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DELANO

OLD BLOCK'S SKETCH-BOOK

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Delano, Alonzo

OLD BLOCK'S

SKETCH - BOOK;

OR,

TALES

OF

CALIFORNIA LIFE.

by Delano, Alonzo

ILLUSTRATED WITH NUMEROUS ELEGANT DESIGNS,

BY ^{Charles} NAHL,

THE CRUIKSHANK OF CALIFORNIA.

SACRAMENTO:

JAMES ANTHONY & CO., PUBLISHERS AND PRINTERS, UNION OFFICE.

1856.

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INTRODUCTION.

DEAR PUBLIC: The rain was pattering against the casement, and the wind was howling amid the storm, a few evening's since, when I was sitting in my rocking chair, in my snug parlor, before a comfortable fire, listening to the raging elements, as the flood came down to rejoice the heart of the worthy miner, who had long been waiting the action of Providence for the means of working the rich deposits of California, when I fell into a train of reminiscence of my experience of the last six years.

I thought of the many nights that I had passed in such a storm without a shelter, when even the cayotes had slunk to their holes to avoid its fury; I thought of my old comrades who had shared my exposures; I thought of the miner in his cabin, or as he toiled on from day to day; and I thought, too, of his heroic courage in battling on and maintaining his good nature under crushing discouragements; and I felt proud that I had shared his toil and feelings alike, whether of weal or woe, and that, notwithstanding circumstances had combined to place me now in other business, I felt that I was of and with the miner in close identification. In this spirit, I thought it would not be misapropos to place some of my worthy comrades before the public, so that the world could judge something of the character of the men by whom our mountains are peopled. Standing on the plain, you see on the East the mighty Sierra, blending its snow-capped peaks with the clouds; along the range from North to South, as far as the eye can reach, you see the lesser hills gradually descending, in a broken, uneven surface, growing less and less, till they end in the plain at your feet; you observe rocks and trees in the dim distance, like spots on the hill sides, till they fade into mere shades of a darker hue, with no distinctive mark to separate them from the dark mountain itself; but with all the grandeur and beauty of this wild panorama, you see nothing—you feel nothing, unless you have been there, of the mighty power which is moving among

those everlasting hills, and which is producing a revolution that the whole world feels to its heart's core. Amid those sombre hills, beneath those waving pines, at the base of those huge castellated rocks, in those dark and almost inaccessible canons, along the banks and on the bars of those rolling streams or mountain torrents, in every gulch or ravine, go where you will, in any direction, you will find a band of hardy freemen who are tearing up the soil, displacing immense boulders that have lain undisturbed for ages, and who are not only developing the rich resources of that mountain region for the use of the world, but are making the desolation, which reigned six years ago, the theater of active busy life, the site of noble towns, and its forbidding deserts now smiling with happy homes. Wonderful indeed is the change, and wonderful the people who have produced it. Courage, intellect, perseverance, mark every movement. The wish to do is but the precursor of the will—the will once formed, the thing is done.

Among that busy throng you will find the genius of man in all its varying phases. The statesman and philosopher are there, the poet and the painter are of its people, science has its numerous representatives, literature there finds a congenial home, and no where on earth has mechanics a more varied field; the artizan, the husbandman, the tradesman, the learned professions, all, all find a local habitation; and, where six years ago was heard only the wild whoop of the savage mingling with the growl of the cougar, you will find the comforts, the luxuries, the elegancies of civilized life. O, I feel at this moment as if I wished for power to take California in my arms as I would a darling child, and with a warm, heartfelt embrace, beg of Heaven to continue its smiles upon the land for ages to come.

I see you smile, dear reader, at the idea, and of thinking what awful long arms I must have to do it; but recollect it is only the arms of thought, and their fingers can span the universe easier than a pair of seven league boots can walk around the earth. But now a word of myself:

One bleak winter day I was wandering in the mountains alone, with but a confused idea of my position. I had been out prospecting, when a terrible storm overtook me, and I started for my cabin. The snow fell fast and soon covered the trails, and the landmarks were so altered that they no longer served as guides. I took a wrong direction, and soon had to acknowledge to myself, that old mountaineer as I was, I was lost. There was but one course to pursue, and that was to keep on in a general direction, hoping to find the shelter of a cabin at last.

Whoever has been thus situated knows full well the anxieties of such a position, and the intense feeling which pervades the whole man when he thinks his bones may be laid where they may never be recognised, and that his fate may never reach his friends at home. I had walked many a weary mile, had crossed many a deep gulch, had climbed many a difficult hill, when the shades of night began to close around me, and even hope had almost fled, when at last my eye caught the glimmer of light from a miner's cabin. My heart bounded with joy as I approached the door—I felt that I was saved. My knock was promptly

answered, and the "Welcome stranger," sounded like "glad tidings" to my ears. "A stranger and they took me in—an hungered they gave me meat"—in trouble "they comforted me." My heart thanked them—my words seemed too barren.

Time passed along and summer came. Once more I visited that cabin when I was not a wanderer. The smile of welcome met me at the threshold. They took me by the hand as a friend—a grateful friend, for they knew I loved them for their former kindness, and they knew, too, that I tried faithfully "as they had done to me, to do so unto them."

Dear reader, may I make an application of this "o'er true tale?" Once upon a time thou hast opened the door of approval unto me, when the storm of doubt was whistling around. 'Twas then that thou took the stranger in and comforted him with kind words, and sent him on his way rejoicing. And now he is emboldened to visit thee again with more SKETCHES OF CALIFORNIA LIFE, hoping, but not daring, to ask for thy approval. Thou surely dost not care whether I am engaged in the pumpkin and squash trash or not? whether I am a wharf rat of San Francisco, or a counter jumper of Grass Valley? Thou dost not care, I am certain, whether I bake my own slapjacks in my cabin, or board at Benton's Exchange, so long as I pay Benton my prog bill honorably every week? Thou dost not care if time and exposure hath marred the scalp-lock upon my crown, and put spectacles on my nose, and no longer made me loveable to the ladies? And now wilt thou give thy hand to

OLD BLOCK.

DEDICATION.

When I was young I had the fortune—I don't know whether to write good or mis before it—to fall in love. No matter, I was in love. Well, every rhyme I made—and I made a good many, them strange enough too—I dedicated to the chosen one of my heart. It was she that gave me inspiration, and I could'nt, for the life of me, write with anybody else in mind. In my mature years I fell in love again, and this time by good fortune surely, but it was with my old associates in our wild hills of California, and it is them who now give me inspiration to pass off my otherwise dull hours alone, and I should feel as if I wanted to pick a quarrel with somebody if I did not, as I now with all my heart do, dedicate my little work

TO MY TRUE FRIENDS,

THE MINERS OF CALIFORNIA.

THE AUTHOR.

OLD BLOCK'S SKETCH BOOK.

CHAPTER I.—MY MESS.

MY CABIN—NOT UNCLE TOM'S.

Look in—when you are in, you can look out if you choose. The string is out at the door—you need not knock—just pull the string, the latch will raise and the door open. Come in—sit down on that three-legged stool, and now look around and see how cozy and snug we are. A roaring fire is on the hearth, the old pine logs, which cost many a hard knock to reduce to humble size, blaze and crack as brightly as if they were burning in a palace for the comfort of a king, and with its cheerful warmth emits a light that nearly does away with the use of candles, so that you can read the latest news or a stray volume, without injury to your eyes; and if, perchance, the light grows dim, you have only to stir up the fire with a wooden poker that leans jauntily against the jamb, and *PRESTO*—there's light again. Before the fire is the bake kettle doing its duty, and the hot loaf is nearly done—you'll stay to supper and see what capital bread I can make. From a peg, near the fire place, hangs a frying pan, which we'll use presently to fry our bacon in, while on the floor stands the tea kettle, the coffee boiler and iron pot, and that is about all the cooking apparatus we want. Now, those shelves in the corner, elevated on pegs, we split out of blocks of the noble pine, and hewing them smooth with the axe, they answer just as well to hold our tin plates, cups and saucers, sugar and salt dish, vinegar bottle, pickle jar and a few sundries, as if they were of mahogany—stained and varnished.

