothing but the vaguest surmises were afloat, and nothing definite was known.

It was a pleasant afternoon when the editor of the *Sierra Flat Record* looked up from his case and beheld the figure of Mr. Morgan McCorkle standing in the doorway. There was a distressed look on the face of that worthy gentleman that at once enlisted the editor's sympathizing attention. He held an open letter in his hand as he advanced toward the middle of the room.

"As a man as has allers borne a fair reputation," began Mr. McCorkle slowly, "I should like, if so be as I could, Mister Editor, to make a correction in the columns of your valooable paper."

Mr. Editor begged him to proceed.

"Ye may not disremember that about a month ago I fetched here what so be as we'll call a young man whose name might be as it were Milton—Milton Chubbuck."

Mr. Editor remembered perfectly.

"Thet same party I'd knowed better nor fower year, two on 'em campin' out together. Not that I'd known him all the time, fur he war shy and strange at spells, and had odd ways that I took war nat'ral to a borned poet. Ye may remember that I said he was a borned poet?"

The editor distinctly did.

"I picked this same party up in St. Jo., takin' a fancy to his face, and kinder calklating he'd runn'd away from home,—for I'm a married man, Mr. Editor, and hev children of my own,—and thinkin' belike he was a borned poet."

"Well?" said the editor.

"And as I said before, I should like now to make a correction in the columns of your valooable paper."

"What correction?" asked the editor.

"I said, ef you remember my words, as how he was a borned poet."

"Yes."

"From statements in this yer letter it seems as how I war wrong."

"Well?"

"She war a woman."

MRS. SKAGGS'S HUSBANDS

PART I.—WEST

THE sun was rising in the foot-hills. But for an hour the black mass of Sierra eastward of Angel's had been outlined with fire, and the conventional morning had come two hours before with the down coach from Placerville. The dry, cold, dewless California night still lingered in the long cañons and folded skirts of Table Mountain. Even on the mountain road the air was still sharp, and that urgent necessity for something to keep out the chill, which sent the bar-keeper sleepily among his bottles and wine-glasses at the station, obtained all along the road.

Perhaps it might be said that the first stir of life was in the bar-rooms. A few birds twittered in the sycamores at the roadside, but long before that glasses had clicked and bottles gurgled in the saloon of the Mansion House. This was still lit by a dissipated-looking hanging-lamp, which was evidently the worse for having been up all night, and bore a singular resemblance to a faded reveller of Angel's, who even then sputtered and flickered in *his* socket in an arm-chair below it,—a resemblance so plain that when the first level sunbeam pierced the window-pane, the bar-keeper, moved by a sentiment of consistency and compassion, put them both out together.

Then the sun came up haughtily. When it had passed the eastern ridge it began, after its habit, to lord it over Angel's, sending the thermometer up twenty degrees in as many minutes, driving the mules to the sparse shade of corrals and fences, making the red dust incandescent, and renewing its old imperious aggression on the spiked bosses

of the convex shield of pines that defended Table Mountain. Thither by nine o'clock all coolness had retreated, and the "outsides" of the up-stage plunged their hot faces in its aromatic shadows as in water.

It was the custom of the driver of the Wingdam coach to whip up his horses and enter Angel's at that remarkable pace which the woodcuts in the hotel bar-room represented to credulous humanity as the usual rate of speed of that conveyance. At such times the habitual expression of disdainful reticence and lazy official severity which he wore on the box became intensified as the loungers gathered about the vehicle, and only the boldest ventured to address him. It was the Hon. Judge Beeswinger, Member of Assembly, who to-day presumed, perhaps rashly, on the strength of his official position.

"Any political news from below, Bill?" he asked, as the latter slowly descended from his lofty perch, without, however, any perceptible coming down of mien or manner.

"Not much," said Bill, with deliberate gravity. "The President o' the United States hezn't bin hisself sens you refoosed that seat in the Cabinet. The ginral feelin' in perlitical circles is one o' regret."

Irony, even of this outrageous quality, was too common in Angel's to excite either a smile or a frown. Bill slowly entered the bar-room during a dry, dead silence, in which only a faint spirit of emulation survived.

"Ye didn't bring up that agint o' Rothschild's this trip?" asked the bar-keeper slowly, by way of vague contribution to the prevailing tone of conversation.

"No," responded Bill, with thoughtful exactitude. "He said he couldn't look inter that claim o' Johnson's without first consultin' the Bank o' England."

The Mr. Johnson here alluded to being present as the faded reveller the barkeeper had lately put out, and as the alleged claim notoriously possessed no attractions whatever to capitalists, expectation naturally looked to him for some response to this evident challenge. He did so by simply stating that he would "take sugar" in his, and by walking unsteadily toward the bar, as if accepting a festive invitation. To the credit of Bill be it recorded that he did not attempt to correct the mistake, but gravely touched glasses with him, and after saying "Here's another nail in your

coffin,"—a cheerful sentiment, to which "And the hair all off your head," was playfully added by the others,—he threw off his liquor with a single dexterous movement of head and elbow, and stood refreshed.

"Hello, old major!" said Bill, suddenly setting down his glass. "Are *you* there?"

It was a boy, who, becoming bashfully conscious that this epithet was addressed to him, retreated sideways to the doorway, where he stood beating his hat against the doorpost with an assumption of indifference that his downcast but mirthful dark eyes and reddening cheek scarcely bore out. Perhaps it was owing to his size, perhaps it was to a certain cherubic outline of face and figure, perhaps to a peculiar trustfulness of expression, that he did not look half his age, which was really fourteen.

Everybody in Angel's knew the boy. Either under the venerable title bestowed by Bill, or as "Tom Islington," after his adopted father, his was a familiar presence in the settlement, and the theme of much local criticism and comment. His waywardness, indolence, and unaccountable amiability—a quality at once suspicious and gratuitous in a pioneer community like Angel's—had often been the subject of fierce discussion. A large and reputable majority believed him destined for the gallows; a minority not quite so reputable enjoyed his presence without troubling themselves much about his future; to one or two the evil predictions of the majority possessed neither novelty nor terror.

"Anything for me, Bill?" asked the boy, half mechanically, with the air of repeating some jocular formulary perfectly understood by Bill.

"Anythin' for you!" echoed Bill, with an overacted severity equally well understood by Tommy,—"anythin' for you? No! And it's my opinion there won't be anythin' for you ez long ez you hang around bar-rooms and spend your valooable time with loafers and bummers. Git!"

The reproof was accompanied by a suitable exaggeration of gesture (Bill had seized a decanter), before which the boy retreated still good-humouredly. Bill followed him to the door. "Dern my skin, if he hezn't gone off

with that bummer Johnson," he added, as he looked down the road.

"What's he expectin', Bill?" asked the bar-keeper.

"A letter from his aunt. Reckon he'll hev to take it out in expectin'. Likely they're glad to get shut o' him."

"He's leadin' a shiftless, idle life here," interposed the Member of Assembly.

"Well," said Bill, who never allowed any one but himself to abuse his protégé, "seein' he ain't expectin' no offis from the hands of an enlightened constitooency, it *is* raythor a shiftless life." After delivering this Parthian arrow with a gratuitous twanging of the bow to indicate its offensive personality, Bill winked at the bar-keeper, slowly resumed a pair of immense, bulgy buckskin gloves, which gave his fingers the appearance of being painfully sore and bandaged, strode to the door without looking at anybody, called out, "All aboard," with a perfunctory air of supreme indifference whether the invitation was heeded, remounted his box, and drove stolidly away.

Perhaps it was well that he did so, for the conversation at once assumed a disrespectful attitude toward Tom and his relatives. It was more than intimated that Tom's alleged aunt was none other than Tom's real mother, while it was also asserted that Tom's alleged uncle did not himself participate in this intimate relationship to the boy to an extent which the fastidious taste of Angel's deemed moral and necessary. Popular opinion also believed that Islington, the adopted father, who received a certain stipend ostensibly for the boy's support, retained it as a reward for his reticence regarding these facts. "He ain't ruinin' hisself by wastin' it on Tom," said the barkeeper, who possibly possessed positive knowledge of much of Islington's disbursements. But at this point exhausted nature languished among some of the debaters, and he turned from the frivolity of conversation to his severer professional duties.

It was also well that Bill's momentary attitude of didactic propriety was not further excited by the subsequent conduct of his protégé. For by this time Tom, half supporting the unstable Johnson, who developed a tendency to occasionally dash across the glaring road, but checked himself midway each time, reached the

corral which adjoined the Mansion House. At its farther extremity was a pump and horse-trough. Here, without a word being spoken, but evidently in obedience to some habitual custom, Tom led his companion. With the boy's assistance, Johnson removed his coat and neck-cloth, turned back the collar of his shirt, and gravely placed his head beneath the pump-spout. With equal gravity and deliberation, Tom took his place at the handle. For a few moments only the splashing of water and regular strokes of the pump broke the solemnly ludicrous silence. Then there was a pause in which Johnson put his hands to his dripping head, felt it critically as if it belonged to somebody else, and raised his eyes to his companion. "That ought to fetch *it*," said Tom, in answer to the look. "Ef it don't," replied Johnson doggedly, with an air of relieving himself of all further responsibility in the matter, "it's got to, thet's all!"

If "it" referred to some change in the physiognomy of Johnson, "it" had probably been "fetched" by the process just indicated. The head that went under the pump was large, and clothed with bushy, uncertain-coloured hair; the face was flushed, puffy, and expressionless, the eyes injected and full. The head that came out from under the pump was of smaller size and different shape, the hair straight, dark, and sleek, the face pale and hollow-cheeked, the eyes bright and restless. In the haggard, nervous ascetic that rose from the horse-trough there was very little trace of the Bacchus that had bowed there a moment before. Familiar as Tom must have been with the spectacle, he could not help looking inquiringly at the trough, as if expecting to see some traces of the previous Johnson in its shallow depths.

A narrow strip of willow, alder, and buckeye—a mere dusty, ravelled fringe of the green mantle that swept the high shoulders of Table Mountain—lapped the edge of the corral. The silent pair were quick to avail themselves of even its scant shelter from the overpowering sun. They had not proceeded far, before Johnson, who was walking quite rapidly in advance, suddenly brought himself up, and turned to his companion with an interrogative "Eh?"

"I didn't speak," said Tommy quietly.

"Who said you spoke?" said Johnson, with a quick look of cunning. "In course you didn't speak, and I didn't speak neither. Nobody spoke. Wot makes you think you spoke?" he continued, peering curiously into Tommy's eyes.

The smile which habitually shone there quickly vanished as the boy stepped quietly to his companion's side, and took his arm without a word.

"In course you didn't speak, Tommy," said Johnson deprecatingly. "You ain't a boy to go for to play an ole soaker like me. That's wot I like you for. Thet's wot I seed in you from the first. I sez, 'Thet 'ere boy ain't goin' to play you, Johnson! You can go your whole pile on him, when you can't trust even a bar-keep'.' Thet's wot I said. Eh?"

This time Tommy prudently took no notice of the interrogation, and Johnson went on: "Ef I was to ask you another question, you wouldn't go to play me neither —would you, Tommy?"

"No," said the boy.

"Ef I was to ask you," continued Johnson, without heeding the reply, but with a growing anxiety of eye and a nervous twitching of his lips,—"ef I was to ask you, fur instance, ef that was a jackass rabbit thet jest passed, —eh?—you'd say it was or was not, ez the case may be. You wouldn't play the ole man on thet?"

"No," said Tommy quietly, "it *was* a jackass rabbit."

"Ef I was to ask you," continued Johnson, "ef it wore, say, fur instance, a green hat with yaller ribbons, you wouldn't play me, and say it did, onless"—he added, with intensified cunning—"onless it *did*?"

"No," said Tommy, "of course I wouldn't; but then, you see, *it did*."

"It did?"

"It did!" repeated Tommy stoutly; "a green hat with yellow ribbons—and—and—a red rosette."

"I didn't get to see the ros-ette," said Johnson, with slow and conscientious deliberation, yet with an evident sense of relief; "but that ain't sayin' it warn't there, you know. Eh?"

Tommy glanced quietly at his companion. There

were great beads of perspiration on his ashen-grey forehead, and on the ends of his lank hair; the hand which twitched spasmodically in his was cold and clammy, the other, which was free, had a vague, purposeless, jerky activity, as if attached to some deranged mechanism. Without any apparent concern in these phenomena, Tommy halted, and, seating himself on a log, motioned his companion to a place beside him. Johnson obeyed without a word. Slight as was the act, perhaps no other incident of their singular companionship indicated as completely the dominance of this careless, half-effeminate, but self-possessed boy over this doggedly self-willed, abnormally excited man.

"It ain't the square thing," said Johnson, after a pause, with a laugh that was neither mirthful nor musical, and frightened away a lizard that had been regarding the pair with breathless suspense,—"it ain't the square thing for jackass rabbits to wear hats, Tommy,—is it, eh?"

"Well," said Tommy, with unmoved composure, "sometimes they do and sometimes they don't. Animals are mighty queer." And here Tommy went off in an animated, but, I regret to say, utterly untruthful and untrustworthy account of the habits of California fauna, until he was interrupted by Johnson.

"And snakes, eh, Tommy?" said the man, with an abstracted air, gazing intently on the ground before him.

"And snakes," said Tommy; "but they don't bite,—at least, not that kind you see. There!—don't move, Uncle Ben, don't move; they're gone now. And it's about time you took your dose."

Johnson had hurriedly risen as if to leap upon the log, but Tommy had as quickly caught his arm with one hand while he drew a bottle from his pocket with the other. Johnson paused, and eyed the bottle. "Ef you say so, my boy," he faltered, as his fingers closed nervously around it; "say 'when,' then." He raised the bottle to his lips and took a long draught, the boy regarding him critically. "When," said Tommy suddenly. Johnson started, flushed, and returned the bottle quickly. But the colour that had risen to his cheek stayed there, his eye grew less restless, and as they moved away

again, the hand that rested on Tommy's shoulder was steadier.

Their way lay along the flank of Table Mountain,—a wandering trail through a tangled solitude that might have seemed virgin and unbroken but for a few oyster-cans, yeast-powder tins, and empty bottles that had been apparently stranded by the "first low wash" of pioneer waves. On the ragged trunk of an enormous pine hung a few tufts of grey hair caught from a passing grizzly, but in strange juxtaposition at its foot lay an empty bottle of incomparable bitters,—the *chef-d'œuvre* of a hygienic civilization, and blazoned with the arms of an all-healing republic. The head of a rattlesnake peered from a case that had contained tobacco, which was still brightly placarded with the high-coloured effigy of a popular *danseuse*. And a little beyond this the soil was broken and fissured, there was a confused mass of roughly-hewn timber, a straggling line of sluicing, a heap of gravel and dirt, a rude cabin, and the claim of Johnson.

Except for the rudest purposes of shelter from rain and cold, the cabin possessed but little advantage over the simple savagery of surrounding nature. It had all the practical directness of the habitation of some animal, without its comfort or picturesque quality; the very birds that haunted it for food must have felt their own superiority as architects. It was inconceivably dirty, even with its scant capacity for accretion; it was singularly stale, even in its newness and freshness of material. Unspeakably dreary as it was in shadow, the sunlight visited it in a blind, aching, purposeless way, as if despairing of mellowing its outlines or of even tanning it into colour.

The claim worked by Johnson in his intervals of sobriety was represented by half a dozen rude openings in the mountain-side, with the heaped-up débris of rock and gravel before the mouth of each. They gave very little evidence of engineering skill or constructive purpose, or indeed showed anything but the vague, successively abandoned essays of their projector. To-day they served another purpose, for as the sun had heated the little cabin almost to the point of combustion, curling up the long dry shingles, and starting aromatic tears

from the green pine beams, Tommy led Johnson into one of the larger openings, and with a sense of satisfaction threw himself panting upon its rocky floor. Here and there the grateful dampness was condensed in quiet pools of water, or in a monotonous and soothing drip from the rocks above. Without lay the staring sunlight—colourless, clarified, intense.

For a few moments they lay resting on their elbows in blissful contemplation of the heat they had escaped. "Wot do you say," said Johnson slowly, without looking at his companion, but abstractedly addressing himself to the landscape beyond,—"wot do you say to two straight games fur one thousand dollars?"

"Make it five thousand." replied Tommy reflectively, also to the landscape, "and I'm in."

"Wot do I owe you now?" said Johnson, after a lengthened silence.

"One hundred and seventy-five thousand two hundred and fifty dollars," replied Tommy, with business-like gravity.

"Well," said Johnson, after a deliberation commensurate with the magnitude of the transaction, "ef you win, call it a hundred and eighty thousand, round. War's the keerds?"

They were in an old tin box in a crevice of a rock above his head. They were greasy and worn with service. Johnson dealt, albeit his right hand was still uncertain,—hovering, after dropping the cards, aimlessly about Tommy, and being only recalled by a strong nervous effort. Yet, notwithstanding this incapacity for even honest manipulation, Mr. Johnson covertly turned a knave from the bottom of the pack with such shameless inefficiency and gratuitous unskilfulness, that even Tommy was obliged to cough and look elsewhere to hide his embarrassment. Possibly for this reason the young gentleman was himself constrained, by way of correction, to add a valuable card to his own hand, over and above the number he legitimately held.

Nevertheless the game was unexciting and dragged listlessly. Johnson won. He recorded the fact and the amount with a stub of pencil and shaking fingers in wandering hieroglyphics all over a pocket diary. Then

there was a long pause, when Johnson slowly drew something from his pocket and held it up before his companion. It was apparently a dull red stone.

"Ef," said Johnson slowly, with his old look of simple cunning,—"ef you happened to pick up sich a rock ez that, Tommy, what might you say it was?"

"Don't know," said Tommy.

"Mightn't you say," continued Johnson cautiously, "that it was gold, or silver?"

"Neither," said Tommy promptly.

"Mightn't you say it was quicksilver? Mightn't you say that ef thar was a friend o' yourn ez knew war to go and turn out ten ton of it a day, and every ton worth two thousand dollars, that he had a soft thing, a very soft thing,—allowin', Tommy, that you used sich language, which you don't?"

"But," said the boy, coming to the point with great directness, "*do* you know where to get it? have you struck it, Uncle Ben?"

Johnson looked carefully round. "I hev, Tommy. Listen. I know whar thar's cartloads of it. But thar's only one other specimen—the mate to this yer—thet's above ground, and thet's in 'Frisco. Thar's an agint comin' up in a day or two to look into it. I sent for him. Eh?"

His bright, restless eyes were concentrated on Tommy's face now, but the boy showed neither surprise nor interest. Least of all did he betray any recollection of Bill's ironical and gratuitous corroboration of this part of the story.

"Nobody knows it," continued Johnson, in a nervous whisper,—"nobody knows it but you and the agint in 'Frisco. The boys workin' round yar passes by and sees the old man grubbin' away, and no signs o' colour, not even rotten quartz; the boys loafin' round the Mansion House sees the old man lyin' round free in bar-rooms, and they laughs and sez, 'Played out,' and spects nothin'. Maybe ye think they spects suthin' now, eh?" queried Johnson, suddenly, with a sharp look of suspicion.

Tommy looked up, shook his head, threw a stone at a passing rabbit, but did not reply.

"When I fust set eyes on you, Tommy," continued Johnson, apparently reassured, "the fust day you kem

and pumped for me, an entire stranger, and hevin' no call to do it, I sez, 'Johnson, Johnson,' sez I, 'yer's a boy you kin trust. Yer's a boy that won't play you; yer's a chap that's white and square,'—white and square, Tommy: them's the very words I used."

He paused for a moment, and then went on in a confidential whisper, "'You want capital, Johnson,' sez I, 'to develop your resources, and you want a pardner. Capital you can send for, but your pardner, Johnson,—your pardner is right yer. And his name, it is Tommy Islington.' Them's the very words I used."

He stopped and chafed his clammy hands upon his knees. "It's six months ago sens I made you my pardner. Thar ain't a lick I've struck sens then, Tommy, thar ain't a han'ful o' yearth I've washed, thar ain't a shovelful o' rock I've turned over, but I tho't o' you. 'Share, and share alike,' sez I. When I wrote to my agint, I wrote ekal for my pardner, Tommy Islington, he hevin' no call to know ef the same was man or boy."

He had moved nearer the boy, and would perhaps have laid his hand caressingly upon him, but even in his manifest affection there was a singular element of awed restraint and even fear,—a suggestion of something withheld even his fullest confidences, a hopeless perception of some vague barrier that never could be surmounted. He may have been at times dimly conscious that, in the eyes which Tommy raised to his, there was thorough intellectual appreciation, critical good-humour, even feminine softness, but nothing more. His nervousness somewhat heightened by his embarrassment, he went on with an attempt at calmness which his twitching white lips and unsteady fingers made pathetically grotesque. "'Thar's a bill o' sale in my bunk, made out accordin' to law, of an ekal ondivided half of the claim, and the consideration is two hundred and fifty thousand dollars—gambling debts—gambling debts from me to you, Tommy,—you understand?"—nothing could exceed the intense cunning of his eye at this moment—"and then thar's a will."

"A will?" said Tommy in amused surprise.

Johnson looked frightened.

"Eh?" he said hurriedly, "wot will? Who said anythin' 'bout a will, Tommy?"

"Nobody," replied Tommy, with unblushing calm.

Johnson passed his hand over his cold forehead, wrung the damp ends of his hair with his fingers, and went on: "Times when I'm took bad ez I was to-day, the boys about yer sez — you sez, maybe, Tommy — it's whisky. It ain't, Tommy. It's pizen — quicksilver pizen. That's what's the matter with me. I'm salviated! Salviated with merkery.

"I've heerd o' it before," continued Johnson, appealing to the boy, "and ez a boy o' permiskus reading, I reckon you hev too. Them men as works in cinnabar sooner or later gets salviated. It's bound to fetch 'em some time. Salviated by merkery."

"What are you goin' to do for it?" asked Tommy.

"When the agint comes up, and I begins to realize on this yer mine," said Johnson contemplatively, "I goes to New York. I sez to the bar-keep' o' the hotel, 'Show me the biggest doctor here.' He shows me. I sez to him, 'Salviated by merkery—a year's standin'—how much?' He sez, 'Five thousand dollars, and take two o' these pills at bedtime, and an ekil number o' powders at meals, and come back in a week.' And I goes back in a week, cured, and signs a certifikit to that effect."

Encouraged by a look of interest in Tommy's eye, he went on.

"So I gets cured. I goes to the bar-keep', and I sez, 'Show me the biggest, fashionblest house thet's for sale yer.' And he sez, 'The biggest nat'rally b'longs to John Jacob Astor.' And I sez, 'Show him,' and he shows him. And I sez, 'Wot might you ask for this yer house?' And he looks at me scornful, and sez, 'Go 'way, old man; you must be sick.' And I fetches him one over the left eye, and he apologizes, and I gives him his own price for the house. I stocks that house with mohogany furniture and pervisions, and thar we lives,—you and me, Tommy, you and me!"

The sun no longer shone upon the hill-side. The shadows of the pines were beginning to creep over Johnson's claim, and the air within the cavern was growing chill. In the gathering darkness his eyes shone brightly as he went on: "Then thar comes a day when we gives a big spread. We invites govners, members o'

Congress, gentlemen o' fashion, and the like. And among 'em I invites a Man as holds his head very high, a Man I once knew; but he doesn't know I knows him, and he doesn't remember me. And he comes and he sits opposite me, and I watches him. And he's very airy, this Man, and very chipper, and he wipes his mouth with a white hankercher, and he smiles, and he ketches my eye. And he sez, 'A glass o' wine with you, Mr. Johnson'; and he fills his glass and I fills mine, and we rises. And I heaves that wine, glass and all, right into his damned grinnin' face. And he jumps for me—for he is very game, this Man, very game—but some on 'em grabs him, and he sez, 'Who be you?' And I sez, 'Skaggs! Damn you, Skaggs! Look at me! Gimme back my wife and child, gimme back the money you stole, gimme back the good name you took away, gimme back the health you ruined, gimme back the last twelve years! Give 'em to me, damn you, quick, before I cuts your heart out!' And naterally, Tommy, he can't do it. And so I cuts his heart out, my boy; I cuts his heart out."

The purely animal fury of his eye suddenly changed again to cunning. "You think they hangs me for it, Tommy, but they don't. Not much, Tommy. I goes to the biggest lawyer there, and I says to him, 'Salviated by merkery—you hear me—salviated by merkery.' And he winks at me, and he goes to the judge, and he sez, 'This yer unfortnet man isn't responsible—he's been salviated by merkery.' And he brings witnesses; you comes, Tommy, and you sez ez how you've seen me took bad afore; and the doctor, he comes, and he sez as how he's seen me frightful; and the jury, without leavin' their seats, brings in a verdict o' justifiable insanity,—salviated by merkery."

In the excitement of his climax he had risen to his feet, but would have fallen had not Tommy caught him and led him into the open air. In this sharper light there was an odd change visible in his yellow-white face,—a change which caused Tommy to hurriedly support him, half leading, half dragging him toward the little cabin. When they had reached it, Tommy placed him on a rude "bunk," or shelf, and stood for a moment in anxious contemplation of the tremor-stricken man before

him. Then he said rapidly, "Listen, Uncle Ben. I'm goin' to town—to town, you understand—for the doctor. You're not to get up or move on any account until I return. Do you hear?" Johnson nodded violently. "I'll be back in two hours." In another moment he was gone.

For an hour Johnson kept his word. Then he suddenly sat up, and began to gaze fixedly at a corner of the cabin. From gazing at it he began to smile, from smiling at it he began to talk, from talking at it he began to scream, from screaming he passed to cursing and sobbing wildly. Then he lay quiet again.

He was so still that to merely human eyes he might have seemed asleep or dead. But a squirrel, that, emboldened by the stillness, had entered from the roof, stopped short upon a beam above the bunk, for he saw that the man's foot was slowly and cautiously moving towards the floor, and that the man's eyes were as intent and watchful as his own. Presently, still without a sound, both feet were upon the floor. And then the bunk creaked, and the squirrel whisked into the eaves of the roof. When he peered forth again, everything was quiet, and the man was gone.

An hour later two muleteers on the Placerville Road passed a man with dishevelled hair, glaring, bloodshot eyes, and clothes torn with bramble and stained with the red dust of the mountain. They pursued him, when he turned fiercely on the foremost, wrested a pistol from his grasp, and broke away. Later still, when the sun had dropped behind Payne's Ridge, the underbrush on Deadwood Slope crackled with a stealthy but continuous tread. It must have been an animal whose dimly-outlined bulk, in the gathering darkness, showed here and there in vague but incessant motion; it could be nothing but an animal whose utterance was at once so incoherent, monotonous, and unremitting. Yet, when the sound came nearer, and the chaparral was parted, it seemed to be a man, and that man Johnson.

Above the baying of phantasmal hounds that pressed him hard and drove him on, with never rest or mercy; above the lashing of a spectral whip that curled about his limbs, sang in his ears, and continually stung him

forward; above the outcries of the unclean shapes that thronged about him,—he could still distinguish one real sound,—the rush and sweep of hurrying waters. The Stanislaus River! A thousand feet below him drove its yellowing current. Through all the vacillations of his unseated mind he had clung to one idea—to reach the river, to lave in it, to swim it if need be, but to put it for ever between him and the harrying shapes, to drown for ever in its turbid depths the thronging spectres, to wash away in its yellow flood all stains and colour of the past. And now he was leaping from boulder to boulder, from blackened stump to stump, from gnarled bush to bush, caught for a moment and withheld by clinging vines, or plunging downward into dusty hollows, until, rolling, dropping, sliding, and stumbling, he reached the river-bank, whereon he fell, rose, staggered forward, and fell again with outstretched arms upon a rock that breasted the swift current. And there he lay as dead.

A few stars came out hesitatingly above Deadwood Slope. A cold wind that had sprung up with the going down of the sun fanned them into momentary brightness, swept the heated flanks of the mountain, and ruffled the river. Where the fallen man lay there was a sharp curve in the stream, so that in the gathering shadows the rushing water seemed to leap out of the darkness and to vanish again. Decayed driftwood, trunks of trees, fragments of broken sluicing—the wash and waste of many a mile—swept into sight a moment, and were gone. All of decay, wreck, and foulness gathered in the long circuit of mining-camp and settlement, all the dregs and refuse of a crude and wanton civilization, reappeared for an instant, and then were hurried away in the darkness and lost. No wonder that, as the wind ruffled the yellow waters, the waves seemed to lift their unclean hands toward the rock whereon the fallen man lay, as if eager to snatch him from it, too, and hurry him toward the sea.

It was very still. In the clear air a horn blown a mile away was heard distinctly. The jingling of a spur and a laugh on the highway over Payne's Ridge sounded clearly across the river. The rattling of harness and hoofs foretold for many minutes the approach of the Wingdam coach, that at last, with flashing lights, passed

within a few feet of the rock. Then for an hour all again was quiet. Presently the moon, round and full, lifted herself above the serried ridge and looked down upon the river. At first the bared peak of Deadwood Hill gleamed white and skull-like. Then the shadows of Payne's Ridge cast on the slope slowly sank away, leaving the unshapely stumps, the dusty fissures, and clinging outcrop of Deadwood Slope to stand out in black and silver. Still stealing softly downward, the moonlight touched the bank and the rock, and then glittered brightly on the river. The rock was bare and the man was gone, but the river still hurried swiftly to the sea.

"Is there anything for me?" asked Tommy Islington, as, a week after, the stage drew up at the Mansion House, and Bill slowly entered the bar-room. Bill did not reply, but, turning to a stranger who had entered with him, indicated with a jerk of his finger the boy. The stranger turned with an air half of business, half of curiosity, and looked critically at Tommy. "Is there anything for me?" repeated Tommy, a little confused at the silence and scrutiny. Bill walked deliberately to the bar, and, placing his back against it, faced Tommy with a look of demure enjoyment.

"Ef," he remarked slowly,—"ef a hundred thousand dollars down and half a million in perspektive is ennything, Major, THERE IS!"

PART II.—EAST

IT was characteristic of Angel's that the disappearance of Johnson, and the fact that he had left his entire property to Tommy, thrilled the community but slightly in comparison with the astounding discovery that he had anything to leave. The finding of a cinnabar lode at Angel's absorbed all collateral facts or subsequent details. Prospectors from adjoining camps thronged the settlement; the hill-side for a mile on either side of Johnson's claim was staked out and pre-empted; trade received a sudden stimulus; and, in the excited rhetoric of the *Weekly Record*, "a new era had broken upon Angel's." "On

Thursday last," added that paper, "over five hundred dollars was taken in over the bar of the Mansion House."

Of the fate of Johnson there was little doubt. He had been last seen lying on a boulder on the river-bank by outside passengers of the Wingdam night coach, and when Finn of Robinson's Ferry admitted to have fired three shots from a revolver at a dark object struggling in the water near the ferry, which he "suspicioned" to be a bear, the question seemed to be settled. Whatever might have been the fallibility of his judgement, of the accuracy of his aim there could be no doubt. The general belief that Johnson, after possessing himself of the muleteer's pistol, could have run amuck, gave a certain retributive justice to this story, which rendered it acceptable to the camp.

It was also characteristic of Angel's that no feeling of envy or opposition to the good fortune of Tommy Islington prevailed there. That he was thoroughly cognizant, from the first, of Johnson's discovery, that his attentions to him were interested, calculating, and speculative, was, however, the general belief of the majority,—a belief that, singularly enough, awakened the first feelings of genuine respect for Tommy ever shown by the camp. "He ain't no fool; Yuba Bill seed thet from the first," said the bar-keeper. It was Yuba Bill who applied for the guardianship of Tommy after his accession to Johnson's claim, and on whose bonds the richest men of Calaveras were represented. It was Yuba Bill, also, when Tommy was sent East to finish his education, accompanied him to San Francisco, and, before parting with his charge on the steamer's deck, drew him aside, and said, "Ef at enny time you want enny money, Tommy, over and 'bove your 'lowance, you kin write; but ef you'll take my advice," he added, with a sudden huskiness mitigating the severity of his voice, "you'll forget every derned ole spavined, string-halted bummer, as you ever met or knew at Angel's,—ev'ry one, Tommy,—ev'ry one! And so—boy—take care of yourself—and—and—God bless ye, and pertikerly d—n me for a first-class A 1 fool." It was Yuba Bill, also, after this speech, glared savagely around, walked down the crowded gang-plank with a rigid and aggressive shoulder, picked a quarrel with his

cabman, and, after bundling that functionary into his own vehicle, took the reins himself, and drove furiously to his hotel. "It cost me," said Bill, recounting the occurrence somewhat later at Angel's,—"it cost me a matter o' twenty dollars afore the jedge the next mornin'; but you kin bet high thet I taught them 'Frisco chaps suthin' new about drivin'. I didn't make it lively in Montgomery Street for about ten minutes—O no!"

And so by degrees the two original locaters of the great Cinnabar Lode faded from the memory of Angel's, and Calaveras knew them no more. In five years their very names had been forgotten; in seven the name of the town was changed; in ten the town itself was transported bodily to the hill-side, and the chimney of the Union Smelting Works by night flickered like a corpse-light over the site of Johnson's cabin, and by day poisoned the pure spices of the pines. Even the Mansion House was dismantled, and the Wingdam stage deserted the highway for a shorter cut by Quicksilver City. Only the bared crest of Deadwood Hill, as of old, sharply cut the clear blue sky, and at its base, as of old, the Stanislaus River, unwearied and unresting, babbled, whispered, and hurried away to the sea.

A midsummer's day was breaking lazily on the Atlantic. There was not wind enough to move the vapours in the foggy offing, but when the vague distance heaved against a violet sky there were dull red streaks that, growing brighter, presently painted out the stars. Soon the brown rocks of Greyport appeared faintly suffused, and then the whole ashen line of dead coast was kindled, and the lighthouse beacons went out one by one. And then a hundred sail, before invisible, started out of the vapoury horizon, and pressed toward the shore. It was morning, indeed, and some of the best society in Greyport, having been up all night, were thinking it was time to go to bed.

For as the sky flashed brighter it fired the clustering red roofs of a picturesque house by the sands that had all that night, from open lattice and illuminated balcony, given light and music to the shore. It glittered on the broad crystal spaces of a great conservatory that looked upon an exquisite lawn, where all night long the blended

odours of sea and shore had swooned under the summer moon. But it wrought confusion among the coloured lamps on the long veranda, and startled a group of ladies and gentlemen who had stepped from the drawing-room window to gaze upon it. It was so searching and sincere in its way, that, as the carriage of the fairest Miss Gilly-flower rolled away, that peerless young woman, catching sight of her face in the oval mirror, instantly pulled down the blinds, and, nestling the whitest shoulders in Greyport against the crimson cushions, went to sleep.

"How haggard everybody is! Rose, dear, you look almost intellectual," said Blanche Masterman.

"I hope not," said Rose simply. "Sunrises are very trying. Look how that pink regularly puts out Mrs. Brown-Robinson, hair and all!"

"The angels," said the Count de Nugat, with a polite gesture toward the sky, "must have find these celestial combinations very bad for the *toilette*."

"They're safe in white,—except when they sit for their pictures in Venice," said Blanche. "How fresh Mr. Islington looks! It's really uncomplimentary to us."

"I suppose the sun recognizes in me no rival," said the young man demurely. "But," he added, "I have lived much in the open air, and require very little sleep."

"How delightful!" said Mrs. Brown-Robinson in a low, enthusiastic voice, and a manner that held the glowing sentiment of sixteen and the practical experiences of thirty-two in dangerous combination;—"how perfectly delightful! What sunrises you must have seen, and in such wild, romantic places! How I envy you! My nephew was a classmate of yours, and has often repeated to me those charming stories you tell of your adventures. Won't you tell some now? Do! How you must tire of us and this artificial life here, so frightfully artificial, you know" (in a confidential whisper); "and then to think of the days when you roamed the great West with the Indians, and the bisons, and the grizzly bears! Of course, you have seen grizzly bears and bisons?"

"Of course he has, dear," said Blanche, a little pettishly, throwing a cloak over her shoulders, and seizing her chaperon by the arm; "his earliest infancy was soothed by bisons, and he proudly points to the grizzly bear as

the playmate of his youth. Come with me, and I'll tell you all about it. How good it is of you," she added, *sotto voce*, to Islington as he stood by the carriage,—" how perfectly good it is of you to be like those animals you tell us of, and not know your full power. Think, with your experiences and our credulity, what stories you *might* tell! And you are going to walk? Good night, then." A slim, gloved hand was frankly extended from the window, and the next moment the carriage rolled away.

" Isn't Islington throwing away a chance there? " said Captain Merwin, on the veranda.

" Perhaps he couldn't stand my lovely aunt's superadded presence. But then, he's the guest of Blanche's father, and I dare say they see enough of each other as it is."

" But isn't it a rather dangerous situation? "

" For him, perhaps; although he's awfully old, and very queer. For her, with an experience that takes in all the available men in both hemispheres, ending with Nugat over there, I should say a man more or less wouldn't affect her much, anyway. Of course," he laughed, " these are the accents of bitterness. But that was last year."

Perhaps Islington did not overhear the speaker; perhaps, if he did, the criticism was not new. He turned carelessly away, and sauntered out on the road to the sea. Thence he strolled along the sands toward the cliffs, where, meeting an impediment in the shape of a garden wall, he leaped it with a certain agile, boyish ease and experience, and struck across an open lawn toward the rocks again. The best society of Greyport were not early risers, and the spectacle of a trespasser in an evening dress excited only the criticism of grooms hanging about the stables, or cleanly housemaids on the broad verandas that in Greyport architecture dutifully gave upon the sea. Only once, as he entered the boundaries of Cliffwood Lodge, the famous seat of Renwyck Masterman, was he aware of suspicious scrutiny; but a slouching figure that vanished quickly in the lodge offered no opposition to his progress. Avoiding the pathway to the lodge, Islington kept along the rocks until, reaching

a little promontory and rustic pavilion, he sat down and gazed upon the sea.

And presently an infinite peace stole upon him. Except where the waves lapped lazily the crags below, the vast expanse beyond seemed unbroken by ripple, heaving only in broad ponderable sheets, and rhythmically, as if still in sleep. The air was filled with a luminous haze that caught and held the direct sunbeams. In the deep calm that lay upon the sea, it seemed to Islington that all the tenderness of culture, magic of wealth, and spell of refinement that for years had wrought upon that favoured shore had extended its gracious influence even here. What a pampered and caressed old ocean it was; cajoled, flattered, and fêted where it lay! An odd recollection of the turbid Stanislaus hurrying by the ascetic pines, of the grim outlines of Deadwood Hill, swam before his eyes, and made the yellow green of the velvet lawn and graceful foliage seem almost tropical by contrast. And, looking up, a few yards distant he beheld a tall slip of a girl gazing upon the sea—Blanche Masterman.

She had plucked somewhere a large fan-shaped leaf, which she held parasol-wise, shading the blonde masses of her hair, and hiding her grey eyes. She had changed her festal dress, with its amplitude of flounce and train, for a closely fitting half-antique habit whose scant outlines would have been trying to limbs less shapely, but which prettily accented the graceful curves and sweeping lines of this Greyport goddess. As Islington rose, she came toward him with a frankly outstretched hand and unconstrained manner. Had she observed him first? I don't know.

They sat down together on a rustic seat, Miss Blanche facing the sea, and shading her eyes with the leaf.

"I don't really know how long I have been sitting here," said Islington, "or whether I have not been actually asleep and dreaming. It seemed too lovely a morning to go to bed. But you?"

From behind the leaf, it appeared that Miss Blanche, on retiring, had been pursued by a hideous four-winged bug which defied the efforts of herself and maid to dislodge. Odin, the Spitz dog, had insisted upon scratching at the door. And it made her eyes red to sleep in

the morning. And she had an early call to make. And the sea looked lovely.

"I'm glad to find you here, whatever be the cause," said Islington, with his old directness. "To-day, as you know, is my last day in Greyport, and it is much pleasanter to say good-bye under this blue sky than even beneath your father's wonderful frescoes yonder. I want to remember you, too, as part of this pleasant prospect which belongs to us all, rather than recall you in anybody's particular setting."

"I know," said Blanche, with equal directness, "that houses are one of the defects of our civilization; but I don't think I ever heard the idea as elegantly expressed before. Where do you go?"

"I don't know yet. I have several plans. I may go to South America and become president of one of the republics,—I am not particular which. I am rich, but in that part of America which lies outside of Greyport it is necessary for every man to have some work. My friends think I should have some great aim in life, with a capital A. But I was born a vagabond, and a vagabond I shall probably die."

"I don't know anybody in South America," said Blanche languidly. "There were two girls here last season, but they didn't wear stays in the house, and their white frocks never were properly done up. If you go to South America, you must write to me."

"I will. Can you tell me the name of this flower which I found in your greenhouse? It looks much like a California blossom."

"Perhaps it is. Father bought it of a half-crazy old man who came here one day. Do you know him?"

Islington laughed. "I am afraid not. But let me present this in a less business-like fashion."

"Thank you. Remind me to give you one in return before you go,—or will you choose yourself?"

They had both risen as by a common instinct.

"Good-bye."

The cool, flower-like hand lay in his for an instant.

"Will you oblige me by putting aside that leaf a moment before I go?"

"But my eyes are red, and I look like a perfect fright."

Yet, after a long pause, the leaf fluttered down, and a pair of very beautiful but withal very clear and critical eyes met his. Islington was constrained to look away. When he turned again she was gone.

"Mr. Hislington,—sir!"

It was Chalker, the English groom, out of breath with running.

"Seein' you alone, sir—beg your pardon, sir—but there's a person——"

"A person! what the devil do you mean? Speak English—no, damn it, I mean don't," said Islington snappishly.

"I said a person, sir. Beg pardon—no offence—but not a gent, sir. In the lib'ry."

A little amused even through the utter dissatisfaction with himself and vague loneliness that had suddenly come upon him, Islington, as he walked toward the lodge, asked, "Why isn't he a gent?"

"No gent—beggin' your pardin, sir—'ud guy a man in sarvis, sir. Takes me 'ands so, sir, as I sits in the rumble at the gate, and puts 'em downd so, sir, and sez, 'Put 'em in your pocket, young man,—or is it a road agint you expects to see, that you 'olds hup your 'ands, hand crosses 'em like to that,' sez he. ''Old 'ard,' sez he, 'on the short curves, or you'll bust your precious crust,' sez he. And hasks for you, sir. This way, sir."

They entered the lodge. Islington hurried down the long Gothic hall, and opened the library door.

In an arm-chair, in the centre of the room, a man sat apparently contemplating a large, stiff, yellow hat with an enormous brim, that was placed on the floor before him. His hands rested lightly between his knees, but one foot was drawn up at the side of his chair in a peculiar manner. In the first glance that Islington gave, the attitude in some odd, irreconcilable way suggested a brake. In another moment he dashed across the room, and, holding out both hands, cried, "Yuba Bill!"

The man rose, caught Islington by the shoulders, wheeled him round, hugged him, felt of his ribs like a good-natured ogre, shook his hands violently, laughed, and then said, somewhat ruefully, "And how ever did you know me?"

Seeing that Yuba Bill evidently regarded himself as in some elaborate disguise, Islington laughed, and suggested that it must have been instinct.

"And you?" said Bill, holding him at arm's length, and surveying him critically,—"you!—toe think—toe think—a little cuss no higher nor a trace, a boy as I've flicked outer the road with a whip time in agin, a boy ez never hed much clothes to speak of, turned into a sport!"

Islington remembered, with a thrill of ludicrous terror, that he still wore his evening dress.

"Turned," continued Yuba Bill severely,—"turned into a restyourant waiter,—a garsong! Eh, Alfonse, bring me a patty de foy grass and an omelette, demme!"

"Dear old chap!" said Islington, laughing, and trying to put his hand over Bill's bearded mouth, "but you—*you* don't look exactly like yourself! You're not well, Bill." And indeed, as he turned towards the light, Bill's eyes appeared cavernous, and his hair and beard thickly streaked with grey.

"Maybe it's this yer harness," said Bill, a little anxiously. "When I hitches on this yer curb" (he indicated a massive gold watch-chain with enormous links), "and mounts this 'morning star'" (he pointed to a very large solitaire pin which had the appearance of blistering his whole shirt-front), "it kinder weighs heavy on me, Tommy. Otherwise I'm all right, my boy—all right." But he evaded Islington's keen eye and turned from the light.

"You have something to tell me, Bill," said Islington suddenly, and with almost brusque directness; "out with it."

Bill did not speak, but moved uneasily toward his hat.

"You didn't come three thousand miles, without a word of warning, to talk to me of old times," said Islington more kindly, "glad as I would have been to see you. It isn't your way, Bill, and you know it. We shall not be disturbed here," he added, in reply to an inquiring glance that Bill directed to the door, "and I am ready to hear you."

"Firstly, then," said Bill, drawing his chair nearer Islington, "answer me one question, Tommy, fair and square, and up and down."

"Go on," said Islington, with a slight smile.

"Ef I should say to you, Tommy—say to you to-day, right here, you must come with me—you must leave this place for a month, a year, two years, maybe, perhaps for ever—is there anything that 'ud keep you—anything, my boy, ez you couldn't leave?"

"No," said Tommy quietly; "I am only visiting here. I thought of leaving Greyport to-day."

"But if I should say to you, Tommy, come with me on a *pasear* to Chiny, to Japan, to South Ameriky, p'r'aps, could you go?"

"Yes," said Islington, after a slight pause.

"Thar isn't ennything," said Bill, drawing a little closer, and lowering his voice confidentially,—"ennything in the way of a young woman—you understand, Tommy—ez would keep you? They're mighty sweet about here; and whether a man is young or old, Tommy, there's always some woman as is brake or whip to him!"

In a certain excited bitterness that characterized the delivery of this abstract truth, Bill did not see that the young man's face flushed slightly as he answered "No."

"Then listen. It's seven years ago, Tommy, thet I was working one o' the Pioneer coaches over from Gold Hill. Ez I stood in front o' the stage-office, the sheriff o' the county comes to me, and he sez, 'Bill,' sez he, 'I've got a looney chap, as I'm in charge of, taking 'im down to the 'sylum in Stockton. He'z quiet and peaceable, but the insides don't like to ride with him. Hev you enny objection to give him a lift on the box beside you?' I sez, 'No; put him up.' When I came to go and get up on that box beside him, that man, Tommy—that man sittin' there, quiet and peaceable, was—Johnson!

"He didn't know me, my boy," Yuba Bill continued, rising and putting his hands on Tommy's shoulders,—"he didn't know me. He didn't know nothing about you, nor Angel's, nor the quicksilver lode, nor even his own name. He said his name was Skaggs, but I knowd it was Johnson. Thar was times, Tommy, you might have knocked me off that box with a feather; thar was times when if the twenty-seven passengers o' that stage hed found theirselves swimming in the American River

five hundred feet below the road, I never could have explained it satisfactorily to the company,—never.

"The sheriff said," Bill continued hastily, as if to preclude any interruption from the young man,—"the sheriff said he had been brought into Murphy's Camp three years before, dripping with water, and sufferin' from perkussion of the brain, and had been cared for generally by the boys 'round. When I told the sheriff I knowed 'im, I got him to leave him in my care; and I took him to 'Frisco, Tommy, to 'Frisco, and I put him in charge o' the best doctors there, and paid his board myself. There was nothin' he didn't have ez he wanted. Don't look that way, my dear boy, for God's sake, don't!"

"O Bill!" said Islington, rising and staggering to the window, "why did you keep this from me?"

"Why?" said Bill, turning on him savagely,—"why? because I warn't a fool. Thar was you, winnin' your way in college; thar was *you*, risin' in the world, and of some account to it: Yer was an old bummer, ez good ez dead to it—a man ez oughter been dead afore! a man ez never denied it! But you allus liked him better nor me," said Bill bitterly.

"Forgive me, Bill," said the young man, seizing both his hands. "I know you did it for the best; but go on."

"Thar ain't much more to tell, nor much use to tell it, as I can see," said Bill moodily. "He never could be cured, the doctors said, for he had what they called monomania—was always talking about his wife and darter that somebody had stole away years ago, and plannin' revenge on that somebody. And six months ago he was missed. I tracked him to Carson, to Salt Lake City, to Omaha, to Chicago, to New York,—and here!"

"Here!" echoed Islington.

"Here! And that's what brings me here to-day. Whether he's crazy or well, whethers he's huntin' you or lookin' up that other man, you must get away from here. You mustn't see him. You and me, Tommy, will go away on a cruise. In three or four years he'll be dead or missing, and then we'll come back. Come." And he rose to his feet.

"Bill," said Islington, rising also, and taking the hand of his friend with the same quiet obstinacy that in the

old days had endeared him to Bill, "wherever he is, here or elsewhere, sane or crazy, I shall seek and find him. Every dollar that I have shall be his, every dollar that I have spent shall be returned to him. I am young yet, thank God, and can work; and if there is a way out of this miserable business, I shall find it."

"I knew," said Bill, with a surliness that ill concealed his evident admiration of the calm figure before him—"I knew the partikler style of d—n fool that you was, and expected no better. Good-bye, then—God Almighty! who's that?"

He was on his way to the open French window, but had started back, his face quite white and bloodless, and his eyes staring. Islington ran to the window and looked out. A white skirt vanished around the corner of the veranda. When he returned, Bill had dropped into a chair.

"It must have been Miss Masterman, I think; but what's the matter?"

"Nothing," said Bill faintly; "have you got any whisky handy?"

Islington brought a decanter and, pouring out some spirits, handed the glass to Bill. Bill drained it, and then said, "Who is Miss Masterman?"

"Mr. Masterman's daughter; that is, an adopted daughter, I believe."

"Wot name?"

"I really don't know," said Islington pettishly, more vexed than he cared to own at this questioning.

Yuba Bill rose and walked to the window, closed it, walked back again to the door, glanced at Islington, hesitated, and then returned to his chair.

"I didn't tell you I was married—did I?" he said suddenly, looking up in Islington's face with an unsuccessful attempt at a reckless laugh.

"No," said Islington, more pained at the manner than the words.

"Fact," said Yuba Bill. "Three years ago it was, Tommy,—three years ago!"

He looked so hard at Islington that, feeling he was expected to say something, he asked vaguely, "Who did you marry?"

"Thet's it!" said Yuba Bill; "I can't ezactly say; partikly, though, a she-devil! generally, the wife of half a dozen other men."

Accustomed, apparently, to have his conjugal infelicities a theme of mirth among men, and seeing no trace of amusement on Islington's grave face, his dogged, reckless manner softened, and, drawing his chair closer to Islington, he went on: "It all began outer this: we was coming down Watson's grade one night pretty free, when the expressman turns to me and says, 'There's a row inside, and you'd better pull up!' I pulls up, and out hops, first a woman, and then two or three chaps swearing and cursin', and tryin' to drag some one arter them. Then it 'pear'd, Tommy, thet it was this woman's drunken husband they was going to put out for abusin' her and strikin' her in the coach; and if it hadn't been for me, my boy, they'd have left that chap thar in the road. But I fixes matters up by putting her alongside o' me on the box, and we drove on. She was very white, Tommy—for the matter o' that, she was always one o' these very white women, that never got red in the face—but she never cried a whimper. Most wimin would have cried. It was queer, but she never cried. I thought so at the time.

"She was very tall, with a lot o' light hair meandering down the back of her head, as long as a deerskin whiplash, and about the colour. She hed eyes thet'd bore you through at fifty yards, and pooty hands and feet. And when she kinder got out o' that stiff, narvous state she was in, and warmed up a little, and got chipper, by G—d, sir, she was handsome,—she was that!"

A little flushed and embarrassed at his own enthusiasm, he stopped, and then said carelessly, "They got off at Murphy's."

"Well," said Islington.

"Well, I used to see her often arter thet, and when she was alone she allus took the box-seat. She kinder confided her troubles to me, how her husband got drunk and abused her; and I didn't see much o' him, for he was away in 'Frisco arter thet. But it was all square, Tommy,—all square 'twixt me and her.

"I got a going there a good deal, and then one day I

sez to myself, 'Bill, this won't do,' and I got changed to another route. Did you ever know Jackson Filltree, Tommy?" said Bill, breaking off suddenly.

"No."

"Might have heerd of him, p'r'aps?"

"No," said Islington impatiently.

"Jackson Filltree ran the express from White's out to Sumnit, 'cross the North Fork of the Yuba. One day he sez to me, 'Bill, that's a mighty bad ford at the North Fork.' I sez, 'I believe you, Jackson.' 'It'll git me some day, Bill, sure,' sez he. I sez, 'Why don't you take the lower ford?' 'I don't know,' sez he, 'but I can't.' So ever after, when I met him, he sez, 'That North Fork ain't got me yet.' One day I was in Sacramento, and up comes Filltree. He sez, 'I've sold out the express business on account of the North Fork, but it's bound to get me yet, Bill, sure;' and he laughs. Two weeks after they finds his body below the ford, whar he tried to cross, comin' down from the Summit way. Folks said it was foolishness: Tommy, I sez it was Fate! The second day arter I was changed to the Placerville route, thet woman comes outer the hotel above the stage-office. Her husband, she said, was lying sick in Placerville; that's what she said; but it was Fate, Tommy, Fate. Three months afterward, her husband takes an overdose of morphine for delirium tremens, and dies. There's folks ez sez she gave it to him, but it's Fate. A year after that I married her,—Fate, Tommy, Fate!

"I lived with her jest three months," he went on, after a long breath,—"three months! It ain't much time for a happy man. I've seen a good deal o' hard life in my day, but there was days in that three months longer than any day in my life,—days, Tommy, when it was a toss-up whether I should kill her or she me. But thar, I'm done. You are a young man, Tommy, and I ain't goin' to tell things thet, old as I am, three years ago I couldn't have believed."

When at last, with his grim face turned toward the window, he sat silently with his clenched hands on his knees before him, Islington asked where his wife was now.

"Ask me no more, my boy,—no more. I've said my

say." With a gesture as of throwing down a pair of reins before him, he rose, and walked to the window.

"You kin understand, Tommy, why a little trip around the world 'ud do me good. Ef you can't go with me, well and good. But go I must."

"Not before luncheon, I hope," said a very sweet voice, as Blanche Masterman suddenly stood before them. "Father would never forgive me if in his absence I permitted one of Mr. Islington's friends to go in this way. You will stay, won't you? Do! And you will give me your arm now; and when Mr. Islington has done staring, he will follow us into the dining-room and introduce you."

"I have quite fallen in love with your friend," said Miss Blanche, as they stood in the drawing-room looking at the figure of Bill, strolling, with his short pipe in his mouth, through the distant shrubbery. "He asks very queer questions, though. He wanted to know my mother's maiden name."

"He is an honest fellow," said Islington gravely.

"You are very much subdued. You don't thank me, I dare say, for keeping you and your friend here; but you couldn't go, you know, until father returned."

Islington smiled, but not very gaily.

"And then I think it much better for us to part here under these frescoes, don't you? Good-bye."

She extended her long, slim hand.

"Out in the sunlight there, when my eyes were red, you were very anxious to look at me," she added, in a dangerous voice.

Islington raised his sad eyes to hers. Something glittering upon her own sweet lashes trembled and fell.

"Blanche!"

She was rosy enough now, and would have withdrawn her hand, but Islington detained it. She was not quite certain but that her waist was also in jeopardy. Yet she could not help saying, "Are you sure that there isn't anything in the way of a young woman that would keep you?"

"Blanche!" said Islington in reproachful horror.

"If gentlemen will roar out their secrets before an

open window, with a young woman lying on a sofa on the veranda, reading a stupid French novel, they must not be surprised if she gives more attention to them than her book."

"Then you know all, Blanche?"

"I know," said Blanche, "let's see—I know the partikler style of—ahem!—fool you was, and expected no better. Good-bye." And, gliding like a lovely and innocent milk snake out of his grasp, she slipped away.

To the pleasant ripple of waves, the sound of music and light voices, the yellow midsummer moon again rose over Greyport. It looked upon formless masses of rock and shrubbery, wide spaces of lawn and beach, and a shimmering expanse of water. It singled out particular objects,—a white sail in shore, a crystal globe upon the lawn, and flashed upon something held between the teeth of a crouching figure scaling the low wall of Cliffwood Lodge. Then, as a man and woman passed out from under the shadows of the foliage into the open moonlight of the garden path, the figure leaped from the wall, and stood erect and waiting in the shadow.

It was the figure of an old man, with rolling eyes, his trembling hand grasping a long, keen knife,—a figure more pitiable than pitiless, more pathetic than terrible. But the next moment the knife was stricken from his hand, and he struggled in the firm grasp of another figure that apparently sprang from the wall beside him.

"D—n you, Masterman!" cried the old man hoarsely; "give me fair play, and I'll kill you yet!"

"Which my name is Yuba Bill," said Bill quietly, "and it's time this d—n fooling was stopped."

The old man glared in Bill's face savagely. "I know you. You're one of Masterman's friends,—d—n you,—let me go till I cut his heart out,—let me go! Where is my Mary?—where is my wife?—there she is! there!—there!—there! Mary!" He would have screamed, but Bill placed his powerful hand upon his mouth as he turned in the direction of the old man's glance. Distinct in the moonlight the figures of Islington and Blanche, arm-in-arm, stood out upon the garden path.

"Give me my wife!" muttered the old man hoarsely, between Bill's fingers. "Where is she?"

A sudden fury passed over Yuba Bill's face. "Where is your wife?" he echoed, pressing the old man back against the garden wall, and holding him there as in a vice. "Where is your wife?" he repeated, thrusting his grim sardonic jaw and savage eyes into the old man's frightened face. "Where is Jack Adam's wife? Where is MY wife? Where is the she-devil that drove one man mad, that sent another to hell by his own hand, that eternally broke and ruined me? Where! Where! Do you ask where? In jail in Sacramento,—in jail, do you hear?—in jail for murder, Johnson,—murder!"

The old man gasped, stiffened, and then, relaxing, suddenly slipped, a mere inanimate mass, at Yuba Bill's feet. With a sudden revulsion of feeling, Yuba Bill dropped at his side, and, lifting him tenderly in his arms, whispered, "Look up, old man, Johnson! look up, for God's sake!—it's me,—Yuba Bill! and yonder is your daughter, and—Tommy?—don't you know—Tommy, little Tommy Islington?"

Johnson's eyes slowly opened. He whispered, "Tommy! yes, Tommy! Sit by me, Tommy. But don't sit so near the bank. Don't you see how the river is rising and beckoning to me—hissing, and boilin' over the rocks? It's gittin' higher!—hold me, Tommy,—hold me, and don't let me go yet. We'll live to cut his heart out, Tommy,—we'll live—we'll——"

His head sank, and the rushing river, invisible to all eyes save his, leaped toward him out of the darkness, and bore him away, no longer to the darkness, but through to the distant, peaceful, shining sea.

TWO SAINTS OF THE FOOT-HILLS

It never was clearly ascertained how long they had been there. The first settler of Rough-and-Ready—one Low, playfully known to his familiars as "The Poor Indian"—declared that the Saints were afore his time, and occupied a cabin in the brush when he "blazed" his way to the North Fork. It is certain that the two were present when the water was first turned on the Union Ditch, and then and there received the designation of Daddy Downey and Mammy Downey, which they kept to the last. As they tottered toward the refreshment tent, they were welcomed with the greatest enthusiasm by the boys; or. to borrow the more refined language of the *Union Recorder*,—"Their grey hairs and bent figures, recalling as they did the happy paternal eastern homes of the spectators, and the blessings that fell from venerable lips when they left those homes to journey in quest of the Golden Fleece on Occidental Slopes, caused many to burst into tears." The nearer facts, that many of these spectators were orphans, that a few were unable to establish any legal parentage whatever, that others had enjoyed a State's guardianship and discipline, and that a majority had left their parental roofs without any embarrassing preliminary formula, were mere passing clouds that did not dim the golden imagery of the writer. From that day the Saints were adopted as historical lay figures, and entered at once into possession of uninterrupted gratuities and endowment.

It was not strange that, in a country largely made up of ambitious and reckless youth, these two—types of conservative and settled forms—should be thus cele-

brated. Apart from any sentiment or veneration, they were admirable foils to the community's youthful progress and energy. They were put forward at every social gathering, occupied prominent seats on the platform at every public meeting, walked first in every procession, were conspicuous at the frequent funeral and rarer wedding, and were godfather and godmother to the first baby born in Rough-and-Ready. At the first poll opened in that precinct, Daddy Downey cast the first vote, and, as was his custom on all momentous occasions, became volubly reminiscent. "The first vote I ever cast," said Daddy, "was for Andrew Jackson—the father o' some on you peart young chaps wasn't born then; he! he!—that was 'way long in '33, wasn't it? I disremember now, but if Mammy was here, she bein' a schoolgal at the time, she could say. But my memory's failin' me. I'm an old man, boys; yet I likes to see the young ones go ahead. I reeklect that thar vote from a suckumstance. Squire Adams was present, and seein' it was my first vote, he put a goold piece into my hand, and, sez he, sez Squire Adams, 'Let that always be a reminder of the exercise of a glorious freeman's privilege!' He did; he! he! Lord, boys! I feel so proud of ye, that I wish I had a hundred votes to cast for ye all."

It is hardly necessary to say that the memorial tribute of Squire Adams was increased tenfold by the judges, inspectors, and clerks, and that the old man tottered back to Mammy considerably heavier than he came. As both of the rival candidates were equally sure of his vote, and each had called upon him and offered a conveyance, it is but fair to presume they were equally beneficent. But Daddy insisted upon walking to the polls,—a distance of two miles,—as a moral example, and a text for the Californian paragraphers, who hastened to record that such was the influence of the foot-hill climate, that "a citizen of Rough-and-Ready, aged eighty-four, rose at six o'clock, and, after milking two cows, walked a distance of twelve miles to the polls, and returned in time to chop a cord of wood before dinner." Slightly exaggerated as this statement may have been, the fact that Daddy was always found by the visitor to be engaged at his wood-pile, which seemed neither to

increase nor diminish under his axe, a fact, doubtless, owing to the activity of Mammy, who was always at the same time making pies, seemed to give some credence to the story. Indeed, the wood-pile of Daddy Downey was a standing reproof to the indolent and sluggish miner.

"Ole Daddy must use up a pow'ful sight of wood; every time I've passed by his shanty he's been makin' the chips fly. But what gets me is, that the pile don't seem to come down," said Whisky Dick to his neighbour.

"Well, you derned fool!" growled his neighbour, "spose some chap happens to pass by thar, and sees the ole man doin' a man's work at eighty, and slouches like you and me lying round drunk, and that chap, feelin' kinder humped, goes up some dark night and heaves a load of cut pine over his fence, who's got anything to say about it? say?"

Certainly not the speaker, who had done the act suggested, nor the penitent and remorseful hearer, who repeated it next day.

The pies and cakes made by the old woman were, I think, remarkable rather for their inducing the same loyal and generous spirit than for their intrinsic excellence, and, it may be said, appealed more strongly to the nobler aspirations of humanity than its vulgar appetite. Howbeit, everybody ate Mammy Downey's pies, and thought of his childhood. "Take 'em, dear boys," the old lady would say; "it does me good to see you eat 'em; reminds me kinder of my poor Sammy, that ef he'd lived, would hev been ez strong and big ez you be, but was taken down with lung fever at Sweetwater. I kin see him yet; that's forty year ago, dear! comin' out o' the lot to the bakehouse, and smilin' such a beautiful smile, like yours, dear boy, as I handed him a mince or a lemming turnover. Dear, dear, how I do run on! and those days is past! but I seems to live in you again!" The wife of the hotel-keeper, actuated by a low jealousy, had suggested that she "seemed to live *off* them"; but as that person tried to demonstrate the truth of her statement by reference to the cost of the raw material used by the old lady, it was considered by the camp as too practical and economical for consideration. "Besides," added Cy Perkins, "ef old Mammy wants to turn

an honest penny in her old age, let her do it. How would you like your old mother to make pies on grub wages? eh?" A suggestion that so affected his hearer (who had no mother) that he bought three on the spot. The quality of these pies had never been discussed but once. It is related that a young lawyer from San Francisco, dining at the Palmetto restaurant, pushed away one of Mammy Downey's pies with every expression of disgust and dissatisfaction. At this juncture, Whisky Dick, considerably affected by his favourite stimulant, approached the stranger's table, and, drawing up a chair, sat uninvited before him.

"Mebbee, young man," he began gravely, "ye don't like Mammy Downey's pies?"

The stranger replied curtly, and in some astonishment, that he did not, as a rule, "eat pie."

"Young man," continued Dick with drunken gravity, "mebbee you're accustomed to Charlotte rusks and blue mange; mebbee ye can't eat unless your grub is got up by one o' them French cooks? Yet *we*—us boys yar in this camp—calls that pie—a good—a com-pe-tent pie!"

The stranger again disclaimed anything but a general dislike of that form of pastry.

"Young man," continued Dick, utterly unheeding the explanation,—"young man, mebbee you onst had an ole—a very ole mother, who, tottering down the vale o' years, made pies. Mebbee, and it's like your blank epicurean soul, ye turned up your nose on the ole woman, and went back on the pies, and on her! She that dandled ye when ye woz a baby,—a little baby! Mebbee ye went back on her, and shook her, and played off on her, and gave her away—dead away! And now, mebbee, young man—I wouldn't hurt ye for the world, but mebbee, afore ye leave this yar table, YE'LL EAT THAT PIE!"

The stranger rose to his feet, but the muzzle of a dragoon revolver in the unsteady hands of Whisky Dick, caused him to sit down again. He ate the pie, and lost his case likewise, before a Rough-and-Ready jury.

Indeed, far from exhibiting the cynical doubts and distrusts of age, Daddy Downey received always with childlike delight the progress of modern improvement and energy. "In my day, long back in the twenties,

it took us nigh a week—a week, boys—to get up a barn, and all the young ones—I was one then—for miles 'round at the raisin'; and yer's you boys—rascals ye are, too—runs up this yer shanty for Mammy and me 'twixt sun-up and dark! Eh, eh, you're teachin' the old folks new tricks, are ye? Ah, get along, you!" and in playful simulation of anger he would shake his white hair and his hickory staff at the "rascals." The only indication of the conservative tendencies of age was visible in his continual protest against the extravagance of the boys. "Why," he would say, "a family, a hull family,—leavin' alone me and the old woman,—might be supported on what you young rascals throw away in a single spree. Ah, you young dogs, didn't I hear about your scattering half-dollars on the stage the other night when that Eyetalian Papist was singin'. And that money goes out of Ameriky—ivry cent!"

There was little doubt that the old couple were saving, if not avaricious. But when it was known, through the indiscreet volubility of Mammy Downey, that Daddy Downey sent the bulk of their savings, gratuities, and gifts, to a dissipated and prodigal son in the East,—whose photograph the old man always carried with him,—it rather elevated him in their regard. "When ye write to that gay and festive son o' yourn, Daddy," said Joe Robinson, "send him this yer specimen. Give him my compliments, and tell him, ef he kin spend money faster than I can, I call him! Tell him, ef he wants a first-class jamboree, to kem out here, and me and the boys will show him what a square drunk is!" In vain would the old man continue to protest against the spirit of the gift; the miner generally returned with his pockets that much the lighter, and it is not improbable a little less intoxicated than he otherwise might have been. It may be premised that Daddy Downey was strictly temperate. The only way he managed to avoid hurting the feelings of the camp was by accepting the frequent donations of whisky to be used for the purposes of liniment.

"Next to snake-oil, my son," he would say, "and dilberry-juice,—and ye don't seem to pro-duce 'em hereabouts,—whisky is good for rubbin' onto old bones to make 'em limber. But pure cold water, 'sparklin' and

bright in its liquid light,' and, so to speak, reflectin' of God's own linyments on its surfiss, is the best, onless, like poor ol' Mammy and me, ye gets the dumb-agur from over-use."

The fame of the Downey couple was not confined to the foot-hills. The Rev. Henry Gushington, D.D., of Boston, making a bronchial tour of California, wrote to the *Christian Pathfinder* an affecting account of his visit to them, placed Daddy Downey's age at 102, and attributed the recent conversions in Rough-and-Ready to their influence. That gifted literary Hessian, Bill Smith, travelling in the interests of various capitalists, and the trustworthy correspondent of four "only independent American journals," quoted him as an evidence of the longevity superinduced by the climate, offered him as an example of the security of helpless life and property in the mountains, used him as an advertisement of the Union Ditch, and it is said, in some vague way cited him as proving the collateral facts of a timber and ore-producing region existing in the foot-hills worthy the attention of Eastern capitalists.

Praised thus by the lips of distinguished report, fostered by the care and sustained by the pecuniary offerings of their fellow-citizens, the Saints led for two years a peaceful life of gentle absorption. To relieve them from the embarrassing appearance of eleemosynary receipts,—an embarrassment felt more by the givers than the recipients,—the postmastership of Rough-and-Ready was procured for Daddy, and the duty of receiving and delivering the United States mails performed by him, with the advice and assistance of the boys. If a few letters went astray at this time, it was easily attributed to this undisciplined aid, and the boys themselves were always ready to make up the value of a missing money-letter and "keep the old man's accounts square." To these functions presently were added the treasurerships of the Masons' and Odd Fellows' charitable funds,—the old man being far advanced in their respective degrees,—and even the position of almoner of their bounties was superadded. Here, unfortunately, Daddy's habits of economy and avaricious propensity came near making him unpopular, and very often needy brothers were forced to

object to the quantity and quality of the help extended. They always met with more generous relief from the private hands of the brothers themselves, and the remark, "that the ol' man was trying to set an example,—that he meant well,"—and that they would yet be thankful for his zealous care and economy. A few, I think, suffered in noble silence, rather than bring the old man's infirmity to the public notice.

And so with this honour of Daddy and Mammy, the days of the miners were long and profitable in the land of the foot-hills. The mines yielded their abundance, the winters were singularly open, and yet there was no drouth nor lack of water, and peace and plenty smiled on the Sierrean foot-hills, from their highest sunny upland to the trailing *falda* of wild oats and poppies. If a certain superstition got abroad among the other camps, connecting the fortunes of Rough-and-Ready with Daddy and Mammy, it was a gentle, harmless fancy, and was not, I think, altogether rejected by the old people. A certain large, patriarchal, bountiful manner, of late visible in Daddy, and the increase of much white hair and beard, kept up the poetic illusion, while Mammy, day by day, grew more and more like somebody's fairy godmother. An attempt was made by a rival camp to emulate these paying virtues of reverence, and an aged mariner was procured from the Sailor's Snug Harbour in San Francisco on trial. But the unfortunate seaman was more or less diseased, was not always presentable, through a weakness for ardent spirits, and finally, to use the powerful idiom of one of his disappointed foster-children, "up and died in a week, without slinging ary blessin'."

But vicissitude reaches young and old alike. Youthful Rough-and-Ready and the Saints had climbed to their meridian together, and it seemed fit that they should together decline. The first shadow fell with the immigration to Rough-and-Ready of a second aged pair. The landlady of the Independence Hotel had not abated her malevolence towards the Saints, and had imported at considerable expense her grand-aunt and grand-uncle, who had been enjoying for some years a sequestered retirement in the poorhouse at East Machias. They

were indeed very old. By what miracle, even as anatomical specimens, they had been preserved during their long journey was a mystery to the camp. In some respects they had superior memories and reminiscences. The old man—Abner Trix—had shouldered a musket in the war of 1812 ; his wife, Abigail, had seen Lady Washington. She could sing hymns ; he knew every text between "the leds" of a Bible. There is little doubt but that in many respects, to the superficial and giddy crowd of youthful spectators, they were the more interesting spectacle.