Our table, like our cupboard, was made of hewn plank, and our stools and benches were in the tree before we split them out, so you see, stranger, that with an axe, an auger, and a noble pine, we have in our mountain home the means of protecting ourselves against the snows and frosts, and rain of the Sierra.

Yes, those are our bunks—first, we bore holes with the augur in the logs of the cabin, at the proper light from the ground, then have a standard at the head and foot, with a cross-piece fitted by the axe into the log on one side, and the posts on the other, which makes a frame to lay the riven bottom boards on, and on these we spread our blankets, which keep us high and dry from the damp ground. Now, let the winds “crack their cheeks,” and the black angry clouds pour out their deluge of rain—let old Whitehead sprinkle his flakes till the snow reaches to the eaves of our cabin—the shingles over us which we split out of that same old pine that used to sigh and groan as the winter blasts howled around it, will keep us dry, and the “pelting of the pitiless storm” will only give us a feeling of comfort at its impotent efforts to break through the roof in vain. O, how little man can be happy and comfortable with, if he will only bring his mind to his circumstances, for even in the eternal struggle for wealth, when his imagination pictures luxury and ease in prospective, strange enough he finds peace of mind and comparative happiness in a cabin, without being scarcely sensible of it.

Our cabin was built amid the storms of winter, and while the rain was descending in fitful gusts, the noble trees were felled to the ground, cut the appropriate length and rolled together, and thus, slowly, painfully, and dripping with wet and shivering with cold, we erected our cabin, and in due time a cover over our heads was made, which our exposure and suffering taught us to appreciate with a greater feeling of comfort than a king contemplates his crystal palace and marble halls.

We have enough to eat, thank God; although our diet is plain and simple, labor gives strength to our appetites and makes digestion good. There's a bag of flour in the corner, a side of bacon on the shelf, and hope in our claims; and so help us Heaven, so long as a poor miner comes hungry to our door, and there's a biscuit left, he shall share it, and our blankets too, if he is weary. Could a millionaire do more? Would he do as much?

There lays Ned in his bunk, snoring like a pig in his nest, dreaming perhaps of "the girl he left behind him." Happy fellow! He has nothing to do this week but dig and wash his own shirts, and it is my week to cook and wash dishes. But, after all, what would I give for a nice, pretty, sweet little girl, just to—Pshaw! why should I wish to bring such a fairy being to my cabin, to—make slapjacks and wash shirts, when I can do it well enough myself. No, no; talk about love in a cottage, and make as much poetry about it as you please, the fact is, bunks and hard boards, fat bacon and beans, slapjacks and molasses, though they have their sweets, are not exactly the place to put rosy cheeks, ruby lips and laughing eyes in, for domestic comfort. No, no; the cheeks would grow pale; the ruby lips would pout, and the beautiful eyes would snap with ire when the boys came in hungry to dinner, with sleeves rolled up to the elbows, their old boots covered with mud, and their dresses soiled and bespotted with the dirt of the drift. Only think—when I should come out of the claim after digging all day, in a miner's plight, full of love and appetite, I should rush up to my rosy checked

darling, and, throwing my arms around her fairy waist and placing my long beard and besmeared face against her rosy cheeks, exclaiming in the fullness of feeling—

"Dearest, thy love was mine,
My only thought was thine—"

wouldn't I get a slap in the face from that lily hand, with a "Go along, you great, nasty brute?" No, no; let the gal go till my pile enables me to get something more flashy than my cabin, and then—O, get out!

A few rods in front of our cabin, a creek is coursing its way from the mountains above to contribute its mite in swelling the river, and in its bed is our bank, which makes its daily discounts as we make our drafts upon its deposits; yet, although our paper is not protested when backed up with sharp picks and strong arms, the daily discounts are often unequal; some times it is quite liberal, and then it is "tight up," but take it all in all, our bank is sound, and the stock, on the whole, a profitable investment. Around us tall pines are pointing towards heaven, mute monitors to remind us constantly that the gifts we enjoy are from Him towards whom they raise their stately trunks; and in the distance high mountains rear their lofty peaks to give sublimity to the beautiful scenes which are the characteristic of dear California. We shall climb some of those peaks one of these days, if we have to do it on our hands and knees, and meditate upon the works of God as exhibited in these vast up-heavals. You will enjoy it, too, and you'll find that

"No life is like the mountaineers',
His home is near the sky,
Where thron'd above this world, he hears
Its strife at distance die."

But come, boys, the bread is done, the bacon fried, the slapjacks baked—supper is ready—come Ned, Bogue—all of you turn out—stranger, take the stool and sit by me—no ceremony, you know. Go it with a rush—if there aint enough I'll cook more. We're "in town" as long as we have enough to eat—not in the city where you live on crockery and ceremony, and have to fish daintily with a silver fork to corner a bite.

Let me see, to-morrow after breakfast I've got to go to town for supplies—what do we want?

Memoranda—1 jar pickles; 1 sack potatoes; 1 gallon molasses; 1 bag salt; 6 pipes; 4 papers of smoking tobacco; 2 plugs of chewing tobacco; 10 pounds of dried apples.

Ned.—(Striving to swallow a whole slap-jack)—Yes, bring two euchre decks; it's all nonsense to pass off these long evenings without a little fun.

Bogue.—Bring a pile of *Unions, Golden Eras,* and States' papers; there's no use in fooling away the time over pasteboard.

Old Swamp.—And go to the post office and see if the d—d thing hasn't ground out a letter for me from Betsy and the children.

The fire still burns brightly; the hearth is swept with our pine bough broom; the lizards have gone to sleep, and the cayotes only are holding a serenade and fandango over the carcass of a dead mule; so turn in, and—good night, good night.

NED.

WE were all clever fellows, especially in our own estimation, whatever the world might think of us. We didn't quarrel more than could be expected; we all worked steadily, for we were obliged to in order to make anything; we didn't cheat each other, for there was no chance, and the money we spent was our own. Old Swamp was treasurer, and devil a rap would he disburse till our dividends were fairly made every Saturday night. On the whole, we were rather a jolly set—our jokes not altogether dry ones, for we found working in mud and water rather a wet business, which often led to moist ideas, and when full man-power was applied to our pumps to keep the claim dry, we had a realizing sense that "large streams from little fountains flow," for perspiration from every pore, and water from every pour of the pump, appeared to be running a sluice, and between the two a large amount of fluid was brought to the surface.

Ned was a sort of universal genius. He

could do anything, from singing Lucy Neal to baking a johnny cake—from writing a newspaper article to making a pump; and, with a most generous heart, was as careless of his money and jokes as a child. Always ready for fun, he was always ready to relieve distress, and never flagged in keeping up his end at labor; but he never went to town without spending half of his week's earnings—sometimes all—and when old Swamp good naturedly took him to task for his improvisation, he would exclaim, "I know I'm a fool, but how can I help it?" Talk to him about his father and mother, and above all, a single word about ———, the tears would start from his eyes; he would jump up, and, striking his hands together with desperate determination, exclaim, "I'll be d—d if I'll ever touch another card or drink another drop of liquor, so long as I live;" and he would remember his oath till—he went to town again.

One Sunday evening, on coming home, after having lost all his money at the monte table, he sat suddenly down on the stool before the fire. Old Swamp and I were reading, and Bogue had turned in. Not a word was said, for we saw that his conscience was reproaching him for something. In a little while, as if mechanically, he reached out his hand and picked up a book which lay upon our rude table, and opened it apparently without end or aim, when his eye rested on a sentence, "Remove me far from temptation." He started to his feet, dropped the book, then sinking to his seat, buried his face in his hands and sobbed like a child. We knew him too well to venture any remarks, even of sympathy, so we sat quietly waiting for his nature to have vent. In a little while, he sprang to his feet, and putting his hand on old Swamp's shoulder, he exclaimed with energy, "I'm a fool—a fool—why didn't I read it before—old Swamp, if we get five thousand dollars this week, don't give me a cent on Saturday night—not a cent; keep it for me; if I will go to town Sunday and—and"—his lip quivered—"will go into temptation, don't give me a cent to go with. No matter

how much I beg or threaten, don't let me have it, and every month take my money yourself, buy a draft, be it little or much, and send it home to—to—you know who—I can't speak it."