Whether it was jealousy, distrust, or timidity that overcame the Saints, was never known, but they studiously declined to meet the strangers. When directly approached upon the subject, Daddy Downey pleaded illness, kept himself in close seclusion, and the Sunday that the Trixes attended church in the schoolhouse on the hill, the triumph of the Trix party was mitigated by the fact that the Downeys were not in their accustomed pew. "You bet that Daddy and Mammy is lying low jest to ketch them old mummies yet," explained a Downeyite. For by this time schism and division had crept into the camp ; the younger and later members of the settlement adhering to the Trixes, while the older pioneers stood not only loyal to their own favourites, but even, in the true spirit of partisanship, began to seek for a principle underlying their personal feelings. "I tell ye what, boys," observed Sweetwater Joe, "if this yer camp is goin' to be run by greenhorns, and old pioneers, like Daddy and the rest of us, must take back seats, it's time we emigrated and shoved out, and tuk Daddy with us. Why, they're talkin' of rotation in offiss, and of putting that skeleton that Ma'am Decker sets up at the table to take her boarders' appetites away, into the post office in place o' Daddy." And, indeed, there were some fears of such a conclusion ; the newer men of Rough-and-Ready were in the majority, and wielded a more than equal influence of wealth and outside enterprise. "Frisco," as a Downeyite bitterly remarked, "already owned half the town." The old friends that rallied around Daddy and Mammy were, like most loyal friends in adversity, in bad case themselves, and were beginning

to look and act, it was observed, not unlike their old favourites.

At this juncture Mammy died.

The sudden blow for a few days seemed to reunite dissevered Rough-and-Ready. Both factions hastened to the bereaved Daddy with condolements, and offers of aid and assistance. But the old man received them sternly. A change had come over the weak and yielding octogenarian. Those who expected to find him maudlin, helpless, disconsolate, shrank from the cold, hard eyes and truculent voice that bade them "begone," and "leave him with his dead." Even his own friends failed to make him respond to their sympathy, and were fain to content themselves with his cold intimation that both the wishes of his dead wife and his own instincts were against any display, or the reception of any favour from the camp that might tend to keep up the divisions they had innocently created. The refusal of Daddy to accept any service offered was so unlike him as to have but one dreadful meaning! The sudden shock had turned his brain! Yet so impressed were they with his resolution that they permitted him to perform the last sad offices himself, and only a select few of his nearer neighbours assisted him in carrying the plain deal coffin from his lonely cabin in the woods to the still lonelier cemetery on the hill-top. When the shallow grave was filled, he dismissed even these curtly, shut himself up in his cabin, and for days remained unseen. It was evident that he was no longer in his right mind.

His harmless aberration was accepted and treated with a degree of intelligent delicacy hardly to be believed of so rough a community. During his wife's sudden and severe illness, the safe containing the funds entrusted to his care by the various benevolent associations was broken into and robbed, and although the act was clearly attributable to his carelessness and preoccupation, all allusion to the fact was withheld from him in his severe affliction. When he appeared again before the camp, and the circumstances were considerately explained to him, with the remark that "the boys had made it all right," the vacant, hopeless, unintelligent eye that he turned upon the speaker showed too plainly that he had

forgotten all about it. "Don't trouble the old man," said Whisky Dick, with a burst of honest poetry. "Don't ye see his memory's dead, and lying there in the coffin with Mammy?" Perhaps the speaker was nearer right than he imagined.

Failing in religious consolation, they took various means of diverting his mind with worldly amusements, and one was a visit to a travelling variety troupe, then performing in the town. The result of the visit was briefly told by Whisky Dick. "Well, sir, we went in, and I sot the old man down in a front seat, and kinder propped him up with some other of the fellers round him, and there he sot as silent and awful ez the grave. And then that fancy dancer, Miss Grace Somerset, comes in, and dern my skin, ef the old man didn't get to trembling and fidgeting all over, as she cut them pidgin wings. I tell ye what, boys, men is men, way down to their boots,—whether they're crazy or not! Well, he took on so, that I'm blamed if at last that gal *herself* didn't notice him! and she ups, suddenly, and blows him a kiss—so! with her fingers!"

Whether this narration were exaggerated or not, it is certain that the old man Downey every succeeding night of the performance was a spectator. That he may have aspired to more than that was suggested a day or two later in the following incident: A number of the boys were sitting around the stove in the Magnolia saloon, listening to the onset of a winter storm against the windows, when Whisky Dick, tremulous, excited, and bristling with rain-drops and information, broke in upon them.

"Well, boys, I've got just the biggest thing out. Ef I hadn't seed it myself, I wouldn't hev believed it!"

"It ain't thet ghost ag'in?" growled Robinson, from the depths of his arm-chair; "thet ghost's about played."

"Wot ghost?" asked a new-comer.

"Why, ole Mammy's ghost, that every feller about yer sees when he's half full and out late o' nights."

"Where?"

"Where? Why, where should a ghost be? Meanderin' round her grave on the hill, yander, in course."

"It's suthin' bigger nor thet, pard," said Dick con-

fidently; "no ghost kin rake down the pot ag'in the keerds I've got here. This ain't no bluff!"

"Well, go on!" said a dozen excited voices.

Dick paused a moment diffidently, with the hesitation of an artistic *raconteur*.

"Well," he said, with affected deliberation, "let's see! It's nigh onto an hour ago ez I was down thar at the variety show. When the curtain was down betwixt the ax, I looks round fer Daddy. No Daddy thar! I goes out and asks some o' the boys. 'Daddy *was* there a minnit ago,' they say; 'must hev gone home.' Bein' kinder responsible for the old man, I hangs around, and goes out in the hall and sees a passage leadin' behind the scenes. Now the queer thing about this, boys, ez that suthin' in my bones tells me the old man is *thar*. I pushes in, and, sure as a gun, I hear his voice. Kinder pathetic, kinder pleadin', kinder——"

"Love-makin'!" broke in the impatient Robinson.

"You've hit it, pard,—you've rung the bell every time! But she says, 'I wants thet money down, or I'll' —and here I couldn't get to hear the rest. And then he kinder coaxes, and she says, sorter sassy, but listenin' all the time,—woman like, ye know, Eve and the sarpint! —and she says, 'I'll see to-morrow.' And he says, 'You won't blow on me?' and I gets excited and peeps in, and may I be teetotally durned ef I didn't see——"

"What?" yelled the crowd.

"Why, *Daddy on his knees to that there fancy dancer*, Grace Somerset! Now, if Mammy's ghost is meanderin' round, why, et's about time she left the cemetery and put in an appearance in Jackson's Hall. Thet's all!"

"Look yar, boys," said Robinson, rising, "I don't know ez it's the square thing to spile Daddy's fun. I don't object to it, provided she ain't takin' in the old man, and givin' him dead away. But ez we're his guardeens, I propose that we go down thar and see the lady, and find out ef her intentions is honourable. If she means marry, and the old man persists, why, I reckon we kin give the young couple a send-off thet won't disgrace this yer camp! Hey, boys?"

It is unnecessary to say that the proposition was received with acclamation, and that the crowd at once

departed on their discreet mission. But the result was never known, for the next morning brought a shock to Rough-and-Ready before which all other interest paled to nothingness.

The grave of Mammy Downey was found violated and despoiled; the coffin opened, and half filled with the papers and accounts of the robbed benevolent associations; but the body of Mammy was gone! Nor, on examination, did it appear that the sacred and ancient form of that female had ever reposed in its recesses!

Daddy Downey was not to be found, nor is it necessary to say that the ingenuous Grace Somerset was also missing.

For three days the reason of Rough-and-Ready trembled in the balance. No work was done in the ditches, in the flume, nor in the mills. Groups of men stood by the grave of the lamented relict of Daddy Downey, as open-mouthed and vacant as that sepulchre. Never since the great earthquake of '52 had Rough-and-Ready been so stirred to its deepest foundations.

On the third day the sheriff of Calaveras—a quiet, gentle, thoughtful man—arrived in town, and passed from one to the other of excited groups, dropping here and there detached but concise and practical information.

"Yes, gentlemen, you are right, Mrs. Downey is not dead, because there wasn't any Mrs. Downey! Her part was played by George F. Fenwick, of Sydney,—a 'ticket-of-leave-man,' who was, they say, a good actor. Downey? Oh yes! Downey was Jem Flanigan, who, in '52, used to run the variety troupe in Australia, where Miss Somerset made her début. Stand back a little, boys. Steady! 'The money?' Oh yes, they've got away with that, sure! How are ye, Joe? Why, you're looking well and hearty! I rather expected ye court week. How's things your way?"

"Then they were only play-actors, Joe Hall?" broke in a dozen voices.

"I reckon!" returned the sheriff coolly.

"And for a matter o' five blank years," said Whisky Dick sadly, "they played this camp!"

THE MAN FROM SOLANO

He came toward me out of an opera lobby, between the acts—a figure as remarkable as anything in the performance. His clothes, no two articles of which were of the same colour, had the appearance of having been purchased and put on only an hour or two before—a fact more directly established by the clothes-dealer's ticket which still adhered to his coat-collar, giving the number, size, and general dimensions of that garment somewhat obtrusively to an uninterested public. His trousers had a straight line down each leg, as if he had been born flat but had since developed; and there was another crease down his back, like those figures children cut out of folded paper. I may add that there was no consciousness of this in his face, which was good-natured, and, but for a certain squareness in the angle of his lower jaw, utterly uninteresting and commonplace.

"You disremember me," he said briefly, as he extended his hand, "but I'm from Solano, in Californy. I met you there in the spring of '57. I was tendin' sheep, and you was burnin' charcoal."

There was not the slightest trace of any intentional rudeness in the reminder. It was simply a statement of fact, and as such to be accepted.

"What I hailed ye for was only this," he said, after I had shaken hands with him. "I saw you a minnit ago standin' over in yon box—chirpin' with a lady—a young lady, peart and pretty. Might you be telling me her name?"

I gave him the name of a certain noted belle of a neighbouring city, who had lately stirred the hearts of the

metropolis, and who was especially admired by the brilliant and fascinating young Dashboard, who stood beside me.

The Man from Solano mused for a moment, and then said, "That's so! that's the name! It's the same gal!"

"You have met her, then?" I asked, in surprise.

"Ye-es," he responded slowly; "I met her about fower months ago. She'd bin makin' a tour of Californy with some friends, and I first saw her aboard the cars this side of Reno. She lost her baggage-checks, and I found them on the floor and gave 'em back to her, and she thanked me. I reckon now it would be about the square thing to go over thar and sorter recognize her." He stopped a moment, and looked at us inquiringly.

"My dear sir," struck in the brilliant and fascinating young Dashboard, "if your hesitation proceeds from any doubt as to the propriety of your attire, I beg you to dismiss it from your mind at once. The tyranny of custom, it is true, compels your friend and myself to dress peculiarly, but I assure you nothing could be finer than the way that the olive green of your coat melts in the delicate yellow of your cravat, or the pearl grey of your trousers blends with the bright blue of your waistcoat, and lends additional brilliancy to that massive oroid watch-chain which you wear."

To my surprise, the Man from Solano did not strike him. He looked at the ironical Dashboard with grave earnestness, and then said quietly—

"Then I reckon you wouldn't mind showin' me in thar?"

Dashboard was, I admit, a little staggered at this. But he recovered himself, and, bowing ironically, led the way to the box. I followed him and the Man from Solano.

Now, the belle in question happened to be a gentlewoman—descended from gentlewomen—and after Dashboard's ironical introduction, in which the Man from Solano was not spared, she comprehended the situation instantly. To Dashboard's surprise she drew a chair to her side, made the Man from Solano sit down, quietly turned her back on Dashboard, and in full view of the brilliant audience and the focus of a hundred lorgnettes, entered into conversation with him.

Here, for the sake of romance, I should like to say he

became animated, and exhibited some trait of excellence—some rare wit or solid sense. But the fact is he was dull and stupid to the last degree. He persisted in keeping the conversation upon the subject of the lost baggage-checks, and every bright attempt of the lady to divert him failed signally. At last, to everybody's relief, he rose, and leaning over her chair, said—

"I calklate to stop over here some time, miss, and you and me bein' sorter strangers here, maybe when there's any show like this goin' on you'll let me——"

Miss X. said somewhat hastily that the multiplicity of her engagements and the brief limit of her stay in New York she feared would, etc., etc. The two other ladies had their handkerchiefs over their mouths, and were staring intently on the stage, when the Man from Solano continued—

"Then, maybe, miss, whenever there is a show goin' on that you'll attend, you'll just drop me word to Earle's Hotel, to this yer address," and he pulled from his pocket a dozen well-worn letters, and taking the buff envelope from one, handed it to her with something like a bow.

"Certainly," broke in the facetious Dashboard; "Miss X. goes to the Charity Ball to-morrow night. The tickets are but a trifle to an opulent Californian, and a man of your evident means, and the object a worthy one. You will, no doubt, easily secure an invitation."

Miss X. raised her handsome eyes for a moment to Dashboard. "By all means," she said, turning to the Man from Solano; "and as Mr. Dashboard is one of the managers and you are a stranger, he will, of course, send you a complimentary ticket. I have known Mr. Dashboard long enough to know that he is invariably courteous to strangers and a gentleman." She settled herself in her chair again and fixed her eyes upon the stage.

The Man from Solano thanked the Man of New York, and then, after shaking hands with everybody in the box, turned to go. When he had reached the door he looked back to Miss X., and said—

"It *was* one of the queerest things in the world, miss, that my findin' them checks——"

But the curtain had just risen on the garden scene in *Faust*, and Miss X. was absorbed. The Man from

Solano carefully shut the box door and retired. I followed him.

He was silent until he reached the lobby, and then he said, as if renewing a previous conversation, "She *is* a mighty peart gal—that's so. She's just my kind, and will make a stavin' good wife."

I thought I saw danger ahead for the Man from Solano, so I hastened to tell him that she was beset by attentions, that she could have her pick and choice of the best of society, and finally, that she was, most probably, engaged to Dashboard.

"That's so," he said quietly, without the slightest trace of feeling. "It would be mighty queer if she wasn't. But I reckon I'll steer down to the ho-tel. I don't care much for this yellin'." (He was alluding to a cadenza of that famous cantatrice, Signora Batti Batti.) "What's the time?"

He pulled out his watch. It was such a glaring chain, so obviously bogus, that my eyes were fascinated by it. "You're looking at that watch," he said; "it's purty to look at, but she don't go worth a cent. And yet her price was $125, gold. I gobbled her up in Chatham Street day before yesterday, where they were selling 'em very cheap at auction."

"You have been outrageously swindled," I said indignantly. "Watch and chain are not worth twenty dollars."

"Are they worth fifteen?" he asked gravely.

"Possibly."

"Then I reckon it's a fair trade. Ye see, I told 'em I was a Californian from Solano, and hadn't anything about me of greenbacks. I had three slugs with me. Ye remember them slugs?" (I did; the "slug" was a "token" issued in the early days—a hexagonal piece of gold a little over twice the size of a twenty-dollar gold piece—worth and accepted for fifty dollars.)

"Well, I handed them that, and they handed me the watch. You see them slugs I had made myself outer brass filings and iron pyrites, and used to slap 'em down on the boys for a bluff in a game of draw poker. You see, not being reg'lar gov'ment money, it wasn't counterfeiting. I reckon they cost me, counting time and

anxiety, about fifteen dollars. So, if this yer watch is worth that, it's about a square game, ain't it ? "

I began to understand the Man from Solano, and said it was. He returned his watch to his pocket, toyed playfully with the chain, and remarked, " Kinder makes a man look fash'nable and wealthy, don't it ? "

I agreed with him. " But what do you intend to do here ? " I asked.

" Well, I've got a cash capital of nigh on seven hundred dollars. I guess until I get into reg'lar business I'll skirmish round Wall Street, and sorter lay low." I was about to give him a few words of warning, but I remembered his watch, and desisted. We shook hands and parted.

A few days after I met him on Broadway. He was attired in another new suit, but I think I saw a slight improvement in his general appearance. Only five distinct colours were visible in his attire. But this, I had reason to believe afterwards, was accidental.

I asked him if he had been to the ball. He said he had. " That gal, and a mighty peart gal she was too, was there, but she sorter fought shy of me. I got this new suit to go in, but those waiters sorter run me into a private box, and I didn't get much chance to continner our talk about them checks. But that young feller, Dashboard, was mighty perlite. He brought lots of fellers and young women round to the box to see me, and he made up a party that night to take me round Wall Street and in them Stock Boards. And the next day he called for me, and took me, and I invested about five hundred dollars in them stocks—maybe more. You see, we sorter swopped stocks. You know I had ten shares in the Peacock Copper Mine, that you was once secretary of."

" But those shares are not worth a cent. The whole thing exploded ten years ago."

" That's so, maybe ; *you* say so. But then I didn't know anything more about Communipaw Central, or the Naphtha Gaslight Company, and so I thought it was a square game. Only I realized on the stocks I bought, and I kem up outer Wall Street about four hundred dollars better. You see it was a sorter risk, after all, for them Peacock stocks *might* come up ! "

I looked into his face : it was immeasurably serene

and commonplace. I began to be a little afraid of the man, or, rather, of my want of judgement of the man; and after a few words we shook hands and parted.

It was some months before I again saw the Man from Solano. When I did, I found that he had actually become a member of the Stock Board, and had a little office on Broad Street, where he transacted a fair business. My remembrance going back to the first night I met him, I inquired if he had renewed his acquaintance with Miss X.

"I heerd that she was in Newport this summer, and I ran down there fur a week."

"And you talked with her about the baggage-checks?"

"No," he said seriously; "she gave me a commission to buy some stocks for her. You see, I guess them fash'nable fellers sorter got to runnin' her about me, and so she put our acquaintance on a square business footing. I tell you, she's a right peart gal. Did ye hear of the accident that happened to her?"

I had not.

"Well, you see, she was out yachting, and I managed through one of those fellers to get an invite, too. The whole thing was got up by a man that they say is going to marry her. Well, one afternoon the boom swings round in a little squall and knocks her overboard. There was an awful excitement,—you've heard about it, maybe?"

"No!" But I saw it all with a romancer's instinct in a flash of poetry! This poor fellow, debarred through uncouthness from expressing his affection for her, had at last found his fitting opportunity. He had——

"Thar was an awful row," he went on. "I ran out on the taffrail, and there a dozen yards away was that purty creature, that peart gal, and—I——"

"You jumped for her," I said hastily.

"No!" he said gravely. "I let the other man do the jumping. I sorter looked on."

I stared at him in astonishment.

"No," he went on seriously. "He was the man who jumped—that was just then his 'put'—his line of business. You see if I had waltzed over the side of that ship, and cavoorted in, and flummuxed round and finally flopped to the bottom, that other man would have jumped naterallike and saved her; and ez he was going to marry her any

way, I don't exactly see where *I'd* hev been represented in the transaction. But don't you see, ef, after he'd jumped and hadn't got her, he'd gone down himself, I'd hev had the next best chance, and the advantage of heving him outer the way. You see, you don't understand me—I don't think you did in Californy."

"Then he did save her?"

"Of course. Don't you see she was all right. If he'd missed her, I'd have chipped in. Thar warn't no sense in my doing his duty onless he failed."

Somehow the story got out. The Man from Solano as a butt became more popular than ever, and of course received invitations to burlesque receptions, and naturally met a great many people whom otherwise he would not have seen. It was observed also that his seven hundred dollars were steadily growing, and that he seemed to be getting on in his business. Certain Californian stocks which I had seen quietly interred in the old days in the tombs of their fathers were magically revived; and I remember, as one who has seen a ghost, to have been shocked as I looked over the quotations one morning to have seen the ghastly face of the "Dead Beach Mining Co.," rouged and plastered, looking out from the columns of the morning paper. At last a few people began to respect, or suspect, the Man from Solano. At last suspicion culminated with this incident:—

He had long expressed a wish to belong to a certain "fash'n'ble" club, and with a view of burlesque he was invited to visit the club, where a series of ridiculous entertainments were given him, winding up with a card party. As I passed the steps of the club-house early next morning, I overheard two or three members talking excitedly,—

"He cleaned everybody out." "Why, he must have raked in nigh on $40,000."

"Who?" I asked.

"The Man from Solano."

As I turned away, one of the gentlemen, a victim, noted for his sporting propensities, followed me, and laying his hand on my shoulder, asked—

"Tell me fairly now. What business did your friend follow in California?"

"He was a shepherd."

"A what?"

"A shepherd. Tended his flocks on the honey-scented hills of Solano."

"Well, all I can say is, d—n your Californian pastorals!"

AN EPISODE OF FIDDLETOWN

In 1858 Fiddletown considered her a very pretty woman. She had a quantity of light chestnut hair, a good figure, a dazzling complexion, and a certain languid grace which passed easily for gentlewomanliness. She always dressed becomingly, and in what Fiddletown accepted as the latest fashion. She had only two blemishes: one of her velvety eyes, when examined closely, had a slight cast, and her left cheek bore a small scar left by a single drop of vitriol—happily the only drop of an entire phial thrown upon her by one of her own jealous sex that reached the pretty face it was intended to mar. But when the observer had studied the eyes sufficiently to notice this defect, he was generally incapacitated for criticism, and even the scar on her cheek was thought by some to add piquancy to her smile. The youthful editor of the Fiddletown *Avalanche* had said privately that it was "an exaggerated dimple." Colonel Starbottle was instantly "reminded of the beautifying patches of the days of Queen Anne, but more particularly, sir, of the blankest beautiful woman, that, blank you, you ever laid your two blank eyes upon. A creole woman, sir, in New Orleans. And this woman had a scar—a line extending, blank me, from her eye to her blank chin. And this woman, sir, thrilled you, sir, maddened you, sir, absolutely sent your blank soul to perdition with her blank fascination. And one day I said to her, 'Celeste, how in blank did you come by that beautiful scar, blank you?' And she said to me, 'Star, there isn't another white man that I'd confide in but you, but I made that scar myself, purposely, I did, blank me.' These were

her very words, sir, and perhaps you think it a blank lie, sir, but I'll put up any blank sum you can name and prove it, blank me."

Indeed, most of the male population of Fiddletown were or had been in love with her. Of this number about one-half believed that their love was returned, with the exception, possibly, of her own husband. He alone had been known to express scepticism.

The name of the gentleman who enjoyed this infelicitous distinction was Tretherick. He had been divorced from an excellent wife to marry this Fiddletown enchantress. She also had been divorced, but it was hinted that some previous experiences of hers in that legal formality had made it perhaps less novel and probably less sacrificial. I would not have it inferred from this that she was deficient in sentiment or devoid of its highest moral expression. Her intimate friend had written (on the occasion of her second divorce), "The cold world does not understand Clara yet," and Colonel Starbottle had remarked, blankly, that with the exception of a single woman in Opelousas Parish, Louisiana, she had more soul than the whole caboodle of them put together. Few indeed could read those lines entitled "Infelissimus," commencing "Why waves no cypress o'er this brow," originally published in the *Avalanche* over the signature of "The Lady Clare," without feeling the tear of sensibility tremble on his eyelids, or the glow of virtuous indignation mantle his cheek at the low brutality and pitiable jocularity of the *Dutch Flat Intelligencer*, which the next week had suggested the exotic character of the cypress and its entire absence from Fiddletown as a reasonable answer to the query.

Indeed, it was this tendency to elaborate her feelings in a metrical manner, and deliver them to the cold world through the medium of the newspapers, that first attracted the attention of Tretherick. Several poems descriptive of the effects of California scenery upon a too sensitive soul, and of the vague yearnings for the infinite which an enforced study of the heartlessness of California society produced in the poetic breast, impressed Mr. Tretherick, who was then driving a six-mule freight wagon between Knight's Ferry and Stockton, to seek

out the unknown poetess. Mr. Tretherick was himself dimly conscious of a certain hidden sentiment in his own nature, and it is possible that some reflections on the vanity of his pursuit—he supplied several mining camps with whisky and tobacco—in conjunction with the dreariness of the dusty plain on which he habitually drove, may have touched some chord in sympathy with this sensitive woman. Howbeit, after a brief courtship—as brief as was consistent with some previous legal formalities—they were married, and Mr. Tretherick brought his blushing bride to Fiddletown, or "Fidéletown," as Mrs. T. preferred to call it in her poems.

The union was not a felicitous one. It was not long before Mr. Tretherick discovered that the sentiment he had fostered while freighting between Stockton and Knight's Ferry was different from that which his wife had evolved from the contemplation of California scenery and her own soul. Being a man of imperfect logic, this caused him to beat her, and she, being equally faulty in deduction, was impelled to a certain degree of unfaithfulness on the same premise. Then Mr. Tretherick began to drink, and Mrs. T. to contribute regularly to the columns of the *Avalanche*. It was at this time that Colonel Starbottle discovered a similarity in Mrs. T.'s verse to the genius of Sappho, and pointed it out to the citizens of Fiddletown in a two-columned criticism, signed "A. S.," also published in the *Avalanche*, and supported by extensive quotation. As the *Avalanche* did not possess a font of Greek type, the editor was obliged to reproduce the Leucadian numbers in the ordinary Roman letter, to the intense disgust of Colonel Starbottle, and the vast delight of Fiddletown, who saw fit to accept the text as an excellent imitation of Choctaw—a language with which the Colonel, as a whilom resident of the Indian territories, was supposed to be familiar. Indeed, the next week's *Intelligencer* contained some vile doggerel, supposed to be an answer to Mrs. T.'s poem, ostensibly written by the wife of a Digger Indian chief, accompanied by a glowing eulogium signed "A. S. S."

The result of this jocularity was briefly given in a later copy of the *Avalanche*. "An unfortunate rencontre took place on Monday last between the Hon. Jackson Flash,

of the *Dutch Flat Intelligencer*, and the well-known Colonel Starbottle of this place, in front of the Eureka Saloon. Two shots were fired by the parties without injury to either, although it is said that a passing Chinaman received fifteen buckshot in the calves of his legs from the Colonel's double-barrelled shotgun, which were not intended for him. John will learn to keep out of the way of Melican man's firearms hereafter. The cause of the affray is not known, although it is hinted that there is a lady in the case. The rumour that points to a well-known and beautiful poetess whose lucubrations have often graced our columns, seems to gain credence from those that are posted."

Meanwhile the passiveness displayed by Tretherick under these trying circumstances was fully appreciated in the gulches. "The old man's head is level," said one long-booted philosopher. "Ef the Colonel kills Flash, Mrs. Tretherick is avenged; if Flash drops the Colonel, Tretherick is all right. Either way he's got a sure thing." During this delicate condition of affairs Mrs. Tretherick one day left her husband's home and took refuge at the Fiddletown Hotel, with only the clothes she had on her back. Here she stayed for several weeks, during which period it is only justice to say that she bore herself with the strictest propriety.

It was a clear morning in early spring that Mrs. Tretherick, unattended, left the hotel and walked down the narrow street toward the fringe of dark pines which indicated the extreme limits of Fiddletown. The few loungers at that early hour were preoccupied with the departure of the Wingdam coach at the other extremity of the street, and Mrs. Tretherick reached the suburbs of the settlement without discomposing observation. Here she took a cross street or road running at right angles with the main thoroughfare of Fiddletown, and passing through a belt of woodland. It was evidently the exclusive and aristocratic avenue of the town; the dwellings were few, ambitious, and uninterrupted by shops. And here she was joined by Colonel Starbottle.

The gallant Colonel, notwithstanding that he bore the swelling port which usually distinguished him—that his coat was tightly buttoned and his boots tightly fitting,

and that his cane, hooked over his arm, swung jauntily—was not entirely at his ease. Mrs. Tretherick, however, vouchsafed him a gracious smile and a glance of her dangerous eyes, and the Colonel, with an embarrassed cough and a slight strut, took his place at her side.

"The coast is clear," said the Colonel, "and Tretherick is over at Dutch Flat on a spree; there is no one in the house but a Chinaman, and you need fear no trouble from him. *I*," he continued, with a slight inflation of the chest that imperilled the security of his button,—"I will see that you are protected in the removal of your property."

"I'm sure it's very kind of you, and so disinterested," simpered the lady as they walked along. "It's so pleasant to meet some one who has soul—some one to sympathize with in a community so hardened and heartless as this." And Mrs. Tretherick cast down her eyes, but not until they had wrought their perfect and accepted work upon her companion.

"Yes, certainly, of course," said the Colonel, glancing nervously up and down the street; "yes, certainly." Perceiving, however, that there was no one in sight or hearing, he proceeded at once to inform Mrs. Tretherick that the great trouble of his life, in fact, had been the possession of too much soul. That many women—as a gentleman she would excuse him, of course, from mentioning names—but many beautiful women had often sought his society, but, being deficient, madam, absolutely deficient in this quality, he could not reciprocate. But when two natures thoroughly in sympathy—despising alike the sordid trammels of a low and vulgar community and the conventional restraints of a hypocritical society—when two souls in perfect accord met and mingled in poetical union, then—but here the Colonel's speech, which had been remarkable for a certain whisky-and-watery fluency, grew husky, almost inaudible, and decidedly incoherent. Possibly Mrs. Tretherick may have heard something like it before, and was enabled to fill the hiatus. Nevertheless, the cheek that was on the side of the Colonel was quite virginal and bashfully conscious until they reached their destination.

It was a pretty little cottage, quite fresh and warm

with paint, very pleasantly relieved against a platoon of pines, some of whose foremost files had been displaced to give freedom to the fenced enclosure in which it sat. In the vivid sunlight and perfect silence it had a new, uninhabited look, as if the carpenters and painters had just left it. At the farther end of the lot a Chinaman was stolidly digging, but there was no other sign of occupancy. "The coast," as the Colonel had said, was indeed "clear." Mrs. Tretherick paused at the gate. The Colonel would have entered with her, but was stopped by a gesture. "Come for me in a couple of hours, and I shall have everything packed," she said, as she smiled and extended her hand. The Colonel seized and pressed it with great fervour. Perhaps the pressure was slightly returned, for the gallant Colonel was impelled to inflate his chest and trip away as smartly as his stubby-toed, high-heeled boots would permit. When he had gone, Mrs. Tretherick opened the door, listened a moment in the deserted hall, and then ran quickly upstairs to what had been her bedroom.

Everything there was unchanged as on the night she left it. On the dressing-table stood her bandbox, as she remembered to have left it when she took out her bonnet. On the mantel lay the other glove she had forgotten in her flight. The two lower drawers of the bureau were half open—she had forgotten to shut them—and on its marble top lay her shawl-pin and a soiled cuff. What other recollections came upon her I know not, but she suddenly grew quite white, shivered, and listened with a beating heart and her hand upon the door. Then she stepped to the mirror, and half fearfully, half curiously, parted with her fingers the braids of her blonde hair above her little pink ear, until she came upon an ugly, half-healed scar. She gazed at this, moving her pretty head up and down to get a better light upon it, until the slight cast in her velvety eyes became very strongly marked indeed. Then she turned away with a light, reckless, foolish laugh, and ran to the closet where hung her precious dresses. These she inspected nervously, and missing suddenly a favourite black silk from its accustomed peg, for a moment thought she should have fainted. But discovering it the next instant, lying upon a trunk where

she had thrown it, a feeling of thankfulness to a Superior Being who protects the friendless for the first time sincerely thrilled her. Then, albeit she was hurried for time, she could not resist trying the effect of a certain lavender neck-ribbon upon the dress she was then wearing before the mirror. And then suddenly she became aware of a child's voice close beside her, and she stopped. And then the child's voice repeated, "Is it mamma?"

Mrs. Tretherick faced quickly about. Standing in the doorway was a little girl of six or seven. Her dress had been originally fine, but was torn and dirty, and her hair, which was a very violent red, was tumbled serio-comically about her forehead. For all this she was a picturesque little thing, even through whose childish timidity there was a certain self-sustained air which is apt to come upon children who are left much to themselves. She was holding under her arm a rag doll, apparently of her own workmanship and nearly as large as herself—a doll with a cylindrical head and features roughly indicated with charcoal. A long shawl, evidently belonging to a grown person, dropped from her shoulders and swept the floor.

The spectacle did not excite Mrs. Tretherick's delight. Perhaps she had but a small sense of humour. Certainly, when the child, still standing in the doorway, again asked, "Is it mamma?" she answered sharply, "No, it isn't," and turned a severe look upon the intruder.

The child retreated a step, and then, gaining courage with the distance, said, in deliciously imperfect speech—

"Dow 'way, then! Why don't you dow away?"

But Mrs. Tretherick was eyeing the shawl. Suddenly she whipped it off the child's shoulders and said angrily—

"How dared you take my things, you bad child?"

"Is it yours? Then you are my mamma! ain't you? You are mamma!" she continued gleefully, and before Mrs. Tretherick could avoid her she had dropped her doll, and, catching the woman's skirts with both hands, was dancing up and down before her.

"What's your name, child?" said Mrs. Tretherick coldly, removing the small and not very white hands from her garments.

"Tarry."

"Tarry?"

"Yeth. Tarry. Tarowline."

"Caroline?"

"Yeth. Tarowline Tretherick."

"Whose child *are* you?" demanded Mrs. Tretherick still more coldly, to keep down a rising fear.

"Why, yours," said the little creature with a laugh. "I'm your little durl. You're my mamma—my new mamma—don't you know my ole mamma's dorn away, never to tum back any more. I don't live wid my ol' mamma now. I live wid you and papa."

"How long have you been here?" asked Mrs. Tretherick snappishly.

"I think it's free days," said Carry reflectively.

"You think! don't you know?" sneered Mrs. Tretherick. "Then where did you come from?"

Carry's lip began to work under this sharp cross-examination. With a great effort and a small gulp she got the better of it, and answered—

"Papa—papa fetched me—from Miss Simmons—from Sacramento, last week."

"Last week! you said three days just now," returned Mrs. Tretherick with severe deliberation.

"I mean a monf," said Carry, now utterly adrift in sheer helplessness and confusion.

"Do you know what you are talking about?" demanded Mrs. T. shrilly, restraining an impulse to shake the little figure before her and precipitate the truth by specific gravity.

But the flaming red head here suddenly disappeared in the folds of Mrs. Tretherick's dress, as if it were trying to extinguish itself for ever.

"There now, stop that sniffling," said Mrs. Tretherick, extricating her dress from the moist embraces of the child, and feeling exceedingly uncomfortable. "Wipe your face now, and run away, and don't bother. Stop," she continued, as Carry moved away, "where's your papa?"

"He's dorn away too. He's sick. He's been dorn"—she hesitated—"two—free—days."

"Who takes care of you, child?" said Mrs. T., eyeing her curiously.

"John, the Chinaman. I tresses myselth; John tooks and makes the beds."

"Well, now, run away and behave yourself, and don't bother me any more," said Mrs. Tretherick, remembering the object of her visit. "Stop, where are you going?" she added, as the child began to ascend the stairs, dragging the long doll after her by one helpless leg.

"Doin' upstairs to play and be dood, and not bother mamma."

"I ain't your mamma," shouted Mrs. Tretherick, and then she swiftly re-entered her bedroom and slammed the door.

Once inside, she drew forth a large trunk from the closet, and set to work with querulous and fretful haste to pack her wardrobe. She tore her best dress in taking it from the hook on which it hung; she scratched her soft hands twice with an ambushed pin. All the while she kept up an indignant commentary on the events of the past few moments. She said to herself she saw it all. Tretherick had sent for this child of his first wife—this child of whose existence he had never seemed to care—just to insult her—to fill her place. Doubtless the first wife herself would follow soon, or perhaps there would be a third. Red hair—not auburn, but *red*—of course the child—this Caroline—looked like its mother, and, if so, she was anything but pretty. Or the whole thing had been prepared—this red-haired child—the image of its mother—had been kept at a convenient distance at Sacramento, ready to be sent for when needed. She remembered his occasional visits there—on business, as he said. Perhaps the mother already was there—but no—she had gone East. Nevertheless Mrs. Tretherick, in her then state of mind, preferred to dwell upon the fact that she might be there. She was dimly conscious also of a certain satisfaction in exaggerating her feelings. Surely no woman had ever been so shamefully abused. In fancy she sketched a picture of herself sitting alone and deserted, at sunset, among the fallen columns of a ruined temple, in a melancholy yet graceful attitude, while her husband drove rapidly away in a luxurious coach and four, with a red-haired woman at his side. Sitting upon the trunk she had just packed, she partly composed a lugubrious poem, describing her sufferings, as, wandering alone and poorly clad, she came upon her husband and "another"

flaunting in silks and diamonds. She pictured herself dying of consumption, brought on by sorrow—a beautiful wreck, yet still fascinating, gazed upon adoringly by the editor of the *Avalanche* and Colonel Starbottle. And where was Colonel Starbottle all this while? Why didn't he come? He at least understood her. He—she laughed the reckless, light laugh of a few moments before, and then her face suddenly grew grave, as it had not a few moments before.

What was that little red-haired imp doing all this time? Why was she so quiet? She opened the door noiselessly and listened. She fancied that she heard, above the multitudinous small noises and creakings and warpings of the vacant house, a smaller voice singing on the floor above. This, as she remembered, was only an open attic that had been used as a store-room. With a half-guilty consciousness she crept softly upstairs, and, pushing the door partly open, looked within.

Athwart the long, low-studded attic a slant sunbeam from a single small window lay, filled with dancing motes, and only half illuminating the barren, dreary apartment. In the ray of this sunbeam she saw the child's glowing hair, as if crowned by a red aureole, as she sat upon the floor with her exaggerated doll between her knees. She appeared to be talking to it, and it was not long before Mrs. Tretherick observed that she was rehearsing the interview of a half-hour before. She catechized the doll severely, cross-examining it in regard to the duration of its stay there, and generally on the measure of time. The imitation of Mrs. T.'s manner was exceedingly successful, and the conversation almost a literal reproduction, with a single exception. After she had informed the doll that she was not her mother, at the close of the interview she added pathetically, "That if she was dood—very dood—she might be her mamma and love her very much."

I have already hinted that Mrs. Tretherick was deficient in a sense of humour. Perhaps it was for this reason that this whole scene affected her most unpleasantly, and the conclusion sent the blood tingling to her cheek. There was something, too, inconceivably lonely in the situation; the unfurnished vacant room, the half-lights, the monstrous doll, whose very size seemed to give a pathetic significance

to its speechlessness, the smallness of the one animate self-centred figure—all these touched more or less deeply the half-poetic sensibilities of the woman. She could not help utilizing the impression as she stood there, and thought what a fine poem might be constructed from this material, if the room were a little darker, the child lonelier—say, sitting beside a dead mother's bier, and the wind wailing in the turrets. And then she suddenly heard footsteps at the door below, and recognized the tread of the Colonel's cane.

She flew swiftly down the stairs and encountered the Colonel in the hall. Here she poured into his astonished ear a voluble and exaggerated statement of her discovery, and indignant recital of her wrongs. "Don't tell me the whole thing wasn't arranged beforehand; for I know it was!" she almost screamed. "And think," she added, "of the heartlessness of the wretch—leaving his own child alone here in that way."

"It's a blank shame!" stammered the Colonel, without the least idea of what he was talking about. In fact, utterly unable as he was to comprehend a reason for the woman's excitement with his estimate of her character, I fear he showed it more plainly than he intended. He stammered, expanded his chest, looked stern, gallant, tender, but all unintelligently. Mrs. Tretherick for an instant experienced a sickening doubt of the existence of natures in perfect affinity.

"It's of no use," said Mrs. Tretherick with sudden vehemence, in answer to some inaudible remark of the Colonel's, and withdrawing her hand from the fervent grasp of that ardent and sympathetic man. "It's of no use; my mind is made up. You can send for my trunk as soon as you like, but *I* shall stay here and confront that man with the proof of his vileness. I will put him face to face with his infamy."

I do not know whether Colonel Starbottle thoroughly appreciated the convincing proof of Tretherick's unfaithfulness and malignity afforded by the damning evidence of the existence of Tretherick's own child in his own house. He was dimly aware, however, of some unforeseen obstacle to the perfect expression of the infinite longing of his own sentimental nature. But before he could say

anything, Carry appeared on the landing above them, looking timidly and yet half-critically at the pair.

"That's her," said Mrs. Tretherick excitedly. In her deepest emotions, either in verse or prose, she rose above a consideration of grammatical construction.

"Ah!" said the Colonel, with a sudden assumption of parental affection and jocularity that was glaringly unreal and affected. "Ah! pretty little girl, pretty little girl! how do you do? how are you? you find yourself pretty well, do you, pretty little girl?" The Colonel's impulse also was to expand his chest and swing his cane, until it occurred to him that this action might be ineffective with a child of six or seven. Carry, however, took no immediate notice of this advance, but further discomposed the chivalrous Colonel by running quickly to Mrs. Tretherick, and hiding herself, as if for protection, in the folds of her gown. Nevertheless, the Colonel was not vanquished. Falling back into an attitude of respectful admiration, he pointed out a marvellous resemblance to the "Madonna and Child." Mrs. Tretherick simpered, but did not dislodge Carry as before. There was an awkward pause for a moment, and then Mrs. Tretherick, motioning significantly to the child, said in a whisper, "Go, now. Don't come here again, but meet me to-night at the hotel." She extended her hand; the Colonel bent over it gallantly, and, raising his hat, the next moment was gone.

"Do you think," said Mrs. Tretherick, with an embarrassed voice and a prodigious blush, looking down and addressing the fiery curls just visible in the folds of her dress,—"do you think you will be 'dood' if I let you stay in here and sit with me?"

"And let me call you mamma?" queried Carry, looking up.

"And let you call me mamma!" assented Mrs. Tretherick with an embarrassed laugh.

"Yeth," said Carry promptly.

They entered the bedroom together. Carry's eye instantly caught sight of the trunk.

"Are you dowin' away adain, mamma?" she said with a quick, nervous look, and a clutch at the woman's dress.

"No-o," said Mrs. Tretherick, looking out of the window.

"Only playing you're dowin' away," suggested Carry with a laugh. "Let me play too."

Mrs. T. assented. Carry flew into the next room, and presently reappeared, dragging a small trunk, into which she gravely proceeded to pack her clothes. Mrs. T. noticed that they were not many. A question or two regarding them brought out some further replies from the child, and before many minutes had elapsed Mrs. Tretherick was in possession of all her earlier history. But to do this Mrs. Tretherick had been obliged to take Carry upon her lap, pending the most confidential disclosures. They sat thus a long time after Mrs. Tretherick had apparently ceased to be interested in Carry's disclosures, and, when lost in thought, she allowed the child to rattle on unheeded, and ran her fingers through the scarlet curls.

"You don't hold me right, mamma," said Carry at last, after one or two uneasy shiftings of position.

"How should I hold you?" asked Mrs. Tretherick with a half-amused, half-embarrassed laugh.

"This way," said Carry, curling up into position with one arm around Mrs. Tretherick's neck and her cheek resting on her bosom; "this way — there!" After a little preparatory nestling, not unlike some small animal, she closed her eyes and went to sleep.

For a few moments the woman sat silent, scarcely daring to breathe, in that artificial attitude. And then, whether from some occult sympathy in the touch, or God best knows what, a sudden fancy began to thrill her. She began by remembering an old pain that she had forgotten, an old horror that she had resolutely put away all these years. She recalled days of sickness and distrust, days of an overshadowing fear, days of preparation for something that was to be prevented—that *was* prevented, with mortal agony and fear. She thought of a life that might have been—she dared not say *had* been—and wondered! It was six years ago; if it had lived it would have been as old as Carry. The arms which were folded loosely around the sleeping child began to tremble and tighten their clasp. And then the deep potential

impulse came, and with a half-sob, half-sigh, she threw her arms out and drew the body of the sleeping child down, down into her breast, down again and again as if she would hide it in the grave dug there years before. And the gust that shook her passed, and then, ah me! the rain.

A drop or two fell upon the curls of Carry, and she moved uneasily in her sleep. But the woman soothed her again—it was *so* easy to do it now—and they sat there quiet and undisturbed—so quiet that they might have seemed incorporate of the lonely silent house, the slowly declining sunbeams, and the general air of desertion and abandonment, yet a desertion that had in it nothing of age, decay, or despair.

Colonel Starbottle waited at the Fiddletown Hotel all that night in vain. And the next morning, when Mr. Tretherick returned to his husks, he found the house vacant and untenanted except by motes and sunbeams.

When it was fairly known that Mrs. Tretherick had run away, taking Mr. Tretherick's own child with her, there was some excitement and much diversity of opinion in Fiddletown. The *Dutch Flat Intelligencer* openly alluded to the "forcible abduction" of the child, with the same freedom and, it is to be feared, the same prejudice, with which it had criticized the abductor's poetry. All of Mrs. Tretherick's own sex, and perhaps a few of the opposite sex whose distinctive quality was not, however, very strongly indicated, fully coincided in the views of the *Intelligencer*. The majority, however, evaded the moral issue; that Mrs. Tretherick had shaken the red dust of Fiddletown from her dainty slippers was enough for them to know. They mourned the loss of the fair abductor more than her offence. They promptly rejected Tretherick as an injured husband and disconsolate father, and even went so far as to openly cast discredit on the sincerity of his grief. They reserved an ironical condolence for Colonel Starbottle, overbearing that excellent man with untimely and demonstrative sympathy in bar-rooms, saloons, and other localities not generally deemed favourable to the display of sentiment. "She was alliz a skittish thing, Kernel," said one sympathizer with a fine

affectation of gloomy concern and great readiness of illustration, "and it's kinder nat'ril thet she'd get away some day and stampede that theer colt, but thet she should shake *you*, Kernel, thet she should just shake you—is what gits me. And they do say thet you jist hung around thet hotel all night, and payrolled them corriders and histed yourself up and down them stairs, and meandered in and out o' thet piazzy, and all for nothing!" It was another generous and tenderly commiserating spirit that poured additional oil and wine on the Colonel's wounds. "The boys yer let on thet Mrs. Tretherick prevailed on ye to pack her trunk and a baby over from the house to the stage offis, and that the chap ez did go off with her thanked you and offered you two short bits, and sed ez how he liked your looks and 'ud employ you agin—and now you say it ain't so? Well—I'll tell the boys it ain't so, and I'm glad I met you, for stories *do* get round."

Happily for Mrs. Tretherick's reputation, however, the Chinaman in Tretherick's employment, who was the only eye-witness of her flight, stated that she was unaccompanied except by the child. He further deposed that, obeying her orders, he had stopped the Sacramento coach, and secured a passage for herself and child to San Francisco. It was true that Ah Fe's testimony was of no legal value. But nobody doubted it. Even those who were sceptical of the P gan's ability to recognize the sacredness of the truth admitted his passionless, unprejudiced unconcern. But it would appear from an hitherto unrecorded passage of this veracious chronicle that herein they were mistaken.

It was about six months after the disappearance of Mrs. Tretherick that Ah Fe, while working in Tretherick's lot, was hailed by two passing Chinamen. They were the ordinary mining coolies, equipped with long poles and baskets for their usual pilgrimages. An animated conversation at once ensued between Ah Fe and his brother Mongolians—a conversation characterized by that usual shrill volubility and apparent animosity which was at once the delight and scorn of the intelligent Caucasian who did not understand a word of it. Such, at least, was the feeling with which Mr. Tretherick on his

veranda, and Colonel Starbottle who was passing, regarded their heathenish jargon. The gallant Colonel simply kicked them out of his way; the irate Tretherick with an oath threw a stone at the group and dispersed them. But not before one or two slips of yellow rice paper, marked with hieroglyphics, were exchanged, and a small parcel put into Ah Fe's hands. When Ah Fe opened this, in the dim solitude of his kitchen, he found a little girl's apron, freshly washed, ironed, and folded. On the corner of the hem were the initials "C. T." Ah Fe tucked it away in a corner of his blouse, and proceeded to wash his dishes in the sink with a smile of guileless satisfaction.

Two days after this Ah Fe confronted his master. "Me no likee Fiddletown. Me belly sick. Me go now." Mr. Tretherick violently suggested a profane locality. Ah Fe gazed at him placidly and withdrew.

Before leaving Fiddletown, however, he accidentally met Colonel Starbottle, and dropped a few incoherent phrases which apparently interested that gentleman. When he concluded, the Colonel handed him a letter and a twenty-dollar gold piece. "If you bring me an answer I'll double that—Sabe, John?" Ah Fe nodded. An interview equally accidental, with precisely the same result, took place between Ah Fe and another gentleman, whom I suspect to have been the youthful editor of the *Avalanche*. Yet I regret to state that, after proceeding some distance on his journey, Ah Fe calmly broke the seals of both letters, and after trying to read them upside down and sideways, finally divided them into accurate squares, and in this condition disposed of them to a brother Celestial whom he met on the road for a trifling gratuity. The agony of Colonel Starbottle on finding his washbill made out on the unwritten side of one of these squares, and delivered to him with his weekly clean clothes, and the subsequent discovery that the remaining portions of his letter were circulated by the same method from the Chinese laundry of one Fung Ti of Fiddletown, has been described to me as peculiarly affecting. Yet I am satisfied that a higher nature, rising above the levity induced by the mere contemplation of the insignificant details of this breach of trust, would find ample retributive

justice in the difficulties that subsequently attended Ah Fe's pilgrimage.

On the road to Sacramento he was twice playfully thrown from the top of the stage-coach by an intelligent but deeply intoxicated Caucasian, whose moral nature was shocked at riding with one addicted to opium smoking. At Hangtown he was beaten by a passing stranger, purely an act of Christian supererogation. At Dutch Flat he was robbed by well-known hands from unknown motives. At Sacramento he was arrested on suspicion of being something or other, and discharged with a severe reprimand—possibly for not being it, and so delaying the course of justice. At San Francisco he was freely stoned by children of the public schools, but by carefully avoiding these monuments of enlightened progress, he at last reached in comparative safety the Chinese quarters, where his abuse was confined to the police and limited by the strong arm of the law.

The next day he entered the wash-house of Chy Fook as an assistant, and on the following Friday was sent with a basket of clean clothes to Chy Fook's several clients.

It was the usual foggy afternoon as he climbed the long wind-swept hill of California street, one of those bleak grey intervals that made the summer a misnomer to any but the liveliest San Franciscan fancy. There was no warmth or colour in earth or sky; no light nor shade within or without, only one monotonous, universal neutral tint over everything. There was a fierce unrest in the wind-whipped streets, there was a dreary vacant quiet in the grey houses. When Ah Fe reached the top of the hill the Mission ridge was already hidden, and the chill sea-breeze made him shiver. As he put down his basket to rest himself, it is possible that, to his defective intelligence and heathen experience, this "God's own climate," as it was called, seemed to possess but scant tenderness, softness, or mercy. But it is possible that Ah Fe illogically confounded this season with his old persecutors, the school children, who, being released from studious confinement, at this hour were generally most aggressive. So he hastened on, and, turning a corner, at last stopped before a small house.

It was the usual San Franciscan urban cottage. There was the little strip of cold green shrubbery before it; the chilly bare veranda, and above this again the grim balcony on which no one sat. Ah Fe rang the bell; a servant appeared, glanced at his basket, and reluctantly admitted him as if he were some necessary domestic animal. Ah Fe silently mounted the stairs, and, entering the open door of the front chamber, put down the basket and stood passively on the threshold.

A woman who was sitting in the cold grey light of the window, with a child in her lap, rose listlessly and came toward him. Ah Fe instantly recognized Mrs. Tretherick, but not a muscle of his immobile face changed, nor did his slant eyes lighten as he met her own placidly. She evidently did not recognise him as she began to count the clothes. But the child, curiously examining him, suddenly uttered a short glad cry—

"Why, it's John! Mamma, it's our old John what we had in Fiddletown."

For an instant Ah Fe's eyes and teeth electrically lightened. The child clapped her hands and caught at his blouse. Then he said shortly, "Me John—Ah Fe—allee same. Me know you. How do?"

Mrs. Tretherick dropped the clothes nervously and looked hard at Ah Fe. Wanting the quick-witted instinct of affection that sharpened Carry's perception, she even then could not distinguish him above his fellows. With a recollection of past pain and an obscure suspicion of impending danger, she asked him when he had left Fiddletown.

"Longee time. No likee Fiddletown, no likee Tleve-lick. Likee San Flisco. Likee washee. Likee Tally."

Ah Fe's laconics pleased Mrs. Tretherick. She did not stop to consider how much an imperfect knowledge of English added to his curt directness and sincerity. But she said, "Don't tell anybody you have seen me," and took out her pocket-book.

Ah Fe, without looking at it, saw that it was nearly empty. Ah Fe, without examining the apartment, saw that it was scantily furnished. Ah Fe, without removing his eyes from blank vacancy, saw that both Mrs. Tretherick and Carry were poorly dressed. Yet it is my duty to state

that Ah Fe's long fingers closed promptly and firmly over the half-dollar which Mrs. Tretherick extended to him.

Then he began to fumble in his blouse with a series of extraordinary contortions. After a few moments he extracted from apparently no particular place a child's apron, which he laid upon the basket with the remark—

"One piecee washman flagittee."

Then he began anew his fumblings and contortions. At last his efforts were rewarded by his producing, apparently from his right ear, a many-folded piece of tissue paper. Unwrapping this carefully, he at last disclosed two twenty-dollar gold pieces, which he handed to Mrs. Tretherick.

"You leavee money top side of blulow, Fiddletown, me findee money. Me fetchee money to you. All lightee."

"But I left no money on the top of the bureau, John," said Mrs. Tretherick earnestly. "There must be some mistake. It belongs to some other person. Take it back, John."

Ah Fe's brow darkened. He drew away from Mrs. Tretherick's extended hand, and began hastily to gather up his basket.

"Me no takee back. No, no. Bimeby pleesman he catchee me! He say, 'God damn thief—catchee flowty dollar—come to jailee.' Me no takee back. You leavee money top side blulow, Fiddletown. Me fetchee money you. Me no takee back."

Mrs. Tretherick hesitated. In the confusion of her flight she *might* have left the money in the manner he had said. In any event she had no right to jeopardise this honest Chinaman's safety by refusing it. So she said, "Very well, John, I will keep it. But you must come again and see me"—here Mrs. T. hesitated with a new and sudden revelation of the fact that any man could wish to see any other than herself,—"and, and—Carry!"

Ah Fe's face lightened. He even uttered a short ventriloquistic laugh without moving his mouth. Then shouldering his basket he shut the door carefully, and slid quietly downstairs. In the lower hall he, however, found an unexpected difficulty in opening the front door,

and after fumbling vainly at the lock for a moment, looked around for some help or instruction. But the Irish handmaid who had let him in was contemptuously oblivious of his needs and did not appear.

There occurred a mysterious and painful incident which I shall simply record without attempting to explain. On the hall table a scarf, evidently the property of the servant before alluded to, was lying. As Ah Fe tried the lock with one hand, the other rested lightly on the table. Suddenly, and apparently of its own volition, the scarf began to creep slowly towards Ah Fe's hand. From Ah Fe's hand it began to creep up his sleeve, slowly and with an insinuating, snake-like motion, and then disappeared somewhere in the recesses of his blouse. Without betraying the least interest or concern in this phenomenon, Ah Fe still repeated his experiments upon the lock. A moment later the tablecloth of red damask, moved by apparently the same mysterious impulse, slowly gathered itself under Ah Fe's fingers, and sinuously disappeared by the same hidden channel. What further mystery might have followed, I cannot say, for at this moment Ah Fe discovered the secret of the lock, and was enabled to open the door coincident with the sound of footsteps upon the kitchen stairs. Ah Fe did not hasten his movements, but patiently shouldering his basket, closed the door carefully behind him again, and stepped forth into the thick encompassing fog that now shrouded earth and sky.

From her high casement window Mrs. Tretherick watched Ah Fe's figure until it disappeared in the grey cloud. In her present loneliness she felt a keen sense of gratitude toward him, and may have ascribed to the higher emotions and the consciousness of a good deed that certain expansiveness of the chest and swelling of the bosom that was really due to the hidden presence of the scarf and tablecloth under his blouse; for Mrs. Tretherick was still poetically sensitive. As the grey fog deepened into night she drew Carry closer towards her, and above the prattle of the child pursued a vein of sentimental and egotistic recollection at once bitter and dangerous. The sudden apparition of Ah Fe linked her again with her past life at Fiddletown. Over the dreary

interval between she was now wandering—a journey so piteous, wilful, thorny, and useless, that it was no wonder that at last Carry stopped suddenly in the midst of her voluble confidences to throw her small arms around the woman's neck and bid her not to cry.

Heaven forefend that I should use a pen that should be ever dedicated to an exposition of unalterable moral principle to transcribe Mrs. Tretherick's own theory of this interval and episode, with its feeble palliations, its illogical deductions, its fond excuses, and weak apologies. It would seem, however, that her experience had been hard. Her slender stock of money was soon exhausted. At Sacramento she found that the composition of verse, although appealing to the highest emotions of the human heart, and compelling the editorial breast to the noblest commendation in the editorial pages, was singularly inadequate to defray the expenses of herself and Carry. Then she tried the stage, but failed signally. Possibly her conception of the passions was different from that which obtained with a Sacramento audience, but it was certain that her charming presence, so effective at short range, was not sufficiently pronounced for the footlights. She had admirers enough in the green-room, but awakened no abiding affection among the audience. In this strait it occurred to her that she had a voice—a contralto of no very great compass or cultivation, but singularly sweet and touching, and she finally obtained a position in a church choir. She held it for three months, greatly to her pecuniary advantage, and, it is said, much to the satisfaction of the gentlemen in the back pews who faced toward her during the singing of the last hymn.

I remember her quite distinctly at this time. The light that slanted through the oriel of St. Dives choir was wont to fall very tenderly on her beautiful head with its stacked masses of deerskin-coloured hair, on the low black arches of her brows, and to deepen the pretty fringes that shaded her eyes of Genoa velvet. Very pleasant it was to watch the opening and shutting of that small straight mouth, with its quick revelation of little white teeth, and to see the foolish blood faintly deepen her satin cheek as you watched; for Mrs. Tretherick was very sweetly conscious of admiration, and, like most

pretty women, gathered herself under your eye like a racer under the spur.

And then, of course, there came trouble. I have it from the soprano—a little lady who possessed even more than the usual unprejudiced judgement of her sex—that Mrs. Tretherick's conduct was simply shameful; that her conceit was unbearable; that if she considered the rest of the choir as slaves, she, the soprano, would like to know it; that her conduct on Easter Sunday with the basso had attracted the attention of the whole congregation, and that she herself had noticed Dr. Cope twice look up during the service; that her, the soprano's, friends had objected to her singing in the choir with a person who had been on the stage, but she had waived this. Yet she had it from the best authority that Mrs. Tretherick had run away from her husband, and that this red-haired child who sometimes came in the choir was not her own. The tenor confided to me, behind the organ, that Mrs. Tretherick had a way of sustaining a note at the end of a line, in order that her voice might linger longer with the congregation—an act that could be attributed only to a defective moral nature; that as a man—he was a very popular dry-goods clerk on week-days, and sang a good deal from apparently behind his eyebrows on the Sabbath—that as a man, sir, he would put up with it no longer. The basso alone—a short German with a heavy voice, for which he seemed reluctantly responsible, and rather grieved at its possession—stood up for Mrs. Tretherick, and averred that they were jealous of her because she was "bretty." The climax was at last reached in an open quarrel, wherein Mrs. Tretherick used her tongue with such precision of statement and epithet that the soprano burst into hysterical tears, and had to be supported from the choir by her husband and the tenor. This act was marked intentionally to the congregation by the omission of the usual soprano solo. Mrs. Tretherick went home flushed with triumph, but on reaching her room frantically told Carry that they were beggars henceforward; that she—her mother—had just taken the very bread out of her darling's mouth, and ended by bursting into a flood of penitent tears. They did not come so quickly as in her old poetical days, but when they came they stung deeply.

She was roused by a formal visit from a vestryman—one of the Music Committee. Mrs. Tretherick dried her long lashes, put on a new neck-ribbon, and went down to the parlour. She stayed there two hours,—a fact that might have occasioned some remark but that the vestryman was married and had a family of grown-up daughters. When Mrs. Tretherick returned to her room, she sang to herself in the glass and scolded Carry. But she retained her place in the choir.

It was not long, however. In due course of time her enemies received a powerful addition to their forces in the committeeman's wife. That lady called upon several of the church members and on Dr. Cope's family. The result was that at a later meeting of the Music Committee Mrs. Tretherick's voice was declared inadequate to the size of the building, and she was invited to resign. She did so. She had been out of a situation for two months, and her scant means were almost exhausted, when Ah Fe's unexpected treasure was tossed into her lap.

The grey fog deepened into night, and the street lamps started into shivering life, as, absorbed in these unprofitable memories, Mrs. Tretherick still sat drearily at her window. Even Carry had slipped away unnoticed, and her abrupt entrance with the damp evening paper in her hand roused Mrs. Tretherick, and brought her back to an active realisation of the present. For Mrs. Tretherick was wont to scan the advertisements, in the faint hope of finding some avenue of employment—she knew not what—open to her needs, and Carry had noted this habit.

Mrs. Tretherick mechanically closed the shutters, lit the lights, and opened the paper. Her eye fell instinctively on the following paragraph in the telegraphic column :—

"Fiddletown, 7th. Mr. James Tretherick, an old resident of this place, died last night of delirium tremens. Mr. Tretherick was addicted to intemperate habits, said to have been induced by domestic trouble."

Mrs. Tretherick did not start. She quietly turned over another page of the paper and glanced at Carry. The child was absorbed in a book. Mrs. Tretherick uttered no word, but during the remainder of the evening was unusually silent and cold. When Carry was un-

dressed and in bed, Mrs. Tretherick suddenly dropped on her knees beside the bed, and taking Carry's flaming head between her hands, said—

"Should you like to have another papa, Carry, darling?"

"No," said Carry, after a moment's thought.

"But a papa to help mamma take care of you—to love you, to give you nice clothes, to make a lady of you when you grow up?"

Carry turned her sleepy eyes toward the questioner. "Should *you*, mamma?"

Mrs. Tretherick suddenly flushed to the roots of her hair. "Go to sleep," she said sharply, and turned away.

But at midnight the child felt two white arms close tightly around her, and was drawn down into a bosom that heaved, fluttered, and at last was broken up by sobs.

"Don't ky, mamma," whispered Carry, with a vague retrospect of their recent conversation. "Don't ky. I fink I *should* like a new papa, if he loved you very much—very, very much!"

A month afterward, to everybody's astonishment, Mrs. Tretherick was married. The happy bridegroom was one Colonel Starbottle, recently elected to represent Calaveras County in the legislative councils of the State. As I cannot record the event in finer language than that used by the correspondent of the *Sacramento Globe*, I venture to quote some of his graceful periods. "The relentless shafts of the sly god have been lately busy among our gallant Solons. We quote 'one more unfortunate.' The latest victim is the Hon. A. Starbottle of Calaveras. The fair enchantress in the case is a beautiful widow,—a former votary of Thespis, and lately a fascinating St. Cecilia of one of the most fashionable churches of San Francisco, where she commanded a high salary."

The *Dutch Flat Intelligencer* saw fit, however, to comment upon the fact with that humorous freedom characteristic of an unfettered press. "The new Democratic war-horse from Calaveras has lately advented in the Legislature with a little bill to change the name of Tretherick to Starbottle. They call it a marriage certificate down there. Mr. Tretherick has been dead just one month, but we presume the gallant Colonel is not afraid

of ghosts." It is but just to Mrs. Tretherick to state that the Colonel's victory was by no means an easy one. To a natural degree of coyness on the part of the lady was added the impediment of a rival—a prosperous undertaker from Sacramento, who had first seen and loved Mrs. Tretherick at the theatre and church; his professional habits debarring him from ordinary social intercourse, and indeed any other than the most formal public contact with the sex. As this gentleman had made a snug fortune during the felicitous prevalence of a severe epidemic, the Colonel regarded him as a dangerous rival. Fortunately, however, the undertaker was called in professionally to lay out a brother-senator who had unhappily fallen by the Colonel's pistol in an affair of honour, and either deterred by physical consideration from rivalry, or wisely concluding that the Colonel was professionally valuable, he withdrew from the field.

The honeymoon was brief, and brought to a close by an untoward incident. During their bridal trip Carry had been placed in the charge of Colonel Starbottle's sister. On their return to the city, immediately on reaching their lodgings, Mrs. Starbottle announced her intention of at once proceeding to Mrs. Culpepper's to bring the child home. Colonel Starbottle, who had been exhibiting for some time a certain uneasiness which he had endeavoured to overcome by repeated stimulation, finally buttoned his coat tightly across his breast, and after walking unsteadily once or twice up and down the room, suddenly faced his wife with his most imposing manner.

"I have deferred," said the Colonel, with an exaggeration of port that increased with his inward fear, and a growing thickness of speech, "I have deferr—I may say poshponed statement o' fack thash my duty ter dishclose ter ye. I did no wish to mar su'shine mushal happ'ness—to bligh' bud o' promise, to darken conjuglar sky by unpleasht revelashun. Musht be done—by G—d, m'm, musht do it now. The chile is gone!"

"Gone!" echoed Mrs. Starbottle.

There was something in the tone of her voice—in the sudden drawing together of the pupils of her eyes, that for a moment nearly sobered the Colonel and partly collapsed his chest.

"I'll 'splain all in a minit," he said with a deprecating wave of the hand, "everything shall be 'splained. The-the-the-melencholly event wish preshipitate our happ'ness—the myster'us prov'nice wish releash you—releash chile! hunerstan'?—releash chile. The mom't Tretherick die—all claim you have in chile through him—die too. Thash law. Whose chile b'long to? Tretherick? Tretherick dead. Chile can't b'long dead man. Damn nonshense b'long dead man. I'sh your chile? no! who's chile then? Chile b'long to 'ts mother. Unnerstan'?"

"Where is she?" said Mrs. Starbottle, with a very white face and a very low voice.

"I'll 'splain all. Chile b'long to 'ts mother. Thash law. I'm lawyer, leshlator, and American sis'n. Ish my duty as lawyer, as leshlator, and 'merikan sis'n to reshtore chile to suff'rin' mother at any coss—any coss."

"Where is she?" repeated Mrs. Starbottle with her eyes still fixed on the Colonel's face.

"Gone to 'ts m'o'r. Gone East on shteamer yesserday. Wafted by fav'rin' gales to suff'rin' p'rent. Thash so!"

Mrs. Starbottle did not move. The Colonel felt his chest slowly collapsing, but steadied himself against a chair, and endeavoured to beam with chivalrous gallantry not unmixed with magisterial firmness upon her as she sat.

"Your feelin's, m'm, do honour to yer sex, but conshider situashun. Conshider m'o'r's feelings—conshider *my* feelin's." The Colonel paused, and, flourishing a white handkerchief, placed it negligently in his breast, and then smiled tenderly above it, as over laces and ruffles, on the woman before him. "Why should dark shedder cass bligh' on two sholes with single beat? Chile's fine chile, good chile, but summonelse chile! chile's gone, Clar'; but all ishn't gone, Clar'. Conshider, dearesht, you all's have me!"

Mrs. Starbottle started to her feet. "*You!*" she cried, bringing out a chest note that made the chandeliers ring. "You that I married to give my darling food and clothes. *You!* a dog that I whistled to my side to keep the men off me! *You!*"

She choked up, and then dashed past him into the inner room which had been Carry's; then she swept by him

again into her own bedroom, and then suddenly reappeared before him erect, menacing, with a burning fire over her cheek-bones, a quick straightening of her arched brows and mouth, a squaring of jaw and an ophidian flattening of the head.

"Listen!" she said, in a hoarse, half-grown boy's voice. "Hear me! If you ever expect to set eyes on me again, you must find the child. If you ever expect to speak to me again—to touch me—you must bring her back. For where she goes, I go—you hear me!—where she has gone, look for me!"

She struck out past him again, with a quick feminine throwing out of her arms from the elbows down, as if freeing herself from some imaginary bonds, and, dashing into her chamber, slammed and locked the door. Colonel Starbottle, although no coward, stood in superstitious fear of an angry woman, and recoiling as she swept by, lost his unsteady foothold and rolled helplessly on the sofa. Here, after one or two unsuccessful attempts to regain his foothold, he remained, uttering from time to time profane but not entirely coherent or intelligible protests, until at last he succumbed to the exhausting quality of his emotions, and the narcotic quantity of his potations.

Meantime, within, Mrs. Starbottle was excitedly gathering her valuables and packing her trunk, even as she had done once before in the course of this remarkable history. Perhaps some recollection of this was in her mind, for she stopped to lean her burning cheeks upon her hand, as if she saw again the figure of the child standing in the doorway, and heard once more a childish voice asking, "Is it mamma?" But the epithet now stung her to the quick, and with a quick, passionate gesture, she dashed it away with a tear that had gathered in her eye. And then it chanced that in turning over some clothes she came upon the child's slipper with a broken sandal-string. She uttered a great cry here—the first she had uttered—and caught it to her breast, kissing it passionately again and again, and rocking from side to side with a motion peculiar to her sex. And then she took it to the window, the better to see it through her now streaming eyes. Here she was taken with a sudden fit of coughing

that she could not stifle with the handkerchief she put to her feverish lips. And then she suddenly grew very faint, the window seemed to recede before her, the floor to sink beneath her feet, and staggering to the bed, she fell prone upon it with the sandal and handkerchief pressed to her breast. Her face was quite pale, the orbit of her eyes dark, and there was a spot upon her lip, another on her handkerchief, and still another on the white counterpane of the bed.

The wind had risen, rattling the window sashes, and swaying the white curtains in a ghostly way. Later, a grey fog stole softly over the roofs, soothing the wind-roughened surfaces, and enwrapping all things in an uncertain light and a measureless peace. She lay there very quiet—for all her troubles, still a very pretty bride. And on the other side of the bolted door the gallant bridegroom, from his temporary couch, snored peacefully.

JOHNSON'S "OLD WOMAN"

It was growing dark, and the Sonora trail was becoming more indistinct before me at every step. The difficulty had increased over the grassy slope, where the overflow from some smaller watercourse above had worn a number of diverging gullies so like the trail as to be undistinguishable from it. Unable to determine which was the right one, I threw the reins over the mule's neck and resolved to trust to that superior animal's sagacity, of which I had heard so much. But I had not taken into account the equally well-known weaknesses of sex and species, and Chu Chu had already shown uncontrollable signs of wanting her own way. Without a moment's hesitation, feeling the relaxed bridle, she laid down and rolled over.

In this perplexity the sound of horse's hoofs ringing out of the rocky cañon beyond was a relief, even if momentarily embarrassing. An instant afterwards a horse and rider appeared cantering round the hill on what was evidently the lost trail, and pulled up as I succeeded in forcing Chu Chu to her legs again.

"Is that the trail from Sonora?" I asked.

"Yes;" but with a critical glance at the mule, "I reckon you ain't going thar to-night."

"Why not?"

"It's a matter of eighteen miles, and most of it a blind trail through the woods after you take the valley."

"Is it worse than this?"

"What's the matter with this trail? Ye ain't expecting a racecourse or a shell road over the foot-hills—are ye?"

"No. Is there any hotel where I can stop?"

"Nary."

"Nor any house?"

"No."

"Thank you. Good night."

He had already passed on, when he halted again and turned in his saddle. "Look yer. Just a spell over yon cañon ye'll find a patch o' buckeyes; turn to the right and ye'll see a trail. That'll take ye to a shanty. You ask if it's Johnson's."