Old Swamp deliberately closed his book, arose slowly from his stool, took Ned by the hand kindly, and looking him steadily in the face for a moment, replied with emphasis, "Ned, I will—go to bed—sleep—in the morning put on a clean shirt and turn over a new leaf—go."

And Ned did go; but his sobs proved that it was long before sleep visited his eye-lids, or that the words of the supplication, "lead me not into temptation," were not in his mind.

A few days only had passed after this occurrence, and Ned had fully regained his usual cheerfulness, when one day a poor miner presented himself about dinner time. Of course he dined with us, and during our meal gave such a vivid picture of his losses and trials that we all felt for his situation. "Swamp," said Ned, as we were taking a social pipe before resuming our labor, "I want to speak with you." So taking him one side, he said, "I want ten dollars."

"What for?" said Swamp.

"I want to help that poor fellow. He's had worse luck than we've had. I'll give him ten dollars."

"No!" replied Swamp.

"Why, that aint drinking nor gambling. Come, don't be mean—let me have ten dollars."

"No!"

"Give me my own money—I don't want yours."

"No, not a cent."

"You are a d——d old parsimonious—"

"No!" echoed old Swamp, with emphasis, making an asseveration with his pipe.

"You aint—and wont let me have my money, and wont help him?"

"Your gal wants your money. I'll help him."

"You will? How?" said Ned, wondering how it was to be done without giving the money at once.

"I'll employ him for a month, if he is a good hand, at a hundred and fifty dollars. We want a man or two—I'll try him."

"Old Swamp," said Ned, grasping his hand, "I'm a d——d fool and you're a Solomon. If you'd been cashier instead of Nick Biddle, Old Hickory never would have knocked the United States Bank into fits. When I'm married, Swamp, and I will be if—if—you know, I want you to be with me and be my cashier. Will you, eh, will you?"

"I'll ask Betsy," grinned old Swamp.

Our old factotum soon made a bargain with the poor fellow, who proved to be a first-rate hand, and he staid with us till he got into a good claim adjoining, where he made money, and to this day thinks old Swamp one of the best men that ever saw the sun rise over the Sierra. So does Ned. So does Bogue. So does Old Block.

BOGUE.

"THERE is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at its flood, leads on to fortune." "There is a tide in the affairs of women, which, taken at its flood"—but neither Shakspeare nor Byron have any particular business with my character, so let them sing their own songs, and I'll tell my own stories.

Bogue was a good fellow, but a "change came o'er the spirit of his dream"—hang it, there goes Byron again. He had seen thirty summers, but he didn't remember but twenty-six distinctly, for he had no definite idea of the four first after he was launched into life, but for about twenty-six years he had kept his reckoning, and, as he said, from that period his log was reliable. He had coasted through the first sixteen with the usual amount of flogging and ferrule at school, and finally brought up at college, where he was regularly inducted into the mysteries of scrapes and punishments, and in the course of two years' study took his degrees in robbing hen roosts and peach orchards, and could subtract a water melon from the patch, or a linch-pin from the wheel of a pedlar's cart, equal to the most perfect masters of the art



Old Block's Cabin.—See page 1.

among his chums, and he obtained, by close application and unwearied diligence and deviltry, the leather medal awarded to the first in his class, and with it acquired the reputation of being the most daring rogue that ever slid down a rope from his window for a frolic, or pelted a professor at night with rotten fruit, to say nothing of eggs and sundry missiles of that pleasing sort. Matters were going on swimmingly with him, till he was unfortunately detected one night, or rather early one morning, in letting down a basket from his room that contained—well no matter what it contained—he was not in the basket himself, for he held the rope at the other end. To meet the faces of the faculty on such an emergency, and, above all, to meet the frowns and tears of his parents at such a misfortune, was more than poor Bogue had the courage to do, so he saved the one a lecture before expulsion, and the last the trouble of a scene, took a parting glass with his chums, and French leave of the college, and a few days later found him off Sandy Hook in a gale, a sailor before the mast, casting up accounts on the Atlantic, and sorrowful reminiscences of his waywardness, at the same time bound on a whaling voyage around the Horn, inwardly cursing college, baskets, and wishing himself a Moses under the kind care of some daughter of Egypt, with the horn of plenty in prospect, rather than that of the stormy Cape, which, whether he would or not, he was now compelled to double.

But time, the soother of all sorrows, in due course (not Pollock's) had its effect upon Bogue, and, after repeated voyages, he learned to love the profession which his own thoughtlessness had forced upon him, and he became a first-rate sailor, rose second in command of a ship, and made several successful voyages, either in whalers or merchant ships, till, in '49, he was wrecked in a storm off Valdivia, and barely succeeded in saving his life, and getting high and—wet upon terra firma, from whence he came to California, and chance brought him into the mess of Old Swamp, Ned and Old Block, in the mountains of the Sierra Nevada.

He had sowed his wild oats, or, as he expressed it, had hung on the gaff hooks frisking his tail long enough in his boyhood, and therefore a man better prepared for sea, with a sound hull, good pumps, and no bilge water.

He possessed a sound judgment, considerable scientific attainments, was fond of study, and with untiring industry united energy of character and kindness of heart with a sailor's frankness and good nature.

Yes, Bogue was a good fellow, and if Old Swamp esteemed him there was no reason in the world why Ned and I should not—and we did.

California is composed of all sorts of characters, and a novelist has only to look around and find any desired number of originals at hand, from the solitary horseman, as the sun is declining over the western horizon, of James, to the old miserly scoundrel, Old Death, of Reynolds, or the kind hearted hero in common life, of Boz-Dickens, &c.

At present, however, fiction stands but a poor chance in the field, for facts are so much more strange in this strange land, that if the shade of Walter Scott should lay the scene of a novel in California, it would not be read, for the genius of the great Novel King could conceive no course of events more strange or more interesting than some which have transpired in our mountain land. The length of an age in California is about three years, and the present is an age of facts.

It seems to me I am digressing. Where was I? O, I was at the end of Bogue—near the latter end, and a single anecdote will show him up.

One day we were busily at work in our claim; Bogue had got hold of a heavy rock, which he was intent upon getting out of the hole, when a neighbor made his appearance with the news that a company of three green-horns had squatted on his claim, and were determined to prospect and work it for themselves, meeting his remonstrances with abuse, and expressing their determination to work it "*vi et armis*," if necessary. We knew that our friend, a quiet and peaceable man,

was justly entitled to the claim by miners' law, and that such a proceeding on the part of loafers was unjustifiable by the statute miner, and Bogue at once constituted himself judge, jury and posse comitatus, in the case, with an alacrity that might have done honor to Don Quixotte himself, in redressing the rights of distressed damsels. Letting the rock roll back into the hole from whence he had turned it with great labor, he sprang to the bank with a "hard apart boys, let's bear down and see how the land lays," and started off, followed by our crowd.

On reaching the ground, sure enough there were the three gentlemen in red shirts, with black pants, nicely strapped down under their boots, making most awkward demonstration with pick and shovel, apparently digging through the world as if they were on their way to visit their antipodes through a hole of their own making, rather than Symmes'.

"Avast there, ye lubbers," shouted Bogue, "you are cruising on ground under embargo without a permit. Up anchor and heave ahead, unless you want to catch a squall."

"Who the d—l are you," replied one of the worthies, suspending operations, and looking hard at Bogue—"and what business is it to you."

"I'm Port Collector," returned Bogue, "and unless you can show clean papers, I'll throw my grapnels into your bows and rake you fore and aft in such a way as not to leave a spar standing."

"The mines are free, I reckon, Mister, and we have as good a right to work them as anybody," responded greenhorn, in a half argumentative tone. "This ground is as much ours as it is yours."

"I've no time to spin yarns," echoed Bogue, "I'll give you just two minutes to come out of that hole, and if your hawser is not cut loose in that time, d—n me if there'll be a thing left on your deck from windlass to stern; I'll open your hatches and break bulk as I would for any pirate sailing under a flag as black as yours," and he deliberately took a chew from a pound plug and rolled up his sleeves.

"Boys," interlarded Old Swamp, "you've heard the Captain's orders—mizzle, or it will be worse for ye than a fire in a canebrake."

Seeing a pretty strong determination to enforce respect for the rights of property, the three worthies thought discretion the better part of valor, so packing up their truck and plunder, they cast loose from the davits and shoved off, swearing that California was a d—d queer country, when a man couldn't dig as he pleased—to which Bogue replied:

"You'll find as good fishing on the high-way, and all that men of your kidney want is courage to show your flag."

So our neighbor was reinstated in his claim again, with an awful kind feeling towards Bogue.

OLD SWAMP.

"COME Ned, take down your fiddle and give us Lucy Neal," said Old Swamp, while we were sitting one evening by our bright fire, in rather a musing mood—"give it in a raal soft, sentimental strain, not in your gigideo fiddle fiddle style—I want it soft and sweet, like a ripe peach, that will make the mouth water to kiss the gal of she war white, and start the tears from the eyes."

"Yes, do," echoed Bogue, "let's have it like a ship in a soft breeze, with a full spread of canvas, when the man at the wheel has nothing to do but glance at the compass and squirt his pig-tail."

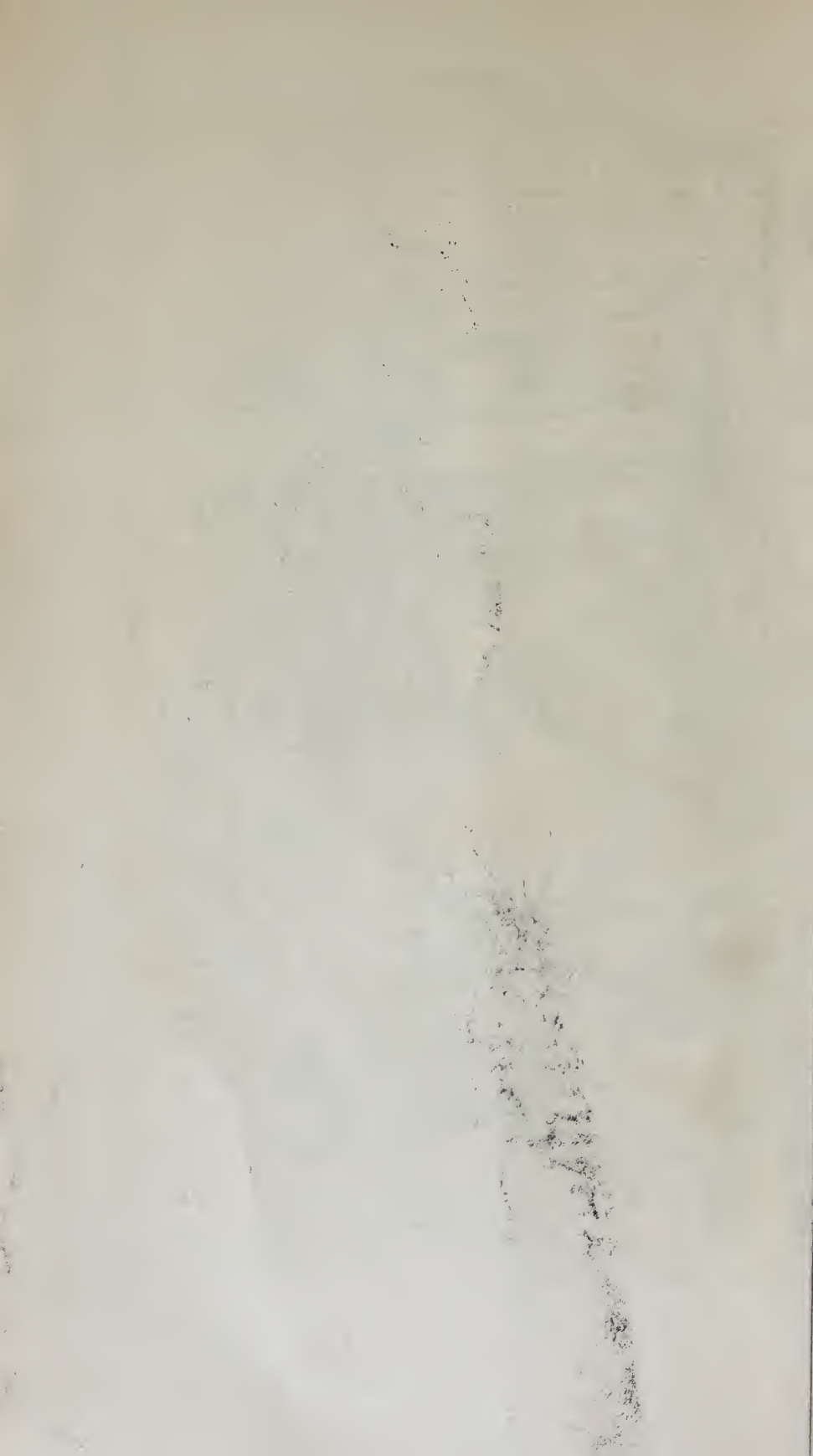
"I will, on one condition, boys," replied Ned, "and that is if you and Bogue will give a genuine Hoosier break-down afterwards; I want to get the hang of that Hoosier shuffle of your boots."

"Wall, agreed," responded Old Swamp, with a quiet grin, "I'm willing to larn ye always, and, without meanin' to brag, when I was out in the Blackhawk war, thar was'nt a boy in the regiment could go 'Pigs in a corn field or flying Ingines' equal to me, ef I do say it—no not old Blackhawk or General Scott themselves."

The violin was taken from the peg, and Ned was soon bringing out "Lucy Neal," in



Bogues Ejecting the Squatters.—See page 8.



beautiful style, for he did play well; and this was succeeded by "The Old Arm Chair," while Old Swamp was leaning his head on his hands, with the tears streaming down his rough, sunburned cheeks, like a child—"One more, Ned, 'Do they miss me at home,'" gasped the old man, struggling to repress a burst of feeling. It was too much, for as the sweet strains went on, accompanied with the voice, he buried his face in his hands on the table and sobbed audibly, till Ned suddenly struck into "Oh Susannah," when the old man got up and setting the table aside, called out, "Give it now—one of your raal knock down jimcracks," when, as Ned complied, he and Bogue broke into one of the most mirth-provoking shuffles that ever originated in the backwoods of Indiana.

"Thar, boys," said Old Swamp, at the conclusion of the performance, "thar's fun and it don't cost nothing, and it's much better than paying out two dollars for a nigger show and spending as much more for licker and makin' fools of yourselves." And that was Old Swamp—no enemy to amusement, and yet he had no idea of throwing away his hard-earned gains for folly, and he said, "We all will be foolish sometimes, but we needn't be spendthrifts to boot." Old Swamp, as we called him, was born in Kentucky, but as he expressed it, was "rared in Indiana, and come up on a plank." His father died when he was a boy, and the care of the family had early devolved upon him, and he discharged that important trust with a fidelity which was as rare as it was meritorious, and the necessity of taking a common sense view of things was early impressed upon his mind. He had taught himself to read and write; although he made no pretensions to superior knowledge, his natural good sense placed him far ahead of many who had had good advantages in school. When the Blackhawk war raged on the frontiers, with the characteristic chivalry of a backwoods pioneer, he volunteered in the service, and was remarked for his energy and good conduct during the campaign. Soon after he married and settled down on government land, which he succeeded in

paying for, but after a while he went into some speculations which embarrassed him, and on the breaking out of the gold fever, in '49, he made a trip over the Plains to California, with a determination to dig gold enough to pay his debts, and, if possible, to put "Betsy and the children" beyond the possibility of want or misfortune.