"Who's Johnson?"

"I am. You ain't lookin' for Vanderbilt or God Almighty up here, are you? Well then, you hark to me, will you? You say to my old woman to give you supper and a shake-down somewhar to-night. Say *I* sent you. So long."

He was gone before I could accept or decline. An extraordinary noise proceeded from Chu Chu, not unlike a suppressed chuckle. I looked sharply at her; she coughed affectedly, and, with her head and neck stretched to their greatest length, appeared to contemplate her neat little off fore shoe with admiring abstraction. But as soon as I had mounted she set off abruptly, crossed the rocky cañon, apparently sighted the patch of buckeyes of her own volition, and without the slightest hesitation found the trail to the right, and in half an hour stood before the shanty.

It was a log cabin, with an additional "lean-to" of the same material, roofed with bark, and on the other side a larger and more ambitious "extension" built of rough, unplaned, and unpainted redwood boards, lightly shingled. The "lean-to" was evidently used as a kitchen, and the central cabin as a living-room. The barking of a dog as I approached called four children of different sizes to the open door, where already an enterprising baby was feebly essaying to crawl over a bar of wood laid across the threshold to restrain it.

"Is this Johnson's house?"

My remark was really addressed to the eldest, a boy of apparently nine or ten, but I felt that my attention was unduly fascinated by the baby, who at that moment had toppled over the bar, and was calmly eyeing me upside down, while silently and heroically suffocating in its

petticoats. The boy disappeared without replying, but presently returned with a taller girl of fourteen or fifteen. I was struck with the way that, as she reached the door, she passed her hands rapidly over the heads of the others as if counting them, picked up the baby, reversed it, shook out its clothes, and returned it to the inside without even looking at it. The act was evidently automatic and habitual.

I repeated my question timidly.

Yes, it *was* Johnson's, but he had just gone to King's Mills. I replied hurriedly that I knew it—that I had met him beyond the cañon. As I had lost my way and couldn't get to Sonora to-night, he had been good enough to say that I might stay until morning. My voice was slightly raised for the benefit of Mr. Johnson's "old woman," who, I had no doubt, was inspecting me furtively from some corner.

The girl drew the children away, except the boy. To him she said simply, "Show the stranger whar to stake out his mule, 'Dolphus," and disappeared in the "extension" without another word. I followed my little guide, who was perhaps more actively curious, but equally unresponsive. To my various questions he simply returned a smile of exasperating vacuity. But he never took his eager eyes from me, and I was satisfied that not a detail of my appearance escaped him. Leading the way behind the house to a little wood, whose only "clearing" had been effected by decay or storm, he stood silently apart while I picketed Chu Chu, neither offering to assist me nor opposing any interruption to my survey of the locality. There was no trace of human cultivation in the surroundings of the cabin; the wilderness still trod sharply on the heels of the pioneer's fresh footprints, and even seemed to obliterate them. For a few yards around the actual dwelling there was an unsavoury fringe of civilization in the shape of cast-off clothes, empty bottles, and tin cans, and the adjacent thorn and elder bushes blossomed unwholesomely with bits of torn white paper and bleaching dish-cloths. This hideous circle never widened; Nature always appeared to roll back the intruding débris; no bird nor beast carried it away; no animal ever forced the uncleanly barrier; civilization

remained grimly trenched in its own exuvia. The old terrifying girdle of fire around the hunters' camp was not more deterring to curious night prowlers than this coarse and accidental outwork.

When I regained the cabin I found it empty, the doors of the lean-to and extension closed, but there was a stool set before a rude table, upon which smoked a tin cup of coffee, a tin dish of hot saleratus biscuit, and a plate of fried beef. There was something odd and depressing in this silent exclusion of my presence. Had Johnson's "old woman" from some dark post of observation taken a dislike to my appearance, or was this churlish withdrawal a peculiarity of Sierran hospitality? Or was Mrs. Johnson young and pretty, and hidden under the restricting ban of Johnson's jealousy, or was she a deformed cripple, or even a bed-ridden crone? From the extension at times came a murmur of voices, but never the accents of adult womanhood. The gathering darkness, relieved only by a dull glow from the smouldering logs in the adobe chimney, added to my loneliness. In the circumstances I knew I ought to have put aside the repast and given myself up to gloomy and pessimistic reflection; but Nature is often inconsistent, and in that keen mountain air, I grieve to say, my physical and moral condition was not in that perfect accord always indicated by romancers. I had an appetite, and I gratified it; dyspepsia and ethical reflections might come later. I ate the saleratus biscuit cheerfully, and was meditatively finishing my coffee when a gurgling sound from the rafters above attracted my attention. I looked up; under the overhang of the bark roof three pairs of round eyes were fixed upon me. They belonged to the children I had previously seen, who, in the attitude of Raphael's cherubs, had evidently been deeply interested spectators of my repast. As our eyes met an inarticulate giggle escaped the lips of the youngest.

I never could understand why the shy amusement of children over their elders is not accepted as philosophically by its object as when it proceeds from an equal. We fondly believe that when Jones or Brown laughs at us it is from malice, ignorance, or a desire to show his superiority, but there is always a haunting suspicion in

our minds that these little critics *really* see something in us to laugh at. I, however, smiled affably in return, ignoring any possible grotesqueness in my manner of eating in private.

"Come here, Johnny," I said blandly.

The two elder ones, a girl and a boy, disappeared instantly, as if the crowning joke of this remark was too much for them. From a scraping and kicking against the log wall I judged that they had quickly dropped to the ground outside. The younger one, the giggler, remained fascinated, but ready to fly at a moment's warning.

"Come here, Johnny, boy," I repeated gently. "I want you to go to your mother, please, and tell her——"

But here the child, who had been working its face convulsively, suddenly uttered a lugubrious howl and disappeared also. I ran to the front door and looked out in time to see the tallest girl, who had received me, walking away with it under her arm, pushing the boy ahead of her and looking back over her shoulder, not unlike a youthful she-bear conducting her cubs from danger. She disappeared at the end of the extension, where there was evidently another door.

It was very extraordinary. It was not strange that I turned back to the cabin with a chagrin and mortification which for a moment made me entertain the wild idea of saddling Chu Chu and shaking the dust of that taciturn house from my feet. But the ridiculousness of such an act, to say nothing of its ingratitude, as quickly presented itself to me. Johnson had offered me only food and shelter; I could have claimed no more from the inn I had asked him to direct me to. I did not re-enter the house, but, lighting my last cigar, began to walk gloomily up and down the trail. With the outcoming of the stars it had grown lighter; through a wind opening in the trees I could see the heavy bulk of the opposite mountain, and beyond it a superior crest defined by a red line of forest fire, which, however, cast no reflection on the surrounding earth or sky. Faint woodland currents of air, still warm from the afternoon sun, stirred the leaves around me with long-drawn aromatic breaths. But these in time gave way to the steady Sierran night wind sweeping down from

the higher summits, and rocking the tops of the tallest pines, yet leaving the tranquillity of the dark lower aisles unshaken. It was very quiet; there was no cry nor call of beast or bird in the darkness; the long rustle of the tree-tops sounded as faint as the far-off wash of distant seas. Nor did the resemblance cease there; the close-set files of the pines and cedars, stretching in illimitable ranks to the horizon, were filled with the immeasurable loneliness of an ocean shore. In this vast silence I began to think I understood the taciturnity of the dwellers in the solitary cabin.

When I returned, however, I was surprised to find the tallest girl standing by the door. As I approached she retreated before me, and, pointing to the corner where a common cot bed had been evidently just put up, said, "Ye can turn in thar, only ye'll have to rouse out early when 'Dolphus does the chores," and was turning towards the extension again, when I stopped her almost appealingly.

"One moment, please. Can I see your mother?"

She stopped and looked at me with a singular expression. Then she said sharply—

"You know, fust rate, she's dead."

She was turning away again, but I think she must have seen my concern in my face, for she hesitated. "But," I said quickly, "I certainly understood your father, that is, Mr. Johnson," I added interrogatively, "to say that—that I was to speak to"—I didn't like to repeat the exact phrase—"his *wife*."

"I don't know what he was playin' ye for," she said shortly. "Mar has been dead mor'n a year."

"But," I persisted, "is there no grown-up woman here?"

"No."

"Then who takes care of you and the children?"

"I do."

"Yourself and your father—eh?"

"Dad ain't here two days running, and then on'y to sleep."

"And you take the entire charge of the house?"

"Yes, and the log tallies."

"The log tallies?"

"Yes; keep count and measure the logs that go by the slide."

It flashed upon me that I had passed the slide or declivity on the hill-side, where logs were slipped down into the valley, and I inferred that Johnson's business was cutting timber for the mill.

"But you're rather young for all this work," I suggested.

"I'm goin' on sixteen," she said gravely.

Indeed, for the matter of that, she might have been any age. Her face, on which sunburn took the place of complexion, was already hard and set. But on a nearer view I was struck with the fact that her eyes, which were not large, were almost indistinguishable from the presence of the most singular eyelashes I had ever seen. Intensely black, intensely thick, and even tangled in their profusion, they bristled rather than fringed her eyelids, obliterating everything but the shining black pupils beneath, which were like certain lustrous hairy mountain berries. It was this woodland suggestion that seemed to uncannily connect her with the locality. I went on playfully—

"That's not *very* old; but tell me—does your father, or *did* your father, ever speak of you as 'his old woman'?"

She nodded. "Then you thought I was mar?" she said, smiling.

It was such a relief to see her worn face relax its expression of pathetic gravity—although this operation quite buried her eyes in their black thick-set hedge again—that I continued cheerfully, "It wasn't much of a mistake, considering all you do for the house and family."

"Then you didn't tell Billy 'to go and be dead in the ground with mar,' as he 'lows you did?" she said half suspiciously, yet trembling on the edge of a smile.

No, I had not; but I admitted that my asking him to go to his mother might have been open to this dismal construction by a sensitive infant mind. She seemed mollified, and again turned to go.

"Good night, Miss—; you know your father didn't tell me your real name," I said.

"Karline!"

"Good night, Miss Karline."

I held out my hand.

She looked at it and then at me through her intricate eyelashes. Then she struck it aside briskly, but not unkindly, said "Quit foolin' now," as she might have said to one of the children, and disappeared through the inner door. Not knowing whether to be amused or indignant, I remained silent a moment. Then I took a turn outside in the increasing darkness, listened to the now hurrying wind over the tree-tops, re-entered the cabin, closed the door, and went to bed.

But not to sleep. Perhaps the responsibility towards these solitary children, which Johnson had so lightly shaken off, devolved upon me as I lay there, for I found myself imagining a dozen emergencies of their unprotected state which the elder girl could scarcely grapple. There was little to fear from depredatory man or beast—desperadoes of the mountain trail never stooped to ignoble burglary, bear or panther seldom approached a cabin—but there was the chance of sudden illness, fire, the accidents that beset childhood, to say nothing of the narrowing moral and mental effect of their isolation at that tender age. It was scandalous in Johnson to leave them alone.

In the silence I found I could hear quite distinctly the sound of their voices in the extension, and it was evident that Caroline was putting them to bed. Suddenly a voice was uplifted—her own! She began to sing and the others to join her. It was the repetition of a single verse of a well-known lugubrious negro melody. "All the world am sad and dreary," wailed Caroline, in a high head-note, "everywhere I roam." "O, darkieth," lisped the younger girl in response, "how my heart growth weary, far from the old folkth at h-o-o-me." This was repeated two or three times before the others seemed to get the full swing of it, and then the lines rose and fell sadly and monotonously in the darkness. I don't know why, but I at once got the impression that those motherless little creatures were under a vague belief that their performance was devotional, and was really filling the place of an evening hymn. A brief and indistinct kind of recitation, followed by a dead silence, broken only by the slow creaking of new timber, as if the house were stretching

itself to sleep too, confirmed my impression. Then all became quiet again.

But I was more wide awake than before. Finally I rose, dressed myself, and dragging my stool to the fire, took a book from my knapsack, and by the light of a guttering candle, which I discovered in a bottle in the corner of the hearth, began to read. Presently I fell into a doze. How long I slept I could not tell, for it seemed to me that a dreamy consciousness of a dog barking at last forced itself upon me so strongly that I awoke. The barking appeared to come from behind the cabin, in the direction of the clearing where I had tethered Chu Chu. I opened the door hurriedly, ran round the cabin towards the hollow, and was almost at once met by the bulk of the frightened Chu Chu, plunging out of the darkness towards me, kept only in check by her riata in the hand of a blanketed shape slowly advancing with a gun over its shoulder out of the hollow. Before I had time to recover from my astonishment I was thrown into greater confusion by recognizing the shape as none other than Caroline!

Without the least embarrassment or even self-consciousness of her appearance, she tossed the end of the riata to me with the curtest explanation as she passed by. Some prowling bear or catamount had frightened the mule. I had better tether it before the cabin away from the wind.

"But I thought wild beasts never came so near," I said quickly.

"Mule meat's mighty temptin'," said the girl sententiously and passed on. I wanted to thank her; I wanted to say how sorry I was that she had been disturbed; I wanted to compliment her on her quiet midnight courage, and yet warn her against recklessness; I wanted to know whether she had been accustomed to such alarms; and if the gun she carried was really a necessity. But I could only respect her reticence, and I was turning away when I was struck by a more inexplicable spectacle. As she neared the end of the extension I distinctly saw the tall figure of a man, moving with a certain diffidence and hesitation that did not, however, suggest any intention of concealment, among the trees; the girl apparently saw him at the same moment, and slightly slackened her pace. Not more than a dozen feet separated them. He said

something that was inaudible to my ears—but whether from his hesitation or the distance, I could not determine. There was no such uncertainty in her reply, however, which was given in her usual curt fashion—" All right. You kin trapse along home now and turn in."

She turned the corner of the extension and disappeared. The tall figure of the man wavered hesitatingly for a moment, and then vanished also. But I was too much excited by curiosity to accept this unsatisfactory conclusion, and, hastily picketing Chu Chu a few rods from the front door, I ran after him, with an instinctive feeling that he had not gone far. I was right. A few paces distant he had halted in the same dubious, lingering way. " Hallo ! " I said.

He turned towards me in the like awkward fashion, but with neither astonishment nor concern.

" Come up and take a drink with me before you go," I said, " if you're not in a hurry. I'm alone here, and since I *have* turned out I don't see why we mightn't have a smoke and a talk together."

" I dursn't."

I looked up at the six feet of strength before me and repeated wonderingly, " Dare not ? "

" *She* wouldn't like it." He made a movement with his right shoulder towards the extension.

" Who ? "

" Miss Karline."

" Nonsense ! " I said. " She isn't in the cabin—you won't see *her*. Come along." He hesitated, although from what I could discern of his bearded face it was weakly smiling.

" Come."

He obeyed, following me not unlike Chu Chu, I fancied, with the same sense of superior size and strength and a slight whitening of the eye, as if ready to shy at any moment. At the door he " backed." Then he entered sideways. I noticed that he cleared the doorway at the top and the sides only by a hair's-breadth.

By the light of the fire I could see that, in spite of his full first growth of beard, he was young—even younger than myself, and that he was by no means bad-looking. As he still showed signs of retreating at any moment, I

took my flask and tobacco from my saddle-bags, handed them to him, pointed to the stool, and sat down myself upon the bed.

"You live near here?"

"Yes," he said a little abstractedly, as if listening for some interruption, "at Ten Mile Crossing."

"Why, that's two miles away."

"I reckon."

"Then you don't live here—on the clearing?"

"No. I b'long to the mill at 'Ten Mile.'"

"You were on your way home?"

"No," he hesitated, looking at his pipe; "I kinder meander round here at this time, when Johnson's away, to see if everything's goin' straight."

"I see—you're a friend of the family."

"'Deed no!" He stopped, laughed, looked confused, and added, apparently to his pipe, "That is, a sorter friend. Not much. *She*"—he lowered his voice, as if that potential personality filled the whole cabin—"wouldn't like it."

"Then at night, when Johnson's away, you do sentry duty round the house?"

"Yes, 'sentry dooty,' that's it"—he seemed impressed with the suggestion—"that's it! Sentry dooty. You've struck it, pardner."

"And how often is Johnson away?"

"'Bout two or three times a week on an average."

"But Miss Caroline appears to be able to take care of herself. She has no fear."

"Fear! Fear wasn't hangin' round when *she* was born!" He paused. "No, sir. Did ye ever look into them eyes?"

I hadn't, on account of the lashes. But I didn't care to say this, and only nodded.

"There ain't the created thing livin' or dead that she can't stand straight up to and look at."

I wondered if he had fancied she experienced any difficulty in standing up before that innocently good-humoured face, but I could not resist saying—

"Then I don't see the use of your walking four miles to look after her."

I was sorry for it the next minute, for he seemed to

have awkwardly broken his pipe, and had to bend down for a long time afterwards to laboriously pick up the smallest fragments of it. At last he said cautiously—

"Ye noticed them bits o' flannin' round the chillern's throats?"

I remembered that I had, but was uncertain whether it was intended as a preventive of cold or a child's idea of decoration. I nodded.

"That's their trouble. One night, when old Johnson had been off for three days to Coulterville, I was prowling round here and I didn't git to see no one, though there was a light burnin' in the shanty all night. The next night I was here again—the same light twinklin', but no one about. I reckoned that was mighty queer, and I jess crep' up to the house an' listened. I heard suthin' like a little cough onest in a while, and times suthin' like a little moan. I didn't durst to sing out, for I knew *she* wouldn't like it, but I whistled keerless like, to let the chillern know I was there. But it didn't seem to take. I was jess goin' off, when—darn my skin!—if I didn't come across the bucket of water I'd fetched up from the spring *that mornin'*, standin' there full, and *never taken in!* When I saw that I reckoned I'd jess wade in, anyhow, and I knocked. Pooty soon the door was half opened, and I saw her eyes blazin' at me like them coals. Then *she* 'lowed I'd better 'git up and get,' and shet the door to! Then I 'lowed she might tell me what was up—through the door. Then she said—through the door—as how the chillern lay all sick with that hoss-distemper, diphthery. Then she 'lowed she'd use a doctor ef I'd fetch him. Then she 'lowed again I'd better take the baby, that hadn't ketched it yet, along with me, and leave it where it was safe. Then she passed out the baby through the door all wrapped up in a blankit like a papoose, and you bet I made tracks with it. I knowed thar wasn't no good going to the mill, so I let out for White's, four miles beyond, whar there was White's old mother. I told her how things were pointin', and she lent me a hoss, and I jess rounded on Doctor Green at Mountain Jim's, and had him back here afore sun up! And then I heard she wilted—regularly played out, you see—for she had it all along wuss than the lot, and never let on or whimpered!"

"It was well you persisted in seeing her that night," I said, watching the rapt expression of his face. He looked up quickly, became conscious of my scrutiny, and dropped his eyes again, smiled feebly, and drawing a circle in the ashes with the broken pipe-stem, said—

"But *she* didn't like it, though."

I suggested, a little warmly, that if she allowed her father to leave her alone at night with delicate children, she had no right to choose *who* should assist her in an emergency. It struck me afterwards that this was not very complimentary to him, and I added hastily that I wondered if she expected some young lady to be passing along the trail at midnight! But this reminded me of Johnson's style of argument, and I stopped.

"Yes," he said meekly; "and ef she didn't keer enough for herself and her brothers and sisters, she orter remember them Beazeley chillern."

"Beazeley children?" I repeated wonderingly.

"Yes; them two little ones, the size of Mirandy; they're Beazeley's."

"Who is Beazeley, and what are his children doing here?"

"Beazeley up and died at the mill, and she bedevilled her father to let her take his two young 'uns here."

"You don't mean to say that with her other work she's taking care of other people's children too?"

"Yes, and eddicatin' them."

"Educating them?"

"Yes; teachin' them to read and write and do sums. One of our loggers ketched her at it when she was keepin' tally."

We were both silent for some moments.

"I suppose you know Johnson?" I said finally.

"Not much."

"But you call here at other times than when you're helping her?"

"Never been in the house before."

He looked slowly around him as he spoke, raising his eyes to the bare rafters above, and drawing a few long breaths, as if he were inhaling the aura of some unseen presence. He appeared so perfectly gratified and contented, and I was so impressed with this humble and

silent absorption of the sacred interior, that I felt vaguely conscious that any interruption of it was a profanation, and I sat still, gazing at the dying fire. Presently he arose, stretched out his hand, shook mine warmly, said, " I reckon I'll meander along," took another long breath, this time secretly, as if conscious of my eyes, and then slouched sideways out of the house into the darkness again, where he seemed suddenly to attain his full height, and so looming, disappeared. I shut the door, went to bed, and slept soundly.

So soundly that when I awoke the sun was streaming on my bed from the open door. On the table before me my breakfast was already laid. When I had dressed and eaten it, struck by the silence, I went to the door and looked out. 'Dolphus was holding Chu Chu by the riata a few paces from the cabin.

" Where's Caroline ? " I asked.

He pointed to the woods and said, " Over yon ; keeping tally."

" Did she leave any message ? "

" Said I was to git your mule for you."

" Anything else ? "

" Yes ; said you was to go."

I went, but not until I had scrawled a few words of thanks on a leaf of my notebook, which I wrapped about my last Spanish dollar, addressed it to " Miss Johnson," and laid it upon the table.

. . . . . .

It was more than a year later that in the bar-room of the Mariposas Hotel a hand was laid upon my sleeve. I looked up. It was Johnson.

He drew from his pocket a Spanish dollar. " I reckoned," he said cheerfully, " I'd run again ye somewhar some time. My old woman told me to give ye that when I did, and say that she ' didn't keep no hotel.' But she allowed she'd keep the letter, and has spelled it out to the chillern."

Here was the opportunity I had longed for to touch Johnson's pride and affection in the brave but unprotected girl. " I want to talk to you about Miss Johnson," I said eagerly.

" I reckon so," he said, with an exasperating smile.

"Most fellers do. But she ain't *Miss* Johnson no more. She's married."

"Not to that big chap over from Ten Mile Mills?" I said breathlessly.

"What's the matter with *him?*" said Johnson. "Ye didn't expect her to marry a nobleman, did ye?"

I said I didn't see why she shouldn't—and believed that she *had*.

LEFT OUT ON LONE STAR MOUNTAIN

CHAPTER I

THERE was little doubt that the " Lone Star " claim was " played out." Not dug out, worked out, washed out—but *played* out. For two years its five sanguine proprietors had gone through the various stages of mining enthusiasm ; had prospected and planned, dug and doubted. They had borrowed money with hearty, but unredeeming, frankness ; established a credit with unselfish abnegation of all responsibility ; and had borne the disappointment of their creditors with a cheerful resignation which only the consciousness of some deep Compensating Future could give. Giving little else, however, a singular dissatisfaction obtained with the traders, and, being accompanied with a reluctance to make further advances, at last touched the gentle stoicism of the proprietors themselves. The youthful enthusiasm which had at first lifted the most ineffectual trial—the most useless essay—to the plane of actual achievement, died out, leaving them only the dull, prosaic record of half-finished ditches, purposeless shafts, untenable pits, abandoned engines, and meaningless disruptions of the soil upon the " Lone Star " claim, and empty flour sacks and pork barrels in the " Lone Star " cabin.

They had borne their poverty—if that term could be applied to a light renunciation of all superfluities in food, dress, or ornament, ameliorated by the gentle depredations already alluded to—with unassuming levity. More than that : having segregated themselves from their fellow-

miners of Red Gulch, and entered upon the possession of the little manzanita-thicketed valley five miles away, the failure of their enterprise had assumed in their eyes only the vague significance of the decline and fall of a general community, and to that extent relieved them of individual responsibility. It was easier for them to admit that the "Lone Star" claim was "played out" than confess to a personal bankruptcy. Moreover, they still retained the sacred right of criticism of Government, and rose superior in their private opinions to their own collective wisdom. Each one experienced a grateful sense of the entire responsibility of the other four in the fate of their enterprise.

On December 24, 1863, a gentle rain was still falling over the length and breadth of the "Lone Star" claim. It had been falling for several days, had already called a faint spring colour to the wan landscape, repairing with tender touches the ravages wrought by the proprietors, or charitably covering their faults. The ragged seams in gulch and cañon lost their harsh outlines, a thin green mantle faintly clothed the torn and abraded hill-side. A few weeks more, and a veil of forgetfulness would be drawn over the feeble failures of the "Lone Star" claim. The charming derelicts themselves, listening to the rain-drops on the roof of their little cabin, gazed philosophically from the open door, and accepted the prospect as a moral discharge from their obligations. Four of the five partners were present: the "Right" and "Left Bowers," "Union Mills," and the "Judge."

It is scarcely necessary to say that not one of these titles was the genuine name of its possessor. The Right and Left Bowers were two brothers; their *sobriquets* a cheerful adaptation from the favourite game of euchre, expressing their relative value in the camp. The mere fact that "Union Mills" had at one time patched his trousers with an old flour sack legibly bearing that brand of its fabrication, was a tempting baptismal suggestion that the other partners could not forgo. "The Judge," a singularly inequitable Missourian, with no knowledge whatever of the law, was an inspiration of gratuitous irony.

Union Mills, who had been for some time sitting placidly on the threshold with one leg exposed to the rain, from a

sheer indolent inability to change his position, finally withdrew that weather-beaten member, and stood up. The movement more or less deranged the attitudes of the other partners, and was received with cynical disfavour. It was somewhat remarkable that, although generally giving the appearance of healthy youth and perfect physical condition, they one and all simulated the decrepitude of age and invalidism, and after limping about for a few moments, settled back again upon their bunks and stools in their former positions. The Left Bower lazily replaced a bandage that he had worn around his ankle for weeks without any apparent necessity; and the Judge scrutinized with tender solicitude the faded cicatrix of a scratch upon his arm. A passive hypochondria, borne of their isolation, was the last ludicrously pathetic touch to their situation.

The immediate cause of this commotion felt the necessity of an explanation.

"It would have been just as easy for you to have stayed outside with your business leg, instead of dragging it into private life in that obtrusive way," retorted the Right Bower; "but that exhaustive effort isn't going to fill the pork barrel. The grocery man at Dalton says —what's that he said?"—he appealed lazily to the Judge.

"Said he reckoned the Lone Star was about played out, and he didn't want any more in his—thank you!" repeated the Judge with a mechanical effort of memory utterly devoid of personal or present interest.

"I always suspected that man, after Grimshaw begun to deal with him," said the Left Bower. "They're just mean enough to join hands against us." It was a fixed belief of the Lone Star partners that they were pursued by personal enmities.

"More than likely those new strangers over in the Fork have been paying cash and filled him up with conceit," said Union Mills, trying to dry his leg by alternately beating it or rubbing it against the cabin wall. "Once begin wrong with that kind of snipe and you drag everybody down with you."

This vague conclusion was received with dead silence. Everybody had become interested in the speaker's peculiar

method of drying his leg, to the exclusion of the previous topic. A few offered criticism—no one assistance.

"Who did the grocery man say that to?" asked the Right Bower, finally returning to the question.

"The Old Man," answered the Judge.

"Of course," ejaculated the Right Bower sarcastically.

"Of course," echoed the other partners together. "That's like him. The Old Man all over!"

It did not appear exactly what was like the Old Man, or why it was like him, but generally that he alone was responsible for the grocery man's defection. It was put more concisely by Union Mills:—

"That comes of letting him go there! It's just a fair provocation to any man to have the Old Man sent to him. They can't—sorter—restrain themselves at him. He's enough to spoil the credit of the Rothschilds."

"That's so," chimed in the Judge. "And look at his prospecting. Why, he was out two nights last week—all night—prospecting in the moonlight for blind leads—just out of sheer foolishness."

"It was quite enough for me," broke in the Left Bower, "when the other day—you remember when—he proposed to us white men to settle down to plain ground sluicing—making 'grub' wages just like any Chinaman. It just showed his idea of the Lone Star claim."

"Well, I never said it afore," added Union Mills, "but when that one of the Mattison boys came over here to examine the claim with an eye to purchasin', it was the Old Man that took the conceit out of him. He just as good as admitted that a lot of work had got to be done afore any pay ore could be realized. Never even asked him over to the shanty here to jine us in a friendly game—just kept him, so to speak, to himself. And naturally the Mattisons didn't see it."

A silence followed, broken only by the rain monotonously falling on the roof, and occasionally through the broad adobe chimney, where it provoked a retaliating hiss and splutter from the dying embers of the hearth. The Right Bower, with a sudden access of energy, drew the empty barrel before him, and taking a pack of well-worn cards from his pocket, began to make a "solitaire" upon the lid. The others gazed at him with languid interest.

"Makin' it for anythin'?" asked Mills.

The Right Bower nodded.

The Judge and Left Bower, who were partly lying in their respective bunks, sat up to get a better view of the game. Union Mills slowly disengaged himself from the wall, and leaned over the "solitaire" player. The Right Bower turned the last card in a pause of almost thrilling suspense, and clapped it down on the lid with fateful emphasis.

"It went!" said the Judge in a voice of hushed respect. "What did you make it for?" he almost whispered.

"To know if we'd make the break we talked about and vamose the ranch. It's the *fifth* time to-day," continued the Right Bower in a voice of gloomy significance. "And it went agin bad cards too."

"I ain't superstitious," said the Judge, with awe and fatuity beaming from every line of his credulous face, "but it's flyin' in the face of Providence to go agin such signs as that."

"Make it again to see if the Old Man must go," suggested the Left Bower.

The suggestion was received with favour, the three men gathering breathlessly around the player. Again the fateful cards were shuffled deliberately, placed in their mysterious combination, with the same ominous result. Yet everybody seemed to breathe more freely, as if relieved from some responsibility, the Judge accepting this manifest expression of Providence with resigned self-righteousness.

"Yes, gentlemen," resumed the Left Bower serenely, as if a calm legal decision had just been recorded, "we must not let any foolishness or sentiment get mixed up with this thing, but look at it like business men. The only sensible move is to get up and get out of the camp."

"And the Old Man?" queried the Judge.

"The Old Man—hush!—he's coming."

The doorway was darkened by a slight lissome shadow. It was the absent partner, otherwise known as the "Old Man." Need it be added that he was a *boy* of nineteen with a slight down just clothing his upper lip!

"The creek is up over the ford, and I had to 'shin'

up a willow on the bank and swing myself across," he said, with a quick, frank laugh; "but all the same, boys, it's going to clear up in about an hour—you bet. It's breaking away over Bald Mountain, and there's a sun flash on a bit of snow on Lone Peak. Look! you can see it from here. It's for all the world like Noah's dove just landed on Mount Ararat. It's a good omen."

From sheer force of habit the men had momentarily brightened up at the Old Man's entrance. But the unblushing exhibition of degrading superstition shown in the last sentence recalled their just severity. They exchanged meaning glances. Union Mills uttered hopelessly to himself: "Hell's full of such omens."

Too occupied with his subject to notice this ominous reception, the Old Man continued: "I reckon I struck a fresh lead in the new grocery man at the Crossing. He says he'll let the Judge have a pair of boots on credit, but he can't send them over here; and considering that the Judge has got to try them anyway, it don't seem to be asking too much for the Judge to go over there. He says he'll give us a barrel of pork and a bag of flour if we'll give him the right of using our tail-race and clean out the lower end of it."

"It's the work of a Chinaman, and a four days' job," broke in the Left Bower.

"It took one white man only two hours to clean out a third of it," retorted the Old Man triumphantly, "for *I* pitched in at once with a pick he let me have on credit, and did that amount of work this morning, and told him the rest of you boys would finish it this afternoon."

A slight gesture from the Right Bower checked an angry exclamation from the Left. The Old Man did not notice either, but, knitting his smooth young brow in a paternally reflective fashion, went on: "You'll have to get a new pair of trousers, Mills, but as he doesn't keep clothing, we'll have to get some canvas and cut you out a pair. I traded off the beans he let me have for some tobacco for the Right Bower at the other shop, and got them to throw in a new pack of cards. These are about played out. We'll be wanting some brushwood for the fire; there's a heap in the hollow. Who's going to bring

it in? It's the Judge's turn, isn't it? Why—what's the matter with you all?"

The restraint and evident uneasiness of his companions had at last touched him. He turned his frank young eyes upon them; they glanced helplessly at each other. Yet his first concern was for them—his first instinct paternal and protecting. He ran his eyes quickly over them, they were all there and apparently in their usual condition. "Anything wrong with the claim?" he suggested.

Without looking at him the Right Bower rose, leaned against the open door with his hands behind him and his face towards the landscape, and said—apparently to the distant prospect: "The claim's played out—the partnership's played out—and the sooner we skedaddle out of this the better. If," he added, turning to the Old Man, "if *you* want to stay—if you want to do Chinaman's work at Chinaman's wages—if you want to hang on to the charity of the traders at the Crossing—you can do it, and enjoy the prospects and the Noah's doves alone. But we're calculatin' to step out of it."

"But I haven't said I wanted to do it *alone*," protested the Old Man, with a gesture of bewilderment.

"If these are your general ideas of the partnership," continued the Right Bower, clinging to the established hypothesis of the other partners for support, "it ain't ours, and the only way we can prove it is to stop the foolishness right here. We calculated to dissolve the partnership and strike out for ourselves elsewhere. You're no longer responsible for us, nor we for you. And we reckon it's the square thing to leave you the claim and the cabin, and all it contains. To prevent any trouble with the traders, we've drawn up a paper here——"

"With a bonus of fifty thousand dollars each down, and the rest to be settled on my children," interrupted the Old Man, with a half-uneasy laugh. "Of course. But——" He stopped suddenly, the blood dropped from his fresh cheek, and he again glanced quickly round the group. "I don't think—I—I quite *sabe*, boys," he added, with a slight tremor of voice and lip. "If it's a conundrum, ask me an easier one."

Any lingering doubt he might have had of their meaning was dispelled by the Judge. "It's about the softest

thing you kin drop into, Old Man," he said confidentially; "if *I* hadn't promised the other boys to go with them, and if I didn't need the best medical advice in Sacramento for my lungs, I'd just enjoy staying with you."

"It gives a sorter freedom to a young fellow like you, Old Man—like goin' into the world on your own capital—that every Californian boy hasn't got," said Union Mills patronizingly.

"Of course it's rather hard papers on us, you know, givin' up everything, so to speak; but it's for your good, and we ain't goin' back on you," said the Left Bower, "are we, boys?"

The colour had returned to the Old Man's face a little more quickly and freely than usual. He picked up the hat he had cast down, put it on carefully over his brown curls, drew the flap down on the side towards his companions, and put his hands in his pockets. "All right," he said, in a slightly altered voice. "When do you go?"

"To-day," answered the Left Bower. "We calculate to take a moonlight *pasear* over to the Cross Roads and meet the down stage at about twelve to-night. There's plenty of time yet," he added, with a slight laugh; "it's only three o'clock now."

There was a dead silence. Even the rain withheld its continuous patter; a dumb, grey film covered the ashes of the hushed hearth. For the first time the Right Bower exhibited some slight embarrassment.

"I reckon it's held up for a spell," he said, ostentatiously examining the weather, "and we might as well take a run round the claim to see if we've forgotten nothing. Of course, we'll be back again," he added hastily, without looking at the Old Man, "before we go, you know."

The others began to look for their hats, but so awkwardly and with such evident preoccupation of mind that it was not at first discovered that the Judge had his already on. This raised a laugh, as did also a clumsy stumble of Union Mills against the pork barrel, although that gentleman took refuge from his confusion and secured a decent retreat by a gross exaggeration of his lameness, as he limped after the Right Bower. The Judge whistled feebly. The Left Bower, in a more ambitious effort to

impart a certain gaiety to his exit, stopped on the threshold and said, as if in arch confidence to his companions: "Darned if the Old Man don't look two inches higher, since he became a proprietor," laughed patronizingly, and vanished.

If the newly-made proprietor had increased in stature, he had not otherwise changed his demeanour. He remained in the same attitude until the last figure disappeared behind the fringe of buckeye that hid the distant highway. Then he walked slowly to the fire-place, and, leaning against the chimney, kicked the dying embers together with his foot. Something dropped and spattered in the film of hot ashes. Surely the rain had not yet ceased!

His high colour had already fled except for a spot on either cheek-bone that lent a brightness to his eyes. He glanced around the cabin. It looked familiar and yet strange. Rather, it looked strange *because* still familiar, and therefore incongruous with the new atmosphere that surrounded it—discordant with the echo of their last meeting and painfully accenting the change. There were the four "bunks," or sleeping berths, of his companions, each still bearing some traces of the individuality of its late occupant with a dumb loyalty that seemed to make their light-hearted defection monstrous. In the dead ashes of the Judge's pipe scattered on his shelf still lived his old fire; in the whittled and carved edges of the Left Bower's bunk still were the memories of by-gone days of delicious indolence; in the bullet-holes clustered round a knot of one of the beams there was still the record of the Right Bower's old-time skill and practice; in the few engravings of female loveliness stuck upon each head-board there were the proofs of their old extravagant devotion—all a mute protest to the change.

He remembered how, a fatherless, truant schoolboy, he had drifted into their adventurous nomadic life—itself a life of grown-up truancy like his own—and became one of that gipsy family. How they had taken the place of relations and household in his boyish fancy—filling it with the unsubstantial pageantry of a child's play at grown-up existence—he knew only too well. But how, from being a pet and protégé, he had gradually and unconsciously

asserted his own individuality and taken upon his younger shoulders not only a poet's keen appreciation of that life, but its actual responsibilities and half-childish burdens, he never suspected. He had fondly believed that he was a neophyte in their ways—a novice in their charming faith and indolent creed—and they had encouraged it; now their renunciation of that faith could only be an excuse for a renunciation of *him*. The poetry that had for two years invested the material and sometimes even mean details of their existence was too much a part of himself to be lightly dispelled. The lesson of those ingenuous moralists failed, as such lessons are apt to fail: their discipline provoked but did not subdue; a rising indignation, stirred by a sense of injury, mounted to his cheek and eyes. It was slow to come, but was none the less violent that it had been preceded by the benumbing shock of shame and pride.

I hope I shall not prejudice the reader's sympathies if my duty as a simple chronicler compels me to state, therefore, that the sober second thought of this gentle poet was to burn down the cabin on the spot with all its contents. This yielded to a milder counsel—waiting for the return of the party, challenging the Right Bower, a duel to the death, perhaps himself the victim, with the crushing explanation *in extremis*: "It seems we are *one* too many. No matter; it is settled now. Farewell!" Dimly remembering, however, that there was something of this in the last well-worn novel they had read together, and that his antagonist might recognize it—or even worse, anticipate it—himself, the idea was quickly rejected. Besides, the opportunity for an apotheosis of self-sacrifice was past. Nothing remained now but to refuse the proffered bribe of claim and cabin by letter, for he must not wait their return. He tore a leaf from a blotted diary, begun and abandoned long since, and essayed to write. Scrawl after scrawl was torn up until his fury had cooled down to a frigid third personality. "Mr. John Ford regrets to inform his late partners that their tender of house of furniture," however, seemed too inconsistent with the pork-barrel table he was writing on; a more eloquent renunciation of their offer became frivolous and idiotic from a caricature of Union Mills, label and all, that

appeared suddenly on the other side of the leaf; and when he at last indited a satisfactory and impassioned exposition of his feelings, the legible *addendum* of "Oh, ain't you glad you're out of the wilderness!"—the forgotten first line of a popular song, which no scratching would erase, seemed too like an ironical postscript to be thought of for a moment. He threw aside his pen and cast the discordant record of past foolish pastime into the dead ashes of the hearth.

How quiet it was! With the cessation of the rain, the wind, too, had gone down, and scarcely a breath of air came through the open door. He walked to the threshold and gazed on the hushed prospect. In this listless attitude he was faintly conscious of a distant reverberation, a mere phantom of sound—perhaps the explosion of a distant blast in the hills—that left the silence more marked and oppressive. As he turned again into the cabin a change seemed to have come over it. It already looked old and decayed. The loneliness of years of desertion seemed to have taken possession of it; the atmosphere of dry rot was in the beams and rafters. To his excited fancy the few disordered blankets and articles of clothing seemed dropping to pieces; in one of the bunks there was a hideous resemblance in the longitudinal heap of clothing to a withered and mummied corpse. So it might look in after years, when some passing stranger—but he stopped. A dread of the place was beginning to creep over him; a dread of the days to come, when the monotonous sunshine should lay bare the loneliness of these walls: the long, long days of endless blue and cloudless overhanging solitude; summer days when the wearying, incessant trade-winds should sing around that empty shell and voice its desolation. He gathered together hastily a few articles that were especially his own—rather that the free communion of the camp, from indifference or accident, had left wholly to him. He hesitated for a moment over his rifle, but, scrupulous in his wounded pride, turned away and left the familiar weapon that in the dark days had so often provided the dinner or breakfast of the little household. Candour compels me to state that his equipment was not large nor eminently practical. His scant pack was a light

weight for even his young shoulders, but I fear he thought more of getting away from the Past than providing for the Future.

With this vague but sole purpose he left the cabin, and almost mechanically turned his steps towards the creek he had crossed that morning. He knew that by this route he would avoid meeting his companions; its difficulties and circuitousness would exercise his feverish limbs and give him time for reflection. He had determined to leave the claim, but whence he had not yet considered. He reached the bank of the creek where he had stood two hours before; it seemed to him two years. He looked curiously at his reflection in one of the broad pools of overflow and fancied he looked older. He watched the rush and outset of the turbid current hurrying to meet the South Fork, and to eventually lose itself in the yellow Sacramento. Even in his preoccupation he was impressed with a likeness to himself and his companions in this flood that had burst its peaceful boundaries. In the drifting fragments of one of their forgotten flumes washed from the bank, he fancied he saw an omen of the disintegration and decay of the "Lone Star" claim.

The strange hush in the air that he had noticed before —a calm so inconsistent with that hour and the season as to seem portentous—became more marked in contrast to the feverish rush of the turbulent watercourse. A few clouds lazily huddled in the west apparently had gone to rest with the sun on beds of somnolent poppies. There was a gleam as of golden water everywhere along the horizon, washing out the cold snow peaks, and drowning even the rising moon. The creek caught it here and there, until, in grim irony, it seemed to bear their broken sluice-boxes and useless engines on the very Pactolian stream they had been hopefully created to direct and carry. But by some peculiar trick of the atmosphere, the perfect plenitude of that golden sunset glory was lavished on the rugged sides and tangled crest of the Lone Star Mountain. That isolated peak—the landmark of their claim, the gaunt monument of their folly—transfigured in the evening splendour, kept its radiance unquenched, long after the glow had fallen from the encompassing skies, and when at last the rising moon, step by step, put out the fires

along the winding valley and plains, and crept up the bosky sides of the cañon, the vanishing sunset was lost only to reappear as a golden crown.

The eyes of the young man were fixed upon it with more than a momentary picturesque interest. It had been the favourite ground of his prospecting exploits, its lowest flank had been scarred in the old enthusiastic days with hydraulic engines, or pierced with shafts, but its central position in the claim and its superior height had always given it a commanding view of the extent of their valley and its approaches, and it was this practical pre-eminence that alone attracted him at that moment. He knew that from its crest he would be able to distinguish the figures of his companions, as they crossed the valley near the cabin, in the growing moonlight. Thus he could avoid encountering them on his way to the high road, and yet see them, perhaps, for the last time. Even in his sense of injury there was a strange satisfaction in the thought.

The ascent was toilsome, but familiar. All along the dim trail he was accompanied by gentler memories of the past, that seemed like the faint odour of spiced leaves and fragrant grasses wet with the rain and crushed beneath his ascending tread, to exhale the sweeter perfume in his effort to subdue or rise above them. There was the thicket of manzanita, where they had broken noonday bread together; here was the rock beside their maiden shaft, where they had poured a wild libation in boyish enthusiasm of success; and here the ledge where their first flag—a red shirt heroically sacrificed—was displayed from a long-handled shovel to the gaze of admirers below. When he at last reached the summit, the mysterious hush was still in the air, as if in breathless sympathy with his expedition. In the west, the plain was faintly illuminated, but disclosed no moving figures. He turned towards the rising moon, and moved slowly to the eastern edge. Suddenly he stopped. Another step would have been his last! He stood upon the crumbling edge of a precipice. A landslip had taken place on the eastern flank, leaving the gaunt ribs and fleshless bones of Lone Star Mountain bare in the moonlight. He understood now the strange rumble and reverberation he had heard; he understood now the strange hush of bird and beast in break and thicket.

Although a single rapid glance convinced him that the slide had taken place in an unfrequented part of the mountain, above an inaccessible cañon, and reflection assured him his companions could not have reached that distance when it took place, a feverish impulse led him to descend a few rods in the track of the avalanche. The frequent recurrence of outcrop and angle made this comparatively easy. Here he called aloud; the feeble echo of his own voice seemed only a dull impertinence to the significant silence. He turned to reascend: the furrowed flank of the mountain before him lay full in the moonlight. To his excited fancy, a dozen luminous star-like points in the rocky crevices started into life as he faced them. Throwing his arm over the ledge above him, he supported himself for a moment by what appeared to be a projection of the solid rock. It trembled slightly. As he raised himself to its level, his heart stopped beating. It was simply a fragment detached from the outcrop lying loosely on the ledge, but upholding him by *its own weight only*. He examined it with trembling fingers; the encumbering soil fell from its sides and left its smoothed and worn protuberances glistening in the moonlight. It was virgin gold!

Looking back upon that moment afterwards, he remembered that he was not dazed, dazzled, or startled. It did not come to him as a discovery or an accident, a stroke of chance or a caprice of fortune. He saw it all in that supreme moment; Nature had worked out their poor deduction. What their feeble engines had essayed spasmodically and helplessly against the curtain of soil that hid the treasure, the elements had achieved with mightier but more patient forces. The slow sapping of the winter rains had loosened the soil from the auriferous rock, even while the swollen stream was carrying their impotent and shattered engines to the sea. What mattered that his single arm could not lift the treasure he had found; what mattered that to unfix those glittering stars would still tax both skill and patience! The work was done—the goal was reached! even his boyish impatience was content with that. He rose slowly to his feet, unstrapped his long-handled shovel from his back, secured it in the crevice, and quietly regained the summit.

It was all his own! His own by right of discovery under the law of the land, and without accepting a favour from *them*. He recalled even the fact that it was *his* prospecting on the mountain that first suggested the existence of gold in the outcrop and the use of the hydraulic. *He* had never abandoned that belief, whatever the others had done. He dwelt somewhat indignantly to himself on this circumstance, and half-unconsciously faced defiantly towards the plain below. But it was sleeping peacefully in full sight of the moon, without life or motion. He looked at the stars; it was still far from midnight. His companions had no doubt long since returned to the cabin to prepare for their midnight journey. They were discussing him—perhaps laughing at him, or worse, pitying him and his bargain. Yet here was his bargain! A slight laugh he gave vent to here startled him a little, it sounded so hard and so unmirthful, and so unlike, as he oddly fancied, what he really *thought*. But *what* did he think?

Nothing mean or revengeful; no, they never would say *that*. When he had taken out all the surface gold and put the mine in working order, he would send them each a draft for a thousand dollars. Of course, if they were ever ill or poor he would do more. One of the first, the very first, things he should do would be to send them each a handsome gun and tell them that he only asked in return the old-fashioned rifle that once was his. Looking back at the moment in after years, he wondered that, with this exception, he made no plans for his own future, or the way he should dispose of his newly-acquired wealth. This was the more singular as it had been the custom of the five partners to lie awake at night, audibly comparing with each other what they would do in case they made a strike. He remembered how, Alnaschar-like, they nearly separated once over a difference in the disposal of a hundred thousand dollars that they never had, nor expected to have. He remembered how Union Mills always began his career as a millionaire by a "square meal" at Delmonico's; how the Right Bower's initial step was always a trip home "to see his mother"; how the Left Bower would immediately placate the parents of his beloved with priceless gifts—(it may be parenthetic-

ally remarked that the parents and the beloved one were as hypothetical as the fortune)—and how the Judge would make his first start as a capitalist by breaking a certain faro bank in Sacramento. He himself had been equally eloquent in extravagant fancy in these penniless days—he who now was quite cold and impassive beside the more extravagant reality.

How different it might have been! If they had only waited a day longer! if they had only broken their resolves to him kindly and parted in good-will! How he would long ere this have rushed to greet them with the joyful news! How they would have danced around it, sung themselves hoarse, laughed down their enemies, and run up the flag triumphantly on the summit of the Lone Star Mountain! How they would have crowned him, "the Old Man," "the hero of the camp!" How he would have told them the old story; how some strange instinct had impelled him to ascend the summit, and how another step on that summit would have precipitated him into the cañon! And how—but what if somebody else—Union Mills or the Judge—had been the first discoverer? Might they not have meanly kept the secret from him; have selfishly helped themselves and done——

"What *you* are doing now."

The hot blood rushed to his cheek, as if a strange voice were at his ear. For a moment he could not believe that it came from his own pale lips until he found himself speaking. He rose to his feet, tingling with shame, and began hurriedly to descend the mountain.

He would go to them, tell them of his discovery, let them give him his share, and leave them for ever. It was the only thing to be done—strange that he had not thought of it at once. Yet it was hard, very hard and cruel to be forced to meet them again. What had he done to suffer this mortification? For a moment he actually hated this vulgar treasure that had for ever buried under its gross ponderability the light and careless past, and utterly crushed out the poetry of their old indolent happy existence.

He was sure to find them waiting at the cross roads where the coach came past. It was three miles away, yet he could get there in time if he hastened. It was a

wise and practical conclusion of his evening's work—a lame and impotent conclusion to his evening's indignation. No matter! They would perhaps at first think he had come to weakly follow them—perhaps they would at first doubt his story. No matter! He bit his lips to keep down the foolish rising tears, but still went blindly forward.

He saw not the beautiful night, cradled in the dark hills, swathed in luminous mists, and hushed in the awe of its own loveliness! Here and there the moon had laid her calm face on lake and overflow, and gone to sleep embracing them, until the whole plain seemed to be lifted into infinite quiet. Walking on as in a dream, the black impenetrable barriers of skirting thickets opened and gave way to vague distances that it appeared impossible to reach—dim vistas that seemed unapproachable. Gradually he seemed himself to become a part of the mysterious night. He was becoming as pulseless, as calm, as passionless.

What was that? A shot in the direction of the cabin! yet so faint, so echoless, so ineffective in the vast silence, that he would have thought it his fancy but for the strange instinctive jar upon his sensitive nerves. Was it an accident, or was it an intentional signal to him? He stopped; it was not repeated—the silence reasserted itself, but this time with an ominous death-like suggestion. A sudden and terrible thought crossed his mind. He cast aside his pack and all encumbering weight, took a deep breath, lowered his head and darted like a deer in the direction of the challenge.

CHAPTER II

THE exodus of the seceding partners of the Lone Star claim had been scarcely an imposing one. For the first five minutes after quitting the cabin, the procession was straggling and vagabond. Unwonted exertion had exaggerated the lameness of some, and feebleness of moral purpose had predisposed the others to obtrusive musical exhibition. Union Mills limped and whistled with

affected abstraction; the Judge whistled and limped with affected earnestness. The Right Bower led the way with some show of definite design; the Left Bower followed with his hands in his pockets. The two feebler natures, drawn together in unconscious sympathy, looked vaguely at each other for support.

"You see," said the Judge suddenly, as if triumphantly concluding an argument, "there ain't anything better for a young fellow than independence. Nature, so to speak, points the way. Look at the animals."

"There's a skunk hereabouts," said Union Mills, who was supposed to be gifted with aristocratically sensitive nostrils, "within ten miles of this place; like as not crossing the Ridge. It's always my luck to happen out just at such times. I don't see the necessity anyhow of trapesing round the claim now, if we calculate to leave it to-night."

Both men waited to observe if the suggestion was taken up by the Right and Left Bower moodily plodding ahead. No response following, the Judge shamelessly abandoned his companion.

"You wouldn't stand snoopin' round instead of lettin' the Old Man get used to the idea alone? No; I could see all along that he was takin' it in—takin' it in—kindly, but slowly, and I reckoned the best thing for us to do was to git up and git until he'd got round it." The Judge's voice was slightly raised for the benefit of the two before him.

"Didn't he say," remarked the Right Bower, stopping suddenly and facing the others—"didn't he say that that new trader was goin' to let him have some provisions anyway?"

Union Mills turned appealingly to the Judge; that gentleman was forced to reply: "Yes; I remember distinctly he said it. It was one of the things I was particular about on his account," responded the Judge, with the air of having arranged it all himself with the new trader. "I remember I was easier in my mind about it."

"But didn't he say," queried the Left Bower, also stopping short, "suthin' about its being contingent on our doing some work on the race?"

The Judge turned for support to Union Mills, who,

however, under the hollow pretence of preparing for a long conference, had luxuriously seated himself on a stump. The Judge sat down also, and replied hesitatingly: "Well, yes! Us or him."

"Us or him," repeated the Right Bower, with gloomy irony. "And you ain't quite clear in your mind, are you, if *you* haven't done the work already? You're just killing yourself with this spontaneous, promiscuous, and premature overwork; that's what's the matter with you."

"I reckon I heard somebody say suthin' about its being a Chinaman's three-day job," interpolated the Left Bower, with equal irony, "but I ain't quite clear in my mind about that."

"It'll be a sorter distraction for the Old Man," saidUnion Mills feebly—"kinder take his mind off his loneliness."

Nobody taking the least notice of the remark, Union Mills stretched out his legs more comfortably and took out his pipe. He had scarcely done so when the Right Bower, wheeling suddenly, set off in the direction of the creek. The Left Bower, after a slight pause, followed without a word. The Judge, wisely conceiving it better to join the stronger party, ran feebly after him, and left Union Mills to bring up a weak and vacillating rear.

Their course, diverging from Lone Star Mountain, led them now directly to the bend of the creek—the base of their old ineffectual operations. Here was the beginning of the famous tail-race that skirted the new trader's claim, and then lost its way in a swampy hollow. It was choked with débris; a thin, yellow stream that once ran through it seemed to have stopped work when they did, and gone into greenish liquidation.

They had scarcely spoken during this brief journey, and had received no other explanation from the Right Bower, who led them, than that afforded by his mute example when he reached the race. Leaping into it without a word, he at once began to clear away the broken timbers and driftwood. Fired by the spectacle of what appeared to be a new and utterly frivolous game, the men gaily leaped after him, and were soon engaged in a fascinating struggle with the impeded race. The Judge forgot his lameness in springing over a broken sluice-box; Union Mills forgot his whistle in a happy imitation of a

Chinese coolie's song. Nevertheless, after ten minutes of this mild dissipation, the pastime flagged. Union Mills was beginning to rub his leg when a distant rumble shook the earth. The men looked at each other; the diversion was complete; a languid discussion of the probabilities of its being an earthquake or a blast followed, in the midst of which the Right Bower, who was working a little in advance of the others, uttered a warning cry and leaped from the race. His companions had barely time to follow before a sudden and inexplicable rise in the waters of the creek sent a swift irruption of the flood through the race. In an instant its choked and impeded channel was cleared, the race was free, and the scattered débris of logs and timber floated upon its easy current. Quick to take advantage of this labour-saving phenomenon, the Lone Star partners sprang into the water, and by disentangling and directing the eddying fragments completed their work.

"The Old Man oughter been here to see this," said the Left Bower; "it's just one o' them climaxes of poetic justice he's always huntin' up. It's easy to see what's happened. One o' them high-toned shrimps over in the Excelsior claim has put a blast in too near the creek. He's tumbled the bank into the creek, and sent the back water down here just to wash out our race. That's what I call poetical retribution."

"And who was it advised us to dam the creek below the race, and make it do the same thing?" asked the Right Bower moodily.

"That was one of the Old Man's ideas, I reckon," said the Left Bower dubiously.

"And you remember," broke in the Judge with animation, "I allus said: 'Go slow, go slow. You just hold on and suthin' will happen.' And," he added triumphantly, "you see suthin' *has* happened. I don't want to take credit to myself, but I reckoned on them Excelsior boys bein' fools, and took the chances."

"And what if I happen to know that the Excelsior boys ain't blastin' to-day?" said the Right Bower sarcastically.

As the Judge had evidently based his hypothesis on the alleged fact of a blast, he deftly evaded the point. "I ain't saying the Old Man's head ain't level on some

things; he wants a little more *sabe* of the world. He's improved a good deal in euchre lately, and in poker—well! he's got that sorter dreamy, listenin'-to-the-angels kind o' way, that you can't exactly tell whether he's bluffin' or has got a full hand. Hasn't he?" he asked, appealing to Union Mills.

But that gentleman, who had been watching the dark face of the Right Bower, preferred to take what he believed to be his cue from him. "That ain't the question," he said virtuously; "we ain't takin' this step to make a card-sharp out of him. We're not doin' Chinamen's work in this race to-day for that! No, sir! We're teachin' him to paddle his own canoe." Not finding the sympathetic response he looked for in the Right Bower's face, he turned to the Left.

"I reckon we were teaching him our canoe was too full," was the Left Bower's unexpected reply. "That's about the size of it."

The Right Bower shot a rapid glance under his brows at his brother. The latter, with his hands in his pockets, stared unconsciously at the rushing water, and then quietly turned away. The Right Bower followed him. "Are you going back on us?" he asked.

"Are you?" responded the other.

"*No*, then it is," returned the Left Bower quietly. The elder brother hesitated in half-angry embarrassment.

"Then what did you mean by saying we reckoned our canoe was too full?"

"Wasn't that our idea?" returned the Left Bower indifferently. Confounded by this practical expression of his own unformulated good intentions, the Right Bower was staggered.

"Speakin' of the Old Man," broke in the Judge with characteristic infelicity, "I reckon he'll sort o' miss us, times like these. We were allers runnin' him and bedevillin' him after work, just to get him excited and amusin', and he'll kinder miss that sorter stimulatin'. I reckon we'll miss it too—somewhat. Don't you remember, boys, the night we put up that little sell on him and made him believe we'd struck it rich in the bank of the creek, and got him so conceited he wanted to go off and settle all our debts at once?"

"And how I came bustin' into the cabin with a panful of iron pyrites and black sand," chuckled Union Mills, continuing the reminiscences, "and how them big grey eyes of his nearly bulged out of his head. Well, it's some satisfaction to know we did our duty by the young fellow even in those little things." He turned for confirmation of their general disinterestedness to the Right Bower, but he was already striding away, uneasily conscious of the lazy following of the Left Bower, like a laggard conscience at his back. This movement again threw Union Mills and the Judge into feeble complicity in the rear, as the procession slowly straggled homeward from the creek.

Night had fallen. Their way lay through the shadow of Lone Star Mountain, deepened here and there by the slight bosky ridges that, starting from its base, crept across the plain like vast roots of its swelling trunk. The shadows were growing blacker as the moon began to assert itself over the rest of the valley, when the Right Bower halted suddenly on one of these ridges. The Left Bower lounged up to him, and stopped also, while the two others came up and completed the group. "There's no light in the shanty," said the Right Bower in a low voice, half to himself and half in answer to their inquiring attitude. The men followed the direction of his finger. In the distance the black outline of the Lone Star cabin stood out distinctly in the illumined space. There was the blank, sightless, external glitter of moonlight on its two windows that seemed to reflect its dim vacancy—empty alike of light, and warmth, and motion.

"That's sing'lar," said the Judge in an awed whisper.

The Left Bower, by simply altering the position of his hands in his trousers' pockets, managed to suggest that he knew perfectly the meaning of it—had always known it—but that being now, so to speak, in the hands of Fate, he was callous to it. This much, at least, the elder brother read in his attitude. But anxiety at that moment was the controlling impulse of the Right Bower, as a certain superstitious remorse was the instinct of the two others, and without heeding the cynic, the three started at a rapid pace for the cabin.

They reached it silently, as the moon, now riding high in the heavens, seemed to touch it with the tender grace

and hushed repose of a tomb. It was with something of this feeling that the Right Bower softly pushed open the door; it was with something of this dread that the two others lingered on the threshold, until the Right Bower, after vainly trying to stir the dead embers on the hearth into life with his foot, struck a match and lit their solitary candle. Its flickering light revealed the familiar interior unchanged in aught but one thing. The bunk that the Old Man had occupied was stripped of its blankets; the few cheap ornaments and photographs were gone; the rude poverty of the bare boards and scant pallet looked up at them unrelieved by the bright face and gracious youth that had once made them tolerable. In the grim irony of that exposure, their own penury was doubly conscious. The little knapsack, the tea-cup and coffee-pot that had hung near his bed, were gone also. The most indignant protest, the most pathetic of the letters he had composed and rejected, whose torn fragments still littered the floor, could never have spoken with the eloquence of this empty space! The men exchanged no words; the solitude of the cabin, instead of drawing them together, seemed to isolate each one in selfish distrust of the others. Even the unthinking garrulity of Union Mills and the Judge was checked. A moment later, when the Left Bower entered the cabin, his presence was scarcely noticed.

The silence was broken by a joyous exclamation from the Judge. He had discovered the Old Man's rifle in the corner, where it had been at first overlooked. "He ain't gone yet, gentlemen—for yer's his rifle," he broke in, with a feverish return of volubility, and a high excited falsetto. "He wouldn't have left this behind. No! I knowed it from the first. He's just outside a bit, foraging for wood and water. No, sir! Coming along here I said to Union Mills—didn't I?—'Bet your life the Old Man's not far off, even if he ain't in the cabin.' Why, the moment I stepped foot——"

"And I said coming along," interrupted Union Mills, with equally reviving mendacity, "'Like as not he's hangin' round yer, and lyin' low just to give us a surprise.' He! ho!"

"He's gone for good, and he left that rifle here on

purpose," said the Left Bower in a low voice, taking the weapon almost tenderly in his hands.

"Drop it then!" said the Right Bower. The voice was that of his brother, but suddenly changed with passion. The two other partners instinctively drew back in alarm.

"I'll not leave it here for the first comer," said the Left Bower calmly, "because we've been fools and he too. It's too good a weapon for that."

"Drop it, I say!" said the Right Bower, with a savage stride towards him.

The younger brother brought the rifle to a half charge, with a white face but a steady eye.

"Stop where you are!" he said collectedly. "Don't row with *me*, because you haven't either the grit to stick to your ideas or the heart to confess them wrong. We've followed your lead, and here we are! The camp's broken up—the Old Man's gone—and we're going. And as for the d——d rifle——"

"Drop it, do you hear!" shouted the Right Bower, clinging to that one idea with the blind pertinacity of rage and a losing cause. "Drop it!"

The Left Bower drew back, but his brother had seized the barrel with both hands. There was a momentary struggle, a flash through the half-lighted cabin, and a shattering report. The two men fell back from each other; the rifle dropped on the floor between them.

The whole thing was over so quickly that the other two partners had not had time to obey their common impulse to separate them, and consequently even now could scarcely understand what had passed. It was over so quickly that the two actors themselves walked back to their places, scarcely realizing their own act.

A dead silence followed. The Judge and Union Mills looked at each other in dazed astonishment, and then nervously set about their former habits, apparently in that fatuous belief common to such natures, that they were ignoring a painful situation. The Judge drew the barrel towards him, picked up the cards and began mechanically to "make a patience," on which Union Mills gazed with ostentatious interest, but with eyes furtively conscious of the rigid figure of the Right Bower by the chimney and the abstracted face of the Left Bower at the

door. Ten minutes had passed in this occupation, the Judge and Union Mills conversing in the furtive whispers of children unavoidably but fascinatedly present at a family quarrel, when a light step was heard upon the crackling brushwood outside, and the bright panting face of the Old Man appeared upon the threshold. There was a shout of joy; in another moment he was half-buried in the bosom of the Right Bower's shirt, half-dragged into the lap of the Judge, upsetting the barrel, and completely encompassed by the Left Bower and Union Mills. With the enthusiastic utterance of his name the spell was broken.

Happily unconscious of the previous excitement that had provoked this spontaneous unanimity of greeting, the Old Man, equally relieved, at once broke into a feverish announcement of his discovery. He painted the details with, I fear, a slight exaggeration of colouring, due partly to his own excitement, and partly to justify their own. But he was strangely conscious that these bankrupt men appeared less elated with their personal interest in their stroke of fortune than with his own success. "I told you he'd do it," said the Judge, with a reckless unscrupulousness of statement that carried everybody with it. "Look at him! the game little pup." "O no! he ain't the right breed—is he?" echoed Union Mills with arch irony, while the Right and Left Bower, grasping either hand, pressed a proud but silent greeting that was half new to him, but wholly delicious. It was not without difficulty that he could at last prevail upon them to return with him to the scene of his discovery, or even then restrain them from attempting to carry him thither on their shoulders on the plea of his previous prolonged exertions. Once only there was a momentary embarrassment. "Then you fired that shot to bring me back?" said the Old Man gratefully. In the awkward silence that followed, the hands of the two brothers sought and grasped each other, penitently. "Yes," interposed the Judge, with delicate tact, "ye see the Right and Left Bower almost quarrelled to see which should be the first to fire for ye. I disremember which did——" "I never touched the trigger," said the Left Bower hastily. With a hurried backward kick, the Judge resumed: "It went off sorter spontaneous."

The difference in the sentiment of the procession that once more issued from the Lone Star cabin did not fail to show itself in each individual partner according to his temperament. The subtle tact of Union Mills, however, in expressing an awakened respect for their fortunate partner by addressing him, as if unconsciously, as "Mr. Ford," was at first discomposing, but even this was forgotten in their breathless excitement as they neared the base of the mountain. When they had crossed the creek the Right Bower stopped reflectively.

"You say you heard the slide come down before you left the cabin?" he said, turning to the Old Man.

"Yes; but I did not know then what it was. It was about an hour and a half after you left," was the reply.

"Then look here, boys," continued the Right Bower with superstitious exultation, "it was the *slide* that tumbled into the creek, overflowed it, and helped *us* clear out the race!"

It seemed so clearly that Providence had taken the partners of the Lone Star directly in hand that they faced the toilsome ascent of the mountain with the assurance of conquerors. They paused only on the summit to allow the Old Man to lead the way to the slope that held their treasure. He advanced cautiously to the edge of the crumbling cliff, stopped, looked bewildered, advanced again, and then remained white and immovable. In an instant the Right Bower was at his side.

"Is anything the matter? Don't—don't look so, Old Man, for God's sake!"

The Old Man pointed to the dull, smooth, black side of the mountain, without a crag, break, or protuberance, and said with ashen lips:—

"It's gone!"

* * * * * * *

And it was gone! A *second* slide had taken place, stripping the flank of the mountain, and burying the treasure and the weak implement that had marked its side deep under a chaos of rock and débris at its base.

"Thank God!" The blank faces of his companions turned quickly to the Right Bower. "Thank God!" he repeated, with his arm round the neck of the Old Man. "Had he stayed behind he would have been buried too."

He paused, and, pointing solemnly to the depths below, said: "And thank God for showing us where we may yet labour for it in hope and patience like honest men."

The men silently bowed their heads and slowly descended the mountain. But when they had reached the plain one of them called out to the others to watch a star that seemed to be rising and moving towards them over the hushed and sleeping valley.

"It's only the stage coach, boys," said the Left Bower, smiling; "the coach that was to take us away."

In the security of their new-found fraternity they resolved to wait and see it pass. As it swept by with flash of light, beat of hoofs, and jingle of harness, the only real presence in the dreamy landscape, the driver shouted a hoarse greeting to the phantom partners, audible only to the Judge, who was nearest the vehicle.

"Did you hear—*did* you hear what he said, boys?" he gasped, turning to his companions. "No! Shake hands all round, boys! God bless you all, boys! To think we didn't know it all this while!"

"Know what?"

"Merry Christmas!"

"CHU CHU!"

I DO not believe that the most enthusiastic lover of that "useful and noble animal," the horse, will claim for him the charm of geniality, humour, or expansive confidence. Any creature who will not look you squarely in the eye; whose only oblique glances are inspired by fear, distrust, or a view to attack; who has no way of returning caresses, and whose favourite expression is one of head-lifting disdain, may be "noble" or "useful," but can be hardly said to add to the gaiety of nations. Indeed, it may be broadly stated that, with the single exception of gold-fish, of all animals kept for the recreation of mankind the horse is alone capable of exciting a passion that shall be absolutely hopeless. I deem these general remarks necessary to prove that my unreciprocated affection for "Chu Chu" was not purely individual or singular. And I may add that to these general characteristics she brought the waywardness of her capricious sex.

She came to me out of the rolling dust of an emigrant wagon, behind whose tail-board she was gravely trotting. She was a half-broken filly—in which character she had at different times unseated everybody in the train—and, although covered with dust, she had a beautiful coat, and the most lambent gazelle-like eyes I had ever seen. I think she kept these latter organs purely for ornament—apparently looking at things with her nose, her sensitive ears, and, sometimes, even a slight lifting of her slim near fore-leg. On our first interview I thought she favoured me with a coy glance, but as it was accompanied by an irrelevant "Look out!" from her owner, the teamster, I was not certain. I only know that after some conversa-

tion, a good deal of mental reservation, and the disbursement of considerable coin, I found myself standing in the dust of the departing emigrant wagon with one end of a forty-foot *riata* in my hand, and Chu Chu at the other.

I pulled invitingly at my own end, and even advanced a step or two towards her. She then broke into a long disdainful pace, and began to circle round me at the extreme limit of her tether. I stood admiring her free action for some moments—not always turning with her, which was tiring—until I found that she was gradually winding herself up *on me* ! Her frantic astonishment when she suddenly found herself thus brought up against me was one of the most remarkable things I ever saw, and nearly took me off my legs. Then, when she had pulled against the *riata* until her narrow head and prettily arched neck were on a perfectly straight line with it, she as suddenly slackened the tension, and condescended to follow me at an angle of her own choosing. Sometimes it was on one side of me, sometimes on the other. Even then the sense of my dreadful contiguity apparently would come upon her like a fresh discovery, and she would become hysterical. But I do not think that she really *saw* me. She looked at the *riata* and sniffed it disparagingly ; she pawed some pebbles that were near me tentatively with her small hoof ; she started back with a Robinson Crusoe-like horror of my footprints in the wet gully, but my actual personal presence she ignored. She would sometimes pause, with her head thoughtfully between her fore-legs, and apparently say : " There is some extraordinary presence here : animal, vegetable, or mineral—I can't make out which—but it's not good to eat, and I loathe and detest it."

When I reached my house in the suburbs, before entering the " fifty vara " lot enclosure, I deemed it prudent to leave her outside while I informed the household of my purchase ; and with this object I tethered her by the long *riata* to a solitary sycamore which stood in the centre of the road, the crossing of two frequented thoroughfares. It was not long, however, before I was interrupted by shouts and screams from that vicinity, and on returning thither I found that Chu Chu, with the assistance of her *riata*, had securely wound up two of my neighbours to the

tree, where they presented the appearance of early Christian martyrs. When I released them it appeared that they had been attracted by Chu Chu's graces, and had offered her overtures of affection, to which she had characteristically rotated, with this miserable result. I led her, with some difficulty, warily keeping clear of the *riata*, to the enclosure from whose fence I had previously removed several bars. Although the space was wide enough to have admitted a troop of cavalry, she affected not to notice it, and managed to kick away part of another section on entering. She resisted the stable for some time, but after carefully examining it with her hoofs, and an affectedly meek outstretching of her nose, she consented to recognize some oats in the feed-box—without looking at them—and was formally installed. All this while she had resolutely ignored my presence. As I stood watching her she suddenly stopped eating; the same reflective look came over her. "Surely I am not mistaken, but that same obnoxious creature is somewhere about here," she seemed to say, and shivered at the possibility.