He was as honest as he was long, and that was six feet from top to toe, with a gaunt frame and thin face, but his broad brow indicated good sense, and his eye intelligence. Frank in his manner, he was rather sententious in his conversation, but there was a general air of quiet good nature about him that attracted you towards him at once as a man to be esteemed for his virtues and respected for his integrity. We were often amused, on a rainy day or long evening, while sitting by our cabin fire, at his yarns, which, with Bogue, he was always ready to spin to while away the heavy hours, and sometimes he would preach a "sarment" to the boys in his own peculiar style, and on subjects certainly useful and interesting; some of which I may give at some future time, as near as I can recollect them. An adventure of his during the Black Hawk war had gained him the soubriquet of Old Swamp—but I had better let him tell his own story:

"Wa'll, boys, we'd drew the Ingines into pretty close quarters, and it was pretty difficult to get a shot at the varmints; in fact, a red skin was about as scarce as potatoes in our knapsacks, and the Commissary hadn't said beans to us for nigh four weeks, letting alone the murphies. General Atkinson wanted to larn something of the whereabouts of the varmints, and arter talking a spell to the Captain, the Captain lit on me for a spy, because, as he said, I had a good narve for a trigger and long legs for a stampede, if necessary. He said somethin' 'bout judgment and discretion, and all that fol de rol, just as if I know'd how to take care of No. 1 better nor any body else, and wouldn't wake snakes for nothin'. Lord, thar was old Bill Allan—no matter. General Atkinson guv me orders to find out whar the Ingines war ef I could,

and what infarnel scheme they war hatching. 'Twant long afore I war ready, for I had nuthing to do but put a piece of bacon in my wallet, and shouler my rifle. We didn't black our boots, boys, in them days to go visiting, and the fact war, I took mine teetotally off and slipped on a pair o' moccasins. I started from camp about four o'clock in the arternoon, and took a bec-line and a sou' west direction. By night I had made tracks about fifteen miles, and as thar war a piece of moon I thought I'd hold on till about midnight as I had plenty of timber for cover. I had gone, I rec'on, about ten miles, and began to think I'd camp for the night, when all of a suddent I felt a sort of jarring of the ground, and as I stopped to listen, a faint dull sound struck my ear, and I know'd at onst thar was fun ahead, and the tired went out o' my legs like a streak o' lightning. I crept keerfully along over dead timber and among the bushes for about half a mile, when I got the glimmer of a light, and creeping along, on my hands and knees, I soon diskivered the Injine camp, and ef thar war one thar war five hundred half naked redskins cutting it down heel and toe, actyve as life, in all the carcumbendirations of a war dance. I know'd in a minute what was up, only I wanted to know a leetle more so. Of all yelling, antics and hifalutins you ever seed—why, boys, it beat all the Jim Crow nigger dancers in California, at two dollars a ticket and no dead heads.

Thar I lay, boys, prehaps half an hour, like a boy peeping through a carcus canvas, without paying a dime for admittance, thinkin' all the while I was getting the worth of my money, and calculatin' how I could slip out without bein' diskivered by the door-keeper. All at onst I heard the crackling of branches and leaves a little way off. Thinks I, some other varmint is takin' a peep at the same price, but not knowin' but it might be the doorkeeper, I laid low and drewed breath only about onst in five minutes. 'Twas no use, for as the animal came up, an infarnal ill-lookin' ugly beast of a squaw came pat upon me, and came nigh spiling her pretty face by tumbling over me. Boys, it ar a fact, women-

kind do play the devil with us men sometimes. Ef we let them alone they won't let us alone. Ef we go after them, they're sure to go the other way, and the only way to catch a woman, if you want one, is to play 'possum and sham just what you aint, and go the road you don't want to.' One thing is sartain—they'll either fall in your traps, or you'll fall into theirs—anyhow, by going on opposite trails, you'll get together, and the Lord knows how, and some time I'll tell you how I got trapped with Betsy.

Wal, as the old gal stumbled over me she guv one of the dismalist skreeges that female lungs ever ground out, and take my word, boys, thar war'nt a bit of love in it. I know'd I war caught, and onless I made myself scace I should be worse off than a hairy coon in a cornfield with a nigger at his heels, so I only staid long enough to press my fist agin her head, thinking it mought compose her sensibilities till I got a start, and then I broke for the camp with a regular stampede, like a race horse on the track—I know'd it were a race for life, and if the redskins got me my skin would'nt be worth a dime for fiddle strings, and the way I put out on the horizontal would have laid an antelope cold in the race. I s'pose you think I took the back track teetotally—no sich thing—I know'd that arter my hard day's work my strength would not hold out for a long race, so, arter running lightning down for a mile, I took a wide circumbendibus and made a sort of a back track, hoping to put 'em on a false scent. Before I got out of hearing I heard a yell, and know'd well enough the varmints had made a diskivery. In fact, the whole crowd, dogs and all, were on my trail, but I thought I mought as well run my scalp off as to let them take it. I had run, I reckon, five or six miles, when I came to a little branch that flowed out of a deep, mucky swamp, when I thought it a good time to put the dogs on a false scent, so I run down it a little ways, then through it, and a few rods on the other side, when I stopped, turned about, and walked on my toes in my old tracks as nigh as I could to the creek, and then walked in the water clear up

to the swamp, for I know'd the dogs could not trace me in the stream.

I thought I'd lay in the swamp all day and at night go through it and make my way home on the other side. Wal, I got among the dense bushes of the swamp, and was feeling my way along a dead log when, all at onst, I heard an awful growl, and an infarnal big black bar guv a rush towards me, and didn't I give a spring? Between the bar and the redskins I felt in a mighty pleasant predicament, but there was no time to think which was the pleasantest, so I guv a leap that would have done honor to a riding master, and, boys, whar do you think I landed? I didn't land at all. There war no land about it, but I found myself up to my neck in mud, muck and mire, and the old bar, instead of helping me out took my track out of the swamp, and left his own to mystify the Ingines and mislead the dogs ef they did come up—and didn't they come? Their dogs put 'em on my track, and by daylight, I heard the infarnal varmint at the brook at fault. They couldn't make head or tail of it, and when they began to search the swamp they fell upon the trace of the bar, and the brakes and vines kivered my head so beautifully, they didn't see me at all, so I lay as quiet as a coon in his hole till night, though if I had staid another night I should probably have sprouted, for it was an awful mellow place whar I had sowed myself. The Ingines thought the Great Spirit had helped me to escape—I felt all day as ef I should have liked a great spirit bottle to keep up inspiration, for I was so dry inside that I could have ate a young Engine and went to sleep on that same old squaw's bosom for a pillow. As soon as Phœbe (or what you call it, the sun) nizzled down behind the trees—I always feel sentimental when I think of my rural retreat—I dug myself out, and a fine sprout I had grown, and made my way keerfully, by a sort of mud-turkle operation, to the other side of the swamp, and by degrees got my limbs into working order, and made my way safely into camp. When the sentry saw me coming up he thought I was an enemy, and leveled his musket, and called

the corporal of the guard, who came up and put me in the guard house, swearing that no sich lookin' live human as I war could be a friend of Uncle Sam or any live man, and I didn't get loose till I war reported to the General, who know'd me the very minute I got a clean pair of pants on and my face washed. And the Indians, Old Swamp? Why they know'd something war up, and in twenty-four hours they had moved their boots to the Mississippi, one hundred miles off, whar we cornered them finally, starved 'em out, and took old Blackhawk prisoner.

A MINER'S LOVE STORY.

It was a dreary winter evening in December, 1849, that a party of us miners were sitting before a rousing fire on Feather river. The rain was pouring down in torrents upon our canvas roof, for we had no cabin then; the wind, in fitful gusts, was sweeping up the deep gorge, and the tall pines were sighing with a melancholy sound, which only gave us a more desolate and lonely feeling. A long pause had occurred in our conversation, and we were fast relapsing into a state of feeling consonant with the outward state of things, when Ned suddenly broke the silence with—“Old Swamp, how under Heaven did such an ungainly old specimen of humanity as you are, contrive to get married; come, tell us the story?”

“Ha! ha! ha!” laughed Old Swamp, in his usual quiet manner.