It was probably this which made me confide my unreciprocated affection to one of my neighbours—a man supposed to be an authority on horses, and particularly of that wild species to which Chu Chu belonged. It was he who, leaning over the edge of the stall where she was complacently, and, as usual, obliviously munching, absolutely dared to toy with a pet lock of hair which she wore over the pretty star on her forehead. "Ye see, Captain," he said, with jaunty easiness, "hosses is like wimmen; ye don't want ter use any standoffishness or shyness with *them:* a stiddy but keerless sort o' familiarity, a kind o' free but firm handlin', jess like this, to let her see who's master——"

We never clearly knew *how* it happened; but when I picked up my neighbour from the doorway, amid the broken splinters of the stall rail, and a quantity of oats that mysteriously filled his hair and pockets, Chu Chu was found to have faced around the other way, and was contemplating her fore-legs, with her hind ones in the other stall. My neighbour spoke of damages while he was in the stall, and of physical coercion when he was

out of it again. But here Chu Chu, in some marvellous way, righted herself, and my neighbour departed hurriedly with a brimless hat and an unfinished sentence.

My next intermediary was Enriquez Saltello—a youth of my own age, and the brother of Consuelo Saltello, whom I adored. As a Spanish Californian he was presumed, on account of Chu Chu's half-Spanish origin, to have superior knowledge of her character, and I even vaguely believed that his language and accent would fall familiarly on her ear. There was the drawback, however, that he always preferred to talk in a marvellous English, combining Castilian precision with what he fondly believed to be Californian slang.

" To confer then as to thees horse, which is not—observe me—a Mexican plug ! Ah, no ! you can your boots bet on that. She is of Castilian stock—believe me, and strike me dead ! I will myself at different times overlook and affront her in the stable, examine her as to the assault, and why she should do thees thing. When she is of the exercise I will also accost and restrain her. Remain tranquil, my friend ! When a few days shall pass much shall be changed, and she will be as another. Trust your oncle to do thees thing ! Comprehend me ? Everything shall be lovely, and the goose hang high ! "

Conformably with this he " overlooked " her the next day, with a cigarette between his yellow-stained fingertips, which made her sneeze in a silent pantomimic way, and certain Spanish blandishments of speech, which she received with more complacency. But I don't think she ever even looked at him. In vain he protested that she was the " dearest " and " littlest " of his " little loves "—in vain he asserted that she was his patron saint, and that it was his soul's delight to pray to her ; she accepted the compliment with her eyes fixed upon the manger. When he had exhausted his whole stock of endearing diminutives, adding a few playful and more audacious sallies, she remained with her head down, as if inclined to meditate upon them. This he declared was at least an improvement on her former performances. It may have been my own jealousy, but I fancied she was only saying to herself, " Gracious ! can there be *two* of them ? "

"Courage and patience, my friend," he said, as we were slowly quitting the stable. "Thees horse is yonge, and has not yet the habitude of the person. To-morrow, at another season, I shall give to her a foundling" ("fondling," I have reason to believe, was the word intended by Enriquez)—"and we shall see. It shall be as easy as to fall away from a log. A leetle more of this chin music which your friend Enriquez possesses, and some tapping of the head and neck, and you are there. You are ever the right side up. Houp la! But let us not precipitate this thing. The more haste, we do not so much accelerate ourselves."

He appeared to be suiting the action to the word as he lingered in the doorway of the stable. "Come on," I said.

"Pardon," he returned, with a bow that was both elaborate and evasive, "but you shall yourself precede me—the stable is *yours*."

"Oh, come along!" I continued impatiently. To my surprise he seemed to dodge back into the stable again. After an instant he reappeared.

"Pardon! but I am re-strain! Of a truth, in this instant I am grasp by the mouth of thees horse in the coat-tail of my dress! She will that I should remain. It would seem"—he disappeared again—"that"—he was out once more—"the experiment is a sooccess! She reciprocate. She is, of a truth, gone on me. It is lofe!"—a stronger pull from Chu Chu here sent him in again—"but"—he was out now triumphantly with half his garment torn away—"I shall coquet."

Nothing daunted, however, the gallant fellow was back next day with a Mexican saddle, and attired in the complete outfit of a *vaquero*. Overcome though *he* was by heavy deerskin trousers, open at the side from the knees down, and fringed with bullion buttons, an enormous flat sombrero, and a stiff, short, embroidered velvet jacket, I was more concerned at the ponderous saddle and equipments intended for the slim Chu Chu. That these would hide and conceal her beautiful curves and contour, as well as overweight her, seemed certain; that she would resist them all to the last seemed equally clear. Nevertheless, to my surprise, when she was led out, and

the saddle thrown deftly across her back, she was passive. Was it possible that some drop of her old Spanish blood responded to its clinging embrace ? She did not either look at it or smell it. But when Enriquez began to tighten the " sinch " or girth a more singular thing occurred. Chu Chu visibly distended her slender barrel to twice its dimensions ; the more he pulled the more she swelled, until I was actually ashamed of her. Not so Enriquez. He smiled at us, and complacently stroked his thin moustache.

" Eet is ever so ! She is the child of her grandmother ! Even when you shall make saddle thees old Castilian stock, it will make large—it will become a balloon ! Eet is a trick—eet is a leetle game—believe me. For why ?

I had not listened, as I was at that moment astonished to see the saddle slowly slide under Chu Chu's belly, and her figure resume, as if by magic, its former slim proportions. Enriquez followed my eyes, lifted his shoulders, shrugged them, and said smilingly, " Ah, you see ! "

When the girths were drawn in again with an extra pull or two from the indefatigable Enriquez, I fancied that Chu Chu nevertheless secretly enjoyed it, as her sex is said to appreciate tight-lacing. She drew a deep sigh, possibly of satisfaction, turned her neck, and apparently tried to glance at her own figure—Enriquez promptly withdrawing to enable her to do so easily. Then the dread moment arrived. Enriquez, with his hand on her mane, suddenly paused, and with exaggerated courtesy lifted his hat and made an inviting gesture.

" You will honour me to precede."

I shook my head laughingly.

" I see," responded Enriquez gravely. " You have to attend the obsequies of your aunt, who is dead, at two of the clock. You have to meet your broker, who has bought you feefty share of the Comstock lode—at thees moment—or you are loss ! You are excuse ! Attend ! Gentlemen, make your bets ! The band has arrived to play ! 'Ere we are ! "

With a quick movement the alert young fellow had vaulted into the saddle. But, to the astonishment of both of us, the mare remained perfectly still. There was

Enriquez, bolt upright in the stirrups, completely overshadowing, by his saddle-flaps, leggings, and gigantic spurs, the fine proportions of Chu Chu, until she might have been a placid Rosinante, bestridden by some youthful Quixote. She closed her eyes; she was going to sleep! We were dreadfully disappointed. This clearly would not do. Enriquez lifted the reins cautiously! Chu Chu moved forward slowly—then stopped, apparently lost in reflection.

"Affront her on thees side."

I approached her gently. She shot suddenly into the air, coming down again on perfectly stiff legs with a springless jolt. This she instantly followed by a succession of other rocket-like propulsions, utterly unlike a leap, all over the enclosure. The movements of the unfortunate Enriquez were equally unlike any equitation I ever saw. He appeared occasionally over Chu Chu's head, astride of her neck and tail, or in the free air, but never *in* the saddle. His rigid legs, however, never lost the stirrups, but came down regularly, accentuating her springless hops. More than that, the disproportionate excess of rider, saddle, and accoutrements was so great that he had at times the appearance of lifting Chu Chu forcibly from the ground by superior strength, and of actually contributing to her exercise! As they came towards me, a wild, tossing, and flying mass of hoofs and spurs, it was not only difficult to distinguish them apart, but to ascertain how much of the jumping was done by Enriquez separately. At last Chu Chu brought matters to a close by making for the low-stretching branches of an oak tree which stood at the corner of the lot. In a few moments she emerged from it—but without Enriquez!

I found the gallant fellow disengaging himself from the fork of a branch in which he had been firmly wedged, but still smiling and confident, and his cigarette between his teeth. Then for the first time he removed it, and seating himself easily on the branch with his legs dangling down, he blandly waved aside my anxious queries with a gentle reassuring gesture.

"Remain tranquil, my friend. Thees does not count! I have conquer—you observe—for why? I have *never* for once *arrive at the ground!* Consequent she is dis-

appoint ! She will ever that I *should !* But I have got her when the hair is not long ! Your oncle Henry "—with an angelic wink—" is fly ! He is ever a bully boy, with the eye of glass ! Believe me. Behold ! I am here ! Big Injun ! Whoop ! "

He leaped lightly to the ground. Chu Chu, standing watchfully at a little distance, was evidently astonished at his appearance. She threw out her hind hoofs violently, shot up into the air until the stirrups crossed each other high above the saddle, and made for the stable in a succession of rabbit-like bounds—taking the precaution to remove the saddle on entering by striking it against the lintel of the door. " You observe," said Enriquez blandly, " she would make that thing of *me.* Not having the good occasion, she ees dissatisfied. Where are you now ? "

Two or three days afterwards he rode her again with the same result—accepted by him with the same heroic complacency. As we did not, for certain reasons, care to use the open road for this exercise, and as it was impossible to remove the tree, we were obliged to submit to the inevitable. On the following day I mounted her—undergoing the same experience as Enriquez, with the individual sensation of falling from a third-story window on top of a counting-house stool, and the variation of being projected over the fence. When I found that Chu Chu had not accompanied me, I saw Enriquez at my side. " More than ever it is become necessary that we should do thees thing again," he said gravely, as he assisted me to my feet. " Courage, my noble General ! God and Liberty ! Once more on to the breach ! Charge, Chestare, charge ! Come on, Don Stanley ! 'Ere we are ! "

He helped me none too quickly to catch my seat again, for it apparently had the effect of the turned peg on the enchanted horse in the " Arabian Nights," and Chu Chu instantly rose into the air. But she came down this time before the open window of the kitchen, and I alighted easily on the dresser. The indefatigable Enriquez followed me.

" Won't this do ? " I asked meekly.

" It ees *better*—for you arrive *not* on the ground," he said cheerfully ; " but you should not once but a thousand

times make trial! Ha! Go and win! Nevare die and say so! 'Eave ahead! 'Eave! There you are!"

Luckily, this time I managed to lock the rowels of my long spurs under her girth, and she could not unseat me. She seemed to recognize the fact after one or two plunges, when, to my great surprise, she suddenly sank to the ground, and quietly rolled over me. The action disengaged my spurs; but righting herself without getting up, she turned her beautiful head and absolutely *looked* at me!—still in the saddle. I felt myself blushing! But the voice of Enriquez was at my side.

"Errise, my friend; you have conquer! It is *she* who has arrive at the ground! *You* are all right. It is done; believe me, it is feenish! No more shall she make thees thing. From thees instant you shall ride her as the cow—as the rail of thees fence—and remain tranquil. For she is a-broke! Ta-ta! Regain your hats, gentlemen! Pass in your checks! It is ovar! How are you now?" He lit a fresh cigarette, put his hands in his pockets, and smiled at me blandly.

For all that, I ventured to point out that the habit of alighting in the fork of a tree, or the disengaging of oneself from the saddle on the ground, was attended with inconvenience, and even ostentatious display. But Enriquez swept the objections away with a single gesture. "It is the *preencipal*—the bottom fact—at which you arrive. The next come of himself! Many horse have achieve to mount the rider by the knees, and relinquish after thees same fashion. My grandfather had a barb of thees kind—but she has gone dead, and so have my grandfather. Which is sad and strange! Otherwise I shall make of them both an instant example!"

I ought to have said that although these performances were never actually witnessed by Enriquez's sister—for reasons which he and I thought sufficient—the dear girl displayed the greatest interest in them, and, perhaps aided by our mutually complimentary accounts of the other, looked upon us both as invincible heroes. It is possible also that she over-estimated our success, for she suddenly demanded that I should *ride* Chu Chu to her house, that she might see her. It was not far; by going through a back lane I could avoid the trees which exercised such a fatal

fascination for Chu Chu. There was a pleading, child-like entreaty in Consuelo's voice that I could not resist, with a slight flash from her lustrous dark eyes that I did not care to encourage. So I resolved to try it at all hazards.

My equipment for the performance was modelled after Enriquez's previous costume, with the addition of a few fripperies of silver and stamped leather, out of compliment to Consuelo, and even with a faint hope that it might appease Chu Chu. *She* certainly looked beautiful in her glittering accoutrements, set off by her jet-black shining coat. With an air of demure abstraction she permitted me to mount her, and even for a hundred yards or so indulged in a mincing maidenly amble that was not without a touch of coquetry. Encouraged by this, I addressed a few terms of endearment to her, and in the exuberance of my youthful enthusiasm I even confided to her my love for Consuelo, and begged her to be "good" and not disgrace herself and me before my Dulcinea. In my foolish trustfulness I was rash enough to add a caress, and to pat her soft neck. She stopped instantly with a hysteric shudder. I knew what was passing through her mind: she had suddenly become aware of my baleful existence.

The saddle and bridle Chu Chu was becoming accustomed to, but who was this living, breathing object that had actually touched her? Presently her oblique vision was attracted by the fluttering movement of a fallen oak-leaf in the road before her. She had probably seen many oak-leaves many times before; her ancestors had no doubt been familiar with them on the trackless hills and in field and paddock; but this did not alter her profound conviction that I and the leaf were identical, that our baleful touch was something indissolubly connected. She reared before that innocent leaf, she revolved round it, and then fled from it at the top of her speed.

The lane passed before the rear wall of Saltello's garden. Unfortunately, at the angle of the fence stood a beautiful Madroño tree, brilliant with its scarlet berries—and endeared to me as Consuelo's favourite haunt, under whose protecting shade I had more than once avowed my youthful passion. By the irony of fate Chu Chu caught sight of it, and with a succession of spirited bounds in-

stantly made for it. In another moment I was beneath it, and Chu Chu shot like a rocket into the air. I had barely time to withdraw my feet from the stirrups, to throw up one arm to protect my glazed sombrero, and grasp an overhanging branch with the other, before Chu Chu darted off. But, to my consternation, as I gained a secure perch on the tree, and looked about me, I saw her—instead of running away—quietly trot through the gate into Saltello's garden.

Need I say that it was to the beneficent Enriquez that I again owed my salvation? Scarcely a moment elapsed before his bland voice rose in a concentrated whisper from the corner of the garden below me. He had divined the dreadful truth!

"For the love of God, collect to yourself many kinds of thees berry! All you can! Your full arms round! Rest tranquil. Leave to your ole oncle to make for you a delicate exposure. At the instant!"

He was gone again. I gathered, wonderingly, a few of the larger clusters of parti-coloured fruit, and patiently waited. Presently he reappeared, and with him the lovely Consuelo—her dear eyes filled with an adorable anxiety.

"Yes," continued Enriquez to his sister, with a confidential lowering of tone but great distinctness of utterance, "it is ever so with the American! He will ever make *first* the salutation of the flower or the fruit, picked to himself by his own hand, to the lady where he call. It is the custom of the American hidalgo! My God!—what will you? *I* make it not—it is so! Without doubt he is in this instant doing thees thing. That is why he have let go his horse to precede him here; it is always the etiquette to offer thees things on the feet. Ah! Behold! it is he!—Don Francisco! Even now he will descend from thees tree! Ah! You make the blush, little sister! (archly.) I will retire! I am discreet; two is not company for the one! I make tracks! I am gone!"

How far Consuelo entirely believed and trusted her ingenious brother I do not know, nor even then cared to inquire. For there was a pretty mantling of her olive cheek as I came forward with my offering, and a certain

significant shyness in her manner, that were enough to throw me into a state of hopeless imbecility. And I was always miserably conscious that Consuelo possessed an exalted sentimentality, and a predilection for the highest mediæval romance, in which I knew I was lamentably deficient. Even in our most confidential moments I was always aware that I weakly lagged behind this daughter of a gloomily distinguished ancestry, in her frequent incursions into a vague but poetic past. There was something of the dignity of the Spanish *châtelaine* in the sweetly grave little figure that advanced to accept my specious offering. I think I should have fallen on my knees to present it, but for the presence of the all-seeing Enriquez. But why did I even at that moment remember that he had early bestowed upon her the nickname of " Pomposa " ? This, as Enriquez himself might have observed, was " sad and strange."

I managed to stammer out something about the Madroño berries being at her " disposicion " (the tree was in her own garden !), and she took the branches in her little brown hand with a soft response to my unutterable glances.

But here Chu Chu, momentarily forgotten, executed a happy diversion. To our astonishment she gravely walked up to Consuelo, and stretching out her long slim neck, not only sniffed curiously at the berries, but even protruded a black underlip towards the young girl herself. In another instant Consuelo's dignity melted. Throwing her arms around Chu Chu's neck, she embraced and kissed her. Young as I was, I understood the divine significance of a girl's vicarious effusiveness at such a moment, and felt delighted. But I was the more astonished that the usually sensitive horse not only submitted to these caresses, but actually responded to the extent of affecting to nip my mistress's little right ear.

This was enough for the impulsive Consuelo. She ran hastily into the house, and in a few moments reappeared in a bewitching riding-skirt gathered round her jimp waist. In vain Enriquez and myself joined in earnest entreaty. The horse was hardly broken for even a man's riding yet ; the saints alone could tell what the nervous creature might do with a woman's skirt flapping at her

side! We begged for delay, for reflection, for at least time to change the saddle—but with no avail! Consuelo was determined, indignant, distressingly reproachful! Ah, well! if Don Pancho (an ingenious diminutive of my Christian name) valued his horse so highly—if he were jealous of the evident devotion of the animal to herself, he would— But here I succumbed! And then I had the felicity of holding that little foot for one brief moment in the hollow of my hand, of readjusting the skirt as she threw her knee over the saddle-horn, of clasping her tightly—only half in fear—as I surrendered the reins to her grasp. And, to tell the truth, as Enriquez and I fell back, although I had insisted upon still keeping hold of the end of the *riata*, it was a picture to admire. The *petite* figure of the young girl, and the graceful folds of her skirt, admirably harmonized with Chu Chu's lithe contour; and as the mare arched her slim neck and raised her slender head under the pressure of the reins, it was so like the lifted velvet-capped toreador crest of Consuelo herself, that they seemed of one race.

"I would not that you should hold the *riata*," said Consuelo petulantly.

I hesitated—Chu Chu looked, certainly, very amiable—I let go. She began to amble towards the gate, not mincingly as before, but with a freer and fuller stride. In spite of the incongruous saddle, the young girl's seat was admirable. As they neared the gate, she cast a single mischievous glance at me, jerked at the rein, and Chu Chu sprang into the road at a rapid canter. I watched them fearfully and breathlessly, until at the end of the lane I saw Consuelo rein in slightly, wheel easily, and come flying back. There was no doubt about it; the horse was under perfect control. Her second subjugation was complete and final.

Overjoyed and bewildered, I overwhelmed them with congratulations; Enriquez alone retaining the usual brotherly attitude of criticism and a superior toleration of a lover's enthusiasm. I ventured to hint to Consuelo (in what I believed was a safe whisper) that Chu Chu only showed my own feelings towards her. "Without doubt," responded Enriquez gravely. "She have of herself assist you to climb to the tree to pull to yourself the berry for

my sister." But I felt Consuelo's little hand return my pressure, and I forgave and even pitied him.

From that day forward Chu Chu and Consuelo were not only firm friends but daily companions. In my devotion I would have presented the horse to the young girl, but with flattering delicacy she preferred to call it mine. "I shall erride it for you, Pancho," she said; "I shall feel," she continued, with exalted although somewhat vague poetry, "that it is of *you*! You lofe the beast—it is therefore of a necessity *you*, my Pancho! It is *your* soul I shall erride like the wings of the wind—your lofe in this beast shall be my only cavalier for ever."—I would have preferred something whose vicarious qualities were less uncertain than I still felt Chu Chu's to be, but I kissed the girl's hand submissively. It was only when I attempted to accompany her in the flesh, on another horse, that I felt the full truth of my instinctive fears. Chu Chu would not permit any one to approach her mistress's side. My mounted presence revived in her all her old blind astonishment and disbelief in my existence; she would start suddenly, face about, and back away from me in utter amazement, as if I had been only recently created, or with an affected modesty as if I had been just guilty of some grave indecorum towards her sex which she really could not stand. The frequency of these exhibitions in the public highway were not only distressing to me as a simple escort, but, as it had the effect on the casual spectators of making Consuelo seem to participate in Chu Chu's objections, I felt that, as a lover, it could not be borne. Any attempt to coerce Chu Chu ended in her running away. And my frantic pursuit of her was open to equal misconstruction. "Go it, miss; the little dude is gainin' on you!" shouted by a drunken teamster to the frightened Consuelo, once checked me in mid career. Even the dear girl herself saw the uselessness of my real presence, and after a while was content to ride with "my soul."

Notwithstanding this, I am not ashamed to say that it was my custom, whenever she rode out, to keep a slinking and distant surveillance of Chu Chu on another horse, until she had fairly settled down to her pace. A little nod of Consuelo's round black-and-red toreador hat,

or a kiss tossed from her riding-whip, was reward enough!

I remember a pleasant afternoon when I was thus awaiting her in the outskirts of the village. The eternal smile of the Californian summer had begun to waver and grow less fixed; dust lay thick on leaf and blade; the dry hills were clothed in russet leather; the trade-winds were shifting to the south with an ominous warm humidity: a few days longer and the rains would be here. It so chanced that this afternoon my seclusion on the roadside was accidently invaded by a village belle—a Western young lady somewhat older than myself, and of a flirtatious reputation. As she persistently, and—as I now have reason to believe—mischievously lingered, I had only a passing glimpse of Consuelo riding past at an unaccustomed speed which surprised me at the moment. But as I reasoned later that she was only trying to avoid a merely formal meeting, I thought no more about it. It was not until I called at the house to fetch Chu Chu at the usual hour, and found that Consuelo had not yet returned, that a recollection of Chu Chu's furious pace again troubled me. An hour passed—it was getting towards sunset, but there were no signs of Chu Chu nor her mistress. I became seriously alarmed. I did not care to reveal my fears to the family, for I felt myself responsible for Chu Chu. At last I desperately saddled my horse, and galloped off in the direction she had taken. It was the road to Rosario and the *hacienda* of one of her relations, where she sometimes halted.

The road was a very unfrequented one, twisting like a mountain river: indeed, it was the bed of an old watercourse, between brown hills of wild oats, and debouching at last into a broad, blue, lake-like expanse of *alfalfa* meadows. In vain I strained my eyes over the monotonous level; nothing appeared to rise above or move across it. In the faint hope that she might have lingered at the *hacienda*, I was spurring on again, when I heard a slight splashing on my left. I looked around. A broad patch of fresher-coloured herbage and a cluster of dwarfed alders indicated a hidden spring. I cautiously approached its quaggy edges, when I was shocked by what appeared to be a sudden vision! Mid-leg deep in the

centre of a greenish pool stood Chu Chu! but without a strap or buckle of harness upon her—as naked as when she was foaled.

For a moment I could only stare at her in bewildered terror. Far from recognizing me, she seemed to be absorbed in a nymph-like contemplation of her own graces in the pool. Then I called "Consuelo!" and galloped frantically around the spring. But there was no response, nor was there anything to be seen but the all-unconscious Chu Chu. The pool, thank Heaven! was not deep enough to have drowned any one; there were no signs of a struggle on its quaggy edges. The horse might have come from a distance! I galloped on, still calling. A few hundred yards farther I detected the vivid glow of Chu Chu's scarlet saddle-blanket in the brush near the trail. My heart leaped—I was on the track. I called again; this time a faint reply, in accents I knew too well, came from the field beside me.

Consuelo was there, reclining beside a manzanita bush which screened her from the road, in what struck me, even at that supreme moment, as a judicious and picturesquely selected couch of scented Indian grass and dry tussocks. The velvet hat with its balls of scarlet plush was laid carefully aside; her lovely blue-black hair retained its tight coils undishevelled; her eyes were luminous and tender. Shocked as I was at her apparent helplessness, I remember being impressed with the fact that it gave so little indication of violent usage or disaster.

I threw myself frantically on the ground beside her.

"You are hurt, Consita! For Heaven's sake! what has happened?"

She pushed my hat back with her little hand, and tumbled my hair gently.

"Nothing. *You* are here, Pancho—eet is enofe! What shall come after thees—when I am perhaps gone among the grave—make nothing! *You* are here—I am happy. For a little, perhaps—not mooch."

"But," I went on desperately, "was it an accident? Were you thrown? Was it Chu Chu?"—for somehow, in spite of her languid posture and voice, I could not, even in my fears, believe her seriously hurt.

"Beat not the poor beast, Pancho. It is not from *her*

comes thees thing. She have make nothing—believe me! I have come upon your assignation with Miss Essmith! I make but to pass you—to fly—to never come back! I have say to Chu Chu, 'Fly!' We fly many miles. Sometimes together, sometimes not so mooch! Sometimes in the saddle, sometimes on the neck! Many things remain in the road; at the end, I myself remain! I have say, 'Courage, Pancho will come!' Then I say, 'No, he is talk with Miss Essmith!' I remember not more. I have creep here on the hands. Et is feenish!"

I looked at her distractedly. She smiled tenderly, and slightly smoothed down and rearranged a fold of her dress to cover her delicate little boot.

"But," I protested, "you are not much hurt, dearest. You have broken no bones. Perhaps," I added, looking at the boot, "only a slight sprain. Let me carry you to my horse: I will walk beside you home. Do, dearest Consita!"

She turned her lovely eyes towards me sadly. "You comprehend not, my poor Pancho! It is not of the foot, the ankle, the arm, or the head that I can say, 'She is broke!' I would it were even so. But"—she lifted her sweet lashes slowly—"I have derrange my inside. It is an affair of my family. My grandfather have once toomble over the bull at a *rodeo*. He speak no more; he is dead. For why? He has derrange his inside. Believe me, it is of the family. You comprehend? The Saltellos are not as the other peoples for this. When I am gone, you will bring to me the berry to grow upon my tomb, Pancho; the berry you have picked for me. The little flower will come too, the little star will arrive; but Consuelo, who lofe you, she will come not more! When you are happy and talk in the road to the Essmith, you will not think of me. You will not see my eyes, Pancho; thees little grass"—she ran her plump little fingers through a tussock—"will hide them; and the small animals in the black coats that lif here will have much sorrow—but you will not. It ees better so! My father will not that I, a Catholique, should marry into a camp-meeting, and lif in a tent, and make howl like the coyote." (It was one of Consuelo's bewildering beliefs that there was only one form of dissent—Methodism!) "He will

not that I should marry a man who possesses not the many horses, ox, and cow, like him. But *I* care not. *You* are my only religion, Pancho ! I have enofe of the horse, and ox, and cow when *you* are with me ! Kiss me, Pancho. Perhaps it is for the last time—the feenish ! Who knows ? "

There were tears in her lovely eyes ; I felt that my own were growing dim ; the sun was sinking over the dreary plain to the slow rising of the wind ; an infinite loneliness had fallen upon us ; and yet I was miserably conscious of some dreadful unreality in it all. A desire to laugh, which I felt must be hysterical, was creeping over me ; I dared not speak. But her dear head was on my shoulder, and the situation was not unpleasant.

Nevertheless, something must be done ! This was the more difficult as it was by no means clear what had already been done. Even while I supported her drooping figure I was straining my eyes across her shoulder for succour of some kind. Suddenly the figure of a rapid rider appeared upon the road. It seemed familiar. I looked again—it was the blessed Enriquez ! A sense of deep relief came over me. I loved Consuelo ; but never before had lover ever hailed the irruption of one of his beloved's family with such complacency.

" You are safe, dearest ; it is Enriquez ! "

I thought she received the information coldly. Suddenly she turned upon me her eyes, now bright and glittering. " Swear to me at the instant, Pancho, that you will not again look upon Miss Essmith, even for once."

I was simple and literal. Miss Smith was my nearest neighbour, and, unless I was stricken with blindness, compliance was impossible. I hesitated—but swore.

" Enofe—you have hesitate—I will no more."

She rose to her feet with grave deliberation. For an instant, with the recollection of the delicate internal organization of the Saltellos on my mind, I was in agony lest she should totter and fall, even then, yielding up her gentle spirit on the spot. But, when I looked again, she had a hairpin between her white teeth, and was carefully adjusting her toreador hat. And beside us was Enriquez —cheerful, alert, voluble, and undaunted.

" Eureka ! I have found ! We are all here ! Eet is

a leetle public—eh ! a leetle too much of a front seat for a *tête-à-tête*, my yonge friends," he said, glancing at the remains of Consuelo's bower, " but for the accounting of taste there is none. What will you ? the meat of the one man shall envenom the meat of the other. But " (in a whisper to me) " as to thees horse—thees Chu Chu, which I have just pass—why is she undress ? Surely you would not make an exposition of her to the traveller to suspect ! And if not, why so ? "

I tried to explain, looking at Consuelo, that Chu Chu had run away, that Consuelo had met with a terrible accident, had been thrown, and, I feared, had suffered serious internal injury. But, to my embarrassment, Consuelo maintained a half-scornful silence, and an inconsistent freshness of healthful indifference, as Enriquez approached her with an engaging smile. " Ah, yes, she have the headache and the molligrubs. She will sit on the damp stone when the gentle dew is falling. I comprehend. Meet me in the lane when the clock strike nine ! But," in a lower voice, " of thees undress horse I comprehend nothing ! Look you—it is sad and strange."

He went off to fetch Chu Chu, leaving me and Consuelo alone. I do not think I ever felt so utterly abject and bewildered before in my life. Without knowing why, I was miserably conscious of having in some way offended the girl for whom I believed I would have given my life ; and I had made her and myself ridiculous in the eyes of her brother. I had again failed in my slower Western nature to understand her high romantic Spanish soul. Meantime she was smoothing out her riding-habit, and looking as fresh and pretty as when she first left her house.

" Consita," I said hesitatingly, " you are not angry with me ? "

" Angry ? " she repeated haughtily, without looking at me. " Oh no ! Of a possibility eet is Mees Essmith who is angry that I have interroopt her *tête-à-tête* with you, and have send here my brother to make the same with me."

" But," I said eagerly, " Miss Smith does not even know Enriquez ! "

Consuelo turned on me a glance of unutterable significance. " Ah ! " she said darkly, " you *think !* "

Indeed I *knew*. But here I believe I understood Consuelo, and was relieved. I even ventured to say gently, "And are you better?"

She drew herself up to her full height, which was not much. "Of my health, what is it? A nothing. Yes! Of my soul, let us not speak."

Nevertheless, when Enriquez appeared with Chu Chu, she ran towards her with outstretched arms. Chu Chu protruded about six inches of upper lip in response—apparently under the impression, which I could quite understand, that her mistress was edible. And I may have been mistaken, but their beautiful eyes met in an absolute and distinct glance of intelligence!

During the home journey Consuelo recovered her spirits, and parted from me with a magnanimous and forgiving pressure of the hand. I do not know what explanation of Chu Chu's original escapade was given to Enriquez and the rest of the family; the inscrutable forgiveness extended to me by Consuelo precluded any further inquiry on my part. I was willing to leave it a secret between her and Chu Chu; but, strange to say, it seemed to complete our own understanding, and precipitated, not only our love-making, but the final catastrophe which culminated that romance; for we had resolved to elope. I do not know that this heroic remedy was absolutely necessary from the attitude of either Consuelo's family or my own; I am inclined to think we preferred it because it involved no previous explanation or advice. Need I say that our confidant and firm ally was Consuelo's brother—the alert, the linguistic, the ever-happy, ever-ready Enriquez. It was understood that his presence would not only give a certain mature respectability to our performance, but I do not think we would have contemplated this step without it. During one of our riding excursions we were to secure the services of a Methodist minister in the adjoining county, and later, that of the Mission Padre—when the secret was out. "I will gif her away," said Enriquez confidently; "it will on the instant propitiate the old shadbelly who shall perform the affair, and withhold his jaw. A little chin-music from your oncle 'Arry shall finish it! Remain tranquil, and forget not a ring! One does not always, in

the agony and dissatisfaction of the moment, a ring remember. I shall bring two in the pocket of my dress."

If I did not entirely participate in this roseate view, it may have been because Enriquez, although a few years my senior, was much younger-looking; and with his demure devilry of eye, and his upper lip close shaven for this occasion, he suggested a depraved acolyte rather than a responsible member of a family. Consuelo had also confided to me that her father—possibly owing to some rumours of our previous escapade—had forbidden any further excursions with me alone. The innocent man did not know that Chu Chu had forbidden it also, and that even on this momentous occasion both Enriquez and myself were obliged to ride in opposite fields like outflankers. But we nevertheless felt the full guilt of disobedience added to our desperate enterprise. Meanwhile, although pressed for time, and subject to discovery at any moment, I managed at certain points of the road to dismount and walk beside Chu Chu (who did not seem to recognize me on foot), holding Consuelo's hand in my own, with the discreet Enriquez leading my horse in the distant field. I retain a very vivid picture of that walk—the ascent of a gentle slope towards a prospect as yet unknown, but full of glorious possibilities; the tender dropping light of an autumn sky, slightly filmed with the promise of the future rains, like foreshadowed tears; and the half-frightened, half-serious talk into which Consuelo and I had insensibly fallen. And then, I don't know how it happened, but, as we reached the summit, Chu Chu suddenly reared, wheeled, and the next moment was flying back along the road we had just travelled, at the top of her speed! It might have been that, after her abstracted fashion, she only at that moment detected my presence; but so sudden and complete was her evolution, that before I could regain my horse from the astonished Enriquez she was already a quarter of a mile on the homeward stretch, with the frantic Consuelo pulling hopelessly at the bridle. We started in pursuit; but a horrible despair seized us. To attempt to overtake her, to even follow at the same rate of speed, would not only excite Chu Chu, but endanger Consuelo's life. There was absolutely no help for it—nothing could be done. The mare had taken her deter-

mined, long, continuous stride; the road was a straight, steady descent all the way back to the village; Chu Chu had the bit between her teeth, and there was no prospect of swerving her. We could only follow hopelessly, idiotically, furiously, until Chu Chu dashed triumphantly into the Saltellos' courtyard, carrying the half-fainting Consuelo back to the arms of her assembled and astonished family.

It was our last ride together. It was the last I ever saw of Consuelo before her transfer to the safe seclusion of a convent in Southern California. It was the last I ever saw of Chu Chu, who, in the confusion of that rencontre, was overlooked in her half-loosed harness, and allowed to escape through the back gate to the fields. Months afterwards it was said that she had been identified among a band of wild horses in the Coast Range, as a strange and beautiful creature who had escaped the brand of the *rodeo*, and had become a myth. There was another legend, that she had been seen, sleek, fat, and gorgeously caparisoned, issuing from the gateway of the Rosario *patio*, before a lumbering Spanish *cabriolé* in which a short, stout matron was seated—but I will have none of it. For there are days when she still lives, and I can see her plainly still climbing the gentle slope towards the summit, with Consuelo on her back, and myself at her side, pressing eagerly forward towards the illimitable prospect that opens in the distance.

THE CHRISTMAS GIFT THAT CAME TO RUPERT

A STORY FOR LITTLE SOLDIERS

It was the Christmas season in California—a season of falling rain and springing grasses. There were intervals when, through driving clouds and flying scud, the sun visited the haggard hills with a miracle, and death and resurrection were as one, and out of the very throes of decay a joyous life struggled outward and upward. Even the storms that swept down the dead leaves nurtured the tender buds that took their places. There were no episodes of snowy silence; over the quickening fields the farmer's ploughshare hard followed the furrows left by the latest rains. Perhaps it was for this reason that the Christmas evergreens which decorated the drawing-room took upon themselves a foreign aspect, and offered a weird contrast to the roses, seen dimly through the windows, as the south-west wind beat their soft faces against the panes.

"Now," said the Doctor, drawing his chair closer to the fire, and looking mildly but firmly at the semicircle of flaxen heads around him, "I want it distinctly understood before I begin my story, that I am not to be interrupted by any ridiculous questions. At the first one I shall stop. At the second, I shall feel it my duty to administer a dose of castor-oil all round. The boy that moves his legs or arms will be understood to invite amputation. I have brought my instruments with me, and never allow pleasure to interfere with my business. Do you promise?"

"Yes, sir," said six small voices simultaneously. The volley was, however, followed by half a dozen dropping questions.

"Silence! Bob, put your feet down, and stop rattling that sword. Flora shall sit by my side, like a little lady, and be an example to the rest. Fung Tang shall stay, too, if he likes. Now, turn down the gas a little; there, that will do—just enough to make the fire look brighter, and to show off the Christmas candles. Silence, everybody! The boy who cracks an almond, or breathes too loud over his raisins, will be put out of the room."

There was a profound silence. Bob laid his sword tenderly aside and nursed his leg thoughtfully. Flora, after coquettishly adjusting the pockets of her little apron, put her arm upon the Doctor's shoulder, and permitted herself to be drawn beside him. Fung Tang, the little heathen page, who was permitted, on this rare occasion, to share the Christmas revels in the drawing-room, surveyed the group with a smile that was at once sweet and philosophical. The light ticking of a French clock on the mantel, supported by a young shepherdess of bronze complexion and great symmetry of limb, was the only sound that disturbed the Christmas-like peace of the apartment—a peace which held the odours of evergreens, new toys, cedar boxes, glue, and varnish in a harmonious combination that passed all understanding.

"About four years ago at this time," began the Doctor, "I attended a course of lectures in a certain city. One of the professors, who was a sociable, kindly man—though somewhat practical and hard-headed—invited me to his house on Christmas-night. I was very glad to go, as I was anxious to see one of his sons, who, though only twelve years old, was said to be very clever. I dare not tell you how many Latin verses this little fellow could recite, or how many English ones he had composed. In the first place, you'd want me to repeat them; secondly, I'm not a judge of poetry—Latin or English. But there were judges who said they were wonderful for a boy, and everybody predicted a splendid future for him. Everybody but his father. He shook his head doubtingly whenever it was mentioned, for, as I have told you, he was a practical, matter-of-fact man.

"There was a pleasant party at the Professor's that night. All the children of the neighbourhood were there, and among them the Professor's clever son, Rupert, as they called him—a thin little chap, about as tall as Bobby there, and fair and delicate as Flora by my side. His health was feeble, his father said; he seldom ran about and played with other boys—preferring to stay at home and brood over his books, and compose what he called his verses.

"Well, we had a Christmas-tree just like this, and we had been laughing and talking, calling the names of the children who had presents on the tree, and everybody was very happy and joyous, when one of the children suddenly uttered a cry of mingled surprise and hilarity, and said, 'Here's something for Rupert—and what do you think it is?'

"We all guessed. 'A desk'; 'A copy of Milton'; 'A gold pen'; 'A rhyming dictionary.' 'No? what then?'

"'A drum!'

"'A what?' asked everybody.

"'A drum! with Rupert's name on it.'

"Sure enough there it was. A good-sized, bright, new, brass-bound drum, with a slip of paper on it, with the inscription, 'For RUPERT.'

"Of course we all laughed, and thought it a good joke. 'You see you're to make a noise in the world, Rupert!' said one. 'Here's parchment for the poet,' said another. 'Rupert's last work in sheepskin covers,' said a third. 'Give us a classical tune, Rupert,' said a fourth, and so on. But Rupert seemed too mortified to speak; he changed colour, bit his lips, and finally burst into a passionate fit of crying and left the room. Then those who had joked him felt ashamed, and everybody began to ask who had put the drum there. But no one knew, or, if they did, the unexpected sympathy awakened for the sensitive boy kept them silent. Even the servants were called up and questioned, but no one could give any idea where it came from. And what was still more singular, everybody declared that up to the moment it was produced, no one had seen it hanging on the tree. What do I think? Well, I have my own opinion. But no questions! Enough

for you to know that Rupert did not come downstairs again that night, and the party soon after broke up.

"I had almost forgotten those things, for the War of the Rebellion broke out the next spring, and I was appointed surgeon in one of the new regiments, and was on my way to the seat of war. But I had to pass through the city where the Professor lived, and there I met him. My first question was about Rupert. The Professor shook his head sadly. 'He's not so well,' he said; 'he has been declining since last Christmas when you saw him. A very strange case,' he added, giving it a long Latin name, 'a very singular case. But go and see him yourself,' he urged; 'it may distract his mind and do him good.'

"I went accordingly to the Professor's house, and found Rupert lying on a sofa, propped up with pillows. Around him were scattered his books, and, what seemed in singular contrast, that drum I told you about was hanging on a nail just above his head. His face was thin and wasted; there was a red spot on either cheek, and his eyes were very bright and widely opened. He was glad to see me, and when I told him where I was going, he asked a thousand questions about the war. I thought I had thoroughly diverted his mind from its sick and languid fancies, when he suddenly grasped my hand and drew me towards him.

"'Doctor,' said he, in a low whisper, 'you won't laugh at me if I tell you something?'

"'No, certainly not,' I said.

"'You remember that drum?' he said, pointing to the glittering toy that hung against the wall. 'You know, too, how it came to me. A few weeks after Christmas, I was lying half-asleep here, and the drum was hanging on the wall, when suddenly I heard it beaten; at first low and slowly, then faster and louder, until its rolling filled the house. In the middle of the night I heard it again. I did not dare to tell anybody about it, but I have heard it every night ever since.'

"He paused and looked anxiously in my face. 'Sometimes,' he continued, 'it is played softly, sometimes loudly, but always quickening to a long roll, so loud and alarming, that I have looked to see people coming into my room to ask what was the matter. But I think,

Doctor—I think,' he repeated slowly, looking up with painful interest into my face, 'that no one hears it but myself.'

"I thought so, too, but I asked him if he had heard it at any other time.

"'Once or twice in the daytime,' he replied, 'when I have been reading or writing; then very loudly, as though it were angry, and tried in that way to attract my attention away from my books.'

"I looked into his face and placed my hand upon his pulse. His eyes were very bright and his pulse a little flurried and quick. I then tried to explain to him that he was very weak, and that his senses were very acute, as most weak people's are; and how that when he read, or grew interested and excited, or when he was tired at night, the throbbing of a big artery made the beating sound he heard. He listened to me with a sad smile of unbelief, but thanked me, and in a little while I went away. But as I was going downstairs I met the Professor. I gave him my opinion of the case—well, no matter what it was.

"'He wants fresh air and exercise,' said the Professor, 'and some practical experience of life, sir.' The Professor was not a bad man, but he was a little worried and impatient, and thought—as clever people are apt to think—that things which he didn't understand were either silly or improper.

"I left the city that very day, and in the excitement of battlefields and hospitals I forgot all about little Rupert, nor did I hear of him again, until one day, meeting an old classmate in the army, who had known the Professor, he told me that Rupert had become quite insane, and that in one of his paroxysms he had escaped from the house, and as he had never been found, it was feared that he had fallen into the river and was drowned. I was terribly shocked for the moment, as you may imagine; but, dear me, I was living just then among scenes as terrible and shocking, and I had little time to spare to mourn over poor Rupert.

"It was not long after receiving this intelligence that we had a terrible battle, in which a portion of our army was slaughtered. I was detached from my brigade to ride over to the battlefield and assist the surgeons of the

beaten division, who had more on their hands than they could attend to. When I reached the barn that served for a temporary hospital, I went at once to work. Ah! Bob," said the Doctor thoughtfully, taking the bright sword from the hands of the half-frightened Bob, and holding it gravely before him, "these pretty playthings are symbols of cruel, ugly realities."

"I turned to a tall, stout Vermonter," he continued, very slowly, tracing a pattern on the rug with the point of the scabbard, "who was badly wounded in both thighs, but he held up his hands and begged me to help others first who needed it more than he. I did not at first heed his request, for this kind of unselfishness was very common in the army; but he went on, 'For God's sake, Doctor, leave me here; there is a drummer-boy of our regiment—a mere child—dying, if he isn't dead now. Go and see him first. He lies over there. He saved more than one life. He was at his post in the panic of this morning, and saved the honour of the regiment.' I was so much more impressed by the man's manner than by the substance of his speech, which was, however, corroborated by the other poor fellows stretched around me, that I passed over to where the drummer lay, with his drum beside him. I gave one glance at his face—and—yes, Bob—yes, my children—it *was* Rupert.

"Well! well! it needed not the chalked cross which my brother surgeons had left upon the rough board whereon he lay to show how urgent was the relief he sought; it needed not the prophetic words of the Vermonter, nor the damp that mingled with the brown curls that clung to his pale forehead, to show how hopeless it was now. I called him by name. He opened his eyes—larger, I thought, in the new vision that was beginning to dawn upon him—and recognized me. He whispered, 'I'm glad you are come, but I don't think you can do me any good.'

"I could not tell him a lie. I could not say anything. I only pressed his hand in mine as he went on.

"'But you will see father, and ask him to forgive me. Nobody is to blame but myself. It was a long time before I understood why the drum came to me that Christmas night, and why it kept calling to me every night,

and what it said. I know it now. The work is done, and I am content. Tell father it is better as it is. I should have lived only to worry and perplex him, and something in me tells me this is right.'

"He lay still for a moment, and then grasping my hand, said—

"'Hark!'

"I listened, but heard nothing but the suppressed moans of the wounded men around me. 'The drum,' he said faintly; 'don't you hear it?—the drum is calling me.'

"He reached out his arm to where it lay, as though he would embrace it.

"'Listen'—he went on—'it's the reveille. There are the ranks drawn up in review. Don't you see the sunlight flash down the long line of bayonets? Their faces are shining—they present arms—there comes the General—but his face I cannot look at for the glory round his head. He sees me; he smiles, it is——' and with a name upon his lips that he had learned long ago, he stretched himself wearily upon the planks and lay quite still.

"That's all.

"No questions now—never mind what became of the drum.

"Who's that snivelling?

"Bless my soul! where's my pill-box?"

WAN LEE, THE PAGAN

As I opened Hop Sing's letter there fluttered to the ground a square strip of yellow paper covered with hieroglyphics, which at first glance I innocently took to be the label from a pack of Chinese fire-crackers. But the same envelope also contained a smaller strip of rice-paper, with two Chinese characters traced in India ink, that I at once knew to be Hop Sing's visiting card. The whole, as afterwards literally translated, ran as follows :—

> To the stranger the gates of my house are not closed ; the rice-jar is on the left, and the sweetmeats on the right, as you enter.
>
> Two sayings of the Master :
>
> Hospitality is the virtue of the son and the wisdom of the ancestor.
>
> The superior man is light-hearted after the crop-gathering ; he makes a festival.
>
> When the stranger is in your melon-patch, observe him not too closely ; inattention is often the highest form of civility.
>
> Happiness, Peace, and Prosperity.
>
> HOP SING.

Admirable, certainly, as was this morality and proverbial wisdom, and although this last axiom was very characteristic of my friend Hop Sing, who was that most sombre of all humorists, a Chinese philosopher, I must confess that, even after a very free translation, I was at a loss to make any immediate application of the message. Luckily I discovered a third enclosure in the shape of a little note in English and Hop Sing's own commercial hand. It ran thus—

The pleasure of your company is requested at No. —, Sacramento Street, on Friday Evening at 8 o'clock. A cup of tea at 9—sharp.

HOP SING.

This explained all. It meant a visit to Hop Sing's warehouse, the opening and exhibition of some rare Chinese novelties and *curios*, a chat in the back office, a cup of tea of a perfection unknown beyond these sacred precincts, cigars, and a visit to the Chinese Theatre or Temple. This was in fact the favourite programme of Hop Sing when he exercised his functions of hospitality as the chief factor or Superintendent of the Ning Foo Company.

At eight o'clock on Friday evening I entered the warehouse of Hop Sing. There was that deliciously commingled mysterious foreign odour that I had so often noticed; there was the old array of uncouth-looking objects, the long procession of jars and crockery, the same singular blending of the grotesque and the mathematically neat and exact, the same endless suggestions of frivolity and fragility, the same want of harmony in colours that were each, in themselves, beautiful and rare. Kites in the shape of enormous dragons and gigantic butterflies; kites so ingeniously arranged as to utter at intervals, when facing the wind, the cry of a hawk; kites so large as to be beyond any boy's power of restraint—so large that you understood why kite-flying in China was an amusement for adults; gods of china and bronze so gratuitously ugly as to be beyond any human interest or sympathy from their very impossibility; jars of sweetmeats covered all over with moral sentiments from Confucius; hats that looked like baskets, and baskets that looked like hats; silks so light that I hesitate to record the incredible number of square yards that you might pass through the ring on your little finger—these and a great many other indescribable objects were all familiar to me. I pushed my way through the dimly-lighted warehouse until I reached the back office or parlour, where I found Hop Sing waiting to receive me.

Before I describe him I want the average reader to discharge from his mind any idea of a Chinaman that he

may have gathered from the pantomime. He did not wear beautifully scalloped drawers fringed with little bells —I never met a Chinaman who did ; he did not habitually carry his forefinger extended before him at right angles with his body, nor did I ever hear him utter the mysterious sentence, " Ching a ring a ring chaw," nor dance under any provocation. He was, on the whole, a rather grave, decorous, handsome gentleman. His complexion, which extended all over his head except where his long pig-tail grew, was like a very nice piece of glazed brown paper-muslin. His eyes were black and bright, and his eyelids set at an angle of 15° ; his nose straight and delicately formed, his mouth small, and his teeth white and clean. He wore a dark blue silk blouse, and in the streets on cold days a short jacket of Astrakhan fur. He wore also a pair of drawers of blue brocade gathered tightly over his calves and ankles, offering a general sort of suggestion that he had forgotten his trousers that morning, but that, so gentlemanly were his manners, his friends had forborne to mention the fact to him. His manner was urbane, although quite serious. He spoke French and English fluently. In brief, I doubt if you could have found the equal of this Pagan shopkeeper among the Christian traders of San Francisco.

There were a few others present : a Judge of the Federal Court, an editor, a high government official, and a prominent merchant. After we had drunk our tea, and tasted a few sweetmeats from a mysterious jar, that looked as if it might contain a preserved mouse among its other nondescript treasures, Hop Sing arose, and gravely beckoning us to follow him, began to descend to the basement. When we got there, we were amazed at finding it brilliantly lighted, and that a number of chairs were arranged in a half-circle on the asphalt pavement. When he had courteously seated us, he said—

" I have invited you to witness a performance which I can at least promise you no other foreigners but yourselves have ever seen. Wang, the court juggler, arrived here yesterday morning. He has never given a performance outside of the palace before. I have asked him to entertain my friends this evening. He requires no theatre, stage, accessories, or any confederate—nothing more

than you see here. Will you be pleased to examine the ground yourselves, gentlemen?"

Of course we examined the premises. It was the ordinary basement or cellar of the San Francisco storehouse, cemented to keep out the damp. We poked our sticks into the pavement and rapped on the walls to satisfy our polite host, but for no other purpose. We were quite content to be the victims of any clever deception. For myself, I knew I was ready to be deluded to any extent, and if I had been offered an explanation of what followed, I should have probably declined it.

Although I am satisfied that Wang's general performance was the first of that kind ever given on American soil, it has probably since become so familiar to many of my readers that I shall not bore them with it here. He began by setting to flight, with the aid of his fan, the usual number of butterflies made before our eyes of little bits of tissue paper, and kept them in the air during the remainder of the performance. I have a vivid recollection of the judge trying to catch one that had lit on his knee, and of its evading him with the pertinacity of a living insect. And even at this time Wang, still plying his fan, was taking chickens out of hats, making oranges disappear, pulling endless yards of silk from his sleeve, apparently filling the whole area of the basement with goods that appeared mysteriously from the ground, from his own sleeves, from nowhere! He swallowed knives to the ruin of his digestion for years to come; he dislocated every limb of his body; he reclined in the air, apparently upon nothing. But his crowning performance, which I have never yet seen repeated, was the most weird, mysterious, and astounding. It is my apology for this long introduction, my sole excuse for writing this article, the genesis of this veracious history.

He cleared the ground of its encumbering articles for a space of about fifteen feet square, and then invited us all to walk forward and again examine it. We did so gravely; there was nothing but the cemented pavement below to be seen or felt. He then asked for the loan of a handkerchief, and, as I chanced to be nearest him, I offered mine. He took it and spread it open upon the floor. Over this he spread a large square of silk, and

over this again a large shawl nearly covering the space he had cleared. He then took a position at one of the points of this rectangle, and began a monotonous chant, rocking his body to and fro in time with the somewhat lugubrious air.

We sat still and waited. Above the chant we could hear the striking of the city clocks, and the occasional rattle of a cart in the street overhead. The absolute watchfulness and expectation, the dim, mysterious half-light of the cellar, falling in a gruesome way upon the misshapen bulk of a Chinese deity in the background, a faint smell of opium smoke mingling with spice, and the dreadful uncertainty of what we were really waiting for, sent an uncomfortable thrill down our backs, and made us look at each other with a forced and unnatural smile. This feeling was heightened when Hop Sing slowly rose, and, without a word, pointed with his finger to the centre of the shawl.

There was something beneath the shawl! Surely—and something that was not there before. At first a mere suggestion in relief, a faint outline, but growing more and more distinct and visible every moment. The chant still continued, the perspiration began to roll from the singer's face, gradually the hidden object took upon itself a shape and bulk that raised the shawl in its centre some five or six inches. It was now unmistakably the outline of a small but perfect human figure, with extended arms and legs. One or two of us turned pale, there was a feeling of general uneasiness, until the editor broke the silence by a gibe that, poor as it was, was received with spontaneous enthusiasm. Then the chant suddenly ceased, Wang arose, and, with a quick, dexterous movement, stripped both shawl and silk away, and discovered, sleeping peacefully upon my handkerchief, a tiny Chinese baby!

The applause and uproar which followed this revelation ought to have satisfied Wang, even if his audience was a small one; it was loud enough to awaken the baby—a pretty little boy about a year old, looking like a Cupid cut out of sandalwood. He was whisked away almost as mysteriously as he appeared. When Hop Sing returned my handkerchief to me with a bow, I asked if the juggler

was the father of the baby. "No sabe!" said the imperturbable Hop Sing, taking refuge in that Spanish form of non-committalism so common in California.

"But does he have a new baby for every performance?" I asked.

"Perhaps; who knows?"

"But what will become of this one?"

"Whatever you choose, gentlemen," replied Hop Sing, with a courteous inclination; "it was born here—you are its godfathers."

There were two characteristic peculiarities of any Californian assemblage in 1856: it was quick to take a hint, and generous to the point of prodigality in its response to any charitable appeal. No matter how sordid or avaricious the individual, he could not resist the infection of sympathy. I doubled the points of my handkerchief into a bag, dropped a coin into it, and, without a word, passed it to the judge. He quietly added a twenty-dollar gold piece, and passed it to the next; when it was returned to me it contained over a hundred dollars. I knotted the money in the handkerchief, and gave it to Hop Sing.

"For the baby, from its godfathers."

"But what name?" said the judge. There was a running fire of "Erebus," "Nox," "Plutus," "Terra Cotta," "Antæus," etc., etc. Finally the question was referred to our host.

"Why not keep his own name," he said quietly—"Wan Lee?" And he did.

And thus was Wan Lee, on the night of Friday the 5th of March 1856, born into this veracious chronicle.

The last forme of the *Northern Star* for the 19th of July 1865—the only daily paper published in Klamath County—had just gone to press, and at three A.M. I was putting aside my proofs and manuscripts, preparatory to going home, when I discovered a letter lying under some sheets of paper which I must have overlooked. The envelope was considerably soiled, it had no post-mark, but I had no difficulty in recognizing the hand of my friend Hop Sing. I opened it hurriedly and read as follows:—

MY DEAR SIR,—I do not know whether the bearer will suit you, but unless the office of "devil" in your newspaper is a purely technical one, I think he has all the qualities required. He is very quick, active, and intelligent; understands English better than he speaks it, and makes up for any defect by his habits of observation and imitation. You have only to show him how to do a thing once, and he will repeat it, whether it is an offence or a virtue. But you certainly know him already; you are one of his godfathers, for is he not Wan Lee, the reputed son of Wang the conjurer, to whose performances I had the honour to introduce you? But, perhaps, you have forgotten it.

I shall send him with a gang of coolies to Stockton, thence by express to your town. If you can use him there, you will do me a favour, and probably save his life, which is at present in great peril from the hands of the younger members of your Christian and highly-civilized race who attend the enlightened schools in San Francisco.

He has acquired some singular habits and customs from his experience of Wang's profession, which he followed for some years, until he became too large to go in a hat, or be produced from his father's sleeve. The money you left with me has been expended on his education; he has gone through the Tri-literal Classics, but, I think, without much benefit. He knows but little of Confucius, and absolutely nothing of Mencius. Owing to the negligence of his father, he associated, perhaps, too much with American children.

I should have answered your letter before, by post, but I thought that Wan Lee himself would be a better messenger for this.—Yours respectfully, HOP SING.

And this was the long-delayed answer to my letter to Hop Sing. But where was "the bearer"? How was the letter delivered? I summoned hastily the foreman, printers, and office-boy, but without eliciting anything; no one had seen the letter delivered, nor knew anything of the bearer. A few days later I had a visit from my laundry-man, Ah Ri.

"You wantee debbil? All lightee; me catchee him."

He returned in a few moments with a bright-looking Chinese boy, about ten years old, with whose appearance and general intelligence I was so greatly impressed that I engaged him on the spot. When the business was concluded, I asked his name.

"Wan Lee," said the boy.

"What! Are you the boy sent out by Hop Sing?

What the devil do you mean by not coming here before, and how did you deliver that letter ? "

Wan Lee looked at me and laughed. " Me pitchee in top side window."

I did not understand. He looked for a moment perplexed, and then, snatching the letter out of my hand, ran down the stairs. After a moment's pause, to my great astonishment, the letter came flying in at the window, circled twice around the room, and then dropped gently like a bird upon my table. Before I had got over my surprise Wan Lee reappeared, smiled, looked at the letter and then at me, said, " So, John," and then remained gravely silent. I said nothing further, but it was understood that this was his first official act.

His next performance, I grieve to say, was not attended with equal success. One of our regular paper-carriers fell sick, and, at a pinch, Wan Lee was ordered to fill his place. To prevent mistakes he was shown over the route the previous evening, and supplied at about daylight with the usual number of subscribers' copies. He returned after an hour, in good spirits and without the papers. He had delivered them all, he said.

Unfortunately for Wan Lee, at about eight o'clock indignant subscribers began to arrive at the office. They had received their copies ; but how ? In the form of hard-pressed cannon balls, delivered by a single shot and a mere *tour de force* through the glass of bedroom windows. They had received them full in the face, like a base ball, if they happened to be up and stirring ; they had received them in quarter sheets, tucked in at separate windows ; they had found them in the chimney, pinned against the door, shot through attic windows, delivered in long slips through convenient keyholes, stuffed into ventilators, and occupying the same can with the morning's milk. One subscriber, who waited for some time at the office door, to have a personal interview with Wan Lee (then comfortably locked in my bedroom), told me, with tears of rage in his eyes, that he had been awakened at five o'clock by a most hideous yelling below his windows ; that on rising, in great agitation, he was startled by the sudden appearance of the *Northern Star*, rolled hard and bent into the form of a boomerang or East Indian club, that sailed into the

window, described a number of fiendish circles in the room, knocked over the light, slapped the baby's face, "took" him (the subscriber) "in the jaw," and then returned out of the window, and dropped helplessly in the area. During the rest of the day wads and strips of soiled paper, purporting to be copies of the *Northern Star* of that morning's issue, were brought indignantly to the office. An admirable editorial on "The Resources of Humboldt County," which I had constructed the evening before, and which, I have reason to believe, might have changed the whole balance of trade during the ensuing year, and left San Francisco bankrupt at her wharves, was in this way lost to the public.

It was deemed advisable for the next three weeks to keep Wan Lee closely confined to the printing-office and the purely mechanical part of the business. Here he developed a surprising quickness and adaptability, winning even the favour and goodwill of the printers and foreman, who at first looked upon his introduction into the secrets of their trade as fraught with the gravest political significance. He learned to set type readily and neatly, his wonderful skill in manipulation aiding him in the mere mechanical act, and his ignorance of the language confining him simply to the mechanical effort—confirming the printer's axiom that the printer who considers or follows the ideas of his copy makes a poor compositor. He would set up deliberately long diatribes against himself, composed by his fellow-printers, and hung on his hook as copy, and even such short sentences as "Wan Lee is the devil's own imp," "Wan Lee is a Mongolian rascal," and bring the proof to me with happiness beaming from every tooth and satisfaction shining in his huckleberry eyes.

It was not long, however, before he learned to retaliate on his mischievous persecutors. I remember one instance in which his reprisal came very near involving me in a serious misunderstanding. Our foreman's name was Webster, and Wan Lee presently learned to know and recognize the individual and combined letters of his name. It was during a political campaign, and the eloquent and fiery Colonel Starbottle, of Siskiyou, had delivered an effective speech, which was reported especially for the

Northern Star. In a very sublime peroration Colonel Starbottle had said, "In the language of the godlike Webster, I repeat,"—and here followed the quotation, which I have forgotten. Now, it chanced that Wan Lee, looking over the galley after it had been revised, saw the name of his chief persecutor, and, of course, imagined the quotation his. After the forme was locked up, Wan Lee took advantage of Webster's absence to remove the quotation, and substitute a thin piece of lead, of the same size as the type, engraved with Chinese characters, making a sentence which, I had reason to believe, was an utter and abject confession of the incapacity and offensiveness of the Webster family generally, and exceedingly eulogistic of Wan Lee himself personally.

The next morning's paper contained Colonel Starbottle's speech in full, in which it appeared that the "godlike" Webster had on one occasion uttered his thoughts in excellent but perfectly enigmatical Chinese. The rage of Colonel Starbottle knew no bounds. I have a vivid recollection of that admirable man walking into my office and demanding a retraction of the statement.

"But, my dear sir," I asked, "are you willing to deny, over your own signature, that Webster ever uttered such a sentence? Dare you deny that, with Mr. Webster's well-known attainments, a knowledge of Chinese might not have been among the number? Are you willing to submit a translation suitable to the capacity of our readers, and deny, upon your honour as a gentleman, that the late Mr. Webster ever uttered such a sentiment? If you are, sir, I am willing to publish your denial."

The Colonel was not, and left, highly indignant.

Webster, the foreman, took it more coolly. Happily he was unaware that for two days after, Chinamen from the laundries, from the gulches, from the kitchens, looked in the front office door with faces beaming with sardonic delight; that three hundred extra copies of the *Star* were ordered for the wash-houses on the river. He only knew that during the day Wan Lee occasionally went off into convulsive spasms, and that he was obliged to kick him into consciousness again. A week after the occurrence I called Wan Lee into my office.

"Wan," I said gravely, "I should like you to give

me, for my own personal satisfaction, a translation of that Chinese sentence which my gifted countryman, the late godlike Webster, uttered upon a public occasion." Wan Lee looked at me intently, and then the slightest possible twinkle crept into his black eyes. Then he replied, with equal gravity—

"Mishtel Webstel,—he say: 'China boy makee me belly much foolee. China boy makee me heap sick.'" Which I have reason to think was true.

But I fear I am giving but one side, and not the best, of Wan Lee's character. As he imparted it to me, his had been a hard life. He had known scarcely any childhood—he had no recollection of a father or mother. The conjurer Wang had brought him up. He had spent the first seven years of his life in appearing from baskets, in dropping out of hats, in climbing ladders, in putting his little limbs out of joint in posturing. He had lived in an atmosphere of trickery and deception; he had learned to look upon mankind as dupes of their senses; in fine, if he had thought at all, he would have been a sceptic, if he had been a little older, he would have been a cynic, if he had been older still, he would have been a philosopher. As it was, he was a little imp! A good-natured imp it was, too—an imp whose moral nature had never been awakened, an imp up for a holiday, and willing to try virtue as a diversion. I don't know that he had any spiritual nature; he was very superstitious: he carried about with him a hideous little porcelain god, which he was in the habit of alternately reviling and propitiating. He was too intelligent for the commoner Chinese vices of stealing or gratuitous lying. Whatever discipline he practised was taught by his intellect.

I am inclined to think that his feelings were not altogether unimpressible—although it was almost impossible to extract an expression from him—and I conscientiously believe he became attached to those that were good to him. What he might have become under more favourable conditions than the bondsman of an over-worked, under-paid literary man, I don't know; I only know that the scant, irregular, impulsive kindnesses that I showed him were gratefully received. He was very loyal and patient—two qualities rare in the average

American servant. He was like Malvolio, "sad and civil" with me; only once, and then under great provocation, do I remember of his exhibiting any impatience. It was my habit, after leaving the office at night, to take him with me to my rooms, as the bearer of any supplemental or happy after-thought in the editorial way, that might occur to me before the paper went to press. One night I had been scribbling away past the usual hour of dismissing Wan Lee, and had become quite oblivious of his presence in a chair near my door, when suddenly I became aware of a voice saying, in plaintive accents, something that sounded like "Chy Lee."

I faced around sternly.

"What did you say?"

"Me say, 'Chy Lee.'"

"Well?" I said impatiently.

"You sabe, 'How do, John?'"

"Yes."

"You sabe, 'So long, John?'"

"Yes."

"Well, 'Chy Lee' allee same!"

I understood him quite plainly. It appeared that "Chy Lee" was a form of "good night," and that Wan Lee was anxious to go home. But an instinct of mischief which I fear I possessed in common with him, impelled me to act as if oblivious of the hint. I muttered something about not understanding him, and again bent over my work. In a few minutes I heard his wooden shoes pattering pathetically over the floor. I looked up. He was standing near the door.

"You no sabe, 'Chy Lee'?"

"No," I said sternly.

"You sabe muchee big foolee!—allee same!"

And with this audacity upon his lips he fled. The next morning, however, he was as meek and patient as before, and I did not recall his offence. As a probable peace-offering, he blacked all my boots—a duty never required of him—including a pair of buff deer-skin slippers and an immense pair of horseman's jack-boots, on which he indulged his remorse for two hours.

I have spoken of his honesty as being a quality of his intellect rather than his principle, but I recall about this

time two exceptions to the rule. I was anxious to get some fresh eggs, as a change to the heavy diet of a mining town, and knowing that Wan Lee's countrymen were great poultry raisers, I applied to him. He furnished me with them regularly every morning, but refused to take any pay, saying that the man did not sell them—a remarkable instance of self-abnegation, as eggs were then worth half a dollar apiece. One morning, my neighbour, Foster, dropped in upon me at breakfast, and took occasion to bewail his own ill fortune, as his hens had lately stopped laying, or wandered off in the bush. Wan Lee, who was present during our colloquy, preserved his characteristic sad taciturnity. When my neighbour had gone, he turned to me with a slight chuckle—"Flostel's hens—Wan Lee's hens—allee same!" His other offence was more serious and ambitious. It was a season of great irregularities in the mails, and Wan Lee had heard me deplore the delay in the delivery of my letters and newspapers. On arriving at my office one day, I was amazed to find my table covered with letters, evidently just from the post office, but unfortunately not one addressed to me. I turned to Wan Lee, who was surveying them with a calm satisfaction, and demanded an explanation. To my horror he pointed to an empty mail-bag in the corner, and said—"Postman he say 'No lettee, John—no lettee, John.' Postman plentee lie! Postman no good. Me catchee lettee last night—allee same!" Luckily it was still early; the mails had not been distributed; I had a hurried interview with the Postmaster, and Wan Lee's bold attempt at robbing the U.S. Mail was finally condoned, by the purchase of a new mail-bag, and the whole affair thus kept a secret.

If my liking for my little pagan page had not been sufficient, my duty to Hop Sing was enough to cause me to take Wan Lee with me when I returned to San Francisco, after my two years' experience with the *Northern Star*. I do not think he contemplated the change with pleasure. I attributed his feelings to a nervous dread of crowded public streets—when he had to go across town for me on an errand, he always made a long circuit of the outskirts—to his dislike for the discipline of the Chinese and English school to which I proposed to send him, to

his fondness for the free, vagrant life of the mines, to sheer wilfulness! That it might have been a superstitious premonition did not occur to me until long after.

Nevertheless it really seemed as if the opportunity I had long looked for and confidently expected had come—the opportunity of placing Wan Lee under gently restraining influences, of subjecting him to a life and experience that would draw out of him what good my superficial care and ill-regulated kindness could not reach. Wan Lee was placed at the school of a Chinese missionary—an intelligent and kind-hearted clergyman, who had shown great interest in the boy, and who, better than all, had a wonderful faith in him. A home was found for him in the family of a widow, who had a bright and interesting daughter about two years younger than Wan Lee. It was this bright, cheery, innocent, and artless child that touched and reached a depth in the boy's nature that hitherto had been unsuspected—that awakened a moral susceptibility which had lain for years insensible alike to the teachings of society or the ethics of the theologian.

These few brief months, bright with a promise that we never saw fulfilled, must have been happy ones to Wan Lee. He worshipped his little friend with something of the same superstition, but without any of the caprice, that he bestowed upon his porcelain pagan god. It was his delight to walk behind her to school, carrying her books—a service always fraught with danger to him from the little hands of his Caucasian Christian brothers. He made her the most marvellous toys, he would cut out of carrots and turnips the most astonishing roses and tulips, he made life-like chickens out of melon-seeds, he constructed fans and kites, and was singularly proficient in the making of dolls' paper dresses. On the other hand she played and sang to him, taught him a thousand little prettinesses and refinements only known to girls, gave him a yellow ribbon for his pig-tail, as best suiting his complexion, read to him, showed him wherein he was original and valuable, took him to Sunday School with her, against the precedents of the school, and, small-womanlike, triumphed. I wish I could add here, that she effected his conversion, and made him give up his porcelain

idol, but I am telling a true story, and this little girl was quite content to fill him with her own Christian goodness, without letting him know that he was changed. So they got along very well together—this little Christian girl with her shining cross hanging around her plump, white little neck, and this dark little pagan, with his hideous porcelain god hidden away in his blouse.

There were two days of that eventful year which will long be remembered in San Francisco—two days when a mob of her citizens set upon and killed unarmed, defenceless foreigners, because they were foreigners and of another race, religion, and colour, and worked for what wages they could get. There were some public men so timid, that, seeing this, they thought that the end of the world had come; there were some eminent statesmen whose names I am ashamed to write here, who began to think that the passage in the Constitution which guarantees civil and religious liberty to every citizen or foreigner was a mistake. But there were also some men who were not so easily frightened, and in twenty-four hours we had things so arranged that the timid men could wring their hands in safety, and the eminent statesmen utter their doubts without hurting anybody or anything. And in the midst of this I got a note from Hop Sing, asking me to come to him immediately.

I found his warehouse closed and strongly guarded by the police against any possible attack of the rioters. Hop Sing admitted me through a barred grating with his usual imperturbable calm, but, as it seemed to me, with more than his usual seriousness. Without a word he took my hand and led me to the rear of the room, and thence downstairs into the basement. It was dimly lighted, but there was something lying on the floor covered by a shawl. As I approached he drew the shawl away with a sudden gesture, and revealed Wan Lee, the Pagan, lying there dead!

Dead, my reverend friends, dead! Stoned to death in the streets of San Francisco, in the year of grace, eighteen hundred and sixty-nine, by a mob of half-grown boys and Christian school-children!

As I put my hand reverently upon his breast, I felt something crumbling beneath his blouse. I looked

inquiringly at Hop Sing. He put his hand between the folds of silk and drew out something with the first bitter smile I had ever seen on the face of that pagan gentleman.