“Well, boys, seein' as how the weather is rayther gloomy, I will give you a gloomy yarn on that gloomy subject, and it may be you'll larn something by my experience. You know I was always great on huntin' and trappin' of wild varmint in my young days, but of all animals I found the worst to trap was a gal. Ned, reach me a coal till I light my pipe. Thar, that'll do. The fact is, put me on the track for a wild varmint, and they mought jist as well turn over and cast their skins at onst; but when I was on the trail of a gal, my heart kept sich an infernal double shuffle, a reglar heel and toe break-down,

that I couldn't cotech one no how I could fix it. When I war about twenty, I got on the trail of one Poll Rhinehart, that lived up in the settlements, and it war'nt long before she caved and agreed to have me. The time was sot for the wedding, but the very night before it was to come off, Poll changed her mind, and ran off across the river with Jim Sykes, and married him, and left me to set my traps somewhar else. The fact is that put a damper on me, and I made up my mind that coon huntin' paid altogether better than gal huntin', and I jist turned my attention to catchin' coon, mink and bar, and thar, boys, I never missed fire. I kind o' forgot that thar war any sich live critters as female women, except mother, who was a widder, with nobody but me to care for, and she and I together supported the family, and as thar war nobody else to work for, we laid up a right smart chance of mink, coon and some dimes. Four or five year passed, when I began to notice that the old woman grow'd as peckish as a settin' hen. What on airth's in the wind, thought I—I scented something. It can't be that the old woman has fell in love. I begun to think about bilin' up some butternut bark and gettin' a tamarack plaster for her back, when one day, when the rain had driv my dog Wolf and me into the cabin, and I had sot half asleep on the stool, the old woman broke loose.

"Ah! Ambrose," says she—it was always Ambrose when the flint was out and the powder damp, but when the horn was full and the primin' dry, it was—Am. you varmint. "Ah! Ambrose, my son, the e'end is comin'." "The e'end of what, mother," says I, "is the hog used up, or the hominy meal out?"

"Worse nor all that, Ambrose," says she.

"What's in the traps now, mother—is gain growin' scarce, or Wolf gettin' mad—what on airth is the matter?"

"Oh! Ambrose, I'm gettin' used up—I feel the rheumaty in my back; my spectacles is broke—I can't bake hoecake, nor try out possum fat like I used to—I'm gettin' old and broke down, and you must get married."

"Phew! phew! phew!" I couldn't whistle

—it wouldn't come out no how. "Wolf! you varmint." The dog sot up one of the dolefullest yells, just as the critters do when anybody's goin' to die, and then he sneaked off and hid under the bed. "Married! mother—I git married?"

"Yes, Ambrose—I can't pull flax; I can't dig taters; I can't hoe corn like I used to, and you'll sartinly come to want if you don't git somebody to fill my place."

"Pour down butternut by the gallon, and slap on tamarack by the yard, mother, and you'll last a dozen years yet. Married! didn't I try it onst, and run the gauntlet worse nor any white man through a row of Ingines, and git knocked down and cleaned out, at that, by Jim Sykes and Poll Rhinehart? Me git married! Catch a weasel asleep."

"That don't signify, Ambrose. If your rifle misses fire you don't throw it away; you pick the flint and try it again."

"That's common sense, mother, but tryin' to git a gal—O, git out."

"Well, Am., you varmint, it's time you had a wife, and you shall; rheumaty or no rheumaty, you shall git married!"

The old woman's grit wur riz, and you mought as well try to catch a thunderbolt in a leaky gourd as put a woman off when her dander's up. I was bound to be a victim. I skip over three days and nights of the orfullest feelin's, boys; but I finally made up my mind to go into it as a lamb to the slaughter, and then motlier got cooled down again. On the fourth night I slipped into them yaller jean pants, that come e'en amost down to my ankles, and flop about at the bottom like a rag on a bean pole. Didn't that calico vest and pepper and salt waumus, all fringed around the cape, cuffs and bottom, with red yarn fringe, that the old woman made herself, look elegant; and them new cowhides, with about a pound of deer's taller on 'em, and my coon skin cap, with the tail brought over the top, take the shine off any everlasting weasel-faced, heron-legged, pucker-mouth, bewhiskered dandy in Sacramento? Whoop! boys—warn't I a roarer—git out o' the way, I'm comin' myself. Gals in the settlement, look

“Old Swamp” in Ambush—His Tussle with a Squaw.—See page 12.





out, I'm riz again, like a dead 'possum. I'm goin' trappin' for a gal, and sure enough I took the trail for old Bob McLaughlin's. Now, Rach was a gal of considerable pertensions. She was Bob's oldest daughter, she was, and he had seven on 'em that run from five foot nine down to the little e'nd of nothin' and I thought among sich a crowd I was sure of one. Rach held her head pretty high, because she could lift a barrel of white-eye out of the wagon on to the ground, and because she had licked the schoolmaster when he tried to lick her. Between you and me he was no great shakes, for he never was taught, with all his larnin', to use his limbs properly. As Wolf and me were pokin' along among the tall timber on the back side of old Bob's clearing, between daylight and dark, I heard the sound of cow bells, and who should come along but Rach McLaughlin, drivin' in the cattle.

"How ar' you, Rach?" says I, in a sort of insinuating way.

"None the better for you, as I knows on," says she.

"Aint I a steamboat, Rachel?" says I, "a regular roarer in Missouri?"

"Wal, you aint nothin' else," says she.

"O, I'm a buster," says I.

"That's a fact," says she, "You bust your biler and blowed all your steam out when you let Jim Sykes take Poll Rhinehart out o' yer traps."

"O! git out; I've got repaired, and I'm goin' to fire up again!" and I gave her a sly nudge with my elbow in the ribs.

"You needn't come here for wood, then—ha! ha! ha! I'm no kindlings for you; so you can take the back track in a little less than no time, Am. Swamp. Go 'long you old Salamander!" and a club flew at an old mooley about as big as a rail, as she sung:

"The frog he would a courtin' ride,
With sord an' pistil by his side."

If that gal had been a coon, and my rifle had missed fire, I would have hung my horn on a peg and never burnt powder again; but as she was game I hadn't larnt the nater on, I wouldn't give up the chase. So, I marveled

on, straight by old McLaughlin's cabin, and went up to Bazaleel Moore's shanty.

As I was climbing over the fence, all at onst Bazaleel's old dog sot up the all firedest hollerin' and the fust I know'd he had me by the hind leg as I was backin' off the fence.

"Geet out! geet out! you varmint! Wolf, where are you?" The creetur had sneaked home after Rach McLaughlin had gin me the mitten. I couldn't blame the animal, for I felt a leetle sneaky, too—it was sneaky business. Wal, the cabin door opened, and out run old Baz, his wife, Nance and all the young ones, to see what was up.

"Geet out, Tig—geet out! Who's on the fence, thar? Who are you, stranger?"

"I'm Am. Swamp, Bazaleel Moore. Call off Tig; he holds on to my new pants worse nor a hound to a hairy coon!"

"What on airth sent you here, Am., at this time o' day?" says Baz.

"I come," says I, "tu—tu—geet out, Tig! I come tu, tu—geet out, you varmint, will you! I'll swallow you without greasin', I will! I've come tu—tu stay with Nancy."

"Stu boy, stu boy! bite em, Tig! screamed Nance, like a young Ingin. The infarnal creetur took a new hold, and bit a mouthful out of the seat of my trowsers, as I sprung on the fence agin, and old Baz and the whole family sot up a reg'lar break-down laugh, like a young airthquake.

"Nance Moore," says I, gettin' wrathy, "I hope you'll live an old maid all the days of your life; you aint fit to bake hoecake for any white man!" I jumped off the fence and made the shucks fly under my cowhides, till I outrun the dog. Jist one week from that night, Nance Moore was married to 'Squire Thorn, who owned two sections of land.

"What luck, Ambrose, my son?" says the old woman, as I come puffing into our cabin, like a blowed badger.

"Luck? mother! Look at my pants and see for yourself. I'd rather skrimmage with a whole tribe of redskins than git on the trail of one gal."