It was Wan Lee's porcelain god, crushed by a stone from the hands of those Christian iconoclasts!

HIGH-WATER MARK

When the tide was out on the Dedlow Marsh, its extended dreariness was patent. Its spongy, low-lying surface, sluggish, inky pools, and tortuous sloughs, twisting their slimy way, eel-like, toward the open bay, were all hard facts. So were the few green tussocks, with their scant blades, their amphibious flavour, and unpleasant dampness. And if you choose to indulge your fancy,—although the flat monotony of Dedlow Marsh was not inspiring,—the wavy line of scattered drift gave an unpleasant consciousness of the spent waters, and made the dead certainty of the returning tide a gloomy reflection, which no present sunshine could dissipate. The greener meadowland seemed oppressed with this idea, and made no positive attempt at vegetation until the work of reclamation should be complete. In the bitter fruit of the low cranberry-bushes one might fancy he detected a naturally sweet disposition curdled and soured by an injudicious course of too much regular cold water.

The vocal expression of the Dedlow Marsh was also melancholy and depressing. The sepulchral boom of the bittern, the shriek of the curlew, the scream of passing brent, the wrangling of quarrelsome teal, the sharp, querulous protest of the startled crane, and syllabled complaint of the "killdeer" plover were beyond the power of written expression. Nor was the aspect of these mournful fowls at all cheerful and inspiring. Certainly not the blue heron standing midleg deep in the water, obviously catching cold in a reckless disregard of wet feet and consequences; nor the mournful curlew, the dejected plover, or the low-spirited snipe, who saw fit

to join him in his suicidal contemplation; nor the impassive king-fisher—an ornithological Marius—reviewing the desolate expanse; nor the black raven that went to and fro over the face of the marsh continually, but evidently couldn't make up his mind whether the waters had subsided, and felt low-spirited in the reflection that, after all this trouble, he wouldn't be able to give a definite answer. On the contrary, it was evident at a glance that the dreary expanse of Dedlow Marsh told unpleasantly on the birds, and that the season of migration was looked forward to with a feeling of relief and satisfaction by the full-grown, and of extravagant anticipation by the callow, brood. But if Dedlow Marsh was cheerless at the slack of the low tide, you should have seen it when the tide was strong and full. When the damp air blew chilly over the cold, glittering expanse, and came to the faces of those who looked seaward like another tide; when a steel-like glint marked the low hollows and the sinuous line of slough; when the great shell-incrusted trunks of fallen trees arose again, and went forth on their dreary, purposeless wanderings, drifting hither and thither, but getting no farther toward any goal at the falling tide or the day's decline than the cursed Hebrew in the legend; when the glossy ducks swung silently, making neither ripple nor furrow on the shimmering surface; when the fog came in with the tide and shut out the blue above, even as the green below had been obliterated; when boatmen, lost in that fog, paddling about in a hopeless way, started at what seemed the brushing of mermen's fingers on the boat's keel, or shrank from the tufts of grass spreading around like the floating hair of a corpse, and knew by these signs that they were lost upon Dedlow Marsh, and must make a night of it, and a gloomy one at that,—then you might know something of Dedlow Marsh at high water.

Let me recall a story connected with this latter view which never failed to recur to my mind in my long gunning excursions upon Dedlow Marsh. Although the event was briefly recorded in the county paper, I had the story, in all its eloquent detail, from the lips of the principal actor. I cannot hope to catch the varying emphasis and peculiar colouring of feminine delineation, for my

narrator was a woman; but I'll try to give at least its substance.

She lived midway of the great slough of Dedlow Marsh and a good-sized river, which debouched four miles beyond into an estuary formed by the Pacific Ocean, on the long sandy peninsula which constituted the south-western boundary of a noble bay. The house in which she lived was a small frame cabin raised from the marsh a few feet by stout piles, and was three miles distant from the settlements upon the river. Her husband was a logger,—a profitable business in a county where the principal occupation was the manufacture of lumber.

It was the season of early spring, when her husband left on the ebb of a high tide, with a raft of logs for the usual transportation to the lower end of the bay. As she stood by the door of the little cabin when the voyagers departed, she noticed a cold look in the south-eastern sky, and she remembered hearing her husband say to his companions that they must endeavour to complete their voyage before the coming of the south-westerly gale which he saw brewing. And that night it began to storm and blow harder than she had ever before experienced, and some great trees fell in the forest by the river, and the house rocked like her baby's cradle.

But however the storm might roar about the little cabin, she knew that one she trusted had driven bolt and bar with his own strong hand, and that had he feared for her he would not have left her. This, and her domestic duties, and the care of her little sickly baby, helped to keep her mind from dwelling on the weather, except, of course, to hope that he was safely harboured with the logs at Utopia in the dreary distance. But she noticed that day, when she went out to feed the chickens and look after the cow, that the tide was up to the little fence of their garden-patch, and the roar of the surf on the south beach, though miles away, she could hear distinctly. And she began to think that she would like to have some one to talk with about matters, and she believed that if it had not been so far and so stormy, and the trail so impassable, she would have taken the baby, and have gone over to Ryckman's, her nearest neighbour. But then, you see, he might have returned in the storm, all

wet, with no one to see to him ; and it was a long exposure for baby, who was croupy and ailing.

But that night, she never could tell why, she didn't feel like sleeping or even lying down. The storm had somewhat abated, but she still "sat and sat," and even tried to read. I don't know whether it was a Bible or some profane magazine that this poor woman read, but most probably the latter, for the words all ran together and made such sad nonsense that she was forced at last to put the book down and turn to that dearer volume which lay before her in the cradle, with its white initial leaf as yet unsoiled, and try to look forward to its mysterious future. And, rocking the cradle, she thought of everything and everybody, but still was wide awake as ever.

It was nearly twelve o'clock when she at last lay down in her clothes. How long she slept she could not remember, but she awoke with a dreadful choking in her throat, and found herself standing, trembling all over, in the middle of the room, with her baby clasped to her breast, and she was "saying something." The baby cried and sobbed, and she walked up and down trying to hush it, when she heard a scratching at the door. She opened it fearfully, and was glad to see it was only old Pete, their dog, who crawled, dripping with water, into the room. She would like to have looked out, not in the faint hope of her husband's coming, but to see how things looked ; but the wind shook the door so savagely that she could hardly hold it. Then she sat down a little while, and then walked up and down a little while, and then she lay down again a little while. Lying close by the wall of the little cabin, she thought she heard once or twice something scrape slowly against the clapboards, like the scraping of branches. Then there was a little gurgling sound, "like the baby made when it was swallowing" ; then something went "click-click" and "cluck-cluck," so that she sat up in bed. When she did so she was attracted by something else that seemed creeping from the back door towards the centre of the room. It wasn't much wider than her little finger, but soon it swelled to the width of her hand, and began spreading all over the floor. It was water.

She ran to the front door and threw it wide open, and saw nothing but water. She ran to the back door and threw it open, and saw nothing but water. She ran to the side window, and, throwing that open, she saw nothing but water. Then she remembered hearing her husband once say that there was no danger in the tide, for that fell regularly, and people could calculate on it, and that he would rather live near the bay than the river, whose banks might overflow at any time. But was it the tide? So she ran again to the back door, and threw out a stick of wood. It drifted away towards the bay. She scooped up some of the water and put it eagerly to her lips. It was fresh and sweet. It was the river, and not the tide!

It was then—O, God be praised for His goodness! she did neither faint nor fall; it was then—blessed be the Saviour, for it was His merciful hand that touched and strengthened her in this awful moment—that fear dropped from her like a garment, and her trembling ceased. It was then and thereafter that she never lost her self-command, through all the trials of that gloomy night.

She drew the bedstead towards the middle of the room, and placed a table upon it, and on that she put the cradle. The water on the floor was already over her ankles, and the house once or twice moved so perceptibly, and seemed to be racked so, that the closet doors all flew open. Then she heard the same rasping and thumping against the wall, and, looking out, saw that a large uprooted tree, which had lain near the road at the upper end of the pasture, had floated down to the house. Luckily its long roots dragged in the soil and kept it from moving as rapidly as the current, for had it struck the house in its full career, even the strong nails and bolts in the piles could not have withstood the shock. The hound had leaped upon its knotty surface, and crouched near the roots shivering and whining. A ray of hope flashed across her mind. She drew a heavy blanket from the bed, and, wrapping it about the babe, waded in the deepening waters to the door. As the tree swung again, broadside on, making the little cabin creak and tremble, she leaped on to its trunk. By God's mercy she succeeded

in obtaining a footing on its slippery surface, and, twining an arm about its roots, she held in the other her moaning child. Then something cracked near the front porch, and the whole front of the house she had just quitted fell forward, just as cattle fall on their knees before they lie down,—and at the same moment the great redwood tree swung round and drifted away with its living cargo into the black night.

For all the excitement and danger, for all her soothing of her crying babe, for all the whistling of the wind, for all the uncertainty of her situation, she still turned to look at the deserted and water-swept cabin. She remembered even then, and she wonders how foolish she was to think of it at that time, that she wished she had put on another dress and the baby's best clothes; and she kept praying that the house would be spared so that he, when he returned, would have something to come to, and it wouldn't be quite so desolate, and—how could he ever know what had become of her and baby? And at the thought she grew sick and faint. But she had something else to do besides worrying, for whenever the long roots of her ark struck an obstacle, the whole trunk made half a revolution, and twice dipped her in the black water. The hound, who kept distracting her by running up and down the tree and howling, at last fell off at one of these collisions. He swam for some time beside her, and she tried to get the poor beast upon the tree, but he "acted silly" and wild, and at last she lost sight of him for ever. Then she and her baby were left alone. The light which had burned for a few minutes in the deserted cabin was quenched suddenly. She could not then tell whither she was drifting. The outline of the white dunes on the peninsula showed dimly ahead, and she judged the tree was moving in a line with the river. It must be about slack water, and she had probably reached the eddy formed by the confluence of the tide and the overflowing waters of the river. Unless the tide fell soon, there was present danger of her drifting to its channel, and being carried out to sea or crushed in the floating drift. That peril averted, if she were carried out on the ebb toward the bay, she might hope to strike one of the wooded promontories of the peninsula, and rest

till daylight. Sometimes she thought she heard voices and shouts from the river, and the bellowing of cattle and bleating of sheep. Then again it was only the ringing in her ears and throbbing of her heart. She found at about this time that she was so chilled and stiffened in her cramped position that she could scarcely move, and the baby cried so when she put it to her breast that she noticed the milk refused to flow; and she was so frightened at that, that she put her head under her shawl, and for the first time cried bitterly.

When she raised her head again, the boom of the surf was behind her, and she knew that her ark had again swung round. She dipped up the water to cool her parched throat, and found that it was salt as her tears. There was a relief, though, for by this sign she knew she was drifting with the tide. It was then the wind went down, and the great and awful silence oppressed her. There was scarcely a ripple against the furrowed sides of the great trunk on which she rested, and around her all was black gloom and quiet. She spoke to the baby just to hear herself speak, and to know that she had not lost her voice. She thought then—it was queer, but she could not help thinking it—how awful must have been the night when the great ship swung over the Asiatic peak, and the sounds of creation were blotted out from the world. She thought, too, of mariners clinging to spars, and of poor women who were lashed to rafts, and beaten to death by the cruel sea. She tried to thank God that she was thus spared, and lifted her eyes from the baby who had fallen into a fretful sleep. Suddenly, away to the southward, a great light lifted itself out of the gloom, and flashed and flickered, and flickered and flashed again. Her heart fluttered quickly against the baby's cold cheek. It was the lighthouse at the entrance of the bay. As she was yet wondering, the tree suddenly rolled a little, dragged a little, and then seemed to lie quiet and still. She put out her hand and the current gurgled against it. The tree was aground, and, by the position of the light and the noise of the surf, aground upon the Dedlow Marsh.

Had it not been for her baby, who was ailing and croupy, had it not been for the sudden drying up of that

sensitive fountain, she would have felt safe and relieved. Perhaps it was this which tended to make all her impressions mournful and gloomy. As the tide rapidly fell, a great flock of black brent fluttered by her, screaming and crying. Then the plover flew up and piped mournfully, as they wheeled around the trunk, and at last fearlessly lit upon it like a grey cloud. Then the heron flew over and around her, shrieking and protesting, and at last dropped its gaunt legs only a few yards from her. But, strangest of all, a pretty white bird, larger than a dove, like a pelican, but not a pelican, circled around and around her. At last it lit upon a rootlet of the tree, quite over her shoulder. She put out her hand and stroked its beautiful white neck, and it never appeared to move. It stayed there so long that she thought she would lift up the baby to see it, and try to attract her attention. But when she did so, the child was so chilled and cold, and had such a blue look under the little lashes, which it didn't raise at all, that she screamed aloud, and the bird flew away, and she fainted.

Well, that was the worst of it, and perhaps it was not so much, after all, to any but herself. For when she recovered her senses it was bright sunlight, and dead low water. There was a confused noise of guttural voices about her, and an old squaw, singing an Indian "hushaby," and rocking herself from side to side before a fire built on the marsh, before which she, the recovered wife and mother, lay weak and weary. Her first thought was for her baby, and she was about to speak, when a young squaw, who must have been a mother herself, fathomed her thought, and brought her the "mowitch," pale but living, in such a queer little willow cradle all bound up, just like the squaw's own young one, that she laughed and cried together, and the young squaw and the old squaw showed their big white teeth and glinted their black eyes and said, "Plenty get well, skeena mowitch," "wagee man come plenty soon," and she could have kissed their brown faces in her joy. And then she found that they had been gathering berries on the marsh in their queer, comical baskets, and saw the skirt of her gown fluttering on the tree from afar, and the old squaw couldn't resist the temptation of procuring a new garment,

and came down and discovered the " wagee " woman and child. And of course she gave the garment to the old squaw, as you may imagine, and when *he* came at last and rushed up to her, looking about ten years older in his anxiety, she felt so faint again that they had to carry her to the canoe. For, you see, he knew nothing about the flood until he met the Indians at Utopia, and knew by the signs that the poor woman was his wife. And at the next high-tide he towed the tree away back home, although it wasn't worth the trouble, and built another house, using the old tree for the foundation and props, and called it after her, " Mary's Ark ! " But you may guess the next house was built above High-water Mark. And that's all.

Not much, perhaps, considering the malevolent capacity of the Dedlow Marsh. But you must tramp over it at low water, or paddle over it at high tide, or get lost upon it once or twice in the fog, as I have, to understand properly Mary's adventure, or to appreciate duly the blessings of living beyond High-water Mark.

BOHEMIAN PAPERS AND OTHER SKETCHES

MELONS

As I do not suppose the most gentle of readers will believe that anybody's sponsors in baptism ever wilfully assumed the responsibility of such a name, I may as well state that I have reason to infer that Melons was simply the nickname of a small boy I once knew. If he had any other, I never knew it.

Various theories were often projected by me to account for this strange cognomen. His head, which was covered with a transparent down, like that which clothes very small chickens, plainly permitting the scalp to show through, to an imaginative mind might have suggested that succulent vegetable. That his parents, recognizing some poetical significance in the fruits of the season, might have given this name to an August child, was an Oriental explanation. That from his infancy he was fond of indulging in melons, seemed on the whole the most likely, particularly as Fancy was not bred in McGinnis's Court. He dawned upon me as Melons. His proximity was indicated by shrill, youthful voices, as "Ah, Melons!" or playfully, "Hi, Melons!" or authoritatively, "You, Melons!"

McGinnis's Court was a democratic expression of some obstinate and radical property-holder. Occupying a limited space between two fashionable thoroughfares, it refused to conform to circumstances, but sturdily paraded its unkempt glories, and frequently asserted itself in ungrammatical language. My window—a rear room on the ground floor—in this way derived blended light and shadow from the court. So low was the window-sill, that had I been the least predisposed to somnambulism, it

would have broken out under such favourable auspices, and I should have haunted McGinnis's Court. My speculations as to the origin of the court were not altogether gratuitous, for by means of this window I once saw the Past, as through a glass darkly. It was a Celtic shadow that early one morning obstructed my ancient lights. It seemed to belong to an individual with a pea-coat, a stubby pipe, and bristling beard. He was gazing intently at the court, resting on a heavy cane, somewhat in the way that heroes dramatically visit the scenes of their boyhood. As there was little of architectural beauty in the court, I came to the conclusion that it was McGinnis looking after his property. The fact that he carefully kicked a broken bottle out of the road somewhat strengthened me in the opinion. But he presently walked away, and the court knew him no more. He probably collected his rents by proxy—if he collected them at all.

Beyond Melons, of whom all this is purely introductory, there was little to interest the most sanguine and hopeful nature. In common with all such localities, a great deal of washing was done, in comparison with the visible results. There was always something whisking on the line, and always something whisking through the court, that looked as if it ought to be there. A fish-geranium — of all plants kept for the recreation of mankind, certainly the greatest illusion—straggled under the window. Through its dusty leaves I caught the first glance of Melons.

His age was about seven. He looked older, from the venerable whiteness of his head, and it was impossible to conjecture his size, as he always wore clothes apparently belonging to some shapely youth of nineteen. A pair of pantaloons, that, when sustained by a single suspender, completely equipped him, formed his everyday suit. How, with this lavish superfluity of clothing, he managed to perform the surprising gymnastic feats it has been my privilege to witness, I have never been able to tell. His "turning the crab," and other minor dislocations, were always attended with success. It was not an unusual sight at any hour of the day to find Melons suspended on a line, or to see his venerable head appearing above the roofs of the out-houses. Melons knew the exact height

of every fence in the vicinity, its facilities for scaling, and the possibility of seizure on the other side. His more peaceful and quieter amusements consisted in dragging a disused boiler by a large string, with hideous outcries, to imaginary fires.

Melons was not gregarious in his habits. A few youths of his own age sometimes called upon him, but they eventually became abusive, and their visits were more strictly predatory incursions for old bottles and junk, which formed the staple of McGinnis's Court. Overcome by loneliness, one day Melons inveigled a blind harper into the court. For two hours did that wretched man prosecute his unhallowed calling, unrecompensed, and going round and round the court, apparently under the impression that it was some other place, while Melons surveyed him from an adjoining fence with calm satisfaction. It was this absence of conscientious motives that brought Melons into disrepute with his aristocratic neighbours. Orders were issued that no child of wealthy and pious parentage should play with him. This mandate, as a matter of course, invested Melons with a fascinating interest to them. Admiring glances were cast at Melons from nursery windows. Baby fingers beckoned to him. Invitations to tea (on wood and pewter) were lisped to him from aristocratic back-yards. It was evident he was looked upon as a pure and noble being, untrammelled by the conventionalities of parentage, and physically as well as mentally exalted above them. One afternoon an unusual commotion prevailed in the vicinity of McGinnis's Court. Looking from my window, I saw Melons perched on the roof of a stable, pulling up a rope by which one "Tommy," an infant scion of an adjacent and wealthy house, was suspended in mid-air. In vain the female relatives of Tommy, congregated in the back-yard, expostulated with Melons; in vain the unhappy father shook his fist at him. Secure in his position, Melons redoubled his exertions, and at last landed Tommy on the roof. Then it was that the humiliating fact was disclosed that Tommy had been acting in collusion with Melons. He grinned delightedly back at his parents, as if "by merit raised to that bad eminence." Long before the ladder arrived that was to succour him, he became the sworn ally

of Melons, and, I regret to say, incited by the same audacious boy, "chaffed" his own flesh and blood below him. He was eventually taken, though of course Melons escaped. But Tommy was restricted to the window after that, and the companionship was limited to "Hi, Melons!" and "You, Tommy!" and Melons, to all practical purposes, lost him for ever. I looked afterward to see some signs of sorrow on Melons's part, but in vain; he buried his grief, if he had any, somewhere in his one voluminous garment.

At about this time my opportunities of knowing Melons became more extended. I was engaged in filling a void in the literature of the Pacific Coast. As this void was a pretty large one, and as I was informed that the Pacific Coast languished under it, I set apart two hours each day to this work of filling in. It was necessary that I should adopt a methodical system, so I retired from the world and locked myself in my room at a certain hour each day, after coming from my office. I then carefully drew out my portfolio and read what I had written the day before. This would suggest some alteration, and I would carefully rewrite it. During this operation I would turn to consult a book of reference, which invariably proved extremely interesting and attractive. It would generally suggest another and better method of "filling in." Turning this method over reflectively in my mind, I would finally commence the new method, which I eventually abandoned for the original plan. At this time I would become convinced that my exhausted faculties demanded a cigar. The operation of lighting a cigar usually suggested that a little quiet reflection and meditation would be of service to me, and I always allowed myself to be guided by prudential instincts. Eventually, seated by my window, as before stated, Melons asserted himself. Though our conversation rarely went further than "Hello, Mister!" and "Ah, Melons!" a vagabond instinct we felt in common implied a communion deeper than words. In this spiritual commingling the time passed, often beguiled by gymnastics on the fence or line (always with an eye to my window), until dinner was announced and I found a more practical void required my attention. An unlooked-for incident drew us in closer relation.

A seafaring friend just from a tropical voyage had presented me with a bunch of bananas. They were not quite ripe, and I hung them before my window to mature in the sun of McGinnis's Court, whose forcing qualities were remarkable. In the mysteriously mingled odours of ship and shore which they diffused throughout my room there was a lingering reminiscence of low latitudes. But even that joy was fleeting and evanescent: they never reached maturity.

Coming home one day, as I turned the corner of that fashionable thoroughfare before alluded to, I met a small boy eating a banana. There was nothing remarkable in that, but as I neared McGinnis's Court I presently met another small boy also eating a banana. A third small boy engaged in a like occupation obtruded a painful coincidence upon my mind. I leave the psychological reader to determine the exact co-relation between this circumstance and the sickening sense of loss that overcame me on witnessing it. I reached my room—and found the bunch of bananas was gone.

There was but one who knew of their existence, but one who frequented my window, but one capable of the gymnastic effort to procure them, and that was—I blush to say it—Melons. Melons the depredator—Melons, despoiled by larger boys of his ill-gotten booty, or reckless and indiscreetly liberal; Melons—now a fugitive on some neighbouring house-top. I lit a cigar, and drawing my chair to the window, sought surcease of sorrow in the contemplation of the fish-geranium. In a few moments something white passed my window at about the level of the edge. There was no mistaking that hoary head, which now represented to me only aged iniquity. It was Melons, that venerable, juvenile hypocrite!

He affected not to observe me, and would have withdrawn quietly, but that horrible fascination which causes the murderer to revisit the scene of his crime, impelled him toward my window. I smoked calmly and gazed at him without speaking. He walked several times up and down the court with a half-rigid, half-belligerent expression of eye and shoulder, intended to represent the carelessness of innocence.

Once or twice he stopped, and putting his arms their

whole length into his capacious trousers, gazed with some interest at the additional width they thus acquired. Then he whistled. The singular conflicting conditions of John Brown's body and soul were at that time beginning to attract the attention of youth, and Melons's performance of that melody was always remarkable. But to-day he whistled falsely and shrilly between his teeth. At last he met my eye. He winced slightly, but recovered himself, and going to the fence, stood for a few moments on his hands, with his bare feet quivering in the air. Then he turned toward me and threw out a conversational preliminary.

"They is a cirkis," said Melons gravely, hanging with his back to the fence and his arms twisted around the palings—"a cirkis over yonder!"—indicating the locality with his foot—"with hosses, and hossback riders. They is a man wot rides six hosses to onct—six hosses to onct—and nary saddle"—and he paused in expectation.

Even this equestrian novelty did not affect me. I still kept a fixed gaze on Melons's eye, and he began to tremble and visibly shrink in his capacious garment. Some other desperate means—conversation with Melons was always a desperate means—must be resorted to. He recommenced more artfully:

"Do you know Carrots?"

I had a faint remembrance of a boy of that euphonious name, with scarlet hair, who was a playmate and persecutor of Melons. But I said nothing.

"Carrots is a bad boy. Killed a policeman onct. Wears a dirk knife in his boots. Saw him to-day looking in your windy."

I felt that this must end here. I rose sternly and addressed Melons.

"Melons, this is all irrelevant and impertinent to the case. *You* took those bananas. Your proposition regarding Carrots, even if I were inclined to accept it as credible information, does not alter the material issue. You took those bananas. The offence under the statutes of California is felony. How far Carrots may have been accessory to the fact either before or after, is not my intention at present to discuss. The act is complete. Your present

conduct shows the *animo furandi* to have been equally clear."

By the time I had finished this exordium, Melons had disappeared, as I fully expected.

He never reappeared. The remorse that I have experienced for the part I had taken in what I fear may have resulted in his utter and complete extermination, alas! he may not know, except through these pages. For I have never seen him since. Whether he ran away and went to sea, to reappear at some future day as the most ancient of mariners, or whether he buried himself completely in his trousers, I never shall know. I have read the papers anxiously for accounts of him. I have gone to the Police Office in the vain attempt of identifying him as a lost child. But I never saw him or heard of him since. Strange fears have sometimes crossed my mind that his venerable appearance may have been actually the result of senility, and that he may have been gathered peacefully to his fathers in a green old age. I have even had doubts of his existence, and have sometimes thought that he was providentially and mysteriously offered to fill the void I have before alluded to. In that hope I have written these pages.

A VENERABLE IMPOSTOR

As I glance across my table, I am somewhat distracted by the spectacle of a venerable head whose crown occasionally appears beyond, at about its level. The apparition of a very small hand, whose fingers are bunchy and have the appearance of being slightly webbed, which is frequently lifted above the table in a vain and impotent attempt to reach the inkstand, always affects me as a novelty at each recurrence of the phenomenon. Yet both the venerable head and bunchy fingers belong to an individual with whom I am familiar, and to whom, for certain reasons hereafter described, I choose to apply the epithet written above this article.

His advent in the family was attended with peculiar circumstances. He was received with some concern, the number of retainers having been increased by one in honour of his arrival. He appeared to be weary,—his pretence was that he had come from a long journey,—so that for days, weeks, and even months, he did not leave his bed except when he was carried. But it was remarkable that his appetite was invariably regular and healthy, and that his meals, which he required should be brought to him, were seldom rejected. During this time he had little conversation with the family, his knowledge of our vernacular being limited, but occasionally spoke to himself in his own language,—a foreign tongue. The difficulties attending this eccentricity were obviated by the young woman who had from the first taken him under her protection,—being, like the rest of her sex, peculiarly open to impositions,—and who at once disorganized her own tongue to suit his. This was effected by the contraction

of the syllables of some words, the addition of syllables to others, and an ingenious disregard for tenses and the governing powers of the verb. The same singular law which impels people in conversation with foreigners to imitate their broken English governed the family in their communications with him. He received these evidences of his power with an indifference not wholly free from scorn. The expression of his eye would occasionally denote that his higher nature revolted from them. I have no doubt myself that his wants were frequently misinterpreted; that the stretching forth of his hands toward the moon and stars might have been the performance of some religious rite peculiar to his own country, which was in ours misconstrued into a desire for physical nourishment. His repetition of the word "goo-goo,"—which was subject to a variety of opposite interpretations,—when taken in conjunction with his size, in my mind seemed to indicate his aboriginal or Aztec origin.

I incline to this belief, as it sustains the impression I have already hinted at, that his extreme youth is a simulation and deceit; that he is really older and has lived before at some remote period, and that his conduct fully justifies his title as A Venerable Impostor. A variety of circumstances corroborate this impression: his tottering walk, which is a senile as well as a juvenile condition; his venerable head, thatched with such imperceptible hair that, at a distance, it looks like a mild aureola, and his imperfect dental exhibition. But beside these physical peculiarities may be observed certain moral symptoms, which go to disprove his assumed youth. He is in the habit of falling into reveries, caused, I have no doubt, by some circumstance which suggests a comparison with his experience in his remoter boyhood, or by some serious retrospection of the past years. He has been detected lying awake at times when he should have been asleep, engaged in curiously comparing the bed-clothes, walls, and furniture with some recollection of his youth. At such moments he has been heard to sing softly to himself fragments of some unintelligible composition, which probably still linger in his memory as the echoes of a music he has long outgrown. He has the habit of receiving strangers with the familiarity of one who had met them

before, and to whom their antecedents and peculiarities were matters of old acquaintance; and so unerring is his judgement of their previous character, that when he withholds his confidence I am apt to withhold mine. It is somewhat remarkable that while the maturity of his years and the respect due to them is denied by man, his superiority and venerable age is never questioned by the brute creation. The dog treats him with a respect and consideration accorded to none others, and the cat permits a familiarity which I should shudder to attempt. It may be considered an evidence of some Pantheistic quality in his previous education, that he seems to recognize a fellowship even in inarticulate objects; he has been known to verbally address plants, flowers, and fruit, and to extend his confidence to such inanimate objects as chairs and tables. There can be little doubt that, in the remote period of his youth, these objects were endowed with not only sentient natures, but moral capabilities, and he is still in the habit of beating them when they collide with him, and of pardoning them with a kiss.

As he has grown older—rather let me say, as we have approximated to his years—he has, in spite of the apparent paradox, lost much of his senile gravity. It must be confessed that some of his actions of late appear to our imperfect comprehension inconsistent with his extreme age. A habit of marching up and down with a string tied to a soda-water bottle, a disposition to ride anything that could by any exercise of the liveliest fancy be made to assume equine proportions, a propensity to blacken his venerable white hair with ink and coal dust, and an omnivorous appetite, which did not stop at chalk, clay, or cinders, were peculiarities not calculated to excite respect. In fact, he would seem to have become demoralized, and when, after a prolonged absence the other day, he was finally discovered standing upon the front steps addressing a group of delighted children out of his limited vocabulary, the circumstance could only be accounted for as the garrulity of age.

But I lay aside my pen amidst an ominous silence and the disappearance of the venerable head from my plane of vision. As I step to the other side of the table, I find that sleep has overtaken him in an overt act of hoary wicked-

ness. The very pages I have devoted to an exposition of his deceit he has quietly abstracted, and I find them covered with cabalistic figures and wild-looking hieroglyphs traced with his forefinger dipped in ink, which doubtless in his own language conveys a scathing commentary on my composition. But he sleeps peacefully, and there is something in his face which tells me that he has already wandered away to that dim region of his youth where I cannot follow him. And as there comes a strange stirring at my heart when I contemplate the immeasurable gulf which lies between us, and how slight and feeble as yet is his grasp on this world and its strange realities, I find, too late, that I also am a willing victim of the Venerable Impostor.

A BOYS' DOG

As I lift my eyes from the paper, I observe a dog lying on the steps of the opposite house. His attitude might induce passers-by and casual observers to believe him to belong to the people who live there, and to accord to him a certain standing and position. I have seen visitors pat him, under the impression that they were doing an act of courtesy to his master, he lending himself to the fraud by hypocritical contortions of the body. But his attitude is one of deceit and simulation. He has neither master nor habitation. He is a very Pariah and outcast; in brief, "A Boys' Dog."

There is a degree of hopeless and irreclaimable vagabondage expressed in this epithet, which may not be generally understood. Only those who are familiar with the roving nature and predatory instincts of boys in large cities will appreciate its strength. It is the lowest step in the social scale to which a respectable canine can descend. A blind man's dog, or the companion of a knife-grinder, is comparatively elevated. He at least owes allegiance to but one master. But the Boys' Dog is the thrall of an entire juvenile community, obedient to the beck and call of the smallest imp in the neighbourhood, attached to and serving not the individual boy so much as the boy element and principle. In their active sports, in small thefts, raids into back-yards, window-breaking, and other minor juvenile recreations, he is a full participant. In this way he is the reflection of the wickedness of many masters, without possessing the virtues or peculiarities of any particular one.

If leading a "dog's life" be considered a peculiar phase

of human misery, the life of a Boys' Dog is still more infelicitous. He is associated in all schemes of wrong-doing, and unless he be a dog of experience, is always the scapegoat. He never shares the booty of his associates. In absence of legitimate amusement, he is considered fair game for his companions; and I have seen him reduced to the ignominy of having a tin kettle tied to his tail. His ears and tail have generally been docked to suit the caprice of the unholy band of which he is a member; and if he has any pluck, he is invariably pitted against larger dogs in mortal combat. He is poorly fed and hourly abused: the reputation of his associates debars him from outside sympathies; and once a Boys' Dog, he cannot change his condition. He is not unfrequently sold into slavery by his inhuman companions. I remember once to have been accosted on my own doorsteps by a couple of precocious youths, who offered to sell me a dog which they were then leading by a rope. The price was extremely moderate, being, if I remember rightly, but fifty cents. Imagining the unfortunate animal to have lately fallen into their wicked hands, and anxious to reclaim him from the degradation of becoming a Boys' Dog, I was about to conclude the bargain, when I saw a look of intelligence pass between the dog and his two masters. I promptly stopped all negotiations, and drove the youthful swindlers and their four-footed accomplice from my presence. The whole thing was perfectly plain. The dog was an old, experienced, and hardened Boys' Dog, and I was perfectly satisfied that he would run away and rejoin his old companions at the first opportunity. This I afterwards learned he did, on the occasion of a kind-hearted but unsophisticated neighbour buying him; and a few days ago I saw him exposed for sale by those two Arcadians in another neighbourhood, having been bought and paid for half a dozen times in this.

But, it will be asked, if the life of a Boys' Dog is so unhappy, why do they enter upon such an unenviable situation, and why do they not dissolve the partnership when it becomes unpleasant? I will confess that I have been often puzzled by this question. For some time I could not make up my mind whether their unholy alliance was the result of the influence of the dog on the boy, or

vice versa, and which was the weakest and most impressible nature. I am satisfied now that at first the dog is undoubtedly influenced by the boy, and, as it were, is led, while yet a puppy, from the paths of canine rectitude by artful and designing boys. As he grows older and more experienced in the ways of his Bohemian friends, he becomes a willing decoy, and takes delight in leading boyish innocence astray, in beguiling children to play truant, and thus revenges his own degradation on the boy nature generally. It is in this relation, and in regard to certain unhallowed practices I have detected him in, that I deem it proper to expose to parents and guardians the danger to which their offspring are exposed by the Boys' Dog.

The Boys' Dog lays his plans artfully. He begins to influence the youthful mind by suggestions of unrestrained freedom and frolic which he offers in his own person. He will lie in wait at the garden gate for a very small boy, and endeavour to lure him outside its sacred precincts by gambolling and jumping a little beyond the enclosure. He will set off on an imaginary chase and run around the block in a perfectly frantic manner, and then return, breathless, to his former position, with a look as of one who would say, "There! you see how perfectly easy it's done!" Should the unhappy infant find it difficult to resist the effect which this glimpse of the area of freedom produces, and step beyond the gate, from that moment he is utterly demoralized. The Boys' Dog owns him, body and soul. Straightway he is led by the deceitful brute into the unhallowed circle of his Bohemian masters. Sometimes the unfortunate boy, if he be very small, turns up eventually at the station-house as a lost child. Whenever I meet a stray boy in the street looking utterly bewildered and astonished, I generally find a Boys' Dog lurking on the corner. When I read the advertisements of lost children, I always add mentally to the description, "was last seen in company with a Boys' Dog." Nor is his influence wholly confined to small boys. I have seen him waiting patiently for larger boys on the way to school, and by artful and sophistical practices inducing them to play truant. I have seen him lying at the schoolhouse door, with the intention of enticing the children on their

way home to distant and remote localities. He has led many an unsuspecting boy to the wharves and quays by assuming the character of a water-dog, which he was not, and again has induced others to go with him on a gunning excursion by pretending to be a sporting dog, in which quality he was knowingly deficient. Unscrupulous, hypocritical, and deceitful, he has won many children's hearts by answering to any name they might call him, attaching himself to their persons until they got into trouble, and deserting them at the very moment they most needed his assistance. I have seen him rob small schoolboys of their dinners by pretending to knock them down by accident; and have seen larger boys in turn dispossess him of his ill-gotten booty for their own private gratification. From being a tool he has grown to be an accomplice; through much imposition, he has learned to impose on others; in his best character he is simply a vagabond's vagabond.

I could find it in my heart to pity him as he lies there through the long summer afternoon, enjoying brief intervals of tranquillity and rest, which he surreptitiously snatches from a stranger's door-step. For a shrill whistle is heard in the streets, the boys are coming home from school, and he is startled from his dreams by a deftly thrown potato, which hits him on the head, and awakens him to the stern reality that he is now and for ever—a Boys' Dog.

SURPRISING ADVENTURES OF MASTER CHARLES SUMMERTON

AT exactly half-past nine o'clock on the morning of Saturday, August 26, 1865, Master Charles Summerton, aged five years, disappeared mysteriously from his paternal residence on Folsom Street, San Francisco. At twenty-five minutes past nine he had been observed, by the butcher, amusing himself by going through that popular youthful exercise known as "turning the crab," a feat in which he was singularly proficient. At a court of inquiry summarily held in the back parlour at 10.15, Bridget, cook, deposed to have detected him at twenty minutes past nine, in the felonious abstraction of sugar from the pantry, which, by the same token, had she known what was a-comin', she'd have never previnted. Patsey, a shrill-voiced youth from a neighbouring alley, testified to have seen "Chowley" at half-past nine in front of the butcher's shop round the corner; but as this young gentleman chose to throw out the gratuitous belief that the missing child had been converted into sausages by the butcher, his testimony was received with some caution by the female portion of the court, and with downright scorn and contumely by its masculine members. But whatever might have been the hour of his departure, it was certain that from half-past ten A.M. until nine P.M., when he was brought home by a policeman, Charles Summerton was missing. Being naturally of a reticent disposition, he has since resisted, with but one exception, any attempt to wrest from him a statement of his whereabouts during that period. That exception has been

myself. He has related to me the following in the strictest confidence.

His intention on leaving the doorsteps of his dwelling was to proceed without delay to Van Diemen's Land, by way of Second and Market Streets. This project was subsequently modified so far as to permit a visit to Otaheite, where Captain Cook was killed. The outfit for his voyage consisted of two car-tickets, five cents in silver, a fishing-line, the brass capping of a spool of cotton, which in his eyes bore some resemblance to metallic currency, and a Sunday-school library ticket. His garments, admirably adapted to the exigencies of any climate, were severally a straw hat with a pink ribbon, a striped shirt, over which a pair of trousers, uncommonly wide in comparison to their length, were buttoned, striped balmoral stockings, which gave his youthful legs something of the appearance of wintergreen candy, and copper-toed shoes with iron heels, capable of striking fire from any flagstone. This latter quality, Master Charley could not help feeling, would be of infinite service to him in the wilds of Van Diemen's Land, which, as pictorially represented in his geography, seemed to be deficient in corner groceries and matches.

Exactly as the clock struck the half-hour, the short legs and straw hat of Master Charles Summerton disappeared around the corner. He ran rapidly, partly by way of inuring himself to the fatigues of the journey before him, and partly by way of testing his speed with that of a North Beach car which was proceeding in his direction. The conductor, not being aware of this generous and lofty emulation, and being somewhat concerned at the spectacle of a pair of very short twinkling legs so far in the rear, stopped his car and generously assisted the youthful Summerton upon the platform. From this point a hiatus of several hours' duration occurs in Charles's narrative. He is under the impression that he " rode out " not only his two tickets, but that he became subsequently indebted to the Company for several trips to and from the opposite termini, and that at last, resolutely refusing to give any explanation of his conduct, he was finally ejected, much to his relief, on a street corner. Although, as he informs us, he felt perfectly satisfied with this arrange-

ment, he was impelled under the circumstances to hurl after the conductor an opprobrious appellation which he had ascertained from Patsey was the correct thing in such emergencies, and possessed peculiarly exasperating properties.

We now approach a thrilling part of the narrative, before which most of the adventures of the *Boys' Own Book* pale into insignificance. There are times when the recollection of this adventure causes Master Charles to break out in a cold sweat, and he has several times since its occurrence been awakened by lamentations and outcries in the night season by merely dreaming of it. On the corner of the street lay several large empty sugar hogsheads. A few young gentlemen disported themselves therein, armed with sticks, with which they removed the sugar which still adhered to the joints of the staves, and conveyed it to their mouths. Finding a cask not yet pre-empted, Master Charles set to work, and for a few moments revelled in a wild saccharine dream, whence he was finally roused by an angry voice and the rapidly retreating footsteps of his comrades. An ominous sound smote his ear, and the next moment he felt the cask wherein he lay uplifted and set upright against the wall. He was a prisoner, but as yet undiscovered. Being satisfied in his mind that hanging was the systematic and legalized penalty for the outrage he had committed, he kept down manfully the cry that rose to his lips.

In a few moments he felt the cask again lifted by a powerful hand, which appeared above him at the edge of his prison, and which he concluded belonged to the ferocious giant Blunderbore, whose features and limbs he had frequently met in coloured pictures. Before he could recover from his astonishment, his cask was placed with several others on a cart, and rapidly driven away. The ride which ensued he describes as being fearful in the extreme. Rolled around like a pill in a box, the agonies which he suffered may be hinted at, not spoken. Evidences of that protracted struggle were visible in his garments, which were of the consistency of syrup, and his hair, which for several hours, under the treatment of hot water, yielded a thin treacle. At length the cart stopped on one of the wharves, and the cartman began

to unload. As he tilted over the cask in which Charles lay, an exclamation broke from his lips, and the edge of the cask fell from his hands, sliding its late occupant upon the wharf. To regain his short legs, and to put the greatest possible distance between himself and the cartman, were his first movements on regaining his liberty. He did not stop until he reached the corner of Front Street.

Another blank succeeds in this veracious history. He cannot remember how or when he found himself in front of the circus tent. He has an indistinct recollection of having passed through a long street of stores which were all closed, and which made him fear that it was Sunday, and that he had spent a miserable night in the sugar cask. But he remembers hearing the sound of music within the tent, and of creeping on his hands and knees, when no one was looking, until he passed under the canvas. His description of the wonders contained within that circle; of the terrific feats which were performed by a man on a pole, since practised by him in the backyard; of the horses, one of which was spotted and resembled an animal in his Noah's Ark, hitherto unrecognized and undefined; of the female equestrians, whose dresses could only be equalled in magnificence by the frocks of his sister's doll; of the painted clown, whose jokes excited a merriment somewhat tinged by an undefined fear, was an effort of language which this pen could but weakly transcribe, and which no quantity of exclamation points could sufficiently illustrate. He is not quite certain what followed. He remembers that almost immediately on leaving the circus it became dark, and that he fell asleep, waking up at intervals on the corners of the streets, on front steps, in somebody's arms, and finally in his own bed. He was not aware of experiencing any regret for his conduct; he does not recall feeling at any time a disposition to go home; he remembers distinctly that he felt hungry.

He has made this disclosure in confidence. He wishes it to be respected. He wants to know if you have five cents about you.

BOONDER

I NEVER knew how the subject of this memoir came to attach himself so closely to the affections of my family. He was not a prepossessing dog. He was not a dog of even average birth and breeding. His pedigree was involved in the deepest obscurity. He may have had brothers and sisters, but in the whole range of my canine acquaintance (a pretty extensive one), I never detected any of Boonder's peculiarities in any other of his species. His body was long, and his fore-legs and hind-legs were very wide apart, as though Nature originally intended to put an extra pair between them, but had unwisely allowed herself to be persuaded out of it. This peculiarity was annoying on cold nights, as it always prolonged the interval of keeping the door open for Boonder's ingress long enough to allow two or three dogs of a reasonable length to enter. Boonder's feet were decided; his toes turned out considerably, and in repose his favourite attitude was the first position of dancing. Add to a pair of bright eyes ears that seemed to belong to some other dog, and a symmetrically pointed nose that fitted all apertures like a pass-key, and you have Boonder as we knew him.

I am inclined to think that his popularity was mainly owing to his quiet impudence. His advent in the family was that of an old member, who had been absent for a short time, but had returned to familiar haunts and associations. In a Pythagorean point of view this might have been the case, but I cannot recall any deceased member of the family who was in life partial to bone-burying (though it might be *post mortem* a consistent amusement),

and this was Boonder's great weakness. He was at first discovered coiled up on a rug in an upper chamber, and was the least disconcerted of the entire household. From that moment Boonder became one of its recognized members, and privileges, often denied the most intelligent and valuable of his species, were quietly taken by him and submitted to by us. Thus, if he were found coiled up in a clothes-basket, or any article of clothing assumed locomotion on its own account, we only said, "O, it's Boonder," with a feeling of relief that it was nothing worse.

I have spoken of his fondness for bone-burying. It could not be called an economical faculty, for he invariably forgot the locality of his treasure, and covered the garden with purposeless holes; but although the violets and daisies were not improved by Boonder's gardening, no one ever thought of punishing him. He became a synonym for Fate; a Boonder to be grumbled at, to be accepted philosophically,—but never to be averted. But although he was not an intelligent dog, nor an ornamental dog, he possessed some gentlemanly instincts. When he performed his only feat,—begging upon his hind legs (and looking remarkably like a penguin),—ignorant strangers would offer him crackers or cake, which he didn't like, as a reward of merit. Boonder always made a great show of accepting the proffered dainties, and even made hypocritical contortions as if swallowing, but always deposited the morsel when he was unobserved in the first convenient receptacle,—usually the visitor's overshoes.

In matters that did not involve courtesy, Boonder was sincere in his likes and dislikes. He was instinctively opposed to the railroad. When the track was laid through our street, Boonder maintained a defiant attitude toward every rail as it went down, and resisted the cars shortly after to the fullest extent of his lungs. I have a vivid recollection of seeing him, on the day of the trial trip, come down the street in front of the car, barking himself out of all shape, and thrown back several feet by the recoil of each bark. But Boonder was not the only one who has resisted innovations, or has lived to see the innovation prosper and even crush—— But I am anticipating. Boonder had previously resisted the gas, but although

he spent one whole day in angry altercation with the workmen,—leaving his bones unburied and bleaching in the sun,—somehow the gas went in. The Spring Valley water was likewise unsuccessfully opposed, and the grading of an adjoining lot was for a long time a personal matter between Boonder and the contractor.

These peculiarities seemed to evince some decided character and embody some idea. A prolonged debate in the family upon this topic resulted in an addition to his name,—we called him "Boonder the Conservative," with a faint acknowledgement of his fateful power. But, although Boonder had his own way, his path was not entirely of roses. Thorns sometimes pricked his sensibilities. When certain minor chords were struck on the piano, Boonder was always painfully affected and howled a remonstrance. If he were removed for company's sake to the backyard, at the recurrence of the provocation, he would go his whole length (which was something) to improvise a howl that should reach the performer. But we got accustomed to Boonder, and as we were fond of music the playing went on.

One morning Boonder left the house in good spirits with his regular bone in his mouth, and apparently the usual intention of burying it. The next day he was picked up lifeless on the track,—run over apparently by the first car that went out of the dépôt.

THE MISSION DOLORES

THE Mission Dolores is destined to be "The Last Sigh" of the native Californian. When the last "Greaser" shall indolently give way to the bustling Yankee, I can imagine he will, like the Moorish King, ascend one of the Mission hills to take his last lingering look at the hilled city. For a long time he will cling tenaciously to Pacific Street. He will delve in the rocky fastnesses of Telegraph Hill until progress shall remove it. He will haunt Vallejo Street, and those back slums which so vividly typify the degradation of a people; but he will eventually make way for improvement. The Mission will be last to drop from his nerveless fingers.

As I stand here this pleasant afternoon, looking up at the old chapel,—its ragged senility contrasting with the smart spring sunshine, its two gouty pillars with the plaster dropping away like tattered bandages, its rayless windows, its crumbling entrances, the leper spots on its whitewashed wall eating through the dark adobe,—I give the poor old mendicant but a few years longer to sit by the highway and ask alms in the names of the blessed saints. Already the vicinity is haunted with the shadow of its dissolution. The shriek of the locomotive discords with the Angelus bell. An Episcopal church, of a green Gothic type, with massive buttresses of Oregon pine, even now mocks its hoary age with imitation, and supplants it with a sham. Vain, alas! were those rural accessories, the nurseries and market-gardens, that once gathered about its walls and resisted civic encroachment. They, too, are passing away. Even those queer little adobe buildings with tiled roofs like longitudinal slips of cinnamon,

and walled enclosures sacredly guarding a few bullock horns and strips of hide. I look in vain for the half-reclaimed Mexican, whose respectability stopped at his waist, and whose red sash under his vest was the utter undoing of his black broadcloth. I miss, too, those black-haired women, with swaying unstable busts, whose dresses were always unseasonable in texture and pattern; whose wearing of a shawl was a terrible awakening from the poetic dream of the Spanish mantilla. Traces of another nationality are visible. The railroad "navvy" has builded his shanty near the chapel, and smokes his pipe in the Posada. Gutturals have taken the place of linguals and sibilants; I miss the half-chanted, half-drawled cadences that used to mingle with the cheery "All aboard" of the stage-driver, in those good old days when the stages ran hourly to the Mission, and a trip thither was an excursion. At the very gates of the temple, in the place of those "who sell doves for sacrifice," a vender of mechanical spiders has halted with his unhallowed wares. Even the old Padre—last type of the Missionary, and descendant of the good Junipero—I cannot find to-day; in his stead a light-haired Celt is reading a lesson from a Vulgate that is wonderfully replete with double r's. Gentle priest, in thy R-isons, let the stranger and heretic be remembered.

I open a little gate and enter the Mission Churchyard. There is no change here, though perhaps the graves lie closer together. A willow-tree, growing beside the deep brown wall, has burst into tufted plumes in the fullness of spring. The tall grass-blades over each mound show a strange quickening of the soil below. It is pleasanter here than on the bleak mountain seaward, where distracting winds continually bring the strife and turmoil of the ocean. The Mission hills lovingly embrace the little cemetery whose decorative taste is less ostentatious. The foreign flavour is strong; here are never-failing garlands of *immortelles*, with their sepulchral spicery; here are little cheap medallions of pewter, with the adornment of three black tears, that would look like the three of clubs, but that the simple humility of the inscription counterbalances all sense of the ridiculous. Here are children's graves with guardian angels of great specific

gravity; but here, too, are the little one's toys in a glass case beside them. Here is the average quantity of execrable original verses; but one stanza—over a sailor's grave—is striking, for it expresses a hope of salvation through the "Lord High Admiral Christ!" Over the foreign graves there is a notable lack of scriptural quotation, and an increase, if I may say it, of humanity and tenderness. I cannot help thinking that too many of my countrymen are influenced by a morbid desire to make a practical point of this occasion, and are too apt hastily to crowd a whole life of omission into the culminating act. But when I see the grey *immortelles* crowning a tombstone, I know I shall find the mysteries of the resurrection shown rather in symbols, and only the love taught in His new commandment left for the graphic touch. But "they manage these things better in France."

During my purposeless ramble the sun has been steadily climbing the brown wall of the church, and the air seems to grow cold and raw. The bright green dies out of the grass, and the rich bronze comes down from the wall. The willow-tree seems half inclined to doff its plumes, and wears the dejected air of a broken faith and violated trust. The spice of the *immortelles* mixes with the incense that steals through the open window. Within, the barbaric gilt and crimson look cold and cheap in this searching air; by this light the church certainly is old and ugly. I cannot help wondering whether the old Fathers, if they ever revisit the scene of their former labours, in their larger comprehensions, view with regret the impending change, or mourn over the day when the Mission Dolores shall appropriately come to grief.

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FROM A BALCONY

THE little stone balcony which, by a popular fallacy, is supposed to be a necessary appurtenance of my window, has long been to me a source of curious interest. The fact that the asperities of our summer weather will not permit me to use it but once or twice in six months does not alter my concern for this incongruous ornament. It affects me as I suppose the conscious possession of a linen coat or a pair of nankeen trousers might affect a sojourner here who has not entirely outgrown his memory of Eastern summer heat and its glorious compensations,—a luxurious providence against a possible but by no means probable contingency. I no longer wonder at the persistency with which San Franciscans adhere to this architectural superfluity in the face of climatical impossibilities. The balconies in which no one sits, the piazzas on which no one lounges, are timid advances made to a climate whose churlishness we are trying to temper by an ostentation of confidence. Ridiculous as this spectacle is at all seasons, it is never more so than in that bleak interval between sunset and dark, when the shrill scream of the factory whistle seems to have concentrated all the hard, unsympathetic quality of the climate into one vocal expression.

Add to this the appearance of one or two pedestrians, manifestly too late for their dinners, and tasting in the shrewish air a bitter premonition of the welcome that awaits them at home, and you have one of those ordinary views from my balcony which makes the balcony itself ridiculous.

But as I lean over its balustrade to-night—a night rare

in its kindness and beauty—and watch the fiery ashes of my cigar drop into the abysmal darkness below, I am inclined to take back the whole of that preceding paragraph, although it cost me some labour to elaborate its polite malevolence. I can even recognize some melody in the music which comes irregularly and fitfully from the balcony of the Museum on Market Street, although it may be broadly stated that, as a general thing, the music of all museums, menageries, and circuses becomes greatly demoralized,—possibly through associations with the beasts. So soft and courteous is this atmosphere that I have detected the flutter of one or two light dresses on the adjacent balconies and piazzas, and the front parlour windows of a certain aristocratic mansion in the vicinity, which have always maintained a studious reserve in regard to the interior, to-night are suddenly thrown into the attitude of familiar disclosure. A few young people are strolling up the street with a lounging step which is quite a relief to that usual brisk, business-like pace which the chilly nights impose upon even the most sentimental lovers. The genial influences of the air are not restricted to the opening of shutters and front doors; other and more gentle disclosures are made, no doubt, beneath this moonlight. The bonnet and hat which passed beneath my balcony a few moments ago were suspiciously close together. I argued from this that my friend the editor will probably receive any quantity of verses for his next issue, containing allusions to "Luna," in which the original epithet of "silver" will be applied to this planet, and that a "boon" will be asked for the evident purpose of rhyming with "moon," and for no other. Should neither of the parties be equal to this expression, the pent-up feelings of the heart will probably find vent later in the evening over the piano, in "I Wandered by the Brookside," or "When the Moon on the Lake is Beaming." But it has been permitted me to hear the fulfilment of my prophecy even as it was uttered. From the window of number Twelve Hundred and Seven gushes upon the slumberous misty air the maddening ballad, "Ever of Thee," while at Twelve Hundred and Eleven the "Star of the Evening" rises with a chorus. I am inclined to think that there is something in the utter vacuity of the

refrain in this song which especially commends itself to the young. The simple statement, "Star of the Evening," is again and again repeated with an imbecile relish; while the adjective "beautiful" recurs with a steady persistency too exasperating to dwell upon here. At occasional intervals a bass voice enunciates "Star-r! Star-r!" as a solitary and independent effort. Sitting here in my balcony, I picture the possessor of that voice as a small, stout young man, standing a little apart from the other singers, with his hands behind him, under his coat-tail, and a severe expression of countenance. He sometimes leans forward, with a futile attempt to read the music over somebody else's shoulder, but always resumes his old severity of attitude before singing his part. Meanwhile the celestial subjects of this choral adoration look down upon the scene with a tranquillity and patience which can only result from the security with which their immeasurable remoteness invests them. I would remark that the stars are not the only topics subject to this "damnable iteration." A certain popular song, which contains the statement, "I will not forget you, mother," apparently reposes all its popularity on the constant and dreary repetition of this unimportant information, which at least produces the desired result among the audience. If the best operatic choruses are not above this weakness, the unfamiliar language in which they are sung offers less violation to common sense.

It may be parenthetically stated here that the songs alluded to above may be found in sheet music on the top of the piano of any young lady who has just come from boarding-school. "The Old Arm-Chair," or "Woodman, Spare that Tree," will be also found in easy juxtaposition. The latter songs are usually brought into service at the instance of an uncle or bachelor brother, whose request is generally prefaced by a remark depreciatory of the opera, and the gratuitous observation that "we are retrograding, sir,—retrograding," and that "there is no music like the old songs." He sometimes condescends to accompany "Marie" in a tremulous baritone, and is particularly forcible in those passages where the word "repeat" is written, for reasons stated above. When the song is over, to the success of which

he feels he has materially contributed, he will inform you that "you may talk of your 'arias' and your 'romanzas,' but for music, sir,—music—" at which point he becomes incoherent and unintelligible. It is this gentleman who suggests "China" or "Brattle Street" as a suitable and cheerful exercise for the social circle. There are certain amatory songs, of an arch and coquettish character, familiar to these localities, which the young lady, being called upon to sing, declines with a bashful and tantalizing hesitation. Prominent among these may be mentioned an erotic effusion entitled "I'm Talking in my Sleep," which, when sung by a young person vivaciously and with appropriate glances, can be made to drive languishing swains to the verge of madness. Ballads of this quality afford splendid opportunities for bold young men, who, by ejaculating "Oh!" and "Ah!" at the affecting passages, frequently gain a fascinating reputation for wildness and scepticism.

But the music which called up these parenthetical reflections has died away, and with it the slight animosities it inspired. The last song has been sung, the piano closed, the lights are withdrawn from the windows, and the white skirts flutter away from stoops and balconies. The silence is broken only by the rattle and rumble of carriages coming from theatre and opera. I fancy that this sound—which, seeming to be more distinct at this hour than at any other time, might be called one of the civic voices of the night—has certain urbane suggestions not unpleasant to those born and bred in large cities. The moon, round and full, gradually usurps the twinkling lights of the city, that one by one seem to fade away and be absorbed in her superior lustre. The distant Mission hills are outlined against the sky, but through one gap the outlying fog which has stealthily invested us seems to have effected a breach, and only waits the co-operation of the laggard sea-breezes to sweep down and take the beleaguered city by assault. An ineffable calm sinks over the landscape. In the magical moonlight the shot-tower loses its angular outline and practical relations, and becomes a minaret from whose balcony an invisible muezzin calls the Faithful to prayer. "Prayer is better than sleep." But what is this? A shuffle of feet on the

pavement, a low hum of voices, a twang of some diabolical instrument, a preliminary hem and cough. Heavens! it cannot be! Ah! yes—it is—it is—serenaders!

Anathema Maranatha! May purgatorial pains seize ye, William Count of Poitou, Girard de Boreuil, Arnaud de Marviel, Bertrand de Born, mischievous progenitors of jongleurs, troubadours, provençals, minnesingers, minstrels and singers of cansos and love-chants! Confusion overtake and confound your modern descendants, the "metre ballad-mongers," who carry the shamelessness of the Middle Ages into the nineteenth century, and awake a sleeping neighbourhood to the brazen knowledge of their loves and wanton fancies! Destruction and demoralization pursue these pitiable imitators of a barbarous age, when ladies' names and charms were shouted through the land, and modest maiden never lent presence to tilt or tourney without hearing a chronicle of her virtues go round the lists, shouted by wheezy heralds and taken up by roaring swashbucklers! Perdition overpower such ostentatious wooers! Marry! shall I shoot the amorous feline who nightly iterates his love-songs on my roof, and yet withhold my trigger-finger from yonder pranksome gallant? Go to! here is an orange left of last week's repast. Decay hath overtaken it,—it possesseth neither savour nor cleanliness. Ha! cleverly thrown! A hit—a palpable hit! Peradventure I have still a boot that hath done me service, and, barring a looseness of the heel, an ominous yawning at the side, 'tis in good case! Na'theless, 'twill serve. So! so! What! dispersed? Nay, then, I too will retire!

JOHN CHINAMAN

THE expression of the Chinese face in the aggregate is neither cheerful nor happy. In an acquaintance of half a dozen years, I can only recall one or two exceptions to this rule. There is an abiding consciousness of degradation,—a secret pain or self-humiliation visible in the lines of the mouth and eye. Whether it is only a modification of Turkish gravity, or whether it is the dread Valley of the Shadow of the Drug through which they are continually straying, I cannot say. They seldom smile, and their laughter is of such an extraordinary and sardonic nature—so purely a mechanical spasm, quite independent of any mirthful attribute—that to this day I am doubtful whether I ever saw a Chinaman laugh. A theatrical representation by natives, one might think, would have set my mind at ease on this point; but it did not. Indeed, a new difficulty presented itself,—the impossibility of determining whether the performance was a tragedy or farce. I thought I detected the low comedian in an active youth who turned two somersaults, and knocked everybody down on entering the stage. But, unfortunately, even this classic resemblance to the legitimate farce of our civilization was deceptive. Another brocaded actor, who represented the hero of the play, turned three somersaults, and not only upset my theory and his fellow-actors at the same time, but apparently ran amuck behind the scenes for some time afterward. I looked around at the glinting white teeth to observe the effect of these two palpable hits. They were received with equal acclamation, and apparently equal facial spasms. One or two beheadings which enlivened the play produced the same sardonic effect, and left upon my mind a painful

anxiety to know what was the serious business of life in China. It was noticeable, however, that my unrestrained laughter had a discordant effect, and that triangular eyes sometimes turned ominously toward the "Fanqui devil"; but as I retired discreetly before the play was finished, there were no serious results. I have only given the above as an instance of the impossibility of deciding upon the outward and superficial expression of Chinese mirth. Of its inner and deeper existence I have some private doubts. An audience that will view with a serious aspect the hero, after a frightful and agonizing death, get up and quietly walk off the stage, cannot be said to have remarkable perceptions of the ludicrous.

I have often been struck with the delicate pliability of the Chinese expression and taste, that might suggest a broader and deeper criticism than is becoming these pages. A Chinaman will adopt the American costume, and wear it with a taste of colour and detail that will surpass those "native, and to the manner born." To look at a Chinese slipper, one might imagine it impossible to shape the original foot to anything less cumbrous and roomy, yet a neater-fitting boot than that belonging to the Americanized Chinaman is rarely seen on this side of the Continent. When the loose sack or paletot takes the place of his brocade blouse, it is worn with a refinement and grace that might bring a jealous pang to the exquisite of our more refined civilization. Pantaloons fall easily and naturally over legs that have known unlimited freedom and bagginess, and even garrote collars meet correctly around sun-tanned throats. The new expression seldom overflows in gaudy cravats. I will back my Americanized Chinaman against any neophyte of European birth in the choice of that article. While in our own State, the Greaser resists one by one the garments of the Northern invader, and even wears the livery of his conqueror with a wild and buttonless freedom, the Chinaman, abused and degraded as he is, changes by correctly graded transition to the garments of Christian civilization. There is but one article of European wear that he avoids. These Bohemian eyes have never yet been pained by the spectacle of a tall hat on the head of an intelligent Chinaman.

My acquaintance with John has been made up of weekly interviews, involving the adjustment of the washing accounts, so that I have not been able to study his character from a social view-point, or observe him in the privacy of the domestic circle. I have gathered enough to justify me in believing him to be generally honest, faithful, simple, and painstaking. Of his simplicity let me record an instance, where a sad and civil young Chinaman brought me certain shirts with most of the buttons missing and others hanging on delusively by a single thread. In a moment of unguarded irony, I informed him that unity would at least have been preserved if the buttons were removed altogether. He smiled sadly and went away. I thought I had hurt his feelings, until the next week, when he brought me my shirts with a look of intelligence, and the buttons carefully and totally erased. At another time, to guard against his general disposition to carry off anything as soiled clothes that he thought could hold water, I requested him to always wait until he saw me. Coming home late one evening, I found the household in great consternation over an immovable Celestial who had remained seated on the front doorstep during the day, sad and submissive, firm, but also patient, and only betraying any animation or token of his mission when he saw me coming. This same Chinaman evinced some evidences of regard for a little girl in the family, who in her turn reposed such faith in his intellectual qualities as to present him with a preternaturally uninteresting Sunday-school book, her own property. This book John made a point of carrying ostentatiously with him in his weekly visits. It appeared usually on the top of the clean clothes, and was sometimes painfully clasped outside of the big bundle of soiled linen. Whether John believed he unconsciously imbibed some spiritual life through its pasteboard cover, as the Prince in the *Arabian Nights* imbibed the medicine through the handle of the mallet, or whether he wished to exhibit a due sense of gratitude, or whether he hadn't any pockets, I have never been able to ascertain. In his turn he would sometimes cut marvellous imitation roses from carrots for his little friend. I am inclined to think that the few roses strewn in John's path were such scentless imitations. The

thorns only were real. From the persecutions of the young and old of a certain class, his life was a torment. I don't know what was the exact philosophy that Confucius taught, but it is to be hoped that poor John in his persecution is still able to detect the conscious hate and fear with which inferiority always regards the possibility of even-handed justice, and which is the key-note to the vulgar clamour about servile and degraded races.

FROM A BACK WINDOW

I REMEMBER that long ago, as a sanguine and trustful child, I became possessed of a highly-coloured lithograph, representing a fair Circassian sitting by a window. The price I paid for this work of art may have been extravagant, even in youth's fluctuating slate-pencil currency; but the secret joy I felt in its possession knew no pecuniary equivalent. It was not alone that Nature in Circassia lavished alike upon the cheek of beauty and the vegetable kingdom that most expensive of colours—Lake; nor was it that the rose which bloomed beside the fair Circassian's window had no visible stem, and was directly grafted upon a marble balcony; but it was because it embodied an idea. That idea was a hinting of my Fate. I felt that somewhere a young and fair Circassian was sitting by a window looking out for me. The idea of resisting such an array of charms and colour never occurred to me, and to my honour be it recorded, that during the feverish period of adolescence I never thought of averting my destiny. But as vacation and holiday came and went, and as my picture at first grew blurred, and then faded quite away between the Eastern and Western continents in my atlas, so its charm seemed mysteriously to pass away. When I became convinced that few females, of Circassian or other origin, sat pensively resting their chins on their henna-tinged nails, at their parlour windows, I turned my attention to back windows. Although the fair Circassian has not yet burst upon me with open shutters, some peculiarities not unworthy of note have fallen under my observation. This knowledge has not been gained without sacrifice. I have made

myself familiar with back windows and their prospects, in the weak disguise of seeking lodgings, heedless of the suspicious glances of landladies and their evident reluctance to show them. I have caught cold by long exposure to draughts. I have become estranged from friends by unconsciously walking to their back windows during a visit, when the weekly linen hung upon the line, or where Miss Fanny (ostensibly indisposed) actually assisted in the laundry, and Master Bobby, in scant attire, disported himself on the area railings. But I have thought of Galileo, and the invariable experience of all seekers and discoverers of truth has sustained me.

Show me the back windows of a man's dwelling, and I will tell you his character. The rear of a house only is sincere. The attitude of deception kept up at the front windows leaves the back area defenceless. The world enters at the front door, but nature comes out at the back passage. That glossy, well-brushed individual, who lets himself in with a latch-key at the front door at night, is a very different being from the slipshod wretch who growls of mornings for hot water at the door of the kitchen. The same with Madame, whose contour of figure grows angular, whose face grows pallid, whose hair comes down, and who looks some ten years older through the sincere medium of a back window. No wonder that intimate friends fail to recognize each other in this *dos à dos* position. You may imagine yourself familiar with the silver door-plate and bow-windows of the mansion where dwells your Saccharissa; you may even fancy you recognize her graceful figure between the lace curtains of the upper chamber which you fondly imagine to be hers; but you shall dwell for months in the rear of her dwelling and within whispering distance of her bower, and never know it. You shall see her with a handkerchief tied round her head in confidential discussion with the butcher, and know her not. You shall hear her voice in shrill expostulation with her younger brother, and it shall awaken no familiar response.

I am writing at a back window. As I prefer the warmth of my coal-fire to the foggy freshness of the afternoon breeze that rattles the leafless shrubs in the garden below me, I have my window-sash closed; con-

sequently, I miss much of the shrilly altercation that has been going on in the kitchen of No. 7 just opposite. I have heard fragments of an entertaining style of dialogue usually known as "chaffing," which has just taken place between Biddy in No. 9, and the butcher who brings the dinner. I have been pitying the chilled aspect of a poor canary, put out to taste the fresh air, from the window of No. 5. I have been watching—and envying, I fear—the real enjoyment of two children raking over an old dust-heap in the alley, containing the waste and débris of all the backyards in the neighbourhood. What a wealth of soda-water bottles and old iron they have acquired! But I am waiting for an even more familiar prospect from my back window. I know that later in the afternoon, when the evening paper comes, a thickset, grey-haired man will appear in his shirt-sleeves at the back door of No. 9, and, seating himself on the doorstep, begin to read. He lives in a pretentious house, and I hear he is a rich man. But there is such humility in his attitude, and such evidence of gratitude at being allowed to sit outside of his own house and read his paper in his shirt-sleeves, that I can picture his domestic history pretty clearly. Perhaps he is following some old habit of humbler days. Perhaps he has entered into an agreement with his wife not to indulge his disgraceful habit indoors. He does not look like a man who could be coaxed into a dressing-gown. In front of his own palatial residence, I know him to be a quiet and respectable middle-aged business-man, but it is from my back window that my heart warms toward him in his shirt-sleeved simplicity. So I sit and watch him in the twilight as he reads gravely, and wonder sometimes, when he looks up, squares his chest, and folds his paper thoughtfully over his knee, whether he doesn't fancy he hears the letting down of bars, or the tinkling of bells, as the cows come home, and stand lowing for him at the gate.

ON A VULGAR LITTLE BOY

THE subject of this article is at present leaning against a tree directly opposite to my window. He wears his cap with the wrong side before, apparently for no other object than that which seems the most obvious,—of showing more than the average quantity of very dirty face. His clothes, which are worn with a certain buttonless ease and freedom, display, in the different quality of their fruit-stains, a pleasing indication of the progress of the seasons. The nose of this vulgar little boy turns up at the end. I have noticed this in several other vulgar little boys, although it is by no means improbable that youthful vulgarity may be present without this facial peculiarity. Indeed, I am inclined to the belief that it is rather the result of early inquisitiveness—of furtive pressures against window-panes, and of looking over fences, or of the habit of biting large apples hastily—than an indication of scorn or juvenile superciliousness. The vulgar little boy is more remarkable for his obtrusive familiarity. It is my experience of his predisposition to this quality which has induced me to write this article.

My acquaintance with him began in a moment of weakness. I have an unfortunate predilection to cultivate originality in people, even when accompanied by objectionable character. But, as I lack the firmness and skilfulness which usually accompany this taste in others, and enable them to drop acquaintances when troublesome, I have surrounded myself with divers unprofitable friends, among whom I count the vulgar little boy. The manner in which he first attracted my attention was purely accidental. He was playing in the street, and the driver of a passing

vehicle cut at him sportively with his whip. The vulgar little boy rose to his feet and hurled after his tormentor a single sentence of invective. I refrain from repeating it, for I feel that I could not do justice to it here. If I remember rightly, it conveyed, in a very few words, a reflection on the legitimacy of the driver's birth; it hinted a suspicion of his father's integrity, and impugned the fair fame of his mother; it suggested incompetency in his present position, personal uncleanliness, and evinced a sceptical doubt of his future salvation. As his youthful lips closed over the last syllable, the eyes of the vulgar little boy met mine. Something in my look emboldened him to wink. I did not repel the action nor the complicity it implied. From that moment I fell into the power of the vulgar little boy, and he has never left me since.

He haunts me in the streets and by-ways. He accosts me, when in the company of friends, with repulsive freedom. He lingers about the gate of my dwelling to waylay me as I issue forth to business. Distance he overcomes by main strength of lungs, and he hails me from the next street. He met me at the theatre the other evening, and demanded my check with the air of a young footpad. I foolishly gave it to him, but re-entering some time after, and comfortably seating myself in the parquet, I was electrified by hearing my name called from the gallery with the addition of a playful adjective. It was the vulgar little boy. During the performance he projected spirally-twisted playbills in my direction, and indulged in a running commentary on the supernumeraries as they entered.

To-day has evidently been a dull one with him. I observe he whistles the popular airs of the period with less shrillness and intensity. Providence, however, looks not unkindly on him, and delivers into his hands, as it were, two nice little boys who have at this moment innocently strayed into our street. They are pink-and-white children, and are dressed alike, and exhibit a certain air of neatness and refinement which is alone sufficient to awaken the antagonism of the vulgar little boy. A sigh of satisfaction breaks from his breast. What does he do? Any other boy would content himself with simply knocking the hats off their respective heads, and so vent his superfluous

vitality in a single act, besides precipitating the flight of the enemy. But there are aesthetic considerations not to be overlooked; insult is to be added to the injury inflicted, and in the struggles of the victim some justification is to be sought for extreme measures. The two nice little boys perceive their danger and draw closer to each other. The vulgar little boy begins by irony. He affects to be overpowered by the magnificence of their costume. He addresses me (across the street and through the closed window), and requests information if there haply be a circus in the vicinity. He makes affectionate inquiries after the health of their parents. He expresses a fear of maternal anxiety in regard to their welfare. He offers to conduct them home. One nice little boy feebly retorts; but alas! his correct pronunciation, his grammatical exactitude, and his moderate epithets only provoke a scream of derision from the vulgar little boy, who now rapidly changes his tactics. Staggering under the weight of his vituperation, they fall easy victims to what he would call his "dexter mawley." A wail of lamentation goes up from our street. But as the subject of this article seems to require a more vigorous handling than I had purposed to give it, I find it necessary to abandon my present dignified position, seize my hat, open the front door, and try a stronger method.

SIDEWALKINGS

THE time occupied in walking to and from my business I have always found to yield me a certain mental enjoyment which no other part of the twenty-four hours could give. Perhaps the physical exercise may have acted as a gentle stimulant of the brain, but more probably the comfortable consciousness that I could not reasonably be expected to be doing anything else—to be studying or improving my mind, for instance—always gave a joyous liberty to my fancy. I once thought it necessary to employ this interval in doing sums in arithmetic,—in which useful study I was and still am lamentably deficient,—but after one or two attempts at peripatetic computation, I gave it up. I am satisfied that much enjoyment is lost to the world by this nervous anxiety to improve our leisure moments, which, like the " shining hours " of Dr. Watts, unfortunately offer the greatest facilities for idle pleasure. I feel a profound pity for those misguided beings who are still impelled to carry text-books with them in cars, omnibuses, and ferry-boats, and who generally manage to defraud themselves of those intervals of rest they most require. Nature must have her fallow moments, when she covers her exhausted fields with flowers instead of grain. Deny her this, and the next crop suffers for it. I offer this axiom as some apology for obtruding upon the reader a few of the speculations which have engaged my mind during these daily perambulations.

Few Californians know how to lounge gracefully. Business habits, and a deference to the custom, even with those who have no business, give an air of restless anxiety to every pedestrian. The exceptions to this rule are apt to go to the other extreme, and wear a defiant, obtrusive kind

of indolence which suggests quite as much inward disquiet and unrest. The shiftless lassitude of a gambler can never be mistaken for the lounge of a gentleman. Even the brokers who loiter upon Montgomery Street at high noon are not loungers. Look at them closely and you will see a feverishness and anxiety under the mask of listlessness. They do not lounge—they lie in wait. No surer sign, I imagine, of our peculiar civilization can be found than this lack of repose in its constituent elements. You cannot keep Californians quiet even in their amusements. They dodge in and out of the theatre, opera, and lecture-room; they prefer the street cars to walking because they think they get along faster. The difference of locomotion between Broadway, New York, and Montgomery Street, San Francisco, is a comparative view of Eastern and Western civilization.

There is a habit peculiar to many walkers, which *Punch*, some years ago, touched upon satirically, but which seems to have survived the jester's ridicule. It is that custom of stopping friends in the street, to whom we have nothing whatever to communicate, but whom we embarrass for no other purpose than simply to show our friendship. Jones meets his friend Smith, whom he has met in nearly the same locality but a few hours before. During that interval, it is highly probable that no event of any importance to Smith, nor indeed to Jones, which by a friendly construction Jones could imagine Smith to be interested in, has occurred, or is likely to occur. Yet both gentlemen stop and shake hands earnestly. "Well, how goes it?" remarks Smith, with a vague hope that something may have happened. "So so," replies the eloquent Jones, feeling intuitively the deep vacuity of his friend answering to his own. A pause ensues, in which both gentlemen regard each other with an imbecile smile and a fervent pressure of the hand. Smith draws a long breath and looks up the street; Jones sighs heavily and gazes down the street. Another pause, in which both gentlemen disengage their respective hands and glance anxiously around for some conventional avenue of escape. Finally, Smith (with a sudden assumption of having forgotten an important engagement) ejaculates, "Well, I must be off,"—a remark instantly echoed by the voluble Jones,

and these gentlemen separate, only to repeat their miserable formula the next day. In the above example I have compassionately shortened the usual leave-taking, which, in skilful hands, may be protracted to a length which I shudder to recall. I have sometimes, when an active participant in these atrocious transactions, lingered in the hope of saying something natural to my friend (feeling that he, too, was groping in the mazy labyrinths of his mind for a like expression), until I have felt that we ought to have been separated by a policeman. It is astonishing how far the most wretched joke will go in these emergencies, and how it will, as it were, convulsively detach the two cohering particles. I have laughed (albeit hysterically) at some witticism under cover of which I escaped, that five minutes afterward I could not perceive possessed a grain of humour. I would advise any person who may fall into this pitiable strait, that, next to getting in the way of a passing dray and being forcibly disconnected, a joke is the most efficacious. A foreign phrase often may be tried with success. I have sometimes known *Au revoir*, pronounced "O-reveer," to have the effect (as it ought) of severing friends.

But this is a harmless habit compared to a certain reprehensible practice in which sundry feeble-minded young men indulge. I have been stopped in the street and enthusiastically accosted by some fashionable young man, who has engaged me in animated conversation, until (quite accidentally) a certain young belle would pass, whom my friend of course saluted. As, by a strange coincidence, this occurred several times in the course of the week, and as my young friend's conversational powers invariably flagged after the lady had passed, I am forced to believe that the deceitful young wretch actually used me as a conventional background to display the graces of his figure to the passing fair. When I detected the trick, of course I made a point of keeping my friend, by strategic movements, with his back toward the young lady, while I bowed to her myself. Since then, I understand that it is a regular custom of these callow youths to encounter each other, with simulated cordiality, some paces in front of the young lady they wish to recognize, so that she cannot possibly cut them. The corner of California and

Montgomery Streets is their favourite haunt. They may be easily detected by their furtive expression of eye, which betrays them even in the height of their apparent enthusiasm.

Speaking of eyes, you can generally settle the average gentility and good-breeding of the people you meet in the street by the manner in which they return or evade your glance. "A gentleman," as the Autocrat has wisely said, is always "calm-eyed." There is just enough abstraction in his look to denote his individual power and the capacity for self-contemplation, while he is, nevertheless, quietly and unobtrusively observant. He does not seek, neither does he evade, your observation. Snobs and prigs do the first; bashful and mean people do the second. There are some men who, on meeting your eye, immediately assume an expression quite different from the one which they previously wore, which, whether an improvement or not, suggests a disagreeable self-consciousness. Perhaps they fancy they are betraying something. There are others who return your look with unnecessary defiance, which suggests a like concealment. The symptoms of the eye are generally borne out in the figure. A man is very apt to betray his character by the manner in which he appropriates his part of the sidewalk. The man who resolutely keeps the middle of the pavement and deliberately brushes against you, you may be certain would take the last piece of pie at the hotel table, and empty the cream-jug on its way to your cup. The man who sidles by you, keeping close to the houses and selecting the easiest planks, manages to slip through life in some such way, and to evade its sternest duties. The awkward man, who gets in your way, and throws you back upon the man behind you, and so manages to derange the harmonious procession of an entire block, is very apt to do the same thing in political and social economy. The inquisitive man, who deliberately shortens his pace so that he may participate in the confidence you impart to your companion, has an eye not unfamiliar to keyholes, and probably opens his wife's letters. The loud man, who talks with the intention of being overheard, is the same egotist elsewhere. If there was any justice in Iago's sneer, that there were some "so weak of soul that in their

sleep they mutter their affairs," what shall be said of the walking reverie-babblers? I have met men who were evidently rolling over, "like a sweet morsel under the tongue," some speech they were about to make, and others who were framing curses. I remember once that, while walking behind an apparently respectable old gentleman, he suddenly uttered the exclamation, "Well, I'm d—d!" and then quietly resumed his usual manner. Whether he had at that moment become impressed with a truly orthodox disbelief in his ultimate salvation, or whether he was simply indignant, I never could tell.

I have been hesitating for some time to speak—or if indeed to speak at all—of that lovely and critic-defying sex, whose bright eyes and voluble prattle have not been without effect in tempering the austerities of my peripatetic musing. I have been humbly thankful that I have been permitted to view their bright dresses and those charming bonnets which seem to have brought the birds and flowers of spring within the dreary limits of the town, and—I trust I shall not be deemed unkind in saying it—my pleasure was not lessened by the reflection that the display, to me at least, was inexpensive. I have walked in—and I fear occasionally on—the train of the loveliest of her sex who has preceded me. If I have sometimes wondered why two young ladies always began to talk vivaciously on the approach of any good-looking fellow; if I have wondered whether the mirror-like qualities of all large show-windows at all influenced their curiosity regarding silks and calicoes; if I have ever entertained the same ungentlemanly thought concerning daguerreotype show-cases; if I have ever misinterpreted the eyeshot which has passed between two pretty women—more searching, exhaustive, and sincere than any of our feeble ogles;—if I have ever committed these or any other impertinences, it was only to retire beaten and discomfited, and to confess that masculine philosophy, while it soars beyond Sirius and the ring of Saturn, stops short at the steel periphery which encompasses the simplest school-girl.

CHARITABLE REMINISCENCES

As the new Benevolent Association has had the effect of withdrawing beggars from the streets, and as professional mendicancy bids fair to be presently ranked with the lost arts, to preserve some records of this noble branch of industry, I have endeavoured to recall certain traits and peculiarities of individual members of the order whom I have known, and whose forms I now miss from their accustomed haunts. In so doing, I confess to feeling a certain regret at this decay of professional begging, for I hold the theory that mankind are bettered by the occasional spectacle of misery, whether simulated or not, on the same principle that our sympathies are enlarged by the fictitious woes of the drama, though we know that the actors are insincere. Perhaps I am indiscreet in saying that I have rewarded the artfully-dressed and well-acted performance of the begging impostor through the same impulse that impelled me to expend a dollar in witnessing the counterfeited sorrows of poor "Triplet," as represented by Charles Wheatleigh. I did not quarrel with deceit in either case. My coin was given in recognition of the sentiment; the moral responsibility rested with the performer.

The principal figure that I now mourn over as lost for ever is one that may have been familiar to many of my readers. It was that of a dark-complexioned, black-eyed, foreign-looking woman, who supported in her arms a sickly baby. As a pathological phenomenon the baby was especially interesting, having presented the Hippocratic face and other symptoms of immediate dissolution, without change, for the past three years. The woman

never verbally solicited alms. Her appearance was always mute, mysterious, and sudden. She made no other appeal than that which the dramatic tableau of herself and baby suggested, with an outstretched hand and deprecating eye sometimes superadded. She usually stood in my doorway, silent and patient, intimating her presence, if my attention were preoccupied, by a slight cough from her baby, whom I shall always believe had its part to play in this little pantomime, and generally obeyed a secret signal from the maternal hand. It was useless for me to refuse alms, to plead business, or affect inattention. She never moved; her position was always taken with an appearance of latent capabilities of endurance and experience in waiting which never failed to impress me with awe and the futility of any hope of escape. There was also something in the reproachful expression of her eye which plainly said to me, as I bent over my paper, "Go on with your mock sentimentalities and simulated pathos, portray the imaginary sufferings of your bodiless creations, spread your thin web of philosophy; but look you, sir, here is real misery—here is genuine suffering!" I confess that this artful suggestion usually brought me down. In three minutes after she had thus invested the citadel I usually surrendered at discretion, without a gun having been fired on either side. She received my offering and retired as mutely and mysteriously as she had appeared. Perhaps it was well for me that she did not know her strength. I might have been forced, had this terrible woman been conscious of her real power, to have borrowed money which I could not pay, or have forged a cheque to purchase immunity from her awful presence. I hardly know if I make myself understood, and yet I am unable to define my meaning more clearly when I say that there was something in her glance which suggested to the person appealed to, when in the presence of others, a certain idea of some individual responsibility for her sufferings, which, while it never failed to affect him with a mingled sense of ludicrousness and terror, always made an impression of unqualified gravity on the minds of the bystanders. As she has disappeared within the last month, I imagine that she has found a home at the San Francisco Benevolent

Association,—at least, I cannot conceive of any charity, however guarded by wholesome checks or sharp-eyed almoners, that could resist that mute apparition. I should like to go there and inquire about her, and also learn if the baby was convalescent or dead; but I am satisfied that she would rise up, a mute and reproachful appeal, so personal in its artful suggestions, that it would end in the Association instantly transferring her to my hands.

My next familiar mendicant was a vender of printed ballads. These effusions were so stale, atrocious, and unsaleable in their character, that it was easy to detect that hypocrisy which—in imitation of more ambitious beggary—veiled the real eleemosynary appeal under the thin pretext of offering an equivalent. This beggar—an aged female in a rusty bonnet—I unconsciously precipitated upon myself in an evil moment. On our first meeting, while distractedly turning over the ballads, I came upon a certain production entitled, I think, "The Fire Zouave," and was struck with the truly patriotic and American manner in which "Zouave" was made to rhyme in different stanzas with "grave, brave, save, and glaive." As I purchased it at once with a gratified expression of countenance, it soon became evident that the act was misconstrued by my poor friend, who from that moment never ceased to haunt me. Perhaps in the whole course of her precarious existence she had never before sold a ballad. My solitary purchase evidently made me, in her eyes, a customer, and in a measure exalted her vocation; so thereafter she regularly used to look in at my door, with a chirping, confident air, and the question, "Any more songs to-day?" as though it were some necessary article of daily consumption. I never took any more of her songs, although that circumstance did not shake her faith in my literary taste; my abstinence from this exciting mental pabulum being probably ascribed to charitable motives. She was finally absorbed by the S.F.B.A., who have probably made a proper disposition of her effects. She was a little old woman, of Celtic origin, predisposed to melancholy, and looking as if she had read most of her ballads.

My next reminiscence takes the shape of a very seedy

individual, who had, for three or four years, been vainly attempting to get back to his relatives in Illinois, where sympathizing friends and a comfortable almshouse awaited him. Only a few dollars, he informed me,—the uncontributed remainder of the amount necessary to purchase a steerage ticket,—stood in his way. These last few dollars seem to have been most difficult to get, and he had wandered about, a sort of antithetical Flying Dutchman, for ever putting to sea, yet never getting away from shore. He was a "49-er," and had recently been blown up in a tunnel, or had fallen down a shaft, I forget which. This sad accident obliged him to use large quantities of whisky as a liniment, which, he informed me, occasioned the mild fragrance which his garments exhaled. Though belonging to the same class, he was not to be confounded with the unfortunate miner who could not get back to his claim without pecuniary assistance, or the desolate Italian who hopelessly handed you a document in a foreign language, very much bethumbed and illegible, which, in your ignorance of the tongue, you couldn't help suspiciously feeling might have been a price current, but which you could see was proffered as an excuse for alms. Indeed, whenever any stranger handed me, without speaking, an open document, which bore the marks of having been carried in the greasy lining of a hat, I always felt safe in giving him a quarter and dismissing him without further questioning. I always noticed that these circular letters, when written in the vernacular, were remarkable for their beautiful caligraphy and grammatical inaccuracy, and that they all seem to have been written by the same hand. Perhaps indigence exercises a peculiar and equal effect upon the handwriting.

I recall a few occasional mendicants whose faces were less familiar. One afternoon a most extraordinary Irishman, with a black eye, a bruised hat, and other traces of past enjoyment, waited upon me with a pitiful story of destitution and want, and concluded by requesting the usual trifle. I replied, with some severity, that if I gave him a dime he would probably spend it for drink. "Be Gorra! but you're roight—I wad that!" he answered promptly. I was so much taken aback by this

unexpected exhibition of frankness that I instantly handed over the dime. It seems that truth had survived the wreck of his other virtues; he did get drunk, and, impelled by a like conscientious sense of duty, exhibited himself to me in that state a few hours after, to show that my bounty had not been misapplied.

In spite of the peculiar characters of these reminiscences, I cannot help feeling a certain regret at the decay of professional mendicancy. Perhaps it may be owing to a lingering trace of that youthful superstition which saw in all beggars a possible prince or fairy, and invested their calling with a mysterious awe. Perhaps it may be from a belief that there is something in the old-fashioned almsgivings and actual contact with misery that is wholesome for both donor and recipient, and that any system which interposes a third party between them is only putting on a thick glove, which, while it preserves us from contagion, absorbs and deadens the kindly pressure of our hand. It is a very pleasant thing to purchase relief from the annoyance and trouble of having to weigh the claims of an afflicted neighbour. As I turn over these printed tickets, which the courtesy of the San Francisco Benevolent Association has — by a slight stretch of the imagination in supposing that any sane unfortunate might rashly seek relief from a newspaper office—conveyed to these editorial hands, I cannot help wondering whether when, in our last extremity, we come to draw upon the Immeasurable Bounty, it will be necessary to present a ticket

"SEEING THE STEAMER OFF"

I HAVE sometimes thought, while watching the departure of an Eastern steamer, that the act of parting from friends—so generally one of bitterness and despondency—is made by an ingenious Californian custom to yield a pleasurable excitement. This luxury of leave-taking, in which most Californians indulge, is often protracted to the hauling in of the gang-plank. Those last words, injunctions, promises, and embraces, which are mournful and depressing perhaps in that privacy demanded on other occasions, are here, by reason of their very publicity, of an edifying and exhilarating character. A parting kiss, blown from the deck of a steamer into a miscellaneous crowd, of course loses much of that sacred solemnity with which foolish superstition is apt to invest it. A broadside of endearing epithets, even when properly aimed and apparently raking the whole wharf, is apt to be impotent and harmless. A husband who prefers to embrace his wife for the last time at the door of her state-room, and finds himself the centre of an admiring group of unconcerned spectators, of course feels himself lifted above any feeling save that of ludicrousness which the situation suggests. The mother, parting from her offspring, should become a Roman matron under the like influences; the lover who takes leave of his sweetheart is not apt to mar the general hilarity by any emotional folly. In fact, this system of delaying our parting sentiments until the last moment—this removal of domestic scenery and incident to a public theatre—may be said to be worthy of a stoical and democratic people, and is an event in our lives which

may be shared with the humblest coal-passer or itinerant vender of oranges. It is a return to that classic out-of-door experience and mingling of public and domestic economy which so ennobled the straight-nosed Athenian.

So universal is this desire to be present at the departure of any steamer that, aside from the regular crowd of loungers who make their appearance confessedly only to look on, there are others who take advantage of the slightest intimacy to go through the leave-taking formula. People whom you have quite forgotten, people to whom you have been lately introduced, suddenly and unexpectedly make their appearance and wring your hands with fervour. The friend long estranged forgives you nobly at the last moment, to take advantage of this glorious opportunity of "seeing you off." Your bootmaker, tailor, and hatter—haply with no ulterior motives and unaccompanied by official friends—visit you with enthusiasm. You find great difficulty in detaching your relatives and acquaintances from the trunks on which they resolutely seat themselves up to the moment when the paddles are moving, and you are haunted continually by an ill-defined idea that they may be carried off and foisted on you—with the payment of their passage, which, under the circumstances, you could not refuse—for the rest of the voyage. Your friends will make their appearance at the most inopportune moments and from the most unexpected places,—dangling from hawsers, climbing up paddle-boxes, and crawling through cabin windows at the imminent peril of their lives. You are nervous and crushed by this added weight of responsibility. Should you be a stranger, you will find any number of people on board, who will cheerfully and at a venture take leave of you on the slightest advances made on your part. A friend of mine assures me that he once parted, with great enthusiasm and cordiality, from a party of gentlemen, to him personally unknown, who had apparently mistaken his state-room. This party,—evidently connected with some fire company,—on comparing notes on the wharf, being somewhat dissatisfied with the result of their performances, afterward rendered my friend's position on the hurricane deck one of extreme peril and

inconvenience, by reason of skilfully projected oranges and apples, accompanied with some invective. Yet there is certainly something to interest us in the examination of that cheerless damp closet, whose painted wooden walls no furniture or company can make habitable, wherein our friend is to spend so many vapid days and restless nights. The sight of these apartments, yclept *state-rooms*,—Heaven knows why, except it be from their want of cosiness,—is full of keen reminiscences to most Californians who have not outgrown the memories of that dreary interval when, in obedience to Nature's wise compensations, home-sickness was blotted out by sea-sickness, and both at last resolved into a chaotic and distempered dream, whose details we now recognize. The steamer chair that we used to drag out upon the narrow strip of deck and doze in over the pages of a well-thumbed novel; the deck itself, of afternoons redolent with the skins of oranges and bananas, of mornings damp with salt-water and mopping; the netted bulwark, smelling of tar in the tropics and fretted on the weather side with little saline crystals; the villanously compounded odours of victuals from the pantry and oil from the machinery; the young lady that we used to flirt with, and with whom we shared our last novel, adorned with marginal annotations; our own chum; our own bore; the man who was never sea-sick; the two events of the day, breakfast and dinner, and the dreary interval between; the tremendous importance given to trifling events and trifling people; the young lady who kept a journal; the newspaper, published on board, filled with mild pleasantries and impertinences, elsewhere unendurable; the young lady who sang; the wealthy passenger; the popular passenger; the——

Let us sit down for a moment until this qualmishness, which these associations and some infectious quality of the atmosphere seem to produce, has passed away. What becomes of our steamer friends? Why are we now so apathetic about them? Why is it that we drift away from them so unconcernedly, forgetting even their names and faces? Why, when we do remember them, do we look at them so suspiciously, with an undefined idea that,

in the unrestrained freedom of the voyage, they became possessed of some confidence and knowledge of our weaknesses that we never should have imparted? Did we make any such confessions? Perish the thought! The popular man, however, is not now so popular. We have heard finer voices than that of the young lady who sang so sweetly. Our chum's fascinating qualities somehow have deteriorated on land; so have those of the fair young novel-reader, now the wife of an honest miner in Virginia City.]

—The passenger who made so many trips, and exhibited a reckless familiarity with the officers; the officers themselves, now so modest and undemonstrative, a few hours later so all-powerful and important,—these are among the reminiscences of most Californians, and these are to be remembered among the experiences of our friend. Yet he feels, as we all do, that his past experience will be of profit to him, and has already the confident air of an old voyager.

As you stand on the wharf again, and listen to the cries of itinerant fruit venders, you wonder why it is that grief at parting and the unpleasant novelties of travel are supposed to be assuaged by oranges and apples, even at ruinously low prices. Perhaps it may be, figuratively, the last offering of the fruitful earth, as the passenger commits himself to the bosom of the sterile and unproductive ocean. Even while the wheels are moving and the lines are cast off, some hardy apple merchant, mounted on the top of a pile, concludes a trade with a steerage passenger,—twenty feet interposing between buyer and seller,—and achieves, under these difficulties, the delivery of his wares. Handkerchiefs wave, hurried orders mingle with parting blessings, and the steamer is "off." As you turn your face cityward, and glance hurriedly around at the retreating crowd, you will see a reflection of your own wistful face in theirs, and read the solution of one of the problems which perplex the California enthusiast. Before you lies San Francisco, with her hard, angular outlines, her brisk, invigorating breezes, her bright, but unsympathetic sunshine, her restless and energetic population; behind you fades the recollection of changeful but honest skies, of extremes of heat and cold,

modified and made enjoyable through social and physical laws, of pastoral landscapes, of accessible Nature in her kindliest forms, of inherited virtues, of long-tested customs and habits, of old friends and old faces,—in a word—of HOME!

NEIGHBOURHOODS I HAVE MOVED FROM

I

A BAY-WINDOW once settled the choice of my house and compensated for many of its inconveniences. When the chimney smoked, or the doors alternately shrunk and swelled, resisting any forcible attempt to open them, or opening of themselves with ghostly deliberation, or when suspicious blotches appeared on the ceiling in rainy weather, there was always the bay-window to turn to for comfort. And the view was a fine one. Alcatraz, Lime Point, Fort Point, and Saucelito were plainly visible over a restless expanse of water that changed continually, glittering in the sunlight, darkening in rocky shadow, or sweeping in mimic waves on a miniature beach below.

Although at first the bay-window was supposed to be sacred to myself and my writing materials, in obedience to some organic law it by and by became a general lounging-place. A rocking-chair and crotchet basket one day found their way there. Then the baby invaded its recesses, fortifying himself behind entrenchments of coloured worsteds and spools of cotton, from which he was only dislodged by concerted assault, and carried lamenting into captivity. A subtle glamour crept over all who came within its influence. To apply oneself to serious work there was an absurdity. An incoming ship, a gleam on the water, a cloud lingering about Tamalpais, were enough to distract the attention. Reading or writing, the bay-window was always showing something to be looked at. Unfortunately these views

were not always pleasant, but the window gave equal prominence and importance to all, without respect to quality.

The landscape in the vicinity was unimproved but not rural. The adjacent lots had apparently just given up bearing scrub-oaks, but had not seriously taken to bricks and mortar. In one direction the vista was closed by the Home of the Inebriates, not in itself a cheerful-looking building, and, as the apparent terminus of a ramble in a certain direction, having all the effect of a moral lesson. To a certain extent, however, this building was an imposition. The enthusiastic members of my family, who confidently expected to see its inmates hilariously disporting themselves at its windows in the different stages of inebriation portrayed by the late W. E. Burton, were much disappointed. The Home was reticent of its secrets. The County Hospital, also in range of the bay-window, showed much more animation. At certain hours of the day convalescents passed in review before the window on their way to an airing. This spectacle was the still more depressing from a singular lack of sociability that appeared to prevail among them. Each man was encompassed by the impenetrable atmosphere of his own peculiar suffering. They did not talk or walk together. From the window I have seen half a dozen sunning themselves against a wall within a few feet of each other, to all appearance utterly oblivious of the fact. Had they but quarrelled or fought,—anything would have been better than this horrible apathy.

The lower end of the street on which the bay-window was situate opened invitingly from a popular thoroughfare, and after beckoning the unwary stranger into its recesses, ended unexpectedly at a frightful precipice. On Sundays, when the travel North-Beachwards was considerable, the bay-window delighted in the spectacle afforded by unhappy pedestrians who were seduced into taking this street as a short-cut somewhere else. It was amusing to notice how these people invariably, on coming to the precipice, glanced upward to the bay-window and endeavoured to assume a careless air before they retraced their steps, whistling ostentatiously, as if they had previously known all about it. One high-spirited young

man in particular, being incited thereto by a pair of mischievous bright eyes in an opposite window, actually descended this fearful precipice rather than return, to the great peril of life and limb, and manifest injury to his Sunday clothes.

Dogs, goats, and horses constituted the *fauna* of our neighbourhood. Possessing the lawless freedom of their normal condition, they still evinced a tender attachment to man and his habitations. Spirited steeds got up *extempore* races on the sidewalks, turning the street into a miniature *Corso*; dogs wrangled in the areas; while from the hill beside the house a goat browsed peacefully upon my wife's geraniums in the flower-pots in the second-story window. "We had a fine hail-storm last night," remarked a newly arrived neighbour, who had just moved into the adjoining house. It would have been a pity to set him right, as he was quite enthusiastic about the view and the general sanitary qualifications of the locality. So I didn't tell him anything about the goats who were in the habit of using his house as a stepping-stone to the adjoining hill.

But the locality was remarkably healthy. People who fell down the embankments found their wounds heal rapidly in the steady sea-breeze. Ventilation was complete and thorough. The opening of the bay-window produced a current of wholesome air which effectually removed all noxious exhalations, together with the curtains, the hinges of the back door, and the window-shutters. Owing to this peculiarity, some of my writings acquired an extensive circulation and publicity in the neighbourhood, which years in another locality might not have produced. Several articles of wearing apparel which were mysteriously transposed from our clothes-line to that of an humble though honest neighbour, were undoubtedly the result of these sanitary winds. Yet in spite of these advantages I found it convenient in a few months to move. And the result whereof I shall communicate in other papers.

II

"A house with a fine garden and extensive shrubbery, in a genteel neighbourhood," were, if I remember rightly, the general terms of an advertisement which once decided my choice of a dwelling. I should add that this occurred at an early stage of my household experience, when I placed a trustful reliance in advertisements. I have since learned that the most truthful people are apt to indulge a slight vein of exaggeration in describing their own possessions, as though the mere circumstance of going into print were an excuse for a certain kind of mendacity. But I did not fully awaken to this fact until a much later period, when, in answering an advertisement which described a highly advantageous tenement, I was referred to the house I then occupied, and from which a thousand inconveniences were impelling me to move.

The "fine garden" alluded to was not large, but contained several peculiarly shaped flower-beds. I was at first struck with the singular resemblance which they bore to the mutton-chops that are usually brought on the table at hotels and restaurants,—a resemblance the more striking from the sprigs of parsley which they produced freely. One plat in particular reminded me, not unpleasantly, of a peculiar cake known to my boyhood as "a bolivar." The owner of the property, however, who seemed to be a man of original æsthetic ideas, had banked up one of these beds with bright-coloured sea-shells, so that in rainy weather it suggested an aquarium, and offered the elements of botanical and conchological study in pleasing juxtaposition. I have since thought that the fish-geraniums, which it also bore to a surprising extent, were introduced originally from some such idea of consistency. But it was very pleasant after dinner to ramble up and down the gravelly paths (whose occasional boulders reminded me of the dry bed of a somewhat circuitous mining stream), smoking a cigar, or inhaling the rich aroma of fennel, or occasionally stopping to pluck one of the hollyhocks with which the garden abounded. The prolific qualities of this plant alarmed us greatly, for although, in the first transport of enthusiasm, my wife

planted several different kinds of flower-seeds, nothing ever came up but hollyhocks; and although, impelled by the same laudable impulse, I procured a copy of *Downing's Landscape Gardening*, and a few gardening tools, and worked for several hours in the garden, my efforts were equally futile.

The "extensive shrubbery" consisted of several dwarfed trees. One was a very weak young weeping willow, so very limp and maudlin, and so evidently bent on establishing its reputation, that it had to be tied up against the house for support. The dampness of that portion of the house was usually attributed to the presence of this lachrymose shrub. Add to these a couple of highly objectionable trees, known, I think, by the name of *Malva*, which made an inordinate show of cheap blossoms that they were continually shedding, and one or two dwarf oaks with scaly leaves and a generally spiteful exterior, and you have what was not inaptly termed by our Milesian handmaid "the scrubbery."

The gentility of our neighbourhood suffered a blight from the unwholesome vicinity of McGinnis Court. This court was a kind of cul-de-sac, that, on being penetrated, discovered a primitive people living in a state of barbarous freedom, and apparently spending the greater portion of their lives on their own doorsteps. Many of those details of the toilet which a popular prejudice restricts to the dressing-room in other localities were here performed in the open court without fear and without reproach. Early in the week the court was hid in a choking, soapy mist, which arose from innumerable wash-tubs. This was followed in a day or two later by an extraordinary exhibition of wearing apparel of divers colours, fluttering on lines like a display of bunting on shipboard, and whose flapping in the breeze was like irregular discharges of musketry. It was evident also that the court exercised a demoralizing influence over the whole neighbourhood. A sanguine property-owner once put up a handsome dwelling on the corner of our street and lived therein; but although he appeared frequently on his balcony, clad in a bright crimson dressing-gown, which made him look like a tropical bird of some rare and gorgeous species, he failed to woo any kindred dressing-gown to the vicinity,

and only provoked opprobrious epithets from the *gamins* of the court. He moved away shortly after, and on going by the house one day, I noticed a bill of "Rooms to let, with board," posted conspicuously on the Corinthian columns of the porch. McGinnis Court had triumphed. An interchange of civilities at once took place between the court and the servants' area of the palatial mansion, and some of the young men boarders exchanged playful slang with the adolescent members of the court. From that moment we felt that our claims to gentility were for ever abandoned.

Yet we enjoyed intervals of unalloyed contentment. When the twilight toned down the hard outlines of the oaks and made shadowy clumps and formless masses of other bushes, it was quite romantic to sit by the window and inhale the faint, sad odour of the fennel in the walks below. Perhaps this economical pleasure was much enhanced by a picture in my memory, whose faded colours the odour of this humble plant never failed to restore. So I often sat there of evenings and closed my eyes until the forms and benches of a country schoolroom came back to me, redolent with the incense of fennel covertly stowed away in my desk, and gazed again in silent rapture on the round red cheeks and long black braids of that peerless creature whose glance had often caused my cheeks to glow over the preternatural collar which at that period of my boyhood it was my pride and privilege to wear. As I fear I may be often thought hypercritical and censorious in these articles, I am willing to record this as one of the advantages of our new house, not mentioned in the advertisement nor chargeable in the rent. May the present tenant, who is a stockbroker, and who impresses me with the idea of having always been called "Mr." from his cradle up, enjoy this advantage, and try sometimes to remember he was a boy!

III

Soon after I moved into Happy Valley I was struck with the remarkable infelicity of its title. Generous as Californians are in the use of adjectives, this passed into

the domain of irony. But I was inclined to think it sincere,—the production of a weak but gushing mind, just as the feminine nomenclature of streets in the vicinity was evidently bestowed by one in habitual communion with "Friendship's Gifts" and "Affection's Offerings."

Our house on Laura Matilda Street looked somewhat like a toy Swiss cottage,—a style of architecture so prevalent, that in walking down the block it was quite difficult to resist an impression of fresh glue and pine shavings. The few shade-trees might have belonged originally to those oval Christmas boxes which contain toy villages; and even the people who sat by the windows had a stiffness that made them appear surprisingly unreal and artificial. A little dog belonging to a neighbour was known to the members of my household by the name of "Glass," from the general suggestion he gave of having been spun of that article. Perhaps I have somewhat exaggerated these illustrations of the dapper nicety of our neighbourhood,—a neatness and conciseness which I think have a general tendency to belittle, dwarf, and contract their objects. For we gradually fell into small ways and narrow ideas, and to some extent squared the round world outside to the correct angles of Laura Matilda Street.

One reason for this insincere quality may have been the fact that the very foundations of our neighbourhood were artificial. Laura Matilda Street was "made ground." The land, not yet quite reclaimed, was continually struggling with its old enemy. We had not been long in our new home before we found an older tenant, not yet wholly divested of his rights, who sometimes showed himself in clammy perspiration on the basement walls, whose damp breath chilled our dining-room, and in the night struck a mortal chilliness through the house. There were no patent fastenings that could keep him out, no writ of unlawful detainer that could eject him. In the winter his presence was quite palpable; he sapped the roots of the trees, he gurgled under the kitchen floor, he wrought an unwholesome greenness on the side of the veranda. In summer he became invisible, but still exercised a familiar influence over the locality. He planted little stitches in the small of the back, sought

out old aches and weak joints, and sportively punched the tenants of the Swiss cottage under the ribs. He inveigled little children to play with him, but his plays generally ended in scarlet-fever, diphtheria, whooping-cough, and measles. He sometimes followed strong men about until they sickened suddenly and took to their beds. But he kept the green plants in good order, and was very fond of verdure, bestowing it even upon lath and plaster and soulless stone. He was generally invisible, as I have said; but some time after I had moved, I saw him one morning from the hill stretching his grey wings over the valley, like some fabulous vampire, who had spent the night sucking the wholesome juices of the sleepers below, and was sluggish from the effects of his repast. It was then that I recognized him as Malaria, and knew his abode to be the dread Valley of the Shadow of Miasma,—miscalled the Happy Valley!

On week-days there was a pleasant melody of boiler-making from the foundries, and the gasworks in the vicinity sometimes lent a mild perfume to the breeze. Our street was usually quiet, however,—a footfall being sufficient to draw the inhabitants to their front windows, and to oblige an incautious trespasser to run the gauntlet of batteries of blue and black eyes on either side of the way. A carriage passing through it communicated a singular thrill to the floors, and caused the china on the dining-table to rattle. Although we were comparatively free from the prevailing winds, wandering gusts sometimes got bewildered and strayed unconsciously into our street, and finding an unencumbered field, incontinently set up a shriek of joy, and went gleefully to work on the clothes-lines and chimney-pots, and had a good time generally until they were quite exhausted. I have a very vivid picture in my memory of an organ-grinder who was at one time blown into the end of our street, and actually blown through it in spite of several ineffectual efforts to come to a stand before the different dwellings, but who was finally whirled out of the other extremity, still playing and vainly endeavouring to pursue his unhallowed calling. But these were noteworthy exceptions to the calm and even tenor of our life.

There was contiguity but not much sociability in our

neighbourhood. From my bedroom window I could plainly distinguish the peculiar kind of victuals spread on my neighbour's dining-table; while, on the other hand, he obtained an equally uninterrupted view of the mysteries of my toilet. Still that "low vice, curiosity," was regulated by certain laws, and a kind of rude chivalry invested our observation. A pretty girl, whose bedroom window was the cynosure of neighbouring eyes, was once brought under the focus of an opera-glass in the hands of one of our ingenious youth; but this act met such prompt and universal condemnation, as an unmanly advantage, from the lips of married men and bachelors who didn't own opera-glasses, that it was never repeated.

With this brief sketch I conclude my record of the neighbourhoods I have moved from. I have moved from many others since then, but they have generally presented features not dissimilar to the three I have endeavoured to describe in these pages. I offer them as types containing the salient peculiarities of all. Let no inconsiderate reader rashly move on account of them. My experience has not been cheaply bought. From the nettle Change I have tried to pluck the flower Security. Draymen have grown rich at my expense. House-agents have known me and were glad, and landlords have risen up to meet me from afar. The force of habit impels me still to consult all the bills I see in the streets, nor can the war telegrams divert my first attention from the advertising columns of the daily papers. I repeat, let no man think I have disclosed the weaknesses of the neighbourhood, nor rashly open that closet which contains the secret skeleton of his dwelling. My carpets have been altered to fit all sized odd-shaped apartments from parallelopiped to hexagons. Much of my furniture has been distributed among my former dwellings. These limbs have stretched upon uncarpeted floors or have been let down suddenly from imperfectly established bedsteads. I have dined in the parlour and slept in the back kitchen. Yet the result of these sacrifices and trials may be briefly summed up in the statement that I am now on the eve of removal from my PRESENT NEIGHBOURHOOD.

MY SUBURBAN RESIDENCE

I LIVE in the suburbs. My residence, to quote the pleasing fiction of the advertisement, "is within fifteen minutes' walk of the City Hall." Why the City Hall should be considered as an eligible terminus of anybody's walk under any circumstances, I have not been able to determine. Never having walked from my residence to that place, I am unable to verify the assertion, though I may state as a purely abstract and separate proposition, that it takes me the better part of an hour to reach Montgomery Street.

My selection of locality was a compromise between my wife's desire to go into the country and my own predilections for civic habitation. Like most compromises, it ended in retaining the objectionable features of both propositions; I procured the inconveniences of the country without losing the discomforts of the city. I increased my distance from the butcher and greengrocer without approximating to herds and kitchen-gardens. But I anticipate.

Fresh air was to be the principal thing sought for. That there might be too much of this did not enter into my calculations. The first day I entered my residence, it blew; the second day was windy; the third, fresh, with a strong breeze stirring; on the fourth, it blew; on the fifth, there was a gale, which has continued to the present writing.

That the air is fresh the above statement sufficiently establishes. That it is bracing I argue from the fact that I find it impossible to open the shutters on the windward side of the house. That it is healthy I am also convinced,

believing that there is no other force in Nature that could so buffet and ill-use a person without serious injury to him. Let me offer an instance. The path to my door crosses a slight eminence. The unconscious visitor, a little exhausted by the ascent and the general effects of the gentle gales which he has faced in approaching my hospitable mansion, relaxes his efforts, smooths his brow, and approaches with a fascinating smile. Rash and too confident man! The wind delivers a succession of rapid blows, and he is thrown back. He staggers up again, in the language of the P. R., "smiling and confident." The wind now makes for a vulnerable point, and gets his hat in chancery. All ceremony is now thrown away; the luckless wretch seizes his hat with both hands and charges madly at the front door. Inch by inch the wind contests the ground; another struggle and he stands upon the veranda. On such occasions I make it a point to open the door myself, with a calmness and serenity that shall offer a marked contrast to his feverish and excited air, and shall throw suspicion of inebriety upon him. If he be inclined to timidity and bashfulness, during the rest of the evening he is all too conscious of the disarrangement of his hair and cravat. If he is less sensitive, the result is often more distressing. A valued elderly friend once called upon me after undergoing a twofold struggle with the wind and a large Newfoundland dog (which I keep for reasons hereinafter stated), and not only his hat, but his wig had suffered. He spent the evening with me, totally unconscious of the fact that his hair presented the singular spectacle of having been parted diagonally from the right temple to the left ear. When ladies called, my wife preferred to receive them. They were generally hysterical, and often in tears. I remember, one Sunday, to have been startled by what appeared to be the balloon from Hayes Valley drifting rapidly past my conservatory, closely followed by the Newfoundland dog. I rushed to the front door, but was anticipated by my wife. A strange lady appeared at lunch, but the phenomenon remained otherwise unaccounted for. Egress from my residence is much more easy. My guests seldom "stand upon the order of their going, but go at once," the Newfoundland dog playfully harassing their rear. I was

standing one day, with my hand on the open hall door, in serious conversation with the minister of the parish, when the back door was cautiously opened. The watchful breeze seized the opportunity, and charged through the defenceless passage. The front door closed violently in the middle of a sentence, precipitating the reverend gentleman into the garden. The Newfoundland dog, with that sagacity for which his race is so distinguished, at once concluded that a personal collision had taken place between myself and visitor, and flew to my defence. The reverend gentleman never called again.

The Newfoundland dog above alluded to was part of a system of protection which my suburban home once required. Robberies were frequent in the neighbourhood, and my only fowl fell a victim to the spoiler's art. One night I awoke and found a man in my room. With singular delicacy and respect for the feelings of others, he had been careful not to awaken any of the sleepers, and retired upon my rising without waiting for any suggestion. Touched by his delicacy, I forbore giving the alarm until after he had made good his retreat. I then wanted to go after a policeman, but my wife remonstrated, as this would leave the house exposed. Remembering the gentlemanly conduct of the burglar, I suggested the plan of following him and requesting him to give the alarm as he went in town. But this proposition was received with equal disfavour. The next day I procured a dog and a revolver. The former went off, but the latter wouldn't. I then got a new dog and chained him, and a duelling pistol with a hair-trigger. The result was so far satisfactory that neither could be approached with safety, and for some time I left them out, indifferently, during the night. But the chain one day gave way, and the dog, evidently having no other attachment to the house, took the opportunity to leave. His place was soon filled by the Newfoundland, whose fidelity and sagacity I have just recorded.

Space is one of the desirable features of my suburban residence. I do not know the number of acres the grounds contain except from the inordinate quantity of hose required for irrigating. I perform daily, like some gentle shepherd, upon a quarter-inch pipe without any

visible result, and have had serious thoughts of contracting with some disbanded fire company for their hose and equipments. It is quite a walk to the wood-house. Every day some new feature of the grounds is discovered. My youngest boy was one day missing for several hours. His head — a peculiarly venerable and striking object — was at last discovered just above the grass at some distance from the house. On examination, he was found comfortably seated in a disused drain, in company with a silver spoon and a dead rat. On being removed from this locality he howled dismally and refused to be comforted.

The view from my suburban residence is fine. Lone Mountain, with its white obelisks, is a suggestive if not cheering termination of the vista in one direction, while the old receiving vault of Yerba Buena Cemetery limits the view in another. Most of the funerals which take place pass my house. My children, with the charming imitativeness that belongs to youth, have caught the spirit of these passing *cortèges*, and reproduce in the back yard, with creditable skill, the salient features of the lugubrious procession. A doll, from whose features all traces of vitality and expression have been removed, represents the deceased. Yet unfortunately I have been obliged to promise them more active participation in this ceremony at some future time, and I fear that they look anxiously forward with the glowing impatience of youth to the speedy removal of some one of my circle of friends. I am told that the eldest, with the unsophisticated frankness that belongs to his age, made a personal request to that effect to one of my acquaintances. One singular result of the frequency of these funerals is the development of a critical and fastidious taste in such matters on the part of myself and family. If I may so express myself without irreverence, we seldom turn out for anything less than six carriages. Any number over this is usually breathlessly announced by Bridget as "Here's another, mum,—and a good long one."

With these slight drawbacks my suburban residence is charming. To the serious poet and writer of elegiac verses, the aspect of Nature, viewed from my veranda, is suggestive. I myself have experienced moments when

the "sad mechanic exercise" of verse would have been of infinite relief. The following stanzas, by a young friend who has been stopping with me for the benefit of his health, addressed to a duck that frequented a small pond in the vicinity of my mansion, may be worthy of perusal. I think I have met the idea conveyed in the first verse in some of Hood's prose, but as my friend assures me that Hood was too conscientious to appropriate anything not his own, I conclude I am mistaken.

LINES TO A WATER-FOWL

(*Intra Muros*)

I

Fowl, that sing'st in yonder pool,
Where the summer winds blow cool,
Are there hydropathic cures
For the ills that man endures?
Know'st thou Priessnitz? What? alack!
Hast no other word but "Quack"?

II

Cleopatra's barge might pale
To the splendours of thy tail,
Or the stately caravel
Of some "high-pooped admiral."
Never yet left such a wake
E'en the navigator Drake!

III

Dux thou art, and leader, too,
Heeding not what's "falling due";
Knowing not of debt or dun,—
Thou dost heed no bill but one;
And, though scarce conceivable,
That's a bill receivable,
Made—that thou thy stars mightst thank—
Payable at the next bank.

THE RUINS OF SAN FRANCISCO

TOWARDS the close of the nineteenth century, the city of San Francisco was totally engulfed by an earthquake. Although the whole coast-line must have been much shaken, the accident seems to have been purely local, and even the city of Oakland escaped. Schwappelfurt, the celebrated German geologist, has endeavoured to explain this singular fact by suggesting that there are some things the earth cannot swallow,—a statement that should be received with some caution, as exceeding the latitude of ordinary geological speculation.

Historians disagree in the exact date of the calamity. Tulu Krish, the well-known New Zealander, whose admirable speculations on the ruins of St. Paul's as seen from London Bridge, have won for him the attentive consideration of the scientific world, fixes the occurrence in A.D. 1880. This, supposing the city to have been actually founded in 1850, as asserted, would give but thirty years for it to have assumed the size and proportions it had evidently attained at the time of its destruction. It is not our purpose, however, to question the conclusions of the justly-famed Maorian philosopher. Our present business lies with the excavations that are now being prosecuted by order of the Hawaiian Government upon the site of the lost city. Every one is familiar with the story of its discovery. For many years the Bay of San Francisco had been famed for the luscious quality of its oysters. It is stated that a dredger one day raked up a large bell, which proved to belong to the City Hall, and led to the discovery of the cupola of that building. The attention of the Government was at once directed to the

spot. The Bay of San Francisco was speedily drained by a system of patent siphons, and the city, deeply embedded in mud, brought to light after a burial of many centuries. The City Hall, Post Office, Mint, and Custom House were readily recognized by the large full-fed barnacles which adhered to their walls. Shortly afterwards the first skeleton was discovered, that of a broker, whose position in the upper strata of mud nearer the surface was supposed to be owing to the exceeding buoyancy or inflation of scrip which he had secured about his person while endeavouring to escape. Many skeletons, supposed to be those of females, encompassed in that peculiar steel coop or cage which seems to have been worn by the women of that period, were also found in the upper stratum. Alexis von Puffer, in his admirable work on San Francisco, accounts for the position of these unfortunate creatures by asserting that the steel cage was originally the frame of a parachute-like garment which distended the skirt, and in the submersion of the city prevented them from sinking. "If anything," says Von Puffer, "could have been wanting to add intensity to the horrible catastrophe which took place as the waters first entered the city, it would have been furnished in the forcible separation of the sexes at this trying moment. Buoyed up by their peculiar garments, the female population instantly ascended to the surface. As the drowning husband turned his eyes above, what must have been his agony as he saw his wife shooting upward, and knew that he was debarred the privilege of perishing with her? To the lasting honour of the male inhabitants be it said that but few seem to have availed themselves of their wives' superior levity. Only one skeleton was found still grasping the ankles of another in their upward journey to the surface."

For many years California had been subject to slight earthquakes, more or less generally felt, but not of sufficient importance to awaken anxiety or fear. Perhaps the absorbing nature of the San Franciscans' pursuit of gold-getting, which metal seems to have been valuable in those days, and actually used as a medium of currency, rendered the inhabitants reckless of all other matters. Everything tends to show that the calamity was totally

unlooked for. We quote the graphic language of Schwappelfurt :—

" The morning of the tremendous catastrophe probably dawned upon the usual restless crowd of gold-getters intent upon their several avocations. The streets were filled with the expanded figures of gaily dressed women, acknowledging with coy glances the respectful salutations of beaux as they gracefully raised their remarkable cylindrical head-coverings, a model of which is still preserved in the Honolulu Museum. The brokers had gathered at their respective temples. The shopmen were exhibiting their goods. The idlers, or ' Bummers,'—a term applied to designate an aristocratic, privileged class, who enjoyed immunities from labour, and from whom a majority of the rulers were chosen,—were listlessly regarding the promenaders from the street-corners or the doors of their bibulous temples. A slight premonitory thrill runs through the city. The busy life of this restless microcosm is arrested. The shopkeeper pauses as he elevates the goods to bring them into a favourable light, and the glib professional recommendation sticks on his tongue. In the drinking saloon the glass is checked halfway to the lips ; on the streets the promenaders pause. Another thrill, and the city begins to go down, a few of the more persistent topers tossing off their liquor at the same moment. Beyond a terrible sensation of nausea, the crowds who now throng the streets do not realize the extent of the catastrophe. The waters of the bay recede at first from the centre of depression, assuming a concave shape, the outer edge of the circle towering many thousand feet above the city. Another convulsion, and the water instantly resumes its level. The city is smoothly engulfed nine thousand feet below, and the regular swell of the Pacific calmly rolls over it. Terrible," says Schwappelfurt, in conclusion, " as the calamity must have been in direct relation to the individuals immediately concerned therein, we cannot but admire its artistic management: the division of the catastrophe into three periods, the completeness of the cataclysms, and the rare combination of sincerity of intention with felicity of execution."

MORNING ON THE AVENUES

(AN EASTERN SKETCH)

I HAVE always been an early riser. The popular legend that "Early to bed and early to rise," invariably and rhythmically resulted in healthfulness, opulence, and wisdom, I beg here to solemnly protest against. As an "unhealthy" man, as an "unwealthy" man, and doubtless by virtue of this protest an "unwise" man, I am, I think, a glaring example of the untruth of the proposition.

For instance, it is my misfortune, as an early riser, to live upon a certain fashionable avenue, where the practice of early rising is confined exclusively to domestics. Consequently, when I issue forth on this broad, beautiful thoroughfare at 6 A.M., I cannot help thinking that I am to a certain extent desecrating its traditional customs. I have more than once detected the milkman winking at the maid with a diabolical suggestion that I was returning from a carouse, and Roundsman 9999 has once or twice followed me a block or two with the evident impression that I was a burglar returning from a successful evening out. Nevertheless, these various indiscretions have brought me into contact with a kind of character and phenomena whose existence I might otherwise have doubted.

First, let me speak of a large class of working people whose presence is, I think, unknown to many of those gentlemen who are in the habit of legislating or writing about them. A majority of these early risers in the neighbourhood of what I may call my "beat" carry with them unmistakable evidences of the American type. I

have seen so little of that foreign element that is popularly supposed to be the real working class of the great metropolis that I have often been inclined to doubt statistics. The ground that my morning rambles cover extends from Twenty-third Street to Washington Park, and laterally from Sixth Avenue to Broadway. The early rising artisans that I meet here, crossing three avenues, the milkmen, the truck-drivers, the workman, even the occasional tramp—wherever they may come from or go to, or what their real *habitat* may be—are invariably Americans. I give it as an honest record—whatever its significance or insignificance may be—that during the last year, between the hours of 6 and 8 A.M., in and about the locality I have mentioned, I have met with but two unmistakable foreigners—an Irishman and a German. Perhaps it may be necessary to add to this statement that the people I have met at those hours I have never seen at any other time in the same locality.

As to their quality, the artisans were always cleanly dressed, intelligent, and respectful. I remember, however, one morning, when the ice storm of the preceding night had made the sidewalks glistening, smiling, and impassable, to have journeyed down the middle of Twelfth Street with a mechanic so sooty as to absolutely leave a legible track in the snowy pathway. He was the fireman attending the engine in a noted manufactory, and in our brief conversation he told me many facts regarding his profession, which I fear interested me more than the after-dinner speeches of some distinguished gentlemen I had heard the preceding night. I remember that he spoke of his engine as "she," and related certain circumstances regarding her inconsistency, her aberrations, her pettishnesses, that seemed to justify the feminine gender. I have a grateful recollection of him as being one who introduced me to a restaurant where chicory, thinly disguised as coffee, was served with bread at five cents a cup, and that he honourably insisted on being the host, and paid his ten cents for our mutual entertainment with the grace of a Barmecide. I remember, in a more genial season—I think, early summer—to have found upon the benches of Washington Park a gentleman who informed me that his profession was that of a "pigeon-catcher," that he

contracted with certain parties in this city to furnish these birds for what he called their "pigeon-shoots," and that, in fulfilling this contract he often was obliged to go as far west as Minnesota. The details he gave, his methods of entrapping the birds, his study of their habits, his evident belief that the city pigeon, however well provided for by parties who fondly believed the bird to be their own, was really *feræ naturæ*, and consequently "game" for the pigeon-catcher, were all so interesting that I listened to him with undisguised delight. When he had finished, however, he said, "And now, sir, being a poor man with a large family, and work bein' rather slack this year, if ye could oblige me with the loan of a dollar and your address, until remittances what I'm expecting come in from Chicago, you'll be doin' me a great service, etc., etc." He got the dollar, of course (his information was worth twice the money), but I imagine he lost my address. Yet it is only fair to say that some days after, relating this experience to a prominent sporting man, he corroborated all its details, and satisfied me that my pigeon-catching friend, although unfortunate, was not an impostor.

And this leads me to speak of the birds. Of all early risers, my most importunate, aggressive, and obtrusive companions are the English sparrows. Between 7 and 8 A.M. they seem to possess the avenue and resent my intrusion. I remember, one chilly morning, when I came upon a flurry of them, chattering, quarreling, skimming, and alighting just before me, I stopped at last, fearful of stepping on the nearest. To my great surprise, instead of flying away, he contested the ground inch by inch before my advancing foot, with wings outspread and open bill outstretched, very much like that ridiculous burlesque of the American eagle, which the common canary bird assumes when teased. "Did you ever see 'em wash in the fountain in the square?" said Roundsman 9999, early one summer morning. I had not. "I guess they're there yet. Come and see 'em," he said, and complacently accompanied me two blocks. I don't know which was the finer sight: the thirty or forty winged sprites dashing in and out of the basin, each the very impersonation of a light-hearted, mischievous Puck, or this grave policeman, with badge and club and shield, looking

on with delight. Perhaps my visible amusement, or the spectacle of a brother policeman just then going past with a couple of "drunk and disorderlies," recalled his official responsibility and duties. "They say them foreign sparrows drives all the other birds away," he added severely, and then walked off with a certain reserved manner, as if it were not impossible for him to be called upon some morning to take the entire feathered assembly into custody, and if so called upon he should do it.

Next, I think, in procession among the early risers, and surely next in fresh and innocent exterior, were the work-women or shop-girls. I have seen this beautiful avenue on its gala afternoon bright with the beauty and elegance of an opulent city, but I have seen no more beautiful faces than I have seen among these humbler sisters. As the mere habits of dress in America, except to a very acute critic, give no suggestion of the rank of the wearer, I can imagine an inexperienced foreigner utterly mystified and confounded by these girls, who perhaps work a sewing machine or walk the long floors of a fashionable dry-goods shop. I remember one face and figure, faultless and complete—modestly yet most becomingly dressed—indeed a figure that Compte-Calix might have taken for one of his exquisite studies, which, between 7 and 8 A.M., passed through Eleventh Street, between Sixth Avenue and Broadway. So exceptionally fine was her carriage, so chaste and virginal her presence, and so refined and even spiritual her features, that, as a literary man, I would have been justified in taking her for the heroine of a society novel. Indeed I had already woven a little romance about her, when one morning she overtook me accompanied by another girl—pretty, but of a different type—with whom she was earnestly conversing. As the two passed me there fell from her faultless lips the following astounding sentence :—"And I told him if he didn't like it he might lump it, and he travelled off on his left ear, you bet." Heaven knows what indiscretion this speech saved me from, but the reader will understand what a sting the pain of rejection might have added to it by the above formula.

The "morning cocktail" men come next in my experience of early rising. I used to take my early cup of coffee in the café of a certain fashionable restaurant that had a

bar attached. I could not help noticing that, unlike the usual social libations of my countrymen, the act of taking a morning cocktail was a solitary one. In the course of my experience I cannot recall the fact of two men taking an ante-breakfast cocktail together. On the contrary, I have observed the male animal rush savagely at the bar, demand his drink of the bar-keeper, swallow it, and hasten from the scene of his early debauchery, or else take it in a languid, perfunctory manner, which, I think, must have been insulting to the bar-keeper. I have observed two men whom I had seen drinking amicably together the preceding night, standing gloomily at the opposite corners of the bar, evidently trying not to see each other, and making the matter a confidential one with the bar-keeper. I have seen even a thin disguise of simplicity assumed. I remember an elderly gentleman, of most respectable exterior, who used to enter the café as if he had strayed there accidentally. After looking around carefully, and yet unostentatiously, he would walk to the bar, and, with an air of affected carelessness, state that "not feeling well this morning, he guessed he would take—well, he would leave it to the bar-keeper." The bar-keeper invariably gave him a stiff brandy cocktail. When the old gentleman had done this half a dozen times, I think I lost faith in him. I tried afterward to glean from the bar-keeper some facts regarding those experiences, but I am proud to say that he was honourably reticent. Indeed, I think it may be said, truthfully, that there is no record of a bar-keeper who has been "interviewed." Clergymen and doctors have, but it is well for the weaknesses of humanity that the line should be drawn somewhere.

And this reminds me that one distressing phase of early rising is the incongruous and unpleasant contact of the preceding night. The social yesterday is not fairly over before 9 A.M. to-day, and there is always a humorous, sometimes a pathetic lapping over the edges. I remember one morning at 6 o'clock to have been overtaken by a carriage that drew up beside me. I recognized the coachman, who touched his hat apologetically, as if he wished me to understand that he was not at all responsible for the condition of his master, and I went to the door of the carriage. I was astonished to find two young friends of

mine, in correct evening dress, reclining on each other's shoulders and sleeping the sleep of the justly inebriated. I stated this fact to the coachman. Not a muscle of his well-trained face answered to my smile. But he said, "You see, sir, we've been out all night, and more than four blocks below, they saw you, and wanted me to hail you, but you know you stopped to speak to a gentleman, and so I sorter lingered, and I drove round the block once or twice and I guess I've got 'em quiet again." I looked in the carriage-door once more on these sons of Belial. They were sleeping quite unconsciously. A *boutonnière* in the lapel of the younger one's coat had shed its leaves, which were scattered over him with a ridiculous suggestion of the "babes in the wood," and I closed the carriage door softly. "I suppose I'd better take 'em home, sir?" queried the coachman gravely. "Well, yes, John, perhaps you had."

There is another picture in my early rising experience that I wish was as simply and honestly ludicrous. It was at a time when the moral sentiment of the metropolis, expressed through ordinance and special legislation, had declared itself against a certain form of "variety" entertainment, and had, as usual, proceeded against the performers, and not the people who encouraged them. I remember, one frosty morning, to have encountered in Washington Park my honest friend, Sergeant X. and Roundsman 9999 conveying a party of these derelicts to the station. One of the women, evidently, had not had time to change her apparel, and had thinly disguised the flowing robe and loose *cestus* of Venus under a ragged "waterproof"; while the other, who had doubtless posed for Mercury, hid her shapely tights in a plaid shawl, and changed her winged sandals for a pair of "arctics." Their rouged faces were streaked and stained with tears. The man who was with them, the male of their species, had but hastily washed himself of his Ethiopian presentment, and was still black behind the ears; while an exaggerated shirt collar and frilled shirt made his occasional indignant profanity irresistibly ludicrous. So they fared on over the glittering snow, against the rosy sunlight of the square, the grey front of the University building, with a few twittering sparrows in the foreground, beside the two policemen, quiet and impassive as fate. I could not

help thinking of the distinguished A., the most fashionable B., the wealthy and respectable C., the sentimental D., and the man of the world E., who were present at the performance, whose distinguished patronage had called it into life, and who were then resting quietly in their beds, while these haggard servants of their pleasaunce were haled over the snow to punishment and ignominy.

Let me finish by recalling one brighter picture of that same season. It was early—so early that the cross of Grace Church had, when I looked up, just caught the morning sun, and for a moment flamed like a crusader's symbol. And then the grace and glory of that exquisite spire became slowly visible. Fret by fret the sunlight stole slowly down, quivering and dropping from each, until at last the whole church beamed in rosy radiance. Up and down the long avenue the street lay in shadow; by some strange trick of the atmosphere the sun seemed to have sought out only that graceful structure for its blessing. And then there was a dull rumble. It was the first omnibus—the first throb in the great artery of the reviving city. I looked up. The church was again in shadow.

A JERSEY CENTENARIAN

I HAVE seen her at last. She is a hundred and seven years old, and remembers George Washington quite distinctly. It is somewhat confusing, however, that she also remembers a contemporaneous Josiah W. Perkins of Basking Ridge, N.J., and, I think, has the impression that Perkins was the better man. Perkins, at the close of the last century, paid her some little attention. There are a few things that a really noble woman of a hundred and seven never forgets.

It was Perkins who said to her in 1795, in the streets of Philadelphia, "Shall I show thee General Washington?" Then she said careless-like (for you know, child, at that time it wasn't what it is now to see General Washington), she said, "So do, Josiah, so do!" Then he pointed to a tall man who got out of a carriage, and went into a large house. He was larger than you be. He wore his own hair — not powdered; had a flowered chintz vest, with yellow breeches and blue stockings, and a broad-brimmed hat. In summer he wore a white straw hat, and at his farm at Basking Ridge he always wore it. At this point it became too evident that she was describing the clothes of the all-fascinating Perkins: so I gently but firmly led her back to Washington. Then it appeared that she did not remember exactly what he wore. To assist her, I sketched the general historic dress of that period. She said she thought he was dressed like that. Emboldened by my success, I added a hat of Charles II. and pointed shoes of the eleventh century. She endorsed these with such cheerful alacrity, that I dropped the subject.

The house upon which I had stumbled, or, rather, to

which my horse—a Jersey hack, accustomed to historic research—had brought me, was low and quaint. Like most old houses, it had the appearance of being encroached upon by the surrounding glebe, as if it were already half in the grave, with a sod or two, in the shape of moss thrown on it, like ashes on ashes, and dust on dust. A wooden house, instead of acquiring dignity with age, is apt to lose its youth and respectability together. A porch, with scant, sloping seats, from which even the winter's snow must have slid uncomfortably, projected from a doorway that opened most unjustifiably into a small sitting-room. There was no vestibule, or *locus paenitentiae*, for the embarrassed or bashful visitor: he passed at once from the security of the public road into shameful privacy. And here, in the mellow autumnal sunlight, that, streaming through the maples and sumach on the opposite bank, flickered and danced upon the floor, she sat and discoursed of George Washington, and thought of Perkins. She was quite in keeping with the house and the season, albeit a little in advance of both; her skin being of a faded russet, and her hands so like dead November leaves, that I fancied they even rustled when she moved them.

For all that, she was quite bright and cheery; her faculties still quite vigorous, although performing irregularly and spasmodically. It was somewhat discomposing, I confess, to observe, that at times her lower jaw would drop, leaving her speechless, until one of the family would notice it, and raise it smartly into place with a slight snap,—an operation always performed in such an habitual, perfunctory manner, generally in passing to and fro in their household duties, that it was very trying to the spectator. It was still more embarrassing to observe that the dear old lady had evidently no knowledge of this, but believed she was still talking, and that, on resuming her actual vocal utterance, she was often abrupt and incoherent, beginning always in the middle of a sentence, and often in the middle of a word. "Sometimes," said her daughter, a giddy, thoughtless young thing of eighty-five,—"sometimes just moving her head sort of unhitches her jaw; and, if we don't happen to see it, she'll go on talking for hours without ever making a sound." Although I was convinced, after this, that during my interview I

had lost several important revelations regarding George Washington through these peculiar lapses, I could not help reflecting how beneficent were these provisions of the Creator,—how, if properly studied and applied, they might be fraught with happiness to mankind,—how a slight jostle or jar at a dinner-party might make the post-prandial eloquence of garrulous senility satisfactory to itself, yet harmless to others,—how a more intimate knowledge of anatomy, introduced into the domestic circle, might make a home tolerable at least, if not happy, —how a long-suffering husband, under the pretence of a conjugal caress, might so unhook his wife's condyloid process as to allow the flow of expostulation, criticism, or denunciation to go on with gratification to her, and perfect immunity to himself.

But this was not getting back to George Washington and the early struggles of the Republic. So I returned to the commander-in-chief, but found, after one or two leading questions, that she was rather inclined to resent his reappearance on the stage. Her reminiscences here were chiefly social and local, and more or less flavoured with Perkins. We got back as far as the Revolutionary epoch, or, rather, her impressions of that epoch, when it was still fresh in the public mind. And here I came upon an incident, purely personal and local, but, withal, so novel, weird, and uncanny, that for a while I fear it quite displaced George Washington in my mind, and tinged the autumnal fields beyond with a red that was not of the sumach. I do not remember to have read of it in the books. I do not know that it is entirely authentic. It was attested to me by mother and daughter, as an uncontradicted tradition.

In the little field beyond, where the plough still turns up musket-balls and cartridge-boxes, took place one of those irregular skirmishes between the militiamen and Knyphausen's stragglers that made the retreat historical. A Hessian soldier, wounded in both legs and utterly helpless, dragged himself to the cover of a hazel-copse, and lay there hidden for two days. On the third day, maddened by thirst, he managed to creep to the rail-fence of an adjoining farm-house, but found himself unable to mount it or pass through. There was no one in the

house but a little girl of six or seven years. He called to her, and in a faint voice asked for water. She returned to the house, as if to comply with his request, but, mounting a chair, took from the chimney a heavily-loaded Queen Anne musket, and going to the door, took deliberate aim at the helpless intruder, and fired. The man fell back dead without a groan. She replaced the musket, and, returning to the fence, covered the body with boughs and leaves, until it was hidden. Two or three days after, she related the occurrence in a careless, casual way, and leading the way to the fence, with a piece of bread and butter in her guileless little fingers, pointed out the result of her simple, unsophisticated effort. The Hessian was decently buried, but I could not find out what became of the little girl. Nobody seemed to remember. I trust that, in after-years, she was happily married; that no Jersey Lovelace attempted to trifle with a heart whose impulses were so prompt, and whose purposes were so sincere. They did not seem to know if she had married or not. Yet it does not seem probable that such simplicity of conception, frankness of expression, and deftness of execution, were lost to posterity, or that they failed, in their time and season, to give flavour to the domestic felicity of the period. Beyond this, the story perhaps has little value, except as an offset to the usual anecdotes of Hessian atrocity.

They had their financial panics even in Jersey in the old days. She remembered when Dr. White married your cousin Mary—or was it Susan?—yes, it was Susan. She remembers that your Uncle Harry brought in an armful of bank-notes,—paper money, you know,—and threw them in the corner, saying they were no good to anybody. She remembered playing with them, and giving them to your Aunt Anna—no, child, it was your own mother, bless your heart! Some of them was marked as high as a hundred dollars. Everybody kept gold and silver in a stocking, or in a "chaney" vase, like that. You never used money to buy anything. When Josiah went to Springfield to buy anything, he took a cartload of things with him to exchange. That yaller picture-frame was paid for in greenings. But then people knew jest what they had. They didn't fritter their

substance away in unchristian trifles, like your father, Eliza Jane, who doesn't know there is a God who will smite him hip and thigh; for vengeance is mine, and those that believe in me—— But here, singularly enough, the inferior maxillaries gave out, and her jaw dropped. (I noticed that her giddy daughter of eighty-five was sitting near her; but I do not pretend to connect this fact with the arrested flow of personal disclosure.) Howbeit, when she recovered her speech again, it appeared she was complaining of the weather.

The seasons had changed very much since your father went to sea. The winters used to be terrible in those days. When she went over to Springfield, in June, she saw the snow still on Watson's Ridge. There were whole days when you couldn't git over to William Henry's, their next neighbour, a quarter of a mile away. It was that drefful winter that the Spanish sailor was found. You don't remember the Spanish sailor, Eliza Jane—it was before your time. There was a little personal skirmishing here, which I feared, at first, might end in a suspension of maxillary functions, and the loss of the story; but here it is. Ah, me! it is a pure white winter idyll: how shall I sing it this bright, gay autumnal day?

It was a terrible night, that winter's night, when she and the century were young together. The sun was lost at three o'clock: the snowy night came down like a white sheet, that flapped around the house, beat at the windows with its edges, and at last wrapped it in a close embrace. In the middle of the night, they thought they heard above the wind a voice crying, "Christus, Christus!" in a foreign tongue. They opened the door,—no easy task in the north wind that pressed its strong shoulders against it,—but nothing was to be seen but the drifting snow. The next morning dawned on fences hidden, and a landscape changed and obliterated with drift. During this day, they again heard the cry of "Christus!" this time faint and hidden, like a child's voice. They searched in vain; the drifted snow hid its secret. On the third day they broke a path to the fence, and then they heard the cry distinctly. Digging down, they found the body of a man,—a Spanish sailor, dark and bearded, with ear-rings in his ears. As they stood gazing down at his cold and

pulseless figure, the cry of "Christus!" again rose upon the wintry air; and they turned and fled in superstitious terror to the house. And then one of the children, bolder than the rest, knelt down, and opened the dead man's rough pea-jacket, and found—what think you? a little blue-and-green parrot, nestling against his breast. It was the bird that had echoed mechanically the last despairing cry of the life that was given to save it. It was the bird, that ever after, amid outlandish oaths and wilder sailor-songs, that I fear often shocked the pure ears of its gentle mistress, and brought scandal into the Jerseys, still retained that one weird and mournful cry.

The sun meanwhile was sinking behind the steadfast range beyond, and I could not help feeling that I must depart with my wants unsatisfied. I had brought away no historic fragment: I absolutely knew little or nothing new regarding George Washington. I had been addressed variously by the names of different members of the family who were dead and forgotten; I had stood for an hour in the past: yet I had not added to my historical knowledge, nor the practical benefit of your readers. I spoke once more of Washington, and she replied with a reminiscence of Perkins.