"Nonsense!" says the old woman, "I'll

patch the trowsers as good as new, and to-morrow night you shall try again."

"Lord have mercy on me, as the man sed when he was goin' to be hung."

Well, thur was plenty of gals in the settlement, and the old woman wouldn't let me give up the chase, so the next night I left Wolf at home and went up to see John Barker's Molly. She wer'nt up to some of the gals in the settlement, but I were knowin' tu her droppin' eight acres of corn in one day, and rakin' and bindin' after the cradles in the rye field, so I thought she mought do. I know'd Old Barker and his dog were gone away from home, so there war no danger to my pants, but I thought prehaps Molly mought have a bo, and of all things it's a leetle the meanest a gittin' on another man's tree when he's watchin' the Lick, so I thought I'd look in the winder and see if any human was stayin' with the gal, before I went in; so I fumbled around in the dark and climbed upon a dug-out to look in. Jist as I was takin' a peep, my foot slipped and I come kerflop, head and tail, full length up to the neck into something soft. "Heavens and airth! what kind of a quagmire am I in now?" The noise brought the old woman and Moll out with the candle as I war floundering in the trough.

"Am. Swamp—my gracious—what are you doin' thur in my soap?" screamed the old woman.

"A gittin' out jist as fast as I can, Miss Baker," says I, seraping off the slush from my face and hands.

"But how on airth did you come to get there?"

"Why, Miss Baker, to own the corn, I come up tu see if Moll thar would except my company, and I got up on the dug-out tu — tu —"

"To git soft soaped afore you come in," roared Molly. "You can't soft soap me, you varmint, and the sooner you make yourself scarce in these diggins the better, or I'll make soap grease of your body, and bile you down to a smaller chunk than you be now."

"Nuff sed," says I. "May I be teetotally obliterated if I ever try to git on the track of

a gal again. The old woman may die of rheumaty and I'll give up the traps and go to raisin' corn myself—aye and bakin' my own hoe cake, and patchin' my own trowsers before I'll ever try to court another live female woman. I don't understand the natur of the game."

Didn't I feel streeked. Didn't I feel as if I'd peel and put my skin on t'other side out. O, don't. Why I felt so infarnel small that I wouldn't foller the path home, but took it across lots in the dark, to keep out of the light of the stars, in the shade of the rail fences, to hide the blushes from myself.

Wal, I'd got along on Old 'Squire Beach's plantation, when I got a glimpse of light from their cabin winder. I shied off, and war goin' around the sheep pon' to git shut of the house, when the first I know'd, slap! went something with an almighty spring, and the teeth of a double power wolf trap dug into my leg, clean to the bone. "Murder, murder—help, help—in the name of all creation!" I shouted. I war fast as any wild varmint in the tall timber, and oh! didn't it dig.

The 'Squire's dog sot up a yell, and fiew at me like a streak o' lightning. The 'Squire seized his rifle, and with the boys rushed out of the cabin. "A wolf—a wolf—geet out Watch, I'll pepper the varmint."

"Take care, 'Squire; I'm dead—take care, it's me in the trap. It's me, 'Squire; call off the dog, and don't shoot."

"It's Am. Swamp," said one of the boys; "I know his voice—don't shoot, father."

"Am. Swamp!" said the old man, coming up, "what on airth are you doing in my trap? Did you come to steal my sheep?"

"No, not a single fleece," said I; "open the trap, and let me out, and I will tell you all about it—oh! oh!"

They opened the trap and let me out, but I couldn't stand. (So much for trappin' gals, get trapped yourselves, sometimes, boys.) I was much hurt.

"Take him to the cabin, boys," said the old man. "Peter, run and tell Betsy to get some rags ready to bind up his legs. John, cross hands with me—there Am. sit down,

my boy. No matter how you got trapped, we'll take care of you, Am."

Now, old 'Squire was one of the kindest-hearted men in the settlement, and somehow he had always stood by me in trouble, and the boys, and was always ready to give me and mother advice and help, if we ever got bothered in the management of our affairs. I always thought a power of him, and I always liked Betsy, too, but I never thought of making up to *her*, for they were our nearest neighbors, and kind of in the family like. But the old man couldn't see how I got in the trap, nor I neither, but I did get in it, and they got me out.

Wal, after they got me into the cabin, they laid me on the bed and examined my wound. It was an ugly thing, and the soft soap on my trowsers made it smart orfully. Oh, um! um! yes, it didn't do anything else.

Betsy got some warm water and washed off the blood, and then wrapped a clean white cloth around the wound—but it ached all night. After I got a little easy, I just told the 'Squire the whole story from beginning to 'end. He couldn't help laughin', nor the boys neither; but I noticed that Betsy didn't laugh, but onst I seed her wipe her eye with the corner of her apron—what for, thinks I? John got me a suit of his clothes, and Betsy took mine and put 'em in soak, and by daylight the next mornin' they were washed out clean, and dried by the fire.

I didn't go home that night, and mother thought I was having first-rate luck, wondering all the while who it was that I had kothched, and little dreamin' I was kothched myself.

After a while I got into a doze. When I waked up, the house was still and I thought all had gone to bed. I turned over a little, when a twinge made me groan. I raised my eyes, and thar sot Betsy by my bedside a lookin' at me. May I be shot if thar warn't a tear in her eye.

"Why, Betsy, aint you gone to bed yet? It's past midnight," says I, lookin' up.

"No—I aint sleepy, Ambrose," says she. "Don't you want a drink?"

"No," says I, "I aint dry."

"Well," says she, "go to sleep again if you can."

I shut my eyes, but somehow I couldn't sleep a wink, as long as she sot thar, and may I die if the gal didn't set thar the whole blessed night a watchin' on me. She was always a good kind soul.

After breakfast, the 'Squire took me home on a sled, and it was nigh upon ten weeks before I could put a foot to the ground, after my gal hunt.

Betsy Beach used to come over every day to see how I got along—she was so kind-hearted, and after a spell I began to expect her, and if she didn't come about sich a time, my leg ached, I felt riled, scolded Wolf, and actilly driv him out of doors. Think of that, boys—driv my dog, my best friend, out of doors, and for the life of me I couldn't have told what for. When she come, my piller always wanted a little fixin', or the bandage got loose, and, somehow, the little varmint got the hang of fixin' it better nor the old woman, and after a while I got so that I wouldn't let mother dress my leg, no how—she always hurt me, and Betsy didn't.

It happened on Sunday, when I was gittin' better, that mother went to meetin' to hear a Methody man preach, and Wolf and me were keepin' house all alone; I begun to feel oneasy like, and thought my leg were growin' worse. It ached and itched, and itched and ached, and I felt as if Betsy Beach didn't come to dress it I shouldn't live an hour, when, jist as I felt that I must give up the ghost, the latch-string war pulled, and who should come in but Betsy herself.

"Why, Ambrose, you aint all alone, are you?" says she with a smile.

"Yes," said I, "nobody here but Wolf and me, and I'm gittin' very bad."

"Why, where is your mother?"

"Gone to hear the new Methody man preach," says I.

"If I'd know'd that I wouldn't have come here," said she, lookin' kind o' grave.

"Not come here, Betsy? why of all times this is the very time to come. I'd rather see you than the finest deer in the tall timber."

"You don't mean what you say, Am.," and somehow the gal looked foolish and blushed clean to her eyes.

"I do—my leg feels bad—I feel a kind of alloverness, jist as a man feels when he's lost in a canebrake—I'm powerful weak."

"What can I do for you, Ambrose? shall I fix the bandage? You know I'll do anything for you," and this was said with sich a kind expression and so soft that it took my breath clean away. My heart began to double shuffle, and it seemed as if my vitals would come out of my throat.

"Are you in airnest?" says I.

"Why, Am., what do you mean?" looking in another way.

"Betsy," says I—I got rip-roaring oudacious in a minute—"I hope I may never walk if you haven't done more to cure my leg than all the 'pothecary shops on airth. But I feel as though I could lift the world. I'm dead in love with you, and if you'll only go in cohort with me in the cabin fixins and plantation ground, I'll give up coon huntin', gal huntin', and all other huntin', except happiness huntin', and you and me will settle down for life, like two tame turkeys over a pig-sty. Will you go the caper?"