Stand forth, O Josiah W. Perkins of Basking Ridge, N. J. Thou wast of little account in thy life, I warrant; thou didst not even feel the greatness of thy day and time; thou didst criticize thy superiors; thou wast small and narrow in thy ways; thy very name and grave are unknown and uncared for: but thou wast once kind to a woman who survived thee, and, lo! thy name is again spoken of men, and for a moment lifted up above thy betters.

POEM

ELEGIAC AND NATIONAL

SAN FRANCISCO

(FROM THE SEA)

SERENE, indifferent of Fate,
Thou sittest at the Western Gate;

Upon thy height, so lately won,
Still slant the banners of the sun;

Thou seest the white seas strike their tents,
O Warder of two Continents!

And, scornful of the peace that flies
Thy angry winds and sullen skies,

Thou drawest all things, small or great,
To thee, beside the Western Gate.

* * * * * *

O lion's whelp, that hidest fast
In jungle growth of spire and mast!

I know thy cunning and thy greed,
Thy hard high lust and wilful deed,

And all thy glory loves to tell
Of specious gifts material.

Drop down, O Fleecy Fog, and hide
Her sceptic sneer and all her pride!

Wrap her, O Fog, in gown and hood
Of her Franciscan Brotherhood.

Hide me her faults, her sin and blame;
With thy grey mantle cloak her shame!

So shall she, cowlèd, sit and pray
Till morning bears her sins away.

Then rise, O Fleecy Fog, and raise
The glory of her coming days;

Be as the cloud that flecks the seas
Above her smoky argosies;

When forms familiar shall give place
To stranger speech and newer face;

When all her throes and anxious fears
Lie hushed in the repose of years;

When Art shall raise and Culture lift
The sensual joys and meaner thrift,

And all fulfilled the vision we
Who watch and wait shall never see,

Who, in the morning of her race,
Toiled fair or meanly in our place,

But, yielding to the common lot,
Lie unrecorded and forgot.

THE MOUNTAIN HEART'S-EASE

By scattered rocks and turbid waters shifting,
By furrowed glade and dell,
To feverish men thy calm, sweet face uplifting,
Thou stayest them to tell

The delicate thought, that cannot find expression,
For ruder speech too fair,
That, like thy petals, trembles in possession,
And scatters on the air.

The miner pauses in his rugged labour,
And, leaning on his spade,
Laughingly calls unto his comrade-neighbour
To see thy charms displayed;

But in his eyes a mist unwonted rises,
And for a moment clear,
Some sweet home face his foolish thought surprises
And passes in a tear,—

Some boyish vision of his Eastern village,
Of uneventful toil,
Where golden harvests followed quiet tillage
Above a peaceful soil.

One moment only; for the pick, uplifting,
Through root and fibre cleaves,
And on the muddy current slowly drifting
Are swept thy bruisèd leaves.

And yet O poet! in thy homely fashion
Thy work thou dost fulfil;
For on the turbid current of his passion
Thy face is shining still!

GRIZZLY

Coward,—of heroic size,
In whose lazy muscles lies
Strength we fear and yet despise;
Savage,—whose relentless tusks
Are content with acorn husks;
Robber,—whose exploits ne'er soared
O'er the bee's or squirrel's hoard;

Whiskered chin and feeble nose,
Claws of steel on baby toes,—
Here, in solitude and shade,
Shambling, shuffling plantigrade,
Be thy courses undismayed!

Here, where Nature makes thy bed,
Let thy rude, half-human tread
Point to hidden Indian springs,
Lost in ferns and fragrant grasses,
Hovered o'er by timid wings,
Where the wood-duck lightly passes,
Where the wild bee holds her sweets,—
Epicurean retreats,
Fit for thee, and better than
Fearful spoils of dangerous man.

In thy fat-jowled deviltry
Friar Tuck shall live in thee;
Thou mayst levy tithe and dole;
Thou shalt spread the woodland cheer,
From the pilgrim taking toll;
Match thy cunning with his fear;
Eat, and drink, and have thy fill;
Yet remain an outlaw still!

MADROÑO

Captain of the Western wood,
Thou that apest Robin Hood!
Green above thy scarlet hose
How thy velvet mantle shows;
Never tree like thee arrayed,
O thou gallant of the glade!

When the fervid August sun
Scorches all it looks upon,
And the balsam of the pine
Drips from stem to needle fine,
Round thy compact shade arranged,
Not a leaf of thee is changed!

When the yellow autumn sun
Saddens all it looks upon,
Spreads its sackcloth on the hills,
Strews its ashes in the rills,
Thou thy scarlet hose dost doff,
And in limbs of purest buff
Challengest the sombre glade
For a sylvan masquerade.

Where, O where, shall he begin
Who would paint thee, Harlequin?
With thy waxen burnished leaf,
With thy branches' red relief,
With thy polytinted fruit,
In thy spring or autumn suit,—
Where begin, and oh! where end,—
Thou whose charms all art transcend?

COYOTE

LOWN out of the prairie in twilight and dew,
Half bold and half timid, yet lazy all through;
Loath ever to leave, and yet fearful to stay,
He limps in the clearing,—an outcast in grey.

A shade on the stubble, a ghost by the wall,
Now leaping, now limping, now risking a fall,
Lop-eared and large-jointed, but ever alway
A thoroughly vagabond outcast in grey.

Here, Carlo, old fellow,—he's one of your kind,—
Go, seek him, and bring him in out of the wind.
What! snarling, my Carlo! So even dogs may
Deny their own kin in the outcast in grey.

Well, take what you will,—though it be on the sly,
Marauding, or begging,—I shall not ask why;
But will call it a dole, just to help on his way
A four-footed friar in orders of grey!

TO A SEA-BIRD

(SANTA CRUZ, 1869)

SAUNTERING hither on listless wings,
Careless vagabond of the sea,
Little thou heedest the surf that sings,
The bar that thunders, the shale that rings,—
Give me to keep thy company.

Little thou hast, old friend, that's new;
Storms and wrecks are old things to thee;
Sick am I of these changes, too;
Little to care for, little to rue,—
I on the shore, and thou on the sea.

All of thy wanderings, far and near,
Bring thee at last to shore and me;
All of my journeyings end them here,
This our tether must be our cheer,—
I on the shore, and thou on the sea.

Lazily rocking on ocean's breast,
Something in common, old friend, have we;
Thou on the shingle seek'st thy nest,
I to the waters look for rest,—
I on the shore, and thou on the sea.

WHAT THE CHIMNEY SANG

OVER the chimney the night-wind sang
And chanted a melody no one knew;
And the Woman stopped, as her babe she tossed,
And thought of the one she had long since lost,
And said, as her tear-drops back she forced,
"I hate the wind in the chimney."

Over the chimney the night-wind sang
And chanted a melody no one knew;
And the Children said, as they closer drew,
"'Tis some witch that is cleaving the black night through,—
'Tis a fairy trumpet that just then blew,
And we fear the wind in the chimney."

Over the chimney the night-wind sang
And chanted a melody no one knew;
And the Man, as he sat on his hearth below,
Said to himself, "It will surely snow,
And fuel is dear and wages low,
And I'll stop the leak in the chimney."

Over the chimney the night-wind sang
And chanted a melody no one knew;
But the Poet listened and smiled, for he
Was Man, and Woman, and Child, all three,
And said, "It is God's own harmony,
This wind we hear in the chimney."

DICKENS IN CAMP

ABOVE the pines the moon was slowly drifting,
The river sang below;
The dim Sierras, far beyond, uplifting
Their minarets of snow.

The roaring camp-fire, with rude humour, painted
The ruddy tints of health
On haggard face and form that drooped and fainted
In the fierce race for wealth;

Till one arose, and from his pack's scant treasure
A hoarded volume drew,
And cards were dropped from hands of listless leisure
To hear the tale anew;

And then, while round them shadows gathered faster,
And as the firelight fell,
He read aloud the book wherein the Master
Had writ of "Little Nell."

Perhaps 'twas boyish fancy,—for the reader
Was youngest of them all,—
But, as he read, from clustering pine and cedar
A silence seemed to fall;

The fir-trees, gathering closer in the shadows,
Listened in every spray,
While the whole camp with "Nell" on English meadows
Wandered, and lost their way.

And so in mountain solitudes—o'ertaken
As by some spell divine—
Their cares dropped from them like the needles shaken
From out the gusty pine.

Lost is that camp, and wasted all its fire:
And he who wrought that spell?—
Ah, towering pine and stately Kentish spire,
Ye have one tale to tell!

Lost is that camp! but let its fragrant story
Blend with the breath that thrills
With hop-vines' incense all the pensive glory
That fills the Kentish hills.

And on that grave where English oak and holly
And laurel wreath entwine,
Deem it not all a too presumptuous folly,—
This spray of Western pine!

July 1870.

FATE

"THE sky is clouded, the rocks are bare;
The spray of the tempest is white in air;
The winds are out with the waves at play,
And I shall not tempt the sea to-day.

"The trail is narrow, the wood is dim,
The panther clings to the arching limb;
And the lion's whelps are abroad at play,
And I shall not join in the chase to-day."

But the ship sailed safely over the sea,
And the hunters came from the chase in glee;
And the town that was builded upon a rock
Was swallowed up in the earthquake shock.

ON A CONE OF THE BIG TREES

(SEQUOIA GIGANTEA)

BROWN foundling of the Western wood,
Babe of primaeval wildernesses!
Long on my table thou hast stood
Encounters strange and rude caresses;
Perchance contented with thy lot,
Surroundings new and curious faces,
As though ten centuries were not
Imprisoned in thy shining cases!

Thou bring'st me back the halcyon days
Of grateful rest, the week of leisure,
The journey lapped in autumn haze,
The sweet fatigue that seemed a pleasure,
The morning ride, the noonday halt,
The blazing slopes, the red dust rising,
And then the dim, brown, columned vault,
With its cool, damp, sepulchral spicing.

Once more I see the rocking masts
That scrape the sky, their only tenant
The jay-bird that in frolic casts
From some high yard his broad blue pennant.
I see the Indian files that keep
Their places in the dusty heather,
Their red trunks standing ankle-deep
In moccasins of rusty leather.

I see all this, and marvel much
That thou, sweet woodland waif, art able
To keep the company of such
As throng thy friend's—the poet's—table:
The latest spawn the press hath cast,—
The "modern Pope's," "the later Byron's,"—
Why e'en the best may not outlast
Thy poor relation,—*Sempervirens.*

Thy sire saw the light that shone
On Mohammed's uplifted crescent,
On many a royal gilded throne
And deed forgotten in the present;
He saw the age of sacred trees
And Druid groves and mystic larches;
And saw from forest domes like these
The builder bring his Gothic arches.

And must thou, foundling, still forgo
Thy heritage and high ambition,
To lie full lowly and full low,
Adjusted to thy new condition?
Not hidden in the drifted snows,
But under ink-drops idly spattered,
And leaves ephemeral as those
That on thy woodland tomb were scattered?

Yet lie thou there, O friend! and speak
The moral of thy simple story:
Though life is all that thou dost seek,
And age alone thy crown of glory,—

Not thine the only germs that fail
  The purpose of their high creation,
If their poor tenements avail
  For worldly show and ostentation.

LONE MOUNTAIN

(CEMETERY, SAN FRANCISCO)

This is that hill of awe
That Persian Sindbad saw,—
  The mount magnetic;
And on its seaward face,
Scattered along its base,
  The wrecks prophetic.

Here come the argosies
Blown by each idle breeze,
  To and fro shifting;
Yet to the hill of Fate
All drawing, soon or late,—
  Day by day drifting;—

Drifting for ever here
Barks that for many a year
  Braved wind and weather;
Shallops but yesterday
Launched on yon shining bay,—
  Drawn all together.

This is the end of all:
Sun thyself by the wall,
  O poorer Hindbad!
Envy not Sindbad's fame:
Here come alike the same,
  Hindbad and Sindbad.

THE TWO SHIPS

As I stand by the cross on the lone mountain's crest,
Looking over the ultimate sea,
In the gloom of the mountain a ship lies at rest,
And one sails away from the lea:
One spreads its white wings on a far-reaching track,
With pennant and sheet flowing free;
One hides in the shadow with sails laid aback,—
The ship that is waiting for me!

But lo! in the distance the clouds break away,
The Gate's glowing portals I see;
And I hear from the outgoing ship in the bay
The song of the sailors in glee:
So I think of the luminous footprints that bore
The comfort o'er dark Galilee,
And wait for the signal to go to the shore,
To the ship that is waiting for me.

THE ANGELUS

(HEARD AT THE MISSION DOLORES, 1868)

BELLS of the Past, whose long-forgotten music
Still fills the wide expanse,
Tingeing the sober twilight of the Present
With colour of romance!

I hear your call, and see the sun descending
On rock and wave and sand,
As down the coast the Mission voices, blending,
Girdle the heathen land.

Within the circle of your incantation
No blight nor mildew falls;
Nor fierce unrest, nor lust, nor low ambition
Passes those airy walls.

Borne on the swell of your long waves receding,
I touch the farther Past,—
I see the dying glow of Spanish glory,
The sunset dream and last!

Before me rise the dome-shaped Mission towers,
The white Presidio;
The swart commander in his leathern jerkin,
The priest in stole of snow.

Once more I see Portala's cross uplifting
Above the setting sun;
And past the headland, northward, slowly drifting
The freighted galleon.

O solemn bells! whose consecrated masses
Recall the faith of old,—
O tinkling bells! that lulled with twilight music
The spiritual fold!

Your voices break and falter in the darkness,—
Break, falter, and are still;
And veiled and mystic, like the Host descending,
The sun sinks from the hill!

THE MIRACLE OF PADRE JUNIPERO

This is the tale that the Chronicle
Tells of the wonderful miracle
Wrought by the pious Padre Serro,
The very reverend Junipero.

The heathen stood on his ancient mound,
Looking over the desert bound
Into the distant, hazy South,
Over the dusty and broad champaign,
Where, with many a gaping mouth,
And fissure cracked by the fervid drouth,

For seven months had the wasted plain
Known no moisture of dew or rain.
The wells were empty, and choked with sand;
The rivers had perished from the land;
Only the sea-fogs to and fro
Slipped like ghosts of the streams below.
Deep in its bed lay the river's bones,
Bleaching in pebbles and milk-white stones,
And tracked o'er the desert faint and far,
Its ribs shone bright on each sandy bar.

Thus they stood as the sun went down
Over the foot-hills bare and brown;
Thus they looked to the South, wherefrom
The pale-face medicine-man should come,
Not in anger or in strife,
But to bring—so ran the tale—
The welcome springs of eternal life,
The living waters that should not fail.

Said one, "He will come like Manitou,
Unseen, unheard, in the falling dew."
Said another, "He will come full soon
Out of the round-faced watery moon."
And another said, "He is here!" and lo,—
Faltering, staggering, feeble, and slow,—
Out from the desert's blinding heat
The Padre dropped at the heathen's feet.
They stood and gazed for a little space
Down on his pallid and careworn face,
And a smile of scorn went round the band
As they touched alternate with foot and hand
This mortal waif, that the outer space
Of dim mysterious sky and sand
Flung with so little of Christian grace
Down on their barren, sterile strand.

Said one to him: "It seems thy God
Is a very pitiful kind of God;
He could not shield thine aching eyes
From the blowing desert sands that rise,

Nor turn aside from thy old grey head
The glittering blade that is brandished
By the sun He set in the heavens high;
He could not moisten thy lips when dry;
The desert fire is in thy brain;
Thy limbs are racked with the fever-pain:
If this be the grace He showeth thee
Who art His servant, what may we,
Strange to His ways and His commands,
Seek at His unforgiving hands?"

"Drink but this cup," said the Padre, straight,
"And thou shalt know whose mercy bore
These aching limbs to your heathen door,
And purged my soul of its gross estate.
Drink in His name, and thou shalt see
The hidden depths of this mystery.
Drink!" and he held the cup. One blow
From the heathen dashed to the ground below
The sacred cup that the Padre bore,
And the thirsty soil drank the precious store
Of sacramental and holy wine,
That emblem and consecrated sign
And blessed symbol of blood divine.

Then, says the legend (and they who doubt
The same as heretics be accurst),
From the dry and feverish soil leaped out
A living fountain; a well-spring burst
Over the dusty and broad champaign,
Over the sandy and sterile plain,
Till the granite ribs and the milk-white stones
That lay in the valley—the scattered bones—
Moved in the river and lived again!

Such was the wonderful miracle
Wrought by the cup of wine that fell
From the hands of the pious Padre Serro,
The very reverend Junipero.

THE LOST GALLEON

In sixteen hundred and forty-one,
The regular yearly galleon,
Laden with odorous gums and spice,
India cottons and India rice,
And the richest silks of far Cathay,
Was due at Acapulco Bay.

Due she was, and over-due,—
Galleon, merchandise, and crew,
Creeping along through rain and shine,
Through the tropics, under the line.
The trains were waiting outside the walls,
The wives of sailors thronged the town,
The traders sat by their empty stalls,
And the viceroy himself came down;
The bells in the tower were all a-trip,
Te Deums were on each father's lip,
The limes were ripening in the sun
For the sick of the coming galleon.

All in vain. Weeks passed away,
And yet no galleon saw the bay:
India goods advanced in price;
The governor missed his favourite spice;
The señoritas mourned for sandal,
And the famous cottons of Coromandel;
And some for an absent lover lost,
And one for a husband,—Donna Julia,
Wife of the captain, tempest-tossed,
In circumstances so peculiar:
Even the fathers, unawares,
Grumbled a little at their prayers;
And all along the coast that year
Votive candles were scarce and dear.

Never a tear bedims the eye
That time and patience will not dry;

Never a lip is curved with pain
That can't be kissed into smiles again;
And these same truths, as far as I know,
Obtained on the coast of Mexico
More than two hundred years ago,
In sixteen hundred and fifty-one,—
Ten years after the deed was done,—
And folks had forgotten the galleon:
The divers plunged in the Gulf for pearls,
White as the teeth of the Indian girls;
The traders sat by their full bazaars;
The mules with many a weary load,
And oxen, dragging their creaking cars,
Came and went on the mountain road.

Where was the galleon all this while:
Wrecked on some lonely coral isle?
Burnt by the roving sea-marauders,
Or sailing north under secret orders?
Had she found the Anian passage famed,
By lying Moldonado claimed,
And sailed through the sixty-fifth degree
Direct to the North Atlantic sea?
Or had she found the "River of Kings,"
Of which De Fonté told such strange things
In sixteen forty? Never a sign,
East or West or under the line,
They saw of the missing galleon;
Never a sail or plank or chip,
They found of the long-lost treasure-ship,
Or enough to build a tale upon.
But when she was lost, and where and how,
Are the facts we're coming to just now.

Take, if you please, the chart of that day,
Published at Madrid,—*por el Rey*;
Look for a spot in the old South Sea,
The hundred and eightieth degree
Longitude, west of Madrid: there,
Under the equatorial glare,
Just where the East and West are one,
You'll find the missing galleon,—

You'll find the *San Gregorio*, yet
Riding the seas, with sails all set,
Fresh as upon the very day
She sailed from Acapulco Bay.

How did she get there? What strange spell
Kept her two hundred years so well,
Free from decay and mortal taint?
What but the prayers of a patron saint!
A hundred leagues from Manilla town,
The *San Gregorio's* helm came down;
Round she went on her heel, and not
A cable's length from a galliot
That rocked on the waters, just abreast
Of the galleon's course, which was west-sou-west.

Then said the galleon's commandante,
General Pedro Sobriente
(That was his rank on land and main,
A regular custom of Old Spain),
"My pilot is dead of scurvy: may
I ask the longitude, time, and day?"
The first two given and compared;
The third,—the commandante stared!

"The *first* of June? I make it second."
Said the stranger, "Then you've wrongly reckoned;
I make it *first*: as you came this way,
You should have lost—d'ye see—a day;
Lost a day, as plainly see,
On the hundred and eightieth degree."
"Lost a day?" "Yes: if not rude,
When did you make east longitude?"
"On the ninth of May,—our patron's day."
"On the ninth?—*you had no ninth of May!*
Eighth and tenth was there; but stay"—
Too late; for the galleon bore away.

Lost was the day they should have kept,
Lost unheeded and lost unwept;
Lost in a way that made search vain,
Lost in the trackless and boundless main;

Lost like the day of Job's awful curse,
In his third chapter, third and fourth verse;
Wrecked was their patron's only day,—
What would the holy fathers say?

Said the Fray Antonio Estavan,
The galleon's chaplain,—a learned man,—
"Nothing is lost that you can regain:
And the way to look for a thing is plain
To go where you lost it, back again.
Back with your galleon till you see
The hundred and eightieth degree.
Wait till the rolling year goes round,
And there will the missing day be found;
For you'll find—if computation's true—
That sailing *east* will give to you
Not only one ninth of May, but two,—
One for the good saint's present cheer,
And one for the day we lost last year."

Back to the spot sailed the galleon;
Where, for a twelvemonth, off and on
The hundred and eightieth degree,
She rose and fell on a tropic sea;
But lo! when it came to the ninth of May,
All of a sudden becalmed she lay
One degree from that fatal spot,
Without the power to move a knot;
And of course the moment she lost her way,
Gone was her chance to save that day.

To cut a lengthening story short,
She never saved it. Made the sport
Of evil spirits and baffling wind,
She was always before or just behind,
One day too soon, or one day too late,
And the sun, meanwhile, would never wait.
She had two eighths, as she idly lay,
Two tenths, but never a *ninth* of May;
And there she rides through two hundred years
Of dreary penance and anxious fears;

Yet through the grace of the saint she served,
Captain and crew are still preserved.

By a computation that still holds good,
Made by the Holy Brotherhood,
The *San Gregorio* will cross that line
In nineteen hundred and thirty-nine:
Just three hundred years to a day
From the time she lost the ninth of May.
And the folk in Acapulco town,
Over the waters, looking down,
Will see in the glow of the setting sun
The sails of the missing galleon,
And the royal standard of Philip *Rey*;
The gleaming mast and glistening spar,
As she nears the surf of the outer bar.
A *Te Deum* sung on her crowded deck,
An odour of spice along the shore,
A crash, a cry from a shattered wreck,—
And the yearly galleon sails no more,
In or out of the olden bay;
For the blessed patron has found his day.

Such is the legend. Hear this truth:
Over the trackless past, somewhere,
Lie the lost days of our tropic youth,
Only regained by faith and prayer,
Only recalled by prayer and plaint:
Each lost day has its patron saint!

CONCEPCION DE ARGÜELLO

(PRESIDIO DE SAN FRANCISCO, 1800)

I

LOOKING seaward, o'er the sandhills stands the fortress, old and quaint,
By the San Francisco friars lifted to their patron saint,—

Sponsor to that wondrous city, now apostate to the creed,
On whose youthful walls the Padre saw the angel's golden reed ;

All its trophies long since scattered, all its blazon brushed away ;
And the flag that flies above it but a triumph of to-day.

Never scar of siege or battle challenges the wandering eye—
Never breach of warlike onset holds the curious passer-by ;

Only one sweet human fancy interweaves its threads of gold
With the plain and home-spun present, and a love that ne'er grows old :

Only one thing holds its crumbling walls above the meaner dust,—
Listen to the simple story of a woman's love and trust.

II

Count von Resanoff, the Russian, envoy of the mighty Czar,
Stood beside the deep embrasures where the brazen cannon are ;

He with grave provincial magnates long had held serene debate
On the Treaty of Alliance and the high affairs of state ;

He from grave provincial magnates oft had turned to talk apart
With the Commandante's daughter on the questions of the heart,

Until points of gravest import yielded slowly one by one,
And by Love was consummated what Diplomacy begun ;

Till beside the deep embrasures, where the brazen cannon are,
He received the twofold contract for approval of the Czar;

Till beside the brazen cannon the betrothèd bade adieu,
And, from sallyport and gateway, north the Russian eagles flew.

III

Long beside the deep embrasures, where the brazen cannon are,
Did they wait the promised bridegroom and the answer of the Czar;

Day by day on wall and bastion beat the hollow, empty breeze,—
Day by day the sunlight glittered on the vacant, smiling seas;

Week by week the near hills whitened in their dusty leather cloaks,—
Week by week the far hills darkened from the fringing plain of oaks,

Till the rains came, and far-breaking, on the fierce south-wester tost,
Dashed the whole long coast with colour, and then vanished and were lost.

So each year the seasons shifted,—wet and warm and drear and dry;
Half a year of clouds and flowers,—half a year of dust and sky.

Still it brought no ship nor message,—brought no tidings, ill or meet,
For the statesmanlike Commander, for the daughter fair and sweet.

Yet she heard the varying message, voiceless to all ears beside :
" He will come," the flowers whispered ; " Come no more," the dry hills sighed.

Still she found him with the waters lifted by the morning breeze,—
Still she lost him with the folding of the great white-tented seas ;

Until hollows chased the dimples from her cheeks of olive brown,
And at times a swift, shy moisture dragged the long sweet lashes down ;

Or the small mouth curved and quivered as for some denied caress,
And the fair young brow was knitted in an infantine distress.

Then the grim Commander, pacing where the brazen cannon are,
Comforted the maid with proverbs,—wisdom gathered from afar ;

Bits of ancient observation by his fathers garnered, each
As a pebble worn and polished in the current of his speech :

" ' Those who wait the coming rider travel twice as far as he ; '
' Tired wench and coming butter never did in time agree ; '

" ' He that getteth himself honey, though a clown, he shall have flies ; '
' In the end God grinds the miller ' ; ' In the dark the mole has eyes ; '

" ' He whose father is Alcalde of his trial hath no fear,'—
And be sure the Count has reasons that will make his conduct clear."

Then the voice sententious faltered, and the wisdom it would teach
Lost itself in fondest trifles of his soft Castilian speech;

And on "Concha," "Conchitita," and "Conchita" he would dwell
With the fond reiteration which the Spaniard knows so well.

So with proverbs and caresses, half in faith and half in doubt,
Every day some hope was kindled, flickered, faded, and went out.

IV

Yearly, down the hillside sweeping, came the stately cavalcade,
Bringing revel to vaquero, joy and comfort to each maid;

Bringing days of formal visit, social feast and rustic sport;
Of bull-baiting on the plaza, of love-making in the court.

Vainly then at Concha's lattice, vainly as the idle wind,
Rose the thin high Spanish tenor that bespoke the youth too kind;

Vainly, leaning from their saddles, caballeros, bold and fleet,
Plucked for her the buried chicken from beneath their mustang's feet;

So in vain the barren hillsides with their gay serapes blazed,
Blazed and vanished in the dust-cloud that their flying hoofs had raised.

Then the drum called from the rampart, and once more, with patient mien,
The Commander and his daughter each took up the dull routine,—

Each took up the petty duties of a life apart and lone,
Till the slow years wrought a music in its dreary monotone.

V

Forty years on wall and bastion swept the hollow idle breeze,
Since the Russian eagle fluttered from the California seas;

Forty years on wall and bastion wrought its slow but sure decay,
And St. George's cross was lifted in the port of Monterey;

And the citadel was lighted, and the hall was gaily drest,
All to honour Sir George Simpson, famous traveller and guest.

Far and near the people gathered to the costly banquet set,
And exchanged congratulations with the English baronet;

Till, the formal speeches ended, and amidst the laugh and wine,
Some one spoke of Concha's lover,—heedless of the warning sign.

Quickly then cried Sir George Simpson: "Speak no ill of him, I pray—
He is dead. He died, poor fellow, forty years ago this day.

"Died while speeding home to Russia, falling from a fractious horse.
Left a sweetheart, too, they tell me. Married, I suppose, of course!

"Lives she yet?" A death-like silence fell on banquet, guests, and hall,
And a trembling figure rising fixed the awestruck gaze of all.

Two black eyes in darkened orbits gleamed beneath the nun's white hood;
Black serge hid the wasted figure, bowed and stricken where it stood.

"Lives she yet?" Sir George repeated. All were hushed as Concha drew
Closer yet her nun's attire. "Señor, pardon, she died too!"

RAMON

(REFUGIO MINE, NORTHERN MEXICO)

DRUNK and senseless in his place,
Prone and sprawling on his face,
More like brute than any man
Alive or dead,—
By his great pump out of gear,
Lay the peon engineer,
Waking only just to hear,
Overhead,
Angry tones that called his name,
Oaths and cries of bitter blame—
Woke to hear all this, and, waking, turned and fled!

"To the man who'll bring to me,"
Cried Intendant Harry Lee,—
Harry Lee, the English foreman of the mine,—
"Bring the sot alive or dead,
I will give to him," he said,
"Fifteen hundred *pesos* down,
Just to set the rascal's crown
Underneath this heel of mine:
Since but death
Deserves the man whose deed,
Be it vice or want of heed,
Stops the pumps that give us breath,—
Stops the pumps that suck the death
From the poisoned lower levels of the mine!"

No one answered; for a cry
From the shaft rose up on high,
And shuffling, scrambling, tumbling from below,
Came the miners each, the bolder
Mounting on the weaker's shoulder,
Grappling, clinging to their hold or
Letting go,
As the weaker gasped and fell
From the ladder to the well,—
To the poisoned pit of hell
Down below!

"To the man who sets them free,"
Cried the foreman, Harry Lee,—
Harry Lee, the English foreman of the mine,—
"Brings them out and sets them free,
I will give that man," said he,
"Twice that sum, who with a rope
Face to face with Death shall cope.
Let him come who dares to hope!"
"Hold your peace!" some one replied,
Standing by the foreman's side;
"There has one already gone, whoe'er he be!"

Then they held their breath with awe,
Pulling on the rope, and saw
Fainting figures reappear,
On the black rope swinging clear,
Fastened by some skilful hand from below;
Till a score the level gained,
And but one alone remained,—
He the hero and the last,
He whose skilful hand made fast
The long line that brought them back to hope and cheer!

Haggard, gasping, down dropped he
At the feet of Harry Lee,—
Harry Lee, the English foreman of the mine.
"I have come," he gasped, "to claim
Both rewards. Señor, my name
Is Ramon!

I'm the drunken engineer,
I'm the coward, Señor—— " Here
He fell over, by that sign,
Dead as stone ! 67

A GREYPORT LEGEND

(1797)

THEY ran through the streets of the seaport town :
They peered from the decks of the ships that lay :
The cold sea-fog that came whitening down
Was never as cold or white as they.
" Ho, Starbuck and Pinckney and Tenterden !
Run for your shallops, gather your men,
Scatter your boats on the lower bay."

Good cause for fear ! In the thick midday
The hulk that lay by the rotting pier,
Filled with the children in happy play, 10
Parted its moorings, and drifted clear,—
Drifted clear beyond the reach or call,—
Thirteen children they were in all,—
All adrift in the lower bay !

Said a hard-faced skipper, " God help us all !
She will not float till the turning tide ! "
Said his wife, " My darling will hear *my* call,
Whether in sea or heaven she bide " :
And she lifted a quavering voice and high,
Wild and strange as a sea-bird's cry, 20
Till they shuddered and wondered at her side.

The fog drove down on each labouring crew,
Veiled each from each and the sky and shore :
There was not a sound but the breath they drew,
And the lap of water and creak of oar ;
And they felt the breath of the downs, fresh blown
O'er leagues of clover and cold grey stone,
But not from the lips that had gone before.

They come no more. But they tell the tale,
That, when fogs are thick on the harbour reef,
The mackerel fishers shorten sail;
For the signal they know will bring relief:
For the voices of children, still at play
In a phantom hulk that drifts alway
Through channels whose waters never fail.

It is but a foolish shipman's tale,
A theme for a poet's idle page;
But still, when the mists of doubt prevail,
And we lie becalmed by the shores of Age,
We hear from the misty troubled shore
The voice of the children gone before,
Drawing the soul to its anchorage.

THE RÉVEILLÉ

Hark! I hear the tramp of thousands,
And of armèd men the hum;
Lo! a nation's hosts have gathered
Round the quick alarming drum,—
Saying, "Come,
Freemen, come!
Ere your heritage be wasted," said the quick alarming drum.

"Let me of my heart take counsel:
War is not of life the sum;
Who shall stay and reap the harvest
When the autumn days shall come?"
But the drum
Echoed, "Come!
Death shall reap the braver harvest," said the solemn-sounding drum.

"But when won the coming battle,
What of profit springs therefrom?
What if conquest, subjugation,
Even greater ills become?"

But the drum
Answered, "Come!
You must do the sum to prove it," said the Yankee-answering drum.

"What if, 'mid the cannons' thunder,
Whistling shot and bursting bomb,
When my brothers fall around me,
Should my heart grow cold and numb?"
But the drum
Answered, "Come!
Better there in death united, than in life a recreant,—come!"

Thus they answered,—hoping, fearing,
Some in faith, and doubting some,
Till a trumpet-voice proclaiming,
Said, "My chosen people, come!"
Then the drum,
Lo! was dumb,
For the great heart of the nation, throbbing, answered, "Lord, we come!"

"HOW ARE YOU, SANITARY?"

Down the picket-guarded lane
Rolled the comfort-laden wain,
Cheered by shouts that shook the plain,
Soldier-like and merry:
Phrases such as camps may teach,
Sabre-cuts of Saxon speech,
Such as "Bully!" "Them's the peach!"
"Wade in, Sanitary!"

Right and left the caissons drew
As the car went lumbering through,
Quick succeeding in review
Squadrons military;

Sunburnt men with beards like frieze,
Smooth-faced boys, and cries like these,—
"U. S. San. Com." "That's the cheese!"
"Pass in, Sanitary!"

In such cheer it struggled on
Till the battle front was won,
Then the car, its journey done,
Lo! was stationary;
And where bullets whistling fly,
Came the sadder, fainter cry,
"Help us, brothers, ere we die,—
Save us, Sanitary!"

Such the work. The phantom flies,
Wrapped in battle clouds that rise;
But the brave—whose dying eyes,
Veiled and visionary,
See the jasper gates swung wide,
See the parted throng outside —
Hears the voice to those who ride:
"Pass in, Sanitary!"

JOHN BURNS OF GETTYSBURG

HAVE you heard the story that gossips tell
Of Burns of Gettysburg?—No? Ah, well:
Brief is the glory that hero earns,
Briefer the story of poor John Burns:
He was the fellow who won renown,—
The only man who didn't back down
When the rebels rode through his native town:
But held his own in the fight next day,
When all his townsfolk ran away.
That was in July, sixty-three,
The very day that General Lee,
Flower of Southern chivalry,
Baffled and beaten, backward reeled
From a stubborn Meade and a barren field.

I might tell how, but the day before,
John Burns stood at his cottage door,
Looking down the village street,
Where, in the shade of his peaceful vine,
He heard the low of his gathered kine,
And felt their breath with incense sweet;
Or I might say, when the sunset burned
The old farm gable, he thought it turned
The milk that fell like a babbling flood
Into the milk-pail, red as blood!
Or how he fancied the hum of bees
Were bullets buzzing among the trees.
But all such fanciful thoughts as these
Were strange to a practical man like Burns,
Who minded only his own concerns,
Troubled no more by fancies fine
Than one of his calm-eyed, long-tailed kine,—
Quite old-fashioned and matter-of-fact,
Slow to argue, but quick to act.
That was the reason, as some folk say,
He fought so well on that terrible day.

And it was terrible. On the right
Raged for hours the heady fight,
Thundered the battery's double bass,—
Difficult music for men to face;
While on the left—where now the graves
Undulate like the living waves
That all that day unceasing swept
Up to the pits the rebels kept—
Round shot ploughed the upland glades,
Sown with bullets, reaped with blades;
Shattered fences here and there
Tossed their splinters in the air;
The very trees were stripped and bare;
The barns that once held yellow grain
Were heaped with harvests of the slain;
The cattle bellowed on the plain,
The turkeys screamed with might and main,
And brooding barn-fowl left their rest
With strange shells bursting in each nest.

Just where the tide of battle turns,
Erect and lonely stood old John Burns.
How do you think the man was dressed?
He wore an ancient long buff vest,
Yellow as saffron,—but his best;
And, buttoned over his manly breast,
Was a bright blue coat, with a rolling collar,
And large gilt buttons,—size of a dollar,—
With tails that the country-folk called "swaller."
He wore a broad-brimmed, bell-crowned hat,
White as the locks on which it sat.
Never had such a sight been seen
For forty years on the village green,
Since old John Burns was a country beau,
And went to the "quiltings" long ago.

Close at his elbows all that day,
Veterans of the Peninsula,
Sunburnt and bearded, charged away;
And striplings, downy of lip and chin,—
Clerks that the Home Guard mustered in,—
Glanced, as they passed, at the hat he wore,
Then at the rifle his right hand bore;
And hailed him, from out their youthful lore,
With scraps of a slangy *répertoire*:
"How are you, White Hat!" "Put her through!"
"Your head's level," and "Bully for you!"
Called him "Daddy,"—begged he'd disclose
The name of the tailor who made his clothes,
And what was the value he set on those;
While Burns, unmindful of jeer and scoff,
Stood there picking the rebels off,—
With his long brown rifle, and bell-crown hat,
And the swallow-tails they were laughing at.

'Twas but a moment, for that respect
Which clothes all courage their voices checked;
And something the wildest could understand
Spake in the old man's strong right hand;
And his corded throat, and the lurking frown
Of his eyebrows under his old bell-crown;

Until, as they gazed, there crept an awe
Through the ranks in whispers, and some men saw,
In the antique vestments and long white hair,
The Past of the Nation in battle there;
And some of the soldiers since declare
That the gleam of his old white hat afar,
Like the crested plume of the brave Navarre,
That day was their oriflamme of war.

So raged the battle. You know the rest:
How the rebels, beaten and backward pressed,
Broke at the final charge, and ran.
At which John Burns—a practical man—
Shouldered his rifle, unbent his brows,
And then went back to his bees and cows.

That is the story of old John Burns;
This the moral the reader learns:
In fighting the battle, the question's whether
You'll show a hat that's white, or a feather!

BATTLE BUNNY

(MALVERN HILL, 1864)

["After the men were ordered to lie down, a white rabbit, which had been hopping hither and thither over the field swept by grape and musketry, took refuge among the skirmishers, in the breast of a corporal."—*Report of the Battle of Malvern Hill.*]

BUNNY, lying in the grass,
Saw the shining column pass;
Saw the starry banner fly,
Saw the chargers fret and fume,
Saw the flapping hat and plume—
Saw them with his moist and shy
Most unspeculative eye,
Thinking only, in the dew,
That it was a fine review—
Till a flash, not all of steel,
Where the rolling caissons wheel,

Brought a rumble and a roar
Rolling down that velvet floor,
And like blows of autumn flail
Sharply threshed the iron hail.

Bunny, thrilled by unknown fears,
Raised his soft and pointed ears,
Mumbled his prehensile lip,
Quivered his pulsating hip,
As the sharp vindictive yell
Rose above the screaming shell;
Thought the world and all its men—
All the charging squadrons meant—
All were rabbit-hunters then,
All to capture him intent.
Bunny was not much to blame:
Wiser folk have thought the same—
Wiser folk who think they spy
Every ill begins with "I."

Wildly panting here and there,
Bunny sought the freer air,
Till he hopped below the hill,
And saw, lying close and still,
Men with muskets in their hands.
(Never Bunny understands
That hypocrisy of sleep,
In the vigils grim they keep,
As recumbent on that spot
They elude the level shot.)

One—a grave and quiet man,
Thinking of his wife and child
Far beyond the Rapidan,
Where the Androsaggin smiled—
Felt the little rabbit creep,
Nestling by his arm and side,
Wakened from strategic sleep,
To that soft appeal replied,
Drew him to his blackened breast,
And—
But you have guessed the rest.

Softly o'er that chosen pair
Omnipresent Love and Care
Drew a mightier Hand and Arm,
Shielding them from every harm;
Right and left the bullets waved,
Saved the saviour for the saved.

Who believes that equal grace
God extends in every place,
Little difference he seans
'Twixt a rabbit's God and man's.

RELIEVING GUARD

(T. S. K. OBIIT MARCH 4, 1864)

CAME the relief. "What, sentry, ho!
How passed the night through thy long waking?"
"Cold, cheerless, dark,—as may befit
The hour before the dawn is breaking."

"No sight? no sound?" "No; nothing save
The plover from the marshes calling,
And in yon Western sky, about
An hour ago, a star was falling."

"A star? There's nothing strange in that."
"No, nothing; but, above the thicket,
Somehow it seemed to me that God
Somewhere had just relieved a picket."

THE COPPERHEAD

(1864)

THERE is peace in the swamp where the Copperhead sleeps,
Where the waters are stagnant, the white vapour creeps,
Where the musk of magnolia hangs thick in the air,
And the lilies' phylacteries broaden in prayer;

There is peace in the swamp, though the quiet is death,
Though the mist is miasma, the upas-tree's breath,
Though no echo awakes to the cooing of doves, –
There is peace: yes, the peace that the Copperhead loves!

Go seek him: he coils in the ooze and the drip
Like a thong idly flung from the slave-driver's whip;
But beware the false footstep,—the stumble that brings
A deadlier lash than the overseer swings.
Never arrow so true, never bullet so dread,
As the straight steady stroke of that hammer-shaped head;
Whether slave, or proud planter, who braves that dull crest,
Woe to him who shall trouble the Copperhead's rest!

Then why waste your labours, brave hearts and strong men
In tracking a trail to the Copperhead's den?
Lay your axe to the cypress, hew open the shade
To the free sky and sunshine Jehovah has made;
Let the breeze of the North sweep the vapours away,
Till the stagnant lake ripples, the freed waters play;
And then to your heel can you righteously doom
The Copperhead born of its shadow and gloom!

THE OLD MAJOR EXPLAINS

(REUNION, ARMY OF THE POTOMAC, 12TH MAY 1871)

WELL, you see, the fact is, Colonel, I don't know as I can come:
For the farm is not half planted, and there's work to do at home;
And my leg is getting troublesome,—it laid me up last Fall,
And the doctors, they have cut and hacked, and never found the ball.

And then, for an old man like me, it's not exactly right,
This kind o' playing soldier with no enemy in sight.
"The Union,"—that was well enough way up to '66;
But this "Re-Union," maybe now it's mixed with politics?

No? Well, you understand it best; but then, you see, my lad,
I'm deacon now, and some might think that the example's bad.
And week from next is Conference. . . . You said the twelfth of May?
Why, that's the day we broke their line at Spottsylvan-i-a!

Hot work; eh, Colonel, wasn't it? Ye mind that narrow front:
They called it the "Death-Angle!" Well, well, my lad, we won't
Fight that old battle over now: I only meant to say
I really can't engage to come upon the twelfth of May.

How's Thompson? What! will he be there? Well, now I wa'n't to know!
The first man in the rebel works! they called him "Swearing Joe."
A wild young fellow, sir, I fear the rascal was; but then—
Well, short of heaven, there wa'n't a place he dursn't lead his men.

And Dick, you say, is coming too. And Billy? ah! it's true
We buried him at Gettysburg: I mind the spot; do you?
A little field below the hill,—it must be green this May;
Perhaps that's why the fields about bring him to me to-day.

Well, well, excuse me, Colonel! but there are some things that drop
The tail-board out one's feelings; and the only way's to stop.
So they want to see the old man; ah, the rascals! do they, eh?
Well, I've business down in Boston about the twelfth of May.

THE AGED STRANGER

(AN INCIDENT OF THE WAR)

"I WAS with Grant—" the stranger said;
Said the farmer, "Say no more,
But rest thee here at my cottage porch,
For thy feet are weary and sore."

"I was with Grant—" the stranger said;
Said the farmer, "Nay, no more,—
I prithee sit at my frugal board,
And eat of my humble store.

"How fares my boy,—my soldier boy,
Of the old Ninth Army Corps?
I warrant he bore him gallantly
In the smoke and the battle's roar!"

"I know him not," said the aged man;
"And, as I remarked before,
I was with Grant—" "Nay, nay, I know,"
Said the farmer; "say no more:

"He fell in battle,—I see, alas!
Thou'dst smooth these tidings o'er,—
Nay; speak the truth, whatever it be,
Though it rend my bosom's core.

"How fell he,—with his face to the foe,
Upholding the flag he bore?
Oh, say not that my boy disgraced
The uniform that he wore!"

"I cannot tell," said the aged man,
"And should have remarked before,
That I was with Grant,—in Illinois,—
Some three years before the war."

Then the farmer spake him never a word,
But beat with his fist full sore
That aged man, who had worked for Grant
Some three years before the war.

OFF SCARBOROUGH

(SEPTEMBER 1779)

"HAVE a care!" the bailiffs cried
From their cockleshell that lay
Off the frigate's yellow side,
Tossing on Scarborough Bay,
While the forty sail it convoyed on a bowline stretched away;
"Take your chicks beneath your wings,
And your claws and feathers spread,
Ere the hawk upon them springs—
Ere around Flamborough Head
Swoops Paul Jones, the Yankee falcon, with his beak and talons red."

How we laughed!—my mate and I—
On the *Bon Homme Richard's* deck,—
As we saw that convoy fly
Like a snow squall, till each fleck
Melted in the twilight shadows of the coast-line, speck by speck;
And scuffling back to shore
The Scarborough bailiffs sped,
As the *Richard* with a roar
Of her cannon round the Head,
Crossed her royal yards and signalled to her consort: "Chase ahead!"

But the devil seize Landais
In that consort ship of France!
For the shabby, lubber way
That he worked the *Alliance*
In the offing,—nor a broadside fired save to our mischance!—

When tumbling to the van,
With his battle-lanterns set,
Rose the burly Englishman
'Gainst our hull as black as jet—
Rode the yellow-sided *Serapis*, and all alone we met!

All alone—though far at sea
Hung his consort, rounding to;
All alone—though on our lee
Fought our *Pallas*, stanch and true!
For the first broadside around us both a smoky circle drew:
And, like champions in a ring,
There was cleared a little space—
Scarce a cable's length to swing—
Ere we grappled in embrace,
All the world shut out around us, and we only face to face!

Then awoke all hell below
From that broadside, doubly curst,
For our long eighteens in row
Leaped the first discharge and burst!
And on deck our men came pouring, fearing their own guns the worst.
And as dumb we lay, till, through
Smoke and flame and bitter cry,
Hailed the *Serapis*—"Have you
Struck your colours?" Our reply,
"We have not yet begun to fight!" went shouting to the sky!

Roux of Brest, old fisher, lay
Like a herring gasping here;
Bunker of Nantucket Bay,
Blown from out the port, dropped sheer
Half a cable's length to leeward; yet we faintly raised a cheer
As with his own right hand,
Our Commodore made fast
The foeman's head-gear and
The *Richard's* mizzen-mast,
And in that death-lock clinging held us there from first to last!

Yet the foeman, gun on gun,
Through the *Richard* tore a road—
With his gunners' rammers run
Through our ports at every load,
Till clear the blue beyond us through our yawning timbers showed.
Yet with entrails torn we clung
Like the Spartan to our fox,
And on deck no coward tongue
Wailed the enemy's hard knocks,
Nor that all below us trembled like a wreck upon the rocks.

Then a thought rose in my brain,
As through Channel mists the sun.
From our tops a fire like rain
Drove below decks every one
Of the enemy's ship's company to hide or work a gun,
And that thought took shape as I
On the *Richard's* yard lay out,
That a man might do and die,
If the doing brought about
Freedom for his home and country, and his messmates cheering shout!

Then I crept out in the dark
Till I hung above the hatch
Of the *Serapis*—a mark
For her marksmen!—with a match
And a hand-grenade, but lingered just a moment more to snatch
One last look at sea and sky!
At the lighthouse on the hill!
At the harvest-moon on high!
And our pine flag fluttering still;
Then turned and down her yawning throat I launched that devil's pill!

Then a blank was all between
As the flames around me spun!
Had I fired the magazine?
Was the victory lost or won?
Nor knew I till the fight was o'er but half my work was done:

For I lay among the dead
In the cockpit of our foe,
With a roar above my head—
Till a trampling to and fro,
And a lantern showed my mate's face, and I knew what now you know!

ADDRESS

(OPENING OF THE CALIFORNIA THEATRE, SAN FRANCISCO, JANUARY 19, 1870)

BRIEF words, when actions wait, are well:
The prompter's hand is on his bell;
The coming heroes, lovers, kings,
Are idly lounging at the wings;
Behind the curtain's mystic fold
The glowing future lies unrolled,—
And yet, one moment for the Past;
One retrospect,—the first and last.

"The world's a stage," the Master said.
To-night a mightier truth is read:
Not in the shifting canvas screen,
The flash of gas or tinsel sheen;
Not in the skill whose signal calls
From empty boards baronial halls;
But, fronting sea and curving bay,
Behold the players and the play.

Ah, friends! beneath your real skies
The actor's short-lived triumph dies:
On that broad stage of empire won,
Whose footlights were the setting sun.
Whose flats a distant background rose
In trackless peaks of endless snows;
Here genius bows, and talent waits
To copy that but One creates.

Your shifting scenes: the league of sand,
An avenue by ocean spanned;
The narrow beach of straggling tents,
A mile of stately monuments;
Your standard, lo! a flag unfurled,
Whose clinging folds clasp half the world,—
This is your drama, built on facts,
With "twenty years between the acts."

One moment more: if here we raise
The oft-sung hymn of local praise,
Before the curtain facts must sway:
Here waits the moral of your play.
Glassed in the poet's thought, you view
What *money* can yet cannot do;
The faith that soars, the deeds that shine,
Above the gold that builds the shrine.

And oh! when others take our place,
And Earth's green curtain hides our face,
Ere on the stage, so silent now,
The last new hero makes his bow:
So may our deeds, recalled once more
In Memory's sweet but brief encore,
Down all the circling ages run,
With the world's plaudit of "Well done!"

IN DIALECT

"JIM"

SAY, there! P'r'aps
Some on you chaps
  Might know Jim Wild?
Well,—no offence:
Thar ain't no sense
  In gittin' riled!

Jim was my chum
  Up on the Bar:
That's why I come
  Down from up yar,
Lookin' for Jim.
Thank ye, sir! *You*
Ain't of that crew,—
  Blest if you are!

Money?—Not much:
  That ain't my kind:
I ain't no such.
  Rum?—I don't mind,
Seein' it's you.

Well, this yer Jim,
Did you know him?—
Jess 'bout your size;
Same kind of eyes;—

Well, that is strange:
  Why, it's two year
  Since he came here,
Sick, for a change.

Well, here's to us:
    Eh?
The h— you say!
    Dead?
That little cuss?

What makes you star,—
You over thar?
Can't a man drop
's glass in yer shop
But you must rar'?
  It wouldn't take
  D—d much to break
You and your bar.

    Dead!
Poor—little—Jim!
Why, thar was me,
Jones, and Bob Lee,
Harry and Ben,—
No-account men:
Then to take *him!*

Well, thar—Good-bye,—
No more, sir,—I—
    Eh?
What's that you say?—
Why, dern it!—sho!—
No? Yes! By Joe!
    Sold!
Sold! Why, you limb,
You ornery,
    Derned old
Long-legged Jim!

CHIQUITA

BEAUTIFUL! Sir, you may say so. Thar isn't her match in the county.
Is thar, old gal,—Chiquita, my darling, my beauty?
Feel of that neck, sir,—thar's velvet! Whoa! steady, —ah, will you, you vixen!
Whoa! I say. Jack, trot her out; let the gentleman look at her paces.

Morgan!—She ain't nothin' else, and I've got the papers to prove it.
Sired by Chippewa Chief, and twelve hundred dollars won't buy her.
Briggs of Tuolumne owned her. Did you know Briggs of Tuolumne?—
Busted hisself in White Pine, and blew out his brains down in 'Frisco?

Hedn't no savey—hed Briggs. Thar, Jack! that'll do,— quit that foolin'!
Nothin' to what she kin do, when she's got her work cut out before her.
Hosses is hosses, you know, and likewise, too, jockeys is jockeys:
And 'tain't ev'ry man as can ride as knows what a hoss as got in him.

Know the old ford on the Fork, that nearly got Flanigan's leaders?
Nasty in daylight, you bet, and a mighty rough ford in low water!
Well, it ain't six weeks ago that me and the Jedge and his nevey
Struck for that ford in the night, in the rain, and the water all round us;

Up to our flanks in the gulch, and Rattlesnake Creek just a bilin',
Not a plank left in the dam, and nary a bridge on the river.

I had the grey, and the Jedge had his roan, and his nevey, Chiquita;
And after us trundled the rocks jest loosed from the top of the cañon.

Lickity, lickity, switch, we came to the ford; and Chiquita
Buckled right down to her work, and, afore I could yell to her rider,
Took water jest at the ford; and there was the Jedge and me standing,
And twelve hundred dollars of hoss-flesh afloat, and a-driftin' to thunder!

Would ye b'lieve it? that night that hoss, that ar' filly, Chiquita,
Walked herself into her stall, and stood there, all quiet and dripping:
Clean as a beaver or rat, with nary a buckle of harness,
Just as she swam the Fork,—that hoss, that ar' filly, Chiquita.

That's what I call a hoss! and—What did you say?—Oh, the nevey?
Drownded, I reckon,—leastways, he never kem back to deny it.
Ye see, the derned fool had no seat,—ye couldn't have made him a rider;
And then, ye know, boys will be boys, and hosses—well, hosses is hosses!

DOW'S FLAT

(1856)

Dow's Flat. That's its name;
And I reckon that you
Are a stranger? The same?
Well, I thought it was true,—
For thar isn't a man on the river as can't spot the place at first view.

It was called after Dow,—
Which the same was an ass,—
And as to the how
That the thing kem to pass,—
Jest tie up your hoss to that buckeye, and sit ye down here in the grass:

You see this yer Dow
Hed the worst kind of luck;
He slipped up somehow
On each thing that he struck.
Why, ef he'd a straddled that fence-rail, the derned thing 'ed get up and buck.

He mined on the bar
Till he couldn't pay rates;
He was smashed by a car
When he tunnelled with Bates;
And right on the top of his trouble kem his wife and five kids from the States.

It was rough,—mighty rough;
But the boys they stood by,
And they brought him the stuff
For a house, on the sly;
And the old woman,—well, she did washing, and took on when no one was nigh.

But this yer luck of Dow's
Was so powerful mean
That the spring near his house
Dried right up on the green;
And he sunk forty feet down for water, but nary a drop to be seen.

Then the bar petered out,
And the boys wouldn't stay;
And the chills got about,
And his wife fell away;
But Dow, in his well, kept a peggin' in his usual ridikilous way.

One day,—it was June,—
And a year ago, jest,—
This Dow kem at noon
To his work like the rest,
With a shovel and pick on his shoulder, and a derringer hid in his breast.

He goes to the well,
And he stands on the brink,
And stops for a spell
Jest to listen and think:
For the sun in his eyes (jest like this, sir!), you see, kinder made the cuss blink.

His two ragged gals
In the gulch were at play,
And a gownd that was Sal's
Kinder flapped on a bay:
Not much for a man to be leavin', but his all,—as I've heer'd the folks say.

And—That's a peart hoss
Thet you've got,—ain't it now?
What might be her cost?
Eh? Oh!—Well, then, Dow—
Let's see,—well, that forty-foot grave wasn't his, sir, that day, anyhow.

For a blow of his pick
Sorter caved in the side,
And he looked and turned sick,
Then he trembled and cried.
For you see the dern cuss had struck—"Water?"—
Beg your parding, young man, there you lied!

It was *gold*,—in the quartz,
And it ran all alike;
And I reckon five oughts
Was the worth of that strike;
And that house with the coopilow's his'n,—which the same isn't bad for a Pike.

Thet's why it's Dow's Flat;
And the thing of it is
That he kinder got that
Through sheer contrairiness:
For 'twas *water* the derned cuss was seekin', and his luck made him certain to miss.

Thet's so. Thar's your way
To the left of yon tree;
But—a—look h'yur, say?
Won't you come up to tea?
No? Well, then the next time you're passin'; and ask after Dow,—and thet's *me*.

IN THE TUNNEL

Didn't know Flynn,—
Flynn of Virginia,—
Long as he's been 'yar?
Look'ee here, stranger,
Whar *hev* you been?

Here in this tunnel
He was my pardner,
That same Tom Flynn,—
Working together,
In wind and weather,
Day out and in.

Didn't know Flynn!
Well, that *is* queer;
Why, it's a sin
To think of Tom Flynn,—
Tom with his cheer,
Tom without fear,—
Stranger, look 'yar!

Thar in the drift,
Back to the wall,
He held the timbers
Ready to fall;

Then in the darkness
I heard him call:
"Run for your life, Jake!
Run for your wife's sake!
Don't wait for me."

And that was all
Heard in the din,
Heard of Tom Flynn,—
Flynn of Virginia.

That's all about
Flynn of Virginia.
That lets me out.
Here in the damp,—
Out of the sun,—
That 'ar derned lamp
Makes my eyes run.
Well, there,—I'm done!

But, sir, when you'll
Hear the next fool
Asking of Flynn,—
Flynn of Virginia,—
Just you chip in,
Say you knew Flynn;
Say that you've been 'yar.

"CICELY"

(ALKALI STATION)

CICELY says you're a poet; maybe; I ain't much on rhyme:
I reckon you'd give me a hundred, and beat me every time.
Poetry!—that's the way some chaps puts up an idee,
But I takes mine "straight without sugar," and that's what's the matter with me.

Poetry !—just look round you,—alkali, rock, and sage ;
Sage-brush, rock, and alkali ; ain't it a pretty page !
Sun in the east at mornin', sun in the west at night,
And the shadow of this 'yer station the on'y thing moves in sight.

Poetry !—Well now—Polly ! Polly, run to your mam ;
Run right away, my pooty ! By by ! Ain't she a lamb ?
Poetry !—that reminds me o' suthin' right in that suit :
Jest shet that door thar, will yer ?—for Cicely's ears is cute.

Ye noticed Polly,—the baby ? A month afore she was born,
Cicely—my old woman—was moody-like and forlorn ;
Out of her head and crazy, and talked of flowers and trees ;
Family man yourself, sir ? Well, you know what a woman be's.

Narvous she was, and restless,—said that she " couldn't stay."
Stay,—and the nearest woman seventeen miles away.
But I fixed it up with the doctor, and he said he would be on hand,
And I kinder stuck by the shanty, and fenced in that bit o' land.

One night,—the tenth of October,—I woke with a chill and fright,
For the door it was standing open, and Cicely warn't in sight,
But a note was pinned on the blanket, which it said that she " couldn't stay,"
But had gone to visit her neighbour,—seventeen miles away !

When and how she stampeded, I didn't wait for to see,
For out in the road, next minit, I started as wild as she ;
Running first this way and that way, like a hound that is off the scent,
For there warn't no track in the darkness to tell me the way she went.

I've had some mighty mean moments afore I kem to this spot,—
Lost on the Plains in '50, drownded almost, and shot;
But out on this alkali desert, a hunting a crazy wife,
Was ra'ly as on-satis-factory as anything in my life.

"Cicely! Cicely! Cicely!" I called, and I held my breath,
And "Cicely!" came from the cañon,—and all was as still as death.
And "Cicely! Cicely! Cicely!" came from the rocks below,
And jest but a whisper of "Cicely!" down from them peaks of snow.

I ain't what you call religious,—but I jest looked up to the sky,
And—this 'yer's to what I'm coming, and maybe ye think I lie:
But up away to the east'ard, yaller and big and far,
I saw of a suddent rising the singlerist kind of star.

Big and yaller and dancing, it seemed to beckon to me:
Yaller and big and dancing, such as you never see:
Big and yaller and dancing,—I never saw such a star,
And I thought of them sharps in the Bible, and I went for it then and thar.

Over the brush and bowlders I stumbled and pushed ahead:
Keeping the star afore me, I went wharever it led.
It might hev been for an hour, when, suddent and peart and nigh,
Out of the yearth afore me thar riz up a baby's cry.

Listen! thar's the same music; but her lungs they are stronger now
Than the day I packed her and her mother,—I'm derned if I jest know how.
But the doctor kem the next minit, and the joke o' the whole thing is

That Cis never knew what happened from that very night to this!

But Cicely says you're a poet, and maybe you might, some day,
Jest sling her a rhyme 'bout a baby that was born in a curious way.
And see what she says; and, old fellow, when you speak of the star, don't tell
As how 'twas the doctor's lantern,—for maybe 'twon't sound so well.

PLAIN LANGUAGE FROM TRUTHFUL JAMES

(TABLE MOUNTAIN, 1870)

WHICH I wish to remark,
And my language is plain,
That for ways that are dark
And for tricks that are vain,
The heathen Chinee is peculiar,
Which the same I would rise to explain.

Ah Sin was his name;
And I shall not deny
In regard to the same
What that name might imply;
But his smile it was pensive and childlike,
As I frequent remarked to Bill Nye.

It was August the third;
And quite soft was the skies;
Which it might be inferred
That Ah Sin was likewise;
Yet he played it that day upon William
And me in a way I despise.

Which we had a small game,
And Ah Sin took a hand:
It was Euchre. The same
He did not understand;
But he smiled as he sat by the table,
With the smile that was childlike and bland.

Yet the cards they were stocked
In a way that I grieve,
And my feelings were shocked
At the state of Nye's sleeve:
Which was stuffed full of aces and bowers,
And the same with intent to deceive.

But the hands that were played
By that heathen Chinee,
And the points that he made,
Were quite frightful to see,—
Till at last he put down a right bower,
Which the same Nye had dealt unto me.

Then I looked up at Nye,
And he gazed upon me;
And he rose with a sigh,
And said, "Can this be?
We are ruined by Chinese cheap labour,—"
And he went for that heathen Chinee.

In the scene that ensued
I did not take a hand,
But the floor it was strewed
Like the leaves on the strand
With the cards that Ah Sin had been hiding,
In the game "he did not understand."

In his sleeves, which were long,
He had twenty-four packs,—
Which was coming it strong,
Yet I state but the facts;
And we found on his nails, which were taper,
What is frequent in tapers,—that's wax.

Which is why I remark,
And my language is plain,
That for ways that are dark,
And for tricks that are vain,
The heathen Chinee is peculiar,—
Which the same I am free to maintain.

THE SOCIETY UPON THE STANISLAUS

I RESIDE at Table Mountain, and my name is Truthful James;
I am not up to small deceit, or any sinful games;
And I'll tell in simple language what I know about the row
That broke up our society upon the Stanislow.

But first I would remark, that it is not a proper plan
For any scientific gent to whale his fellow-man,
And, if a member don't agree with his peculiar whim,
To lay for that same member for to "put a head" on him.

Now nothing could be finer or more beautiful to see
Than the first six months' proceedings of that same society,
Till Brown of Calaveras brought a lot of fossil bones
That he found within a tunnel near the tenement of Jones.

Then Brown he read a paper, and he reconstructed there,
From those same bones, an animal that was extremely rare;
And Jones then asked the Chair for a suspension of the rules,
Till he could prove that those same bones was one of his lost mules.

Then Brown he smiled a bitter smile, and said he was at fault.
It seemed he had been trespassing on Jones's family vault:
He was a most sarcastic man, this quiet Mr. Brown,
And on several occasions he had cleaned out the town.

Now I hold it is not decent for a scientific gent
To say another is an ass,—at least, to all intent;
Nor should the individual who happens to be meant
Reply by heaving rocks at him to any great extent.

Then Abner Dean of Angel's raised a point of order—when
A chunk of old red sandstone took him in the abdomen,
And he smiled a kind of sickly smile, and curled up on the floor,
And the subsequent proceedings interested him no more.

For, in less time than I write it, every member did engage
In a warfare with the remnants of a palaeozoic age ;
And the way they heaved those fossils in their anger was a sin,
Till the skull of an old mammoth caved the head of Thompson in.

And this is all I have to say of these improper games,
For I live at Table Mountain, and my name is Truthful James ;
And I've told in simple language what I know about the row
That broke up our society upon the Stanislow.

LUKE

(IN THE COLORADO PARK, 1873)

Wot's that you're readin' ?—a novel ? A novel !—well darn my skin !
You a man grown and bearded and histin' such stuff ez that in—
Stuff about gals and their sweethearts ! No wonder you're thin ez a knife.
Look at me !—clar two hundred—and never read one in my life !

That's my opinion o' novels. And ez to their lyin' round here,
They belong to the Jedge's daughter—the Jedge who came up last year
On account of his lungs and the mountains and the balsam o' pine and fir ;
And his daughter—well, she read novels, and that's what's the matter with her.

Yet she was sweet on the Jedge, and stuck by him day and night,
Alone in the cabin up 'yer—till she grew like a ghost, all white.

She wus only a slip of a thing, ez light and ez up and away
Ez rifle smoke blown through the woods, but she wasn't my kind—no way!

Speakin' o' gals, d'ye mind that house ez you rise the hill,
A mile and a half from White's, and jist above Mattingly's mill?
You do? Well now *thar's* a gal! What! you saw her? Oh, come now, thar! quit!
She was only bedevlin' you boys, for to me she don't cotton one bit.

Now she's what I call a gal—ez pretty and plump ez a quail;
Teeth ez white ez a hound's, and they'd go through a ten-penny nail;
Eyes that kin snap like a cap. So she asked to know "whar I was hid?"
She did! Oh, it's jist like her sass, for she's peart ez a Katydid. 20

But what was I talking of?—Oh! the Jedge and his daughter—she read
Novels the whole day long, and I reckon she read them abed;
And sometimes she read them out loud to the Jedge on the porch where he sat,
And 'twas how "Lord Augustus" said this, and how "Lady Blanche" she said that.

But the sickest of all that I heerd was a yarn thet they read 'bout a chap,
"Leather-stocking" by name, and a hunter chock full o' the greenest o' sap;
And they asked me to hear, but I says, "Miss Mabel, not any for me;
When I likes I kin sling my own lies, and thet chap and I shouldn't agree."

Yet somehow or other she was always sayin' that I brought
her to mind
Of folks about whom she had read, or suthin' belike of
thet kind,
And thar warn't no end o' the names that she give me
thet summer up here—
" Robin Hood," " Leather-stocking," " Rob Roy,"—Oh, I
tell you, the critter was queer!

And yet, ef she hadn't been spiled, she was harmless
enough in her way;
She could jabber in French to her dad, and they said that
she knew how to play;
And she worked me that shot-pouch up thar, which the
man doesn't live ez kin use;
And slippers—you see 'em down 'yer—ez would cradle
an Injin's papoose.

Yet along o' them novels, you see, she was wastin' and
mopin' away,
And then she got shy with her tongue, and at last had
nothin' to say;
And whenever I happened around, her face it was hid by
a book,
And it warn't until she left that she give me ez much ez
a look.

And this was the way it was. It was night when I kem
up here
To say to 'em all " good-bye," for I reckoned to go for
deer
At " sun up " the day they left. So I shook 'em all
round by the hand,
'Cept Mabel, and she was sick, ez they give me to under-
stand.

But jist ez I passed the house next morning at dawn,
some one,
Like a little waver o' mist got up on the hill with the sun;
Miss Mabel it was, alone—all wrapped in a mantle o' lace—
And she stood there straight in the road, with a touch o'
the sun in her face.

And she looked me right in the eye—I'd seen suthin' like
it before
When I hunted a wounded doe to the edge o' the Clear
Lake Shore,
And I had my knee on its neck, and I jist was raisin' my
knife,
When it give me a look like that, and—well, it got off with
its life.

"We are going to-day," she said, "and I thought I would
say good-bye
To you in your own house, Luke—these woods and the
bright blue sky!
You've always been kind to us, Luke, and papa has found
you still
As good as the air he breathes, and wholesome as Laurel
Tree Hill.

"And we'll always think of you, Luke, as the thing we
could not take away,—
The balsam that dwells in the woods, the rainbow that
lives in the spray.
And you'll sometimes think of *me*, Luke, as you know you
once used to say,
A rifle smoke blown through the woods, a moment, but
never to stay."

And then we shook hands. She turned, but a-suddent she
tottered and fell,
And I caught her sharp by the waist, and held her a minit.
Well,
It was only a minit, you know, thet ez cold and ez white
she lay
Ez a snowflake here on my breast, and then—well, she
melted away—

And was gone. . . . And thar are her books; but I says
not any for me;
Good enough maybe for some, but them and I mightn't
agree.

They spiled a decent gal ez might hev made some chap a wife,
And look at me !—clar two hundred—and never read one in my life !

THOMPSON OF ANGELS

It is the story of Thompson—of Thompson, the hero of Angels.
Frequently drunk was Thompson, but always polite to the stranger ;
Light and free was the touch of Thompson upon his revolver ;
Great the mortality incident on that lightness and freedom.

Yet not happy or gay was Thompson, the hero of Angels ;
Often spoke to himself in accents of anguish and sorrow,
" Why do I make the graves of the frivolous youth who in folly
Thoughtlessly pass my revolver, forgetting its lightness and freedom ?

" Why in my daily walks does the surgeon drop his left eyelid,
The undertaker smile, and the sculptor of gravestone marbles
Lean on his chisel and gaze ? I care not o'er much for attention ;
Simple am I in my ways, save but for this lightness and freedom."

So spake that pensive man—this Thompson, the hero of Angels,
Bitterly smiled to himself, as he strode through the chapparel musing.
" Why, O why ? " echoed the pines in the dark olive depth far resounding.
" Why, indeed ? " whispered the sage brush that bent 'neath his feet non-elastic.

Pleasant indeed was that morn that dawned o'er the bar-room at Angels,
Where in their manhood's prime was gathered the pride of the hamlet.
Six "took sugar in theirs," and nine to the barkeeper lightly
Smiled as they said, "Well, Jim, you can give us our regular fusil."

Suddenly as the grey hawk swoops down on the barnyard, alighting
Where, pensively picking their corn, the favourite pullets are gathered,
So in that festive bar-room dropped Thompson, the hero of Angels,
Grasping his weapon dread with his pristine lightness and freedom.

Never a word he spoke; divesting himself of his garments,
Danced the war-dance of the playful yet truculent Modoc,
Uttered a single whoop, and then, in the accents of challenge,
Spake: "Oh, behold in me a Crested Jay Hawk of the mountain."

Then rose a pallid man—a man sick with fever and ague;
Small was he, and his step was tremulous, weak, and uncertain;
Slowly a derringer drew, and covered the person of Thompson;
Said in his feeblest pipe, "I'm a Bald-headed Snipe of the Valley."

As on its native plains the kangaroo, startled by hunters,
Leaps with successive bounds, and hurries away to the thickets,
So leaped the Crested Hawk, and quietly hopping behind him
Ran, and occasionally shot, that Bald-headed Snipe of the Valley.

Vain at the festive bar still lingered the people of Angels,
Hearing afar in the woods the petulant pop of the pistol;
Never again returned the Crested Jay Hawk of the mountains,
Never again was seen the Bald-headed Snipe of the Valley.

Yet in the hamlet of Angels, when truculent speeches are uttered,
When bloodshed and life alone will atone for some trifling misstatement,
Maidens and men in their prime recall the last hero of Angels,
Think of and vainly regret the Bald-headed Snipe of the Valley!

THE HAWK'S NEST

(SIERRAS)

We checked our pace,—the red road sharply rounding;
We heard the troubled flow
Of the dark olive depths of pines, resounding
A thousand feet below.

Above the tumult of the cañon lifted,
The grey hawk breathless hung;
Or on the hill a wingèd shadow drifted
Where furze and thorn-bush clung;

Or where half-way the mountain-side was furrowed
With many a seam and scar;
Or some abandoned tunnel dimly burrowed,—
A mole-hill seen so far.

We looked in silence down across the distant
Unfathomable reach:
A silence broken by the guide's consistent
And realistic speech.

"Walker of Murphy's blew a hole through Peters
For telling him he lied;
Then up and dusted out of South Hornitos
Across the Long Divide.

"We ran him out of Strong's, and up through Eden,
And 'cross the ford below,
And up this cañon (Peters' brother leadin'),
And me and Clark and Joe.

"He fou't us game: somehow, I disremember
Jest how the thing kem round;
Some say 'twas wadding, some a scattered ember
From fires on the ground.

"But in one minute all the hill below him
Was just one sheet of flame;
Guardin' the crest, Sam Clark and I called to him,
And,—well, the dog was game!

"He made no sign: the fires of hell were round him,
The pit of hell below.
We sat and waited, but we never found him;
And then we turned to go.

"And then—you see that rock that's grown so bristly
With chapparel and tan—
Suthin' crep' out: it might hev been a grizzly,
It might hev been a man;

"Suthin' that howled, and gnashed its teeth, and shouted
In smoke and dust and flame;
Suthin' that sprang into the depths about it,
Grizzly or man,—but game!

"That's all. Well, yes, it does look rather risky,
And kinder makes one queer
And dizzy looking down. A drop of whisky
Ain't a bad thing right here!"

HER LETTER

I'm sitting alone by the fire,
Dressed just as I came from the dance,
In a robe even *you* would admire,—
It cost a cool thousand in France;
I'm be-diamonded out of all reason,
My hair is done up in a cue:
In short, sir, "the belle of the season"
Is wasting an hour on you.

A dozen engagements I've broken;
I left in the midst of a set;
Likewise a proposal, half spoken,
That waits—on the stairs—for me yet.
They say he'll be rich,—when he grows up,—
And then he adores me indeed;
And you, sir, are turning your nose up,
Three thousand miles off, as you read.

"And how do I like my position?"
"And what do I think of New York?"
"And now, in my higher ambition,
With whom do I waltz, flirt, or talk?"
"And isn't it nice to have riches,
And diamonds and silks, and all that?"
"And aren't it a change to the ditches
And tunnels of Poverty Flat?"

Well, yes,—if you saw us out driving
Each day in the park, four-in-hand,—
If you saw poor dear mamma contriving
To look supernaturally grand,—
If you saw papa's picture, as taken
By Brady, and tinted at that,—
You'd never suspect he sold bacon
And flour at Poverty Flat.

And yet, just this moment, when sitting
In the glare of the grand chandelier,—
In the bustle and glitter befitting
The "finest soirée of the year,"—

In the mists of a *gaze de Chambéry*,
And the hum of the smallest of talk,—
Somehow, Joe, I thought of the "Ferry,"
And the dance that we had on "The Fork";

Of Harrison's barn, with its muster
Of flags festooned over the wall;
Of the candles that shed their soft lustre
And tallow on head-dress and shawl;
Of the steps that we took to one fiddle;
Of the dress of my queer *vis-à-vis*;
And how I once went down the middle
With the man that shot Sandy McGee;

Of the moon that was quietly sleeping
On the hill, when the time came to go;
Of the few baby peaks that were peeping
From under their bedclothes of snow;
Of that ride,—that to me was the rarest;
Of – the something you said at the gate:
Ah! Joe, then I wasn't an heiress
To "the best-paying lead in the State."

Well, well, it's all past; yet it's funny
To think, as I stood in the glare
Of fashion and beauty and money,
That I should be thinking, right there,
Of some one who breasted high water,
And swam the North Fork, and all that,
Just to dance with old Folinsbee's daughter,
The Lily of Poverty Flat!

But goodness! what nonsense I'm writing!
(Mamma says my taste still is low,)
Instead of my triumphs reciting,
I'm spooning on Joseph,—heigh-ho!
And I'm to be "finished" by travel,—
Whatever's the meaning of that,—
Oh, why did papa strike pay gravel
In drifting on Poverty Flat?

Good night,—here's the end of my paper;
Good night,—if the longitude please,—
For maybe, while wasting my taper,
Your sun's climbing over the trees.
But know, if you haven't got riches,
And are poor, dearest Joe, and all that,
That my heart's somewhere there in the ditches,
And you've struck it,—on Poverty Flat.

HIS ANSWER TO "HER LETTER"

(REPORTED BY TRUTHFUL JAMES)

BEING asked by an intimate party,—
Which the same I would term as a friend,—
Which his health it were vain to call hearty,
Since the mind to deceit it might lend;
For his arm it was broken quite recent,
And there's something gone wrong with his lung,—
Which it is why it is proper and decent
I should write what he runs off his tongue:

First, he says, Miss, he's read through your letter
To the end,—and the end came too soon;
That a slight illness kept him your debtor
(Which for weeks he was wild as a loon);
That his spirits are buoyant as yours is;
That with you, Miss, he challenges Fate
(Which the language that invalid uses
At times it were vain to relate).

And he says that the mountains are fairer
For once being held in your thought;
That each rock holds a wealth that is rarer
Than ever by gold-seeker sought
(Which are words he would put in these pages,
By a party not given to guile;
Though the claim not, at date, paying wages,
Might produce in the sinful a smile).

He remembers the ball at the Ferry,
And the ride, and the gate, and the vow,
And the rose that you gave him,—that very
Same rose he is treasuring now
(Which his blanket he's kicked on his trunk, Miss,
And insists on his legs being free;
And his language to me from his bunk, Miss,
Is frequent and painful and free);

He hopes you are wearing no willows,
But are happy and gay all the while;
That he knows (which this dodging of pillows
Imparts but small ease to the style,
And the same you will pardon),—he knows, Miss,
That, though parted by many a mile,
Yet were he lying under the snows, Miss,
They'd melt into tears at your smile.

And you'll still think of him in your pleasures,
In your brief twilight dreams of the past;
In this green laurel-spray that he treasures,
It was plucked where your parting was last;
In this specimen,—but a small trifle,—
It will do for a pin for your shawl
(Which the truth not to wickedly stifle,
Was his last week's "clean up,"—and *his all*).

He's asleep, which the same might seem strange, Miss,
Were it not that I scorn to deny
That I raised his last dose, for a change, Miss,
In view that his fever was high;
But he lies there quite peaceful and pensive.
And now, my respects, Miss, to you;
Which my language, although comprehensive,
Might seem to be freedom,—it's true.

For I have a small favour to ask you,
As concerns a bull-pup, which the same,—
If the duty would not overtask you,—
You would please to procure for me, *game*;

And send per express to the Flat, Miss,
  Which they say York is famed for the breed,
Which though words of deceit maybe that, Miss,
  I'll trust to your taste, Miss, indeed.

P.S.—Which this same interfering
  Into other folks' way I despise;
Yet if it so be I was hearing
  That it's just empty pockets as lies
Betwixt you and Joseph, it follers,
  That, having no family claims,
Here's my pile; which it's six hundred dollars,
  As is yours, with respects,

TRUTHFUL JAMES.

FURTHER LANGUAGE FROM TRUTHFUL JAMES

(NYE'S FORD, STANISLAUS)

1870

Do I sleep? do I dream?
Do I wonder and doubt?
Are things what they seem?
Or is visions about?
Is our civilization a failure?
Or is the Caucasian played out?

Which expressions are strong;
Yet would feebly imply
Some account of a wrong—
Not to call it a lie—
As was worked off on William, my pardner,
And the same being W. Nye.

He came down to the Ford
On the very same day
Of that lottery drawed
By those sharps at the Bay;
And he says to me, "Truthful, how goes it?"
I replied, "It is far, far from gay;

"For the camp has gone wild
On this lottery game,
And has even beguiled
'Injin Dick' by the same."
Which said Nye to me, "Injins is pizen:
But what is his number, eh? James?"

I replied, "7,2,
9,8,4, is his hand";
When he started, and drew
Out a list, which he scanned;
Then he softly went for his revolver
With language I cannot command.

Then I said, "William Nye!"
But he turned upon me,
And the look in his eye
Was quite painful to see;
And he says, "You mistake; this poor Injin
I protects from such sharps as *you* be!"

I was shocked and withdrew;
But I grieve to relate,
When he next met my view
Injin Dick was his mate;
And the two around town was a-lying
In a frightfully dissolute state.

Which the war-dance they had
Round a tree at the Bend
Was a sight that was sad;
And it seemed that the end
Would not justify the proceedings,
As I quiet remarked to a friend.

For that Injin he fled
The next day to his band;
And we found William spread
Very loose on the strand,
With a peaceful-like smile on his features,
And a dollar greenback in his hand;

Which the same when rolled out,
We observed with surprise,
Was what he, no doubt,
Thought the numbers and prize—
Them figures in red in the corner,
Which the number of notes specifies.

Was it guile, or a dream?
Is it Nye that I doubt?
Are things what they seem?
Or is visions about?
Is our civilization a failure?
Or is the Caucasian played out?

THE STAGE-DRIVER'S STORY

It was the stage-driver's story, as he stood with his back
to the wheelers,
Quietly flecking his whip, and turning his quid of tobacco;
While on the dusty road, and blent with the rays of the
moonlight,
We saw the long curl of his lash and the juice of tobacco
descending.

"Danger! Sir, I believe you,—indeed, I may say on
that subject,
You your existence might put to the hazard and turn of
a wager.
I have seen danger? Oh, no! not me, sir, indeed, I
assure you:
'Twas only the man with the dog that is sitting alone in
yon waggon.

"It was the Geiger Grade, a mile and a half from the
summit:
Black as your hat was the night, and never a star in the
heavens.
Thundering down the grade, the gravel and stones we
sent flying
Over the precipice side,—a thousand feet plumb to the
bottom.

"Half-way down the grade I felt, sir, a thrilling and creaking,
Then a lurch to one side, as we hung on the bank of the cañon;
Then, looking up the road, I saw, in the distance behind me,
The off-hind wheel of the coach just loosed from its axle, and following.

"One glance alone I gave, then gathered together my ribbons,
Shouted, and flung them, outspread, on the straining necks of my cattle;
Screamed at the top of my voice, and lashed the air in my frenzy,
While down the Geiger Grade, on *three* wheels, the vehicle thundered.

"Speed was our only chance, when again came the ominous rattle:
Crack, and another wheel slipped away, and was lost in the darkness.
Two only now were left; yet such was our fearful momentum,
Upright, erect, and sustained on *two* wheels, the vehicle thundered.

"As some huge boulder, unloosed from its rocky shelf on the mountain,
Drives before it the hare and the timorous squirrel, far-leaping,
So down the Geiger Grade rushed the Pioneer coach, and before it
Leaped the wild horses, and shrieked in advance of the danger impending.

"But to be brief in my tale. Again, ere we came to the level,
Slipped from its axle a wheel; so that, to be plain in my statement,

A matter of twelve hundred yards or more, as the distance may be,
We travelled upon *one* wheel, until we drove up to the station.

" Then, sir, we sank in a heap ; but, picking myself from the ruins,
I heard a noise up the grade ; and looking, I saw in the distance
The three wheels following still, like moons on the horizon whirling,
Till, circling, they gracefully sank on the road at the side of the station.

" This is my story, sir ; a trifle, indeed, I assure you.
Much more, perchance, might be said ; but I hold him, of all men, most lightly
Who swerves from the truth in his tale—No, thank you—Well, since you *are* pressing,
Perhaps I don't care if I do : you may give me the same, Jim,—no sugar."

IN THE MISSION GARDEN

(1865)

FATHER FELIPE

I SPEAK not the English well, but Pachita
She speak for me ; is it not so, my Pancha ?
Eh, little rogue ? Come, salute me the stranger Americano.

Sir, in my country we say, " Where the heart is,
There live the speech." Ah ! you not understand ? So !
Pardon an old man,—what you call " ol fogy,"—
Padre Felipe !

Old, Señor, old ! just so old as the Mission.
You see that pear-tree ? How old you think, Señor ?
Fifteen year ? Twenty ? Ah, Señor, just *fifty*
Gone since I plant him !

You like the wine? It is some at the Mission,
Made from the grape of the year Eighteen Hundred;
All the same time when the earthquake he come to
San Juan Bautista.

But Pancha is twelve, and she is the rose-tree;
And I am the olive, and this is the garden:
And Pancha we say; but her name is Francisca,
Same like her mother.

Eh, you knew *her*? No? Ah! it is a story;
But I speak not, like Pachita, the English:
So? If I try, you will sit here beside me,
And shall not laugh, eh?

When the American come to the Mission,
Many arrive at the house of Francisca:
One,—he was fine man,—he buy the cattle
Of José Castro.

So! he came much, and Francisca she saw him:
And it was Love,—and a very dry season;
And the pears bake on the tree,—and the rain come,
But not Francisca;

Not for one year; and one night I have walk much
Under the olive-tree, when comes Francisca:
Comes to me here, with her child, this Francisca,—
Under the olive-tree.

Sir, it was sad; . . . but I speak not the English;
So! . . . she stay here, and she wait for her husband:
He come no more, and she sleep on the hill-side;
There stands Pachita.

Ah! there's the Angelus. Will you not enter?
Or shall you walk in the garden with Pancha?
Go, little rogue—stt—attend to the stranger.
Adios, Señor.

PACHITA (*briskly*)

So, he's been telling that yarn about mother!
Bless you, he tells it to every stranger:
Folks about 'yer say the old man's my father;
What's your opinion?

PENELOPE

(SIMPSON'S BAR, 1858)

So you've kem 'yer agen,
And one answer won't do?
Well, of all the derned men
That I've struck, it is you.
O Sal! 'yer's that derned fool from Simpson's, cavortin' round 'yer in the dew.

Kem in, ef you *will*.
Thar,—quit! Take a cheer.
Not that; you can't fill
Them theer cushings this year,—
For that cheer was my old man's, Joe Simpson, and they don't make such men about 'yer.

He was tall, was my Jack,
And as strong as a tree.
Thar's his gun on the rack,—
Jest you heft it, and see.
And *you* come a courtin' his widder! Lord! where can that critter, Sal, be!

You'd fill my Jack's place?
And a man of your size,—
With no baird to his face,
Nor a snap to his eyes.
And nary—Sho! thar! I was foolin',—I was, Joe, for sartain,—don't rise.

Sit down. Law! why, sho!
I'm as weak as a gal.
Sal! Don't you go, Joe,
Or I'll faint,—sure, I shall.
Sit down,—*anywheer*, where you like, Joe,—in that cheer, if you choose,—Lord! where's Sal?

PARODIES AND HUMOURS

BEFORE THE CURTAIN

Behind the footlights hangs the rusty baize,
A trifle shabby in the upturned blaze
Of flaring gas, and curious eyes that gaze.

The stage, methinks, perhaps is none too wide,
And hardly fit for royal Richard's stride,
Or Falstaff's bulk, or Denmark's youthful pride.

Ah, well! no passion walks its humble boards;
O'er it no king nor valiant Hector lords:
The simplest skill is all its space affords.

The song and jest, the dance and trifling play,
The local hit at follies of the day,
The trick to pass an idle hour away,—

For these, no trumpets that announce the Moor,
No blast that makes the hero's welcome sure,—
A single fiddle in the overture!

TO THE PLIOCENE SKULL

(A GEOLOGICAL ADDRESS)

"Speak, O man, less recent! Fragmentary fossil!
Primal pioneer of pliocene formation,
Hid in lowest drifts below the earliest stratum
Of volcanic tufa!

" Older than the beasts, the oldest Palæotherium ;
Older than the trees, the oldest Cryptogami ;
Older than the hills, those infantile eruptions
Of earth's epidermis !

" Eo—Mio—Plio—whatsoe'er the ' œne ' was
That those vacant sockets filled with awe and wonder,
Whether shores Devonian or Silurian beaches,—
Tell us thy strange story !

" Or has the professor slightly antedated
By some thousand years thy advent on this planet,
Giving thee an air that's somewhat better fitted
For cold-blooded creatures ?

" Wert thou true spectator of that mighty forest
When above thy head the stately Sigillaria
Reared its columned trunks in that remote and distant
Carboniferous epoch ?

" Tell us of that scene,—the dim and watery woodland,
Songless, silent, hushed, with never bird or insect
Veiled with spreading fronds and screened with tall club-mosses,
Lycopodiacea,—

" When beside thee walked the solemn Plesiosaurus,
And around thee crept the festive Ichthyosaurus,
While from time to time above thee flew and circled
Cheerful Pterodactyls.

" Tell us of thy food,—those half-marine refections,
Crinoids on the shell, and Brachipods *au naturel*,—
Cuttle-fish to which the *pieuvre* of Victor Hugo
Seems a periwinkle.

" Speak, thou awful vestige of the Earth's creation,—
Solitary fragment of remains organic !
Tell the wondrous secret of thy past existence,—
Speak ! thou oldest primate ! "

Even as I gazed, a thrill of the maxilla,
And a lateral movement of the condyloid process,
With post-pliocene sounds of healthy mastication,
Ground the teeth together.

And from that imperfect dental exhibition,
Stained with expressed juices of the weed Nicotian,
Came these hollow accents, blent with softer murmurs
Of expectoration;

"Which my name is Bowers, and my crust was busted
Falling down a shaft in Calaveras County,
But I'd take it kindly if you'd send the pieces
Home to old Missouri!"

THE BALLAD OF MR. COOKE

(A LEGEND OF THE CLIFF HOUSE, SAN FRANCISCO)

WHERE the sturdy ocean breeze
Drives the spray of roaring seas,
That the Cliff-House balconies
Overlook:
There, in spite of rain that balked,
With his sandals duly chalked,
Once upon a tight-rope walked
Mr. Cooke.

But the jester's lightsome mien,
And his spangles and his sheen,
All had vanished when the scene
He forsook.
Yet in some delusive hope,
In some vague desire to cope,
One still came to view the rope
Walked by Cooke.

. . . . . .

Amid Beauty's bright array,
On that strange eventful day,
Partly hidden from the spray,
In a nook,
Stood Florinda Vere de Vere;
Who, with wind-dishevelled hair,
And a rapt, distracted air,
Gazed on Cooke,

Then she turned, and quickly cried
To her lover at her side,
While her form with love and pride
Wildly shook:
"Clifford Snook! oh, hear me now!
Here I break each plighted vow:
There's but one to whom I bow,
And that's Cooke!"

Haughtily that young man spoke:
"I descend from noble folk;
'Seven Oaks,' and then 'Se'nnoak,'
Lastly Snook,
Is the way my name I trace.
Shall a youth of noble race
In affairs of love give place
To a Cooke?"

"Clifford Snook, I know thy claim
To that lineage and name,
And I think I've read the same
In Horne Tooke;
But I swear, by all divine,
Never, never, to be thine,
Till thou canst upon yon line
Walk like Cooke."

Though to that gymnastic feat
He no closer might compete
Than to strike a *balance*-sheet
In a book;

Yet thenceforward, from that day,
He his figure would display
In some wild athletic way,
After Cooke.

On some household eminence,
On a clothes-line or a fence,
Over ditches, drains, and thence
O'er a brook,
He, by high ambition led,
Ever walked and balanced,
Till the people, wondering, said,
"How like Cooke!"

Step by step did he proceed,
Nerved by valour, not by greed,
And at last the crowning deed
Undertook.
Misty was the midnight air,
And the cliff was bleak and bare,
When he came to do and dare,
Just like Cooke.

Through the darkness, o'er the flow,
Stretched the line where he should go,
Straight across as flies the crow
Or the rook:
One wild glance around he cast;
Then he faced the ocean blast,
And he strode the cable last
Touched by Cooke.

Vainly roared the angry seas,
Vainly blew the ocean breeze;
But, alas! the walker's knees
Had a crook;
And before he reached the rock
Did they both together knock,
And he stumbled with a shock—
Unlike Cooke!

Downward dropping in the dark,
Like an arrow to its mark,
Or a fish-pole when a shark
Bites the hook,
Dropped the pole he could not save,
Dropped the walker, and the wave
Swift engulfed the rival brave
Of J. Cooke!

Came a roar across the sea
Of sea-lions in their glee,
In a tongue remarkably
Like Chinook;
And the maddened sea-gull seemed
Still to utter, as he screamed,
"Perish thus the wretch who deemed
Himself Cooke!"

But on misty moonlit nights
Comes a skeleton in tights,
Walks once more the giddy heights
He mistook;
And, unseen to mortal eyes,
Purged of grosser earthly ties,
Now at last in spirit guise
Outdoes Cooke.

. . . . . .

Still the sturdy ocean breeze
Sweeps the spray of roaring seas,
Where the Cliff-House balconies
Overlook;
And the maidens in their prime,
Reading of this mournful rhyme,
Weep where, in the olden time,
Walked J. Cooke.

THE BALLAD OF THE EMEU

Oh, say, have you seen at the Willows so green,—
  So charming and rurally true,—
A singular bird, with a manner absurd,
  Which they call the Australian Emeu?
                Have you
  Ever seen this Australian Emeu?

It trots all around with its head on the ground,
  Or erects it quite out of your view;
And the ladies all cry, when its figure they spy,
  Oh, what a sweet pretty Emeu!
                Oh! do
  Just look at that lovely Emeu!

One day to this spot, when the weather was hot,
  Came Matilda Hortense Fortescue;
And beside her there came a youth of high name,—
  Augustus Florell Montague:
                The two
  Both loved that wild, foreign Emeu.

With two loaves of bread then they fed it, instead
  Of the flesh of the white cockatoo,
Which once was its food in that wild neighbourhood
  Where ranges the sweet Kangaroo:
                That too
  Is game for the famous Emeu!

Old saws and gimlets but its appetite whets,
  Like the world-famous bark of Peru:
There's nothing so hard that the bird will discard,
  And nothing its taste will eschew,
                That you
  Can give that long-legged Emeu!

The time slipped away in this innocent play.
When up jumped the bold Montague:
"Where's that specimen pin that I gaily did win
In raffle, and gave unto you,
Forteseue?"
No word spoke the guilty Emeu!

"Quick! tell me his name whom thou gavest that same,
Ere these hands in thy blood I imbrue!"
"Nay, dearest," she cried, as she clung to his side,
"I'm innocent as that Emeu!"
"Adieu!"
He replied, "Miss M. H. Forteseue!"

Down she dropped at his feet, all as white as a sheet,
As wildly he fled from her view:
He thought 'twas her sin,—for he knew not the pin
Had been gobbled up by the Emeu;
All through
The voracity of that Emeu!

MRS. JUDGE JENKINS

(BEING THE ONLY GENUINE SEQUEL TO "MAUD MULLER")

MAUD MULLER all that summer day
Raked the meadow sweet with hay;

Yet, looking down the distant lane,
She hoped the Judge would come again.

But when he came, with smile and bow,
Maud only blushed, and stammered, "Ha-ow?"

And spoke of her "pa," and wondered whether
He'd give consent they should wed together.

Old Müller burst in tears, and then
Begged that the Judge would lend him "ten";

For trade was dull, and wages low,
And the "craps," this year, were somewhat slow.

And ere the languid summer died,
Sweet Maud became the Judge's bride.

But, on the day that they were mated,
Maud's brother Bob was intoxicated;

And Maud's relations, twelve in all,
Were very drunk at the Judge's hall.

And when the summer came again,
The young bride bore him babies twain;

And the Judge was blest, but thought it strange
That bearing children made such a change.

For Maud grew broad and red and stout,
And the waist that his arm once clasped about

Was more than he now could span; and he
Sighed as he pondered, ruefully,

How that which in Maud was native grace
In Mrs. Jenkins was out of place;

And thought of the twins, and wished that they
Looked less like the man who raked the hay

On Müller's farm, and dreamed with pain
Of the day he wandered down the lane.

And, looking down that dreary track,
He half regretted that he came back.

For, had he waited, he might have wed
Some maiden fair and thoroughbred;

For there be women fair as she,
Whose verbs and nouns do more agree.

Alas for maiden! alas for judge!
And the sentimental,—that's one-half "fudge";

For Maud soon thought the Judge a bore,
With all his learning and all his lore;

And the Judge would have bartered Maud's fair face
For more refinement and social grace.

If, of all words of tongue and pen,
The saddest are, "It might have been,"

More sad are these we daily see:
"It is, but hadn't ought to be."

THE WILLOWS

(AFTER EDGAR ALLAN POE)

THE skies they were ashen and sober,
The streets they were dirty and drear;
It was night in the month of October,
Of my most immemorial year;
Like the skies I was perfectly sober,
As I stopped at the mansion of Shear,—
At the Nightingale,—perfectly sober,
And the willowy woodland, down here.

Here, once in an alley Titanic
Of Ten-pins,—I roamed with my soul,—
Of Ten-pins,—with Mary, my soul;
They were days when my heart was volcanic,
And impelled me to frequently roll,
And made me resistlessly roll,

Till my ten-strikes created a panic
In the realms of the Boreal pole,
Till my ten-strikes created a panic
With the monkey atop of his pole.

I repeat, I was perfectly sober,
But my thoughts they were palsied and sear,—
My thoughts were decidedly queer;
For I knew not the month was October,
And I marked not the night of the year:
I forgot that sweet *morceau* of Auber
That the band oft performèd down here;
And I mixed the sweet music of Auber
With the Nightingale's music by Shear.

And now as the night was senescent,
And star-dials pointed to morn,
And car-drivers hinted of morn,
At the end of the path a liquescent
And bibulous lustre was born:
'Twas made by the bar-keeper present,
Who mixèd a duplicate horn,—
His two hands describing a crescent
Distinct with a duplicate horn.

And I said: "This looks perfectly regal;
For it's warm, and I know I feel dry,
I am confident that I feel dry;
We have come past the emeu and eagle,
And watched the gay monkey on high;
Let us drink to the emeu and eagle,—
To the swan and the monkey on high;
To the eagle and monkey on high;
For this bar-keeper will not inveigle,—
Bully boy with the vitreous eye;
He surely would never inveigle,—
Sweet youth with the crystalline eye."

But Mary, uplifting her finger,
Said, "Sadly this bar I mistrust,—
I fear that this bar does not trust.
Oh, hasten! Oh, let us not linger!

Oh, fly,—let us fly,—ere we must!"
In terror she cried, letting sink her
Parasol till it trailed in the dust,—
In agony sobbed, letting sink her
Parasol till it trailed in the dust.—
Till it sorrowfully trailed in the dust.

Then I pacified Mary and kissed her,
And tempted her into the room,
And conquered her scruples and gloom;
And we passed to the end of the vista,
But were stopped by the warning of doom,—
By some words that were warning of doom.
And I said, "What is written, sweet sister,
At the opposite end of the room?"
She sobbed, as she answered, "All liquors
Must be paid for ere leaving the room."

Then my heart it grew ashen and sober,
As the streets were deserted and drear,—
For my pockets were empty and drear;
And I cried, "It was surely October,
On this very night of last year,
That I journeyed—I journeyed down here,—
That I brought a fair maiden down here,
On this night of all nights in the year.
Ah! to me that inscription is clear;
Well I know now, I'm perfectly sober,
Why no longer they credit me here,—
Well I know now that music of Auber,
And this Nightingale, kept by one Shear."

A MORAL VINDICATOR

If Mr. Jones, Lycurgus B.,
Had one peculiar quality,
'Twas his severe advocacy
Of conjugal fidelity.

His views of heaven were very free,
His views of life were painfully
Ridiculous; but fervently
He dwelt on marriage sanctity.

He frequently went on a spree;
But in his wildest revelry,
On this especial subject he
Betrayed no ambiguity.

And though at times Lycurgus B.
Did lay his hands not lovingly
Upon his wife, the sanctity
Of wedlock was his guaranty.

But Mrs. Jones declined to see
Affairs in the same light as he,
And quietly got a decree
Divorcing her from that L. B.

And what did Jones, Lycurgus B.,
With his known idiosynerasy?
He smiled,—a bitter smile to see,—
And drew the weapon of Bowie.

He did what Sickles did to Key,—
What Cole on Hiscock wrought, did he;
In fact, on persons twenty-three
He proved the marriage sanctity.

The counsellor who took the fee,
The witnesses and referee,
The Judge who granted the decree,
Died in that wholesale butchery.

And then when Jones, Lycurgus B.,
Had wiped the weapon of Bowie,
Twelve jurymen did instantly
Acquit and set Lycurgus free.

AN ARCTIC VISION

WHERE the short-legged Esquimaux
Waddle in the ice and snow,
And the playful polar bear
Nips the hunter unaware;
Where by day they track the ermine,
And by night another vermin,—
Segment of the frigid zone,
Where the temperature alone
Warms on St. Elias' cone;
Polar dock, where Nature slips
From the ways her icy ships;
Land of fox and deer and sable,
Shore end of our western cable,—
Let the news that flying goes
Thrill through all your Arctic floes,
And reverberate the boast
From the cliffs of Beechey's coast,
Till the tidings, circling round
Every bay of Norton Sound,
Throw the vocal tide-wave back
To the isles of Kodiac.
Let the stately polar bears
Waltz around the pole in pairs,
And the walrus, in his glee,
Bare his tusk of ivory;
While the bold sea-unicorn
Calmly takes an extra horn;
All ye polar skies, reveal your
Very rarest of parhelia;
Trip it, all ye merry dancers,
In the airiest of lancers;
Slide, ye solemn glaciers, slide,
One inch farther to the tide,
Nor in rash precipitation
Upset Tyndall's calculation.
Know you not what fate awaits you,
Or to whom the future mates you?

All ye icebergs make salaam,—
You belong to Uncle Sam!

On the spot where Eugene Sue
Led his wretched Wandering Jew,
Stands a form whose features strike
Russ and Esquimaux alike.
He it is whom Skalds of old
In their Runic rhymes foretold;
Lean of flank and lank of jaw,
See the real Northern Thor!
See the awful Yankee leering
Just across the Straits of Behring;
On the drifted snow, too plain,
Sinks his fresh tobacco stain
Just beside the deep inden-
Tation of his Number 10.

Leaning on his icy hammer
Stands the hero of this drama,
And above the wild-duck's clamour,
In his own peculiar grammar,
With its linguistic disguises,
Lo, the Arctic prologue rises:
"Wa'll, I reckon 'tain't so bad,
Seein' ez 'twas all they had.
True the Springs are rather late,
And early Falls predominate;
But the ice crop's pretty sure,
And the air is kind o' pure;
'Tain't so very mean a trade,
When the land is all surveyed.
There's a right smart chance for fur-chase
All along this recent purchase,
And, unless the stories fail,
Every fish from cod to whale;
Rocks, too; mebbe quartz; let's see,—
'Twould be strange if there should be,—
Seems I've heerd such stories told;
Eh!—why, bless us,—yes, it's gold!"

While the blows are falling thick
From his California pick,

You may recognize the Thor
Of the vision that I saw,—
Freed from legendary glamour,
See the real magician's hammer.

ST. THOMAS

A GEOGRAPHICAL SURVEY

(1868)

VERY fair and full of promise
Lay the island of St. Thomas:
Ocean o'er its reefs and bars
Hid its elemental scars;
Groves of cocoa-nut and guava
Grew above its fields of lava.
So the gem of the Antilles,—
"Isles of Eden," where no ill is,—
Like a great green turtle slumbered
On the sea that it encumbered.
Then said William Henry Seward,
As he cast his eye to leeward,
"Quite important to our commerce
Is this island of St. Thomas."

Said the Mountain ranges, "Thank'ee,
But we cannot stand the Yankee
O'er our scars and fissures poring,
In our very vitals boring,
In our sacred caverns prying,
All our secret problems trying,—
Digging, blasting, with dynamit
Mocking all our thunders! Damn it!
Other lands may be more civil,
Bust our lava crust if we will."

Said the Sea,—its white teeth gnashing
Through its coral-reef lips flashing,—
"Shall I let this scheming mortal
Shut with stone my shining portal,

Curb my tide, and check my play,
Fence with wharves my shining bay?
Rather let me be drawn out
In one awful waterspout!"

Said the black-browed Hurricane,
Brooding down the Spanish main,
"Shall I see my forces, zounds!
Measured by square inch and pounds,
With detectives at my back
When I double on my track,
And my secret paths made clear,
Published o'er the hemisphere
To each gaping, prying crew?
Shall I? Blow me if I do!"

So the Mountains shook and thundered,
And the Hurricane came sweeping,
And the people stared and wondered
As the Sea came on them leaping:
Each, according to his promise,
Made things lively at St. Thomas.

Till one morn, when Mr. Seward
Cast his weather eye to leeward,
There was not an inch of dry land
Left to mark his recent island.
Not a flagstaff or a sentry,
Not a wharf or port of entry,—
Only—to cut matters shorter—
Just a patch of muddy water
In the open ocean lying,
And a gull above it flying.

THE LEGENDS OF THE RHINE

Beetling walls with ivy grown,
Frowning heights of mossy stone;
Turret, with its flaunting flag
Flung from battlemented crag;

Dungeon-keep and fortalice
Looking down a precipice
O'er the darkly glancing wave
By the Lurline-haunted cave;
Robber haunt and maiden bower,
Home of Love and Crime and Power,—
That's the scenery, in fine,
Of the Legends of the Rhine.

One bold baron, double-dyed
Bigamist and parricide,
And, as most the stories run,
Partner of the Evil One;
Injured innocence in white,
Fair but idiotic quite,
Wringing of her lily hands;
Valour fresh from Paynim lands,
Abbot ruddy, hermit pale,
Minstrel fraught with many a tale,—
Are the actors that combine
In the Legends of the Rhine.

Bell-mouthed flagons round a board;
Suits of armour, shield, and sword;
Kerchief with its bloody stain;
Ghosts of the untimely slain;
Thunder-clap and clanking chain;
Headsman's block and shining axe;
Thumb-screws, crucifixes, racks;
Midnight-tolling chapel bell,
Heard across the gloomy fell,—
These, and other pleasant facts,
Are the properties that shine
In the Legends of the Rhine.

Maledictions, whispered vows
Underneath the linden boughs;
Murder, bigamy, and theft;
Travellers of goods bereft;
Rapine, pillage, arson, spoil,—
Everything but honest toil,

Are the deeds that best define
Every Legend of the Rhine.

That Virtue always meets reward,
But quicker when it wears a sword;
That Providence has special care
Of gallant knight and lady fair;
That villains, as a thing of course,
Are always haunted by remorse,—
Is the moral, I opine,
Of the Legends of the Rhine.

NOTES

Spanish California: the Beginning and the End

Under this heading are grouped three early sketches relating to that Golden Age of California which was anterior to the Age of Gold.

The Legend of Monte del Diablo takes us back to the beginnings, and reminds us that it was Religion (mainly, but not entirely) which first prompted the occupation of the unexplored and almost unvisited region of New Spain known as Alta (or Upper) California. Lower California had been the scene of very successful missionary labours on the part of the Jesuits from the end of the seventeenth century. When that Order was expelled from all Spanish dominions in 1767, the Franciscans were invited to take their place and continue their work, and it was decided at the same time to inaugurate a similar work in the northward region, both in order to save souls and to secure the territorial rights of the King of Spain against encroaching Russians or others. In the early months (January to May) of 1769 a thoroughly equipped expedition was dispatched in four sections, two by sea and two by land, the immediate objects being to make establishments at the two "ports" (*i.e.* harbourages) of San Diego and Monterey, already known from the reports of navigators. This expedition was under the general command of Gaspard de Portolá, captain and governor of Lower California (it is hence called the Portolá Expedition), while the religious side of the enterprise was under the direction of the sainted Junipero (pronounced Hunipero) Serra,[1] father-president of the Franciscan college of San Fernando in Mexico, but now entering upon his greater career as the Apostle of California. San Diego was safely reached, and there on July 16 was founded with due consecration by Father Junipero the first Mission in Upper California. Monterey was more elusive. The ship which sailed to find it had to turn back, being in evil plight, while

[1] Both names are quoted in Bret Harte's poems, but alas! both are mutilated in spelling or accent or both (pp. 533 twice, and 535).

the land explorers passed the " famous port " without recognition, but were compensated for their blunder by the discovery of San Francisco Bay. Monterey was reached in the following year, and there in June 1770 was founded the second Mission, San Carlos Borromeo de Monterey—briefly, San Cárlos. Two others were founded in the following year, and, in 1776, the Mission San Francisco at the entrance to the great Bay which Portolá's soldiers had discovered. From San Diego to San Francisco there were in all eighteen Missions founded and in full function by the century's close, the final number being twenty-one.

It is this long chain of Missions that mainly gives its character to Californian society life until within a decade of the Gold Days. Round each Mission—which individually possessed, though only as a trust, vast domains—were gathered the neophytes or Christianized Indians, and in time their descendants. They lived in a state of combined servitude and pupillage to the Fathers; tending stock, cultivating the Mission corn-fields, vineyards and gardens, practising many handicrafts and the simpler industrial arts, and, in fine, carrying on all the business of the Mission as members of a very large family in which all the children were minors in perpetuity, and none was paid for his work. Some lived within the Mission buildings and even (in the case of " nuns " or unmarried girls) a good deal under lock and key, the majority were housed in huts near by, or were grouped in rancherías (Indian villages) a little farther off. Their lives were regulated to the last degree, and neither their labour nor their souls were their own. But if they were supervised and controlled they were also protected and cared for, and in many instances educated; so that the Mission Indian's life of work and prayer (or at least prompt attention to a bell which at intervals admonished the labourer to be devout) was not an unhappy one.

Associated with the first Missions (which were planted some fifteen leagues apart, and the intervals filled in later) was in each case a Presidio or Garrison, such as we have set before us in *The Right Eye of the Commander*. It was built close to the shore in order to restrain trespassers like Peleg Scudder (foreign trade being strenuously forbidden in Spanish dominions), near enough to the Mission to render aid in case of disturbance or attack, but sufficiently removed to keep the Indian converts from being corrupted by contact with the Christian-born soldiers and sailors who came and went about the Presidio. As a fact the Presidial soldiers were carefully chosen on account of their excellent characters, and many of the privates in this service were men of good family in Spain. There were but four Presidios in all, but these supplied to each Mission an escolta or corporal's guard, who lived in

barracks at the Mission and were exchanged at regular intervals. The Presidio and the Mission guard are important because from them was mainly derived the next social development in California, namely, that of the pueblo or town. Outside the Presidio, or in the vicinity of the Mission, grew up a civil community consisting of retired officials and soldiers, and the families of these, reinforced by new-comers from Spain and Mexico. These increased and multiplied, for it was a land of large families, with the result that in the first quarter of the nineteenth century the Californian coast-line displayed on the map quite a fringe of "towns"; somewhat elementary social formations, no doubt, some of them were, falling short of the material substance and population of an English village—but great towns later on, and even great cities. And in all such cases the town bore, and still bears, the name of the Presidio or the Mission within whose shadow it had its first growth.

Contemporaneous with the formation of these towns was the appearance of the third distinctive social element in Spanish California, the class of landowners engaged chiefly or entirely in stock-raising. They were in the first instance private persons, officials, and retired soldiers to whom grants of the public land were made as a reward for good service or in lieu of pay, but the system of making such grants was continued with a direct view to the development of the country. A very modest rancho would be four square miles in extent, but as time went on the average land-grant grew to be equivalent to many such ranchos. Even the legal maximum of eleven square leagues was sometimes (in effect, though not avowedly) exceeded. The holders of these enormous grants, however, were rather territorial magnates than rancheros proper, and dealt in land (on amazingly easy terms for the purchaser) as well as cattle. Living apart upon their lands, and only coming to the coast-towns at intervals for trade and purchases, the rancheros with their families and servants had characteristics and a type of social life which makes the Pastoral Age of California seem a dreamy idyllic interlude in human affairs. Good feeling was cultivated across great distances. Whoever was within an hour's reach (on horseback) was a next-door neighbour, all neighbours were familiars and like members of a family, and every chance gathering together of three or four was good occasion for a festival of song and dance which might end any time next day. They were a careless, kind-hearted people, exceedingly trusting and hospitable, and a little feckless withal. The women had forfeited no essential of their Spanish breed and the men were in business the soul of honour. No trader but a fool or a newcomer would ask a well-reputed ranchero for his bond,

however much of a ship's cargo he might be removing without present payment.

Those three social factors of California's "Indian Summer" —her Pastoral Age in the spiritual as well as the economic sense—were to be untimely overtaken by a flood of change, and swamped or transformed. Before considering in connexion with the third sketch what happened to the rancheros, the account of the Missions may be briefly concluded.

So long as Spanish control continued, the religious and humanitarian object in California was kept steadily in view. The Missions were sustained against the other social forces and the neophytes guarded (as far as possible) against undue exploitation or harshness by unsuitable Padres After Mexico achieved her independence in 1822 there began a splutter of revolution in that country which has gone on ever since, with one interval of despotism and repose. California, which was a territorial annexe of Mexico, felt the reaction of all this in divers ways, and was made the subject of much legislation and many decrees. The one continuous issue was a project for "secularizing the Missions." This meant ending the Mission system by dividing a proportion of the land and stock of each mission among the neophytes belonging to it, selling the remainder and the buildings in the public behoof, but retaining enough for the support of a Padre, who should henceforth have only the status and authority of a parish priest. This was ostensibly a carrying out of the enlightened purposes of Spain, which had never intended that the Christian Indians should be kept in perpetual pupillage, but had looked forward to the time, and even tried to hasten it, when the Mission should be dissolved and give place to a pueblo or free town. But the effects were very different from those so generously forecast, because the conditions counted on were not supplied. The programme of secularization was achieved in instalments during the 'thirties, and accompanied by endless jobbery and spoliation in the disposal of church and mission properties (plate, furnishings, contents of granaries, wine-cellars, etc.), lands and live-stock. The real victims were the Indians. For the Mission system (as the Padres applied it) had done nothing to prepare them for free economic life, and being set free from the Fathers meant that they had lost their protectors. Of course they soon lost their lands as well, in exchange for drink and other bad bargains. Many returned to the wild life, and the weaker sort hung around for what they could get. They fell upon worse times when the larger American immigration (of land-seekers, not gold-seekers) set in, as it did about 1845–48. For these new-comers were the descendants of four or five generations of frontiersmen, for whom the killing of an Indian had just

as much moral meaning as the crushing of a rattlesnake. Indeed in the districts from which some of them came the accepted name for an Indian was a "copper-head"—a particularly insidious and deadly poisonous reptile. Many of the miners who came a few years later had the same traditions or worse ones, so that the cheating, beating, and butchering of Indians went on in the interior long after there was law and order in the towns. But in the coast region there remained, by the time Bret Harte arrived, no trace of the dream of Spain and the labours of the apostle Junipero Serra save the once sacred buildings now very thoroughly desecrated, like the Mission Dolores, and here and there a Padre who had managed to keep a small flock around him.[1]

P. 26. *Notes by Flood and Field.*—A reminiscence from the days when Bret Harte was an assistant in the Public Surveyor's office. The sketch introduces us to a class of American immigrant differing from the gold-digger, and generally an earlier arrival. As such he represents a transition stage of Californian history which had social and moral effects that ran far into the Gold Period and beyond it.

With the end of Spanish rule in 1822 there was an end also of the traditional Spanish policy which had practically closed the country to foreign trade and foreign residents alike. During the 'twenties and 'thirties the Californian ports were yearly visited by an increasing number of trading-ships of various nationalities, chiefly American and British. During this period, and mainly in connexion with this trade, many foreigners (again mostly from the United States) came to reside in the country. These were a picked class of men, educated, responsible, and living on the best terms with the natives, by whom they were greatly liked and respected. By 1840 a less reputable foreign element began to make itself felt, and had to be proceeded against. About this time two important changes took place. Hitherto the area of settlement had been limited to the coast or the coast-region; but 1840 saw the beginnings of Sutter's Fort, an expansive enterprise in the form of a trading-post established on the Sacramento River (and therefore deep in the interior for those days) by a visionary and ambitious German-Swiss named Sutter. Again, practically all the strangers who had entered California hitherto had come by sea, whether they were commercial agents or ships' deserters; and none had come with a view to living the agricultural settler's life. But in the early 'forties

[1] To revert to *The Legend of Monte del Diablo*. The story is particularly unhistorical, even for a legend. There were never any Jesuits in Upper California; the chronology is unintelligible on any assumption that one can make (e.g. that the writer was out of his reckoning by a century in regard to the date of the Portolá Expedition); and history knows nothing of a Mission of San Pablo in that region.

the impulse to migration was very strong throughout the United States, and especially in the frontier communities. The Oregon Trail had long been familiar to the feet of the fur-traders and the missionaries, but from 1842 it became a beaten path yearly trodden by thousands of home-seekers. Parties from these caravans broke off at Fort Hall and struck south-west for California. In 1844 an easier passage was found, and along the California Trail the emigrants came in increasing numbers yearly, emerging from the mountains into the central valley and almost walking into Sutter's Fort. Thence, after resting and purchasing stock and utensils, they scattered among the lesser valleys in search of likely locations. Their arrival in such numbers was viewed with concern by the authorities, who were yet powerless to avert it or undo it. The times were big with possibilities for California, the most likely being her voluntary accession to the United States. But in 1846 events were precipitated and the best issues spoilt by an egregious act of filibusterism on the part of an American officer and a rabble of disorderlies from Sutter's Fort. This exploit spread out into the sorry achievement called the Conquest of California, a phrase which every good American is ashamed of. Unfortunately, while the wretched business was going on, there entered the country towards the end of that year far the largest contingent of overland immigrants that had yet come. They were not generally the stuff from which good neighbours for a Spaniard, especially if he was a gentleman, could ever have been made. But it was all the worse luck that they, and the yet larger contingents of the next two years, should have entered a country ringing with lies about the oppression, tyranny and atrocity practised by the Californians (whom they called Mexicans when they did not call them Greasers) on the free but unoffending foreigners. These sounds had a long moral reverberation, and even yet, perhaps, are not quite dead.

Now the leading traits of these western immigrants were land-hunger and lawlessness of a kind ; both being the products of generations of movement with the moving frontier. These men thought and dreamed land ; land was all the world's goods in their view and the earthly one thing needful. They and their fathers had taken the land that lay before them wherever they had come, and now they were disposed to make little difference between the Californian landscape and so much virgin prairie or Indian territory. They found it convenient to regard as public domain any situation which they wished to settle upon, and waited for no legal formalities before taking possession of at least the " quarter-section " (160 acres) which they considered the indefeasible right of an American citizen in a new country. Naturally they came up against the rights

of existing landowners at every turn, but they either denied their legal validity or their natural justice. The language of old Tryan (p. 31 for instance) is not in the least an exaggeration (rather the reverse) of the views commonly held by this class. And they had their supporters in another class, so that the Squatter Rights party was an influence in politics. They organized themselves for "direct action" too soon, however, and the Squatter Riots at Sacramento in 1850 put an end to the first and more obviously menacing stage of the movement. The grand spoliation of the Californian landholders aimed at by the Squatters was achieved in slower and more cruel ways through the benevolent intervention of the United States Congress. A law was passed in 1851 requiring every holder of a land-grant in California to bring his claim before a committee *ad hoc* for confirmation. If he failed to do so within a certain time, his lands were "to be considered as having become reincorporated in the public domain." If he did so, the effect was often pretty much the same for him. For whatever the better intentions of Congress were, in practice this law meant that the grant-holder had to defend his title, and the rights of those who held under him, against everybody who chose to challenge it, however impudently; or against the United States (represented by its attorneys) in the absence of any private impertinents; and to go on so defending it, from court to court, practically without end. For when he had reached the Supreme Court of the United States and received there a full confirmation of his grant as a whole, a new series of afflictions might be sprung on him when the official survey came up for registration. Cases in which all this happened were not unknown; cases in which the grant-holder was ruined before he had run the full course were extremely common; and cases in which gross injustice was done, years of anxiety inflicted, hearts embittered and crimes provoked, have never been counted. For this went on for years, during which the accumulated heart-burnings and hatreds of ill-sorted neighbours found relief not seldom in acts of violent crime. This tragic social situation (created by a single cunning politician) had a disastrous effect on the development and character of the country in many ways, among which need only be mentioned here that it presently sprinkled the land with broken men and desperadoes, the sons and servants of honourable Californians who had suffered injustice beyond the degree presented to us in the case of Altascar. In fine, it will be seen that *Notes by Flood and Field* is a very essential and reliable instalment of Bret Harte's presentment of California, real and romantic.

VOCABULARY.—*Adobe* (trisyll.), of large sun-dried bricks (pp. 3, 352, and 455): primarily, the earth from which these were

made. *Serape* (5), a cloak worn by men. *Riata* (33), a finer and more flexible lasso, often of horse hair. *Que bueno* (36), what's the good? *Drive stakes* (44), settle, and therefore stake-out a claim. *Poco a poco* (46), little by little = all in good time = presently *Vaquero* (544), a herdsman.

P. 53. Tales of the Argonauts and Others

As stated in the Introduction, *Tales of the Argonauts* was the title of one of Bret Harte's books published in 1875. Later he used the term to designate a different grouping in the *Collected Works*. In a composite volume, like the present, it may legitimately be used to designate the main body of stories which have for their subjects Californian life, whether camp or urban, during the period of Gold-Seeking. The specimens given here range over the author's three literary periods, the third being represented by *Left out on Lone Star Mountain*, "*Chu Chu!*" and *Johnson's* "*Old Woman.*" Strict chronological order has not been aimed at. It would have been a disservice to author and readers. A beginning is necessarily made with *The Luck of Roaring Camp* (which is itself long subsequent to *Mliss*), and the next five Overland stories follow immediately in their original order, save that a couple of pensive sketches (*A Lonely Ride* and *Waiting for the Ship*) have been interposed where they afford relief and gain value from a sympathetic juxtaposition. It is on this principle that the other early sketches (like *A Night at Wingdam* and *High-Water Mark*) have been worked in among the stories of all periods. The latter sketch is probably the earliest work of Bret Harte that we have, but it has been placed at the close entirely on the ground of its intrinsic qualities. It seemed the right note to end on.

P. 53. "Preface." The volume to which this was prefixed was entitled *The Luck of Roaring Camp, and other Sketches.* It contained the first five *Overland* stories, which are grouped together as Sketches; whereas *Mliss*, *The Right Eye of the Commander*, and *Notes by Flood and Field*, which form another section, are called Stories. Then follow four Bohemian Papers. Such at any rate are the contents of John Camden Hotten's reprint, which effected Bret Harte's introduction to the main body of British readers.

P. 55. "Ace and two bowers." Commanding cards in the game of Euchre, the right bower being the knave of trumps, and the left bower the other knave of the same colour (cf. pp. 99 and 350).

P. 58. "Hasn't mor'n got the colour." This is an exact translation into pan-mining phraseology of "mighty small specimen" and "ain't bigger nor a derringer" in the same

context. "The colour" is the miner's term for gold; and he was said to have "got the colour" when the washings of his prospecting-pan revealed the presence of gold, and "no mor'n got the colour" when the amount was just enough to be visible. "Mighty small specimen" makes exactly the same comment on the new-born mite, but in the parlance of the quartz miner, "specimen" being used in the technical sense of a nugget.

P. 62. "Man-o'-War Jack" was doubtless a fugitive from some penal settlement. Such immigrants from "Her Majesty's Australian Colonies" were known in California as Sydney Ducks, and were debited with all their own evil-doing and a good share of other people's. They had not an easy time; but it is quite in keeping that Roaring Camp should have harboured a specimen, and that Bret Harte should have presented him in his most humane aspect.

P. 78. "Slumgullion," here used as a place-name, is the miner's term for the deposits of sticky red slime that accumulated beside the diggings as a result of the "washing" of the earth or pay-dirt to separate the gold particles.

P. 83. "Faustus . . . his agonizing prayer." In Marlowe's *Faustus*, sc. xvi.: "*O lente, lente, currite noctis equi!*" —really a borrowing from Ovid.

Pp. 136, 137. "A long flume." This was a wooden channel built to convey water from some river or spring higher up the mountain-side to where it was needed for washing the gravel at the diggings on the lower slopes or in the waterless valleys. Some of these flumes were big engineering affairs, worthy of the stately name of aqueducts, and after tapping the water of distant Sierran torrents would convey it across chasms and wide valleys to serve the diggings on a hill-side that had no water-courses of its own. A fortune could easily be lost in building a flume to serve a mine which, on further working, turned out to be only a "pocket"—emptied with the first handful taken from it. Fluming (*i.e.* the construction of flumes and the "letting" of the resulting water power) became a great industry in which vast capital was employed.

P. 170. "I did belong to the Regulators." This term has been fitfully in force in America almost since colonial times, and has covered a multitude of misdemeanours. "Bodies of men assuming authority to rid the community of undesirable persons, and themselves in many cases violating the law." Thus Thornton's *American Glossary*, which, however, seems to have overlooked the Regulators here referred to. Better known to history by their first and most proper name—chosen by themselves—The Hounds—they were an association of bad subjects drawn from the first somewhat foul and frothy wave of immigration produced by the news of the Gold

Discoveries. This wave, in so far as it was Anglo-Saxon, was made up of men who had been living more or less at loose ends in the near-by Spanish-American countries, and so arrived in California towards the end of 1848, months ahead of the Argonauts. This sort did not usually proceed to the mines, then or later, and in San Francisco they forgathered with others like themselves already in the country. With these and other brave spirits who presently followed on (some "from Her Majesty's Australian colonies") they formed an association under the name of The Hounds, and made a good deal of public and processional display as a mutual protection and benefit society. They had their headquarters in a large tent called Tammany Hall, close to the city hotel. But their mutual protection consisted in night attacks, more or less murderous, on the Chilians and Peruvians who were a marked section of the motley population that had squatted in and around San Francisco; and their mutual benefit consisted in a dividing of the spoils. This went on during the spring and summer of 1849, no man preventing them. Their assurance grew with their continued impunity, and they were not always careful to choose their victims from among the despised "Chilenos." When trouble sprang up in the camps between the American miners and the said Chilenos, ending in the latter being driven from the diggings by threats and violence, The Hounds saw what had hitherto been their private business under the new light of a public and patriotic service. They changed their name to the Regulators, posed as protectors of the community, and were more processional and impudent than ever. But this self-satisfaction was the undoing of them. For one day in July they returned from a marauding excursion across the Bay, flushed with victory and still full of fight, and without waiting for nightfall, they ran amuck among the unfortunate Chilenos. It was a brutal scene, and at least one man died of his injuries. Next day the alcalde (all there was to represent law and order in San Francisco in those days) called the public to his aid. The respectable portion of the community gathered to a man, an armed force was quickly formed, and within a few hours some twenty of the ring-leaders were laid by the heels. As a result of the trial which followed, nobody was hanged; even the terms of imprisonment imposed were not enforced for lack of a prison; but the association of The Hounds was broken up.

P. 223. "Make the riffle" = win through one's difficulties, come out all right. The reference is to the risky attempt (frequently made to avoid a détour) to cross the river at a riffle, or small rapid.

P. 234. "A Pike County shindig." The men from Pike County, Missouri, were a very marked variety, as strange to

other Americans as any foreigner could have been. Generally of great stature (seven feet was no unusual height among them) and proportionately built, they were a melancholic looking, half-savage, half-saturnine, tobacco-chewing, shot-gun-carrying breed of bucolic primitives, uncouth in speech if not churlish in manners, the burly yokel on a Transatlantic scale. Why this region should have produced a race of Anakim is not quite clear, but their other characteristics are referable to social isolation and a traditional life of conflict with nature, beasts, and Indians. Of course within this type, as within every other, there was room for all the varieties of natural disposition. Tennessee's Partner (certainly from Pike County) represents the finer issues of the bucolic simplicity: the Man from Solano, again, represents the devastating shrewdness of the plain countryman when he has a mind. The terms Pike County, Pike, and Piker, were generally used with a touch of disrespect, and carried an imputation of uncouthness and "hayseeds in his hair." Then it was extended to describe a type, whether the individuals came from Pike County, Missouri, or no. As always happens, the Pike County man accepted the nickname and lived up to the challenge: witness (p. 570), "And that house with the coopilow's his'n, —which the same isn't bad for a Pike." This Pike County, Missouri, is not to be confused with the scene of the *Pike County Ballads*, which is in Illinois.

P. 321. "Me belly sick." This does not mean that Ah Fe had a stomach-ache. In the Chinaman's first imperfect attempts at English, certain letters or sounds which he has not got are replaced by others which he has: *v* becomes *b*, *r* becomes *l*, *k* may become *t*. Also it seems to be a principle of Chinese phonetics that every pure consonantal sound shall be followed by a vowel, and the ordinary Chinaman will conform to this in his attempts to speak English. The reader will now see that Ah Fe's "belly sick"=very unwell; "flagittee"=forgot; "flowty dollar"=forty dollars; "topside blulow"=on the bureau.

P. 333. "Snored peacefully." As explained in the Introduction (p. xlviii) the story is usually printed with a couple of pages of additional text which besides being spurious was also insulting. I fancy the writer's grievance was that the author had published the whole story in this country when only the first half had been published in America, thus interfering with the usual piratical course of events. Here is the egregious effusion:

"The end of the story?—Yes, it shall be told, but under difficulties, remember, made by the indisposition of people living in States to behave according to the formulæ which go to constitute gentlemen in Kingdoms.

"Poor Mrs. Tretherick! She was a woman, and had a habit of captivating the men, even when she was not knowingly engaged in the campaign of man-catching. Everybody had looked at her, when she was young; and, if she grew a little less young, still the fascination of her shoulders, her form, her movement, made thralls of the beholders. Freeholders, mortgagors, mortgagees, were alike bewitched. There are such women everywhere, and I believe the percentage of them is about the same in all latitudes. You see, without a good many latitudes they could not live.

"It was true enough what Colonel Starbottle had stated to Mrs. Tretherick. She *was* the second Mrs. T.; the first was living, and Carrie had been sent by the Colonel to her, from the disinterested motives that ordinarily governed his conduct. And poor Carrie was sent to school,—I beg pardon, to an Institute, for let it be understood that the United Statesmen have been employed for many years in turning all short words into long ones. When he should have employed these last words, for example, no American author of any repute or prominence (*note* prominence) would have felt contented unless he had described short and long words through the elongated caudal synonymes of monosyllabic and polysyllabic expressions.

"Still Carrie got on very well at the Institute, and at eighteen we learn from those who knew her, she was a beauty. On the same authority we discover that an old friend of ours, the editor of the *Avalanche*, an admirer of Carrie's stepmother, had been kind to this same stepmother, and kept an interest in her wanderings. Moreover, this man was also executor under a will which it had been found Mr. Tretherick had left behind him. That Heathen Chinee, Ah Fe, had something to do, it was rumoured, with the discovery of this document. However that was, the stepmother and Carrie were to share certain lands between them. These lands became valuable.

"Ten years have elapsed since we saw Colonel Starbottle sleeping on one side of a wall, and his bride on the other. The Colonel is dead—we could not well have spared a better man. Carrie is eighteen. She has to make election, now, whether she will live with mother or stepmother. We admire very much one of her schoolfellows. So did the editor of the *Avalanche*. Our grounds for admiring her are that we understood she said to Carrie upon this question of election—'Why, if half of what you tell me is true, your mother and her set are making you not only a little coward, but a snob. If my family had ever treated me so, and then asked me to turn my back on my best friend, I'd——. Stick to your stepmother, Carrie.'

"And Carrie did. But the poor stepmother, like all such

women, whose natures are too soft, and minds too pliable under certain flute-playings, enjoyed Carrie's society but a little while. She pined away; and died, one day, in the bright sunshine, with the birds about her, and caressing and blessing her darling's head.

"The editor of the *Avalanche* mated with the girl who had espoused the cause of Mrs. Starbottle. He was a good fellow, and so was she. We hope the editorials are thriving.

"There is no one else, that I am aware of, whom anybody cares about, in this Episode. If people want to know anything more, they must address inquiries to *Fiddletown*."

P. 455. *The Mission Dolores.* With the founding of the Mission in 1776 San Francisco begins its history, though there was no town of that name there till seventy years later. There was indeed no settlement of any kind on the peninsula save the Mission, and, at the usual discreet distance from the Mission, the Presidio. The beginnings of San Francisco, in a material sense, were made in the decade 1836-46, when there grew up, midway between the Presidio and the Mission, the small hamlet of Yerba Buena on the cove of that name, looking towards the Bay. In 1846 it consisted of about a dozen dwellings with a population of about fifty persons, mostly made up of Hudson's Bay officials and their families, and the rest traders of various nationalities. They had, as it were, simply come to the beach to transact business, and fixed their tents and presently their huts there. The substitution of the name San Francisco for Yerba Buena in 1847 was an inspiration and also a memorably successful piece of sharp practice. It was historically justified also, though the American alcalde of this hamlet who issued the ordinance (!) did not know that fact. For the Spanish authorities had long ago designated that region as the site of a pueblo or free town, and the town would have borne the name of the Mission. Now the real name of the so-called Mission Dolores was never that, but the Mission San Francisco (more precisely, Mision de San Francisco de Asis), Dolores being only the name of a stream on which the Mission stood. It was used as a designation of locality, but ended by entirely supplanting the proper name. As a designation of locality it remained after the Mission, and all the associations of the Mission, had gone. Already by 1854 the locality had become what it has since remained, a kind of Ranelagh or pleasure-place for the excursive citizen. Hence the dirge of Ambrose Bierce:

> Nightly I put up this humble petition,
> "Forgive me, O Father of Glories,
> My sins of commission, my sins of omission,
> My sins of the Mission Dolores!"

Pp. 505 and 512. *Morning on the Avenues* and *A Jersey Centenarian* are the only prose pieces in this volume that take us outside of California. The Avenues, of course, are those of New York. Bret Harte met the centenarian when making local studies for *Thankful Blossom, a Romance of the Jerseys in 1779*—truly "a romantic, spirited, and well-told story," not mentioned in the Introduction simply because the work of his middle period could there only be indicated in the most general way. The delightful sketch of the centenarian (surely one of the knowingest, kindest things he ever penned, and with a peculiarly Lamb-like quality) was published in *Tales of the Argonauts* (1875) and is now printed for the first time in this country. The reason for its exclusion from his *Collected Works* is interesting. He was like Wordsworth in being, upon the whole, an undiscriminating judge of his own work: he was like himself alone in an occasional freakishness in his treatment of it. Thus he appended to *Thankful Blossom* a whimsical concluding paragraph in which he professes to have lately met the blooming and fragrant heroine of that story in the character of a very old lady: briefly, as the centenarian here described. And for the sake of keeping this foolish tag, he was willing to suppress the exquisite essay! The American edition of the story does not contain the tag.

Poems

P. 521. *San Francisco.* See reference to this poem in the Introduction, p. xxxvii, and compare pp. xvii and 625-6. "O Fleecy Fog." The morning fog and the afternoon wind of San Francisco, and of the coast generally, are marked meteorological features of the region. For a reference to the winds, see p. 200.

Pp. 522-25. In those three poems Bret Harte has given their due meed of literary consecration to the characteristic flower, tree, and animal (greater and lesser) of California. The bear occupies a prominent position in the design of the great seal of the Commonwealth, but the coyote is more familiar and less respected. The reader will not fail to observe some uncommonly fine touches of characterization and fancy in each of these poems. The same may be said, in a degree, of the verses on the sequoia (or big-tree) cone at p. 529, though there the author has wasted his greater opportunity in trying to achieve a piece of moralizing *vers-de-société* in the Thackeray manner. The oldest living things on earth (for the sequoias of the Yosemite Valley are credited with 3000 years) deserved to be approached in a sincerer mood.

P. 527. *Dickens in Camp.* Bret Harte was camping in the Foot-hills when the news of Dickens's death arrived. He

at once telegraphed to San Francisco to have the *Overland* which was ready for the press, held over for twenty-four hours. He wrote these verses that evening and sent them on next morning. More than any of his poems they have been counted unto him for righteousness. And who will deny that they are very fine and heartfelt? While he was writing them, a letter from the Master (one of the last he wrote) was on its way to Bret Harte, saying (in brief), Well done, and Welcome to England, and to a certain place in Kent, whenever you can manage it.

P. 529. *Fate.* I suppose there are a thousand persons who could repeat a verse or two of *Her Letter*, for one who has even read this little work. And yet . . . !

P. 531. *Lone Mountain.* See a reference at p. 200.

P. 532. *The Angelus.* See preceding notes on *The Legend of Monte del Diablo* (p. 621), and *The Mission Dolores* (p. 629).

P. 536. *The Lost Galleon.* Bret Harte has a note on this, explaining that the idea of the poem is derived from the custom of navigators "to drop a day from their calendar in crossing westerly the 180 degrees of longitude west of Greenwich and adding a day in coming east"—hence there must be a point, whether on that degree or no, where two days are one. "The Anian passage." (p. 537). As Columbus ran against America in trying to sail to India, the object of most navigators who followed him during the next fifty years was to discover the waterway that would lead them through. As time went on there were many rumours of channels known to exist, and sometimes much mystery made (for political reasons) as to their whereabouts. The most famous of all and the best avouched (even our Frobisher bore no uncertain testimony among others) was the Strait of Anian, through which Maldonado sailed and returned. These reports were not really lies, but only the prophetic soul of the wide world dreaming of—the Panamá Canal.

P. 540. *Concepcion de Arguello.* This moving tale and great poem is historically true, save in a few inessential details. The date of Rezánoff's visit was not 1800 but 1807, and the purpose was not to make a treaty but to beg bread for the starving. "In 1806," says Mr. Bancroft, "famine stalked in Alaska owing to the wreck of a vessel with supplies and the failure of another to arrive. Scurvy also made its appearance. Hunger, misery, despair and death were fast reducing the number of the colonists." This was the state of things that confronted Count Rezánoff, lately arrived from Russia on a visit of inspection. He loaded a ship with whatever he thought might be traded, and made a difficult and dangerous voyage through wintry seas to the port (=Presidio) of San Francisco.

But so unyielding were the protectionist laws of Spain that he found himself up against an impasse. The Governor knew that the goods which the Russian had brought would be of great benefit to the country, but he could allow no trade. Hopeless days passed, relieved as far as might be by Spanish hospitality; and in the course of them sprang up the love between Rezánoff and Concepcion, daughter of the Presidio commander. She prevailed with her father, and her father (there was perhaps no name in California quite so good as Arguello, in all its generations) prevailed at last with the Governor, his friend of forty years, to risk it a little. Rezánoff, betrothed to Concepcion, sailed for Alaska with a ship full of foodstuffs, and thence started on his homeward journey. He was thrown from his horse somewhere in Siberia and killed. Concepcion's subsequent life was as the poem describes it, save that it does not tell of her years given to "works of charity and humiliation, going into the miserable dwellings of the neophytes, where she spent hour after hour, attending to the wants of some dying Indian or teaching young children the Christian doctrine" before she retired to a religious house in 1850. "Sir George Simpson" (p. 545) was an exceptionally fine specimen of the veritably "enlightened traveller," and has left some classic observations on the California of about 1840–45.

P. 550. *How are you, Sanitary?* An official of the Sanitary Commission. This was an organization formed in the second year of the American Civil War, the suggestion and the practical initiation being the work of a woman. "It was the purpose of the Sanitary Commission," says Mr. George Haven Putnam, whose father had much to do with it, "to do what might be practicable to supplement in the field the work of the army hospitals. For this purpose it collected resources in shoes, food, clothing, and moneys, and sent directly to the front representatives—in part volunteers, in part paid workers—whose business it was to care for the wounded, to furnish transportation to the hospitals, to provide hospital supplies, to provide clothing for the sick, and to do all that might be practicable to make less wearisome the lot of the sick and wounded, *to whichever army they might belong.*" The italics are mine. Mr. Putnam does not need them, for a good American could not forget that this was a brother's war. The value of the work done by the Commission could not easily be overstated; but the *Cambridge Modern History* has never heard of it.

P. 551. *John Burns of Gettysburg.* The "stubborn Meade" is General Meade, commanding the Union forces; and the battle is rightly called "a barren field." For the disaster of Gettysburg is not that Lee was defeated there (for he was not defeated) but that he failed to achieve a victory which he needed.

P. 553. "How do you think the man was dressed?" The description that follows gives you the dress of Washington during the War of Independence. It was in lieu of a uniform, being the regulation buff and blue of a colonial gentleman, made *de rigueur* for the General and his staff. That is why buff and blue were the colours of Charles James Fox and his party in England, especially at the famous Westminster Election; and why they formed the cover later of the *Edinburgh Review*. Finally, that is why Bret Harte says (p. 554) that the soldiers presently saw,

> In the antique vestments and long white hair,
> The Past of the Nation in battle there.

"Quiltings" (p. 553) were gatherings of neighbours (sometimes from a wide countryside) to do the quilting and other sewing of one who was going to get married. The men would come along before the work was done, and the whole would conclude with frolics and further courtships.

P. 556. *Relieving Guard.* Thomas Starr King was a Unitarian minister who came from New England to California in 1860. At that time it was considered very uncertain for which side California would declare in the event of Secession or Civil War. King threw the whole of his energies into the task of making sure that she should stand for freedom and the Union. He drew great audiences whether his theme was religion or politics, and wielded a powerful pen, but his character was his most prevailing talent. His influence on Bret Harte has been referred to already (Introduction, p. xxvi, and comp. p. lxix).

P. 556. *The Copperhead*, primarily an alternative name of the Moccasin snake, an insidious and deadly creature infesting the swampy fields of the south. One metaphorical use has already been noted (p. 621). During the Civil War period (not only during the struggle) the name was applied to Northern men with (or supposed to have) Southern sympathies. It was sometimes used loosely for the slavery party or the slave-power, and that seems to be the case here.

P. 558, line 17. "I want to know"=I *am* surprised!

P. 560. *Off Scarborough.* There are many prose accounts of this epic fight, but the best is in the second volume of Parton's *Life of Franklin*.

P. 597. *To the Pliocene Skull.* Bret Harte tells us in a note that the poem was founded on the following paragraph from the *Daily Press* of 1866: "A human skull has been found in California in the pliocene formation. The skull is the remnant not only of the earliest pioneer of this State, but the oldest known human being. . . . The skull was found in a

shaft 150 feet deep, two miles from Angel's, in Calaveras County, by a miner named James Matson, who gave it to Mr. Scribner, a merchant, who gave it to Dr. Jones, who sent it to the State Geographical Survey. The published volume of the *State Survey on the Geology of California* states that man existed here contemporaneously with the mastodon; but this fossil proves that he was here before the mastodon was known to exist."

P. 610. *An Arctic Vision* refers to the Alaska Purchase, effected in 1867. The popular view of that transaction was that Uncle Sam had bought an iceberg which he couldn't even use to cool his drinks. The author, a great admirer of Mr. Secretary Seward, who was responsible for the purchase, tries to make out a more hopeful case. "A right smart chance" (line 68) does not mean a fair prospect but a lot of room. The phrase always indicates considerable length, size, or quantity. "A smart chance from town"—a good long distance from town. "A smart chance of a nigger"—a fine big negro. So "a smart chance of a house," etc. "Kodiac" (line 21) is properly Kadiac. "'Taint so very mean a trade" (line 66)—not such a poor exchange, transaction.

P. 612. *St. Thomas.* Mr. Secretary Seward, having attached Alaska to the United States, looked further in various directions and especially gave attention to the Danish West Indies. He brought his negotiations for the purchase of St. Thomas through many difficulties to the point at which the treaty for its cession had been ratified by the Danish Parliament and signed by the king—only to have it rejected or "laid on the table" by the United States Senate. In the interval between the agreement as to terms and the ratification of the treaty, the island had been visited by a most destructive earthquake, followed by a huge swamping wave, and later by a hurricane, "each of which caused much damage and alarm." These untoward events enabled the opposition to pour a swamping wave of ridicule on Mr. Seward's scheme.

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THE END

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