What do you think she said, boys. Not one word. She stood a minute, like a deer stunned with a buckshot, then burst into tears, and gave me her hand.

God bless that old soap dug-out and wolf trap, for, under Providence, they were the means of gettin' me as good a wife as ever fell to the lot of any human under discouragement, verifying the old proverb that "Disappointment and distress are often blessings in disguise."

One week from that day, Betsy Beach and Ambrose Swamp were roped together in the undissolute bonds of Hymenius Matrimony; and, boys, my leg got well before the old woman got back from the Methody meeting.

PENS AND QUIRKS.

Did you ever try one of Bailey's new gold pens? A real Morton—A—1855? I'm writing with one now, and I'll leave it to the compositor of the *Union* if my letters aint as plain as A B C. Just look once. I'll cut a flourish—(I've tried to do that many a time and slipped up—I'll lay my life you've done the same.) There, there's a Q and U and an I, an R and a K. Don't they look as if they were printed?

It spells quirk; well, what if it does? If you want to execute a quirk just go to Bailey's, on J street, in the village of Sacramento, and buy just such a pen as mine; mind and pay him for it; don't you give him a quirk by buying on credit, and my word for it you can write—just as well as you ever could in your life.

The fact is, I could write a love letter if I had a female soul to write to—I've been told that souls are male and female—but, somehow, California is so hard run for the female article, that I much fear my pen will never have an opportunity, good as it is, and my beauty, "bright with ripe age and lager beer"—(that quotation I made myself)—will never smite the heart of female woman from any blandishments of my own or quirk of my golden Bailey pen. Life is full of quirks. The politician is as full of them as a mole-hill of red ants, and just as small; the lawyer lives on quirks, like a hawk on chickens; the commercial man grows rich and fat on the quirks of trade, like a dyspeptic on cod-liver oil; the doctor has his quirks in the jalap business, equal to a sausage stuffer; the banker does the quirk in exchange and loans, quite as well as a barber with a dull razor; the old maid—there, there, let her alone. Well, then, the young maiden—don't say a word about that—hang it all, I will say, then, the woman that I ever fall in love with, I hope will have quirks enough to keep me faithful and true to the end. The fact is, stranger, everybody has quirks except Expressmen—they are all fair and square as a church steeple with a weathercock on the top, although they seldom get under one.



Old Swamp's Escape from the Indians, by a bare chance.—See page 18.

I'm an Express-man myself—humph! Don't I know? I'll illustrate the quirk subject by giving you a practical illustration.

You've heard me speak of Old Swamp—God bless him! Well, Old Swamp, though as ungainly as a buffalo, had a heart stowed away under his skin as big as an elephant, and at times it was soft as pumpkin butter in paring time. Among other quirks of Old Swamp, he had a bright, blue-eyed, cherry-cheeked daughter, Jennie. She was about seventeen when Old Swamp left home for California, with the stern resolution to relieve himself from embarrassment, and place his family once more in independent circumstances; a proud and generous ambition that has warmed the heart of many an honest man, who has left the hearth-stone and household idols of home, to battle with the climate and privation in every shape in our mountain wilds, to give to those he loved better than his own ease—aye, better than his own life—comfort, happiness and independence. Alas! how many have been wrecked in the strife, how many hopes have been blasted, how many hearts have been broken. Oh! I can't write it—my own heart is swelling—I—I—have seen it—I have felt it—I—I—there—there, let us pass on.

Dear, dear Jennie was the idol of her father, and when he was praising her virtues, her intelligence, her industry and her filial obedience, his countenance brightened up and the tear "sprung unbidden to the eye," as he added: "I'm an ungainly old brute, but her mother's child is as beautiful as an angel, and as good as she is beautiful."

Hadn't I been an Old Block, and the father of two chips, myself, I can't say but what I should have tried to have engrafted Jennie Swamp (that wasn't her real name, you grinning curmudgeon,) into the Block stock, for if I loved the father, I probably should have worshipped the daughter, and I don't doubt but the chips—pshaw!

One day I had been to the settlement—it could scarcely be called a town then—when I found a letter for Old Swamp at the Express Office. I paid the dollar cheerfully

for the letter, for I knew my friend would be happy—even if it was in his own peculiar way. On reaching our cabin, without saying a word, I gave it to him, and, without a remark, he handed me a dollar, and, drawing his stool to the table, sat down to read his missile of love by our single tallow candle. He opened the letter—a second one was enclosed in it—he glanced at the superscription—"humph!" was all he uttered. The first was from his wife—as he finished it he ejaculated "good!" For a moment he looked at the superscription of the second letter—it was a look of pride and of love, for he knew the hand. Deliberately he opened it—placed it before the light and began to read. A start—a long breath followed, and—Old Swamp, in spite of all your stoicism, a tear rolled down your sun-burnt cheek—another—another—faster and faster—you drop your head upon your hands. Old Swamp, you are crying. Good Heaven! What is it—is it possible—has Jennie? No, no, no—it is not so.

We said nothing, although we were ready to sympathise in the old man's grief, whatever it might be; yet we respected his feelings too much to pry into his family secrets, and patiently waited for him to disclose as much of his troubles as he chose. In a little time he recovered himself, and wiping his eyes with the back of his hand, merely observed:

"Boys, I'm an old fool, and—and Jennie is—is—no matter."

He took up a pen and wrote, half the night, a long, long letter to his wife, and a note, only, to his darling daughter. Morning found the old man entirely composed; but there was a feeling of sadness among the rest of us, for we felt that our companion was troubled, and we loved him too well not to feel for him. Even crazy Ned did not whistle or sing a note all day long.

When we stopped work for dinner, and were taking our usual noon rest, Old Swamp sat down by my side and put two letters into my hands, with no remark, but "read," and I discovered that one was Jennie's letter, and the other his reply. I opened hers, and read:

"DEAR FATHER—William Jackson has asked me to marry him. Father, I love him very much; but I told him I could not promise without your consent. Till I hear from you I shall remain, as I have been, and always shall be,

Your affectionate and dutiful

JENNIE."

His was simply :

"MY DARLING—Wait till I come home, about the 1st of May. Your loving father,

AMBROSE SWAMP."

"Thank God, it is no worse!" I exclaimed, entirely relieved of all my forebodings; and, on my word, I didn't see anything so awful in a young man's popping the question to a pretty girl, and the young girl asking consent. Old folks do the same, sometimes, and I have actually known folks old enough to be grand parents fall in love—good and strong, too—pop the question, accept, call in the priest and jump over the broomstick, without shedding a tear. But there were contending emotions which excited Old Swamp—his oldest child, grown a woman, to be married, leaving him and his protection, he away off in California, she a thousand miles beyond the Rocky Mountains; wanted to jump right home, but couldn't, dear Jennie wouldn't do a thing without father's consent. Say, you ragged, bespattered, sunburnt old miner, have you got any daughters at home that you haven't seen for three years?—grown up into beauty and womanhood since their sight blessed your eyes, while you are blistering your hands and working with all your strength in the sweltering sun to gain gold enough to bless them with a good and happy home; don't you think a few dew drops might be wrung from your eyes by such an affectionate and filial epistle as Jennie's? Get out!—I know you'd cry, and would feel too like jumping home at once. I should, and one of these days I shouldn't be surprised if my daughter—but I don't talk of my family affairs now.

"I know Bill Jackson like a book," said Old Swamp, "his father and me have been on many a scout—good man. A better shot nor Bill Jackson aint in the settlement, and no lad can mow more grass or roll more logs than he can, and as for licker, he don't

tech it. If it wasn't all right with him, Jennie wouldn't—no, no; I'll trust the gal at home or abroad. But I'll see—I'll see."

We were sitting by the fire after supper, that evening, in rather a musing mood, when Old Swamp broke the silence with :

"Boys, I start for home one month from to-day!"

"You—home," we all exclaimed, "Old Swamp—home—the d—l."

"Yes, boys, I hate to leave you, and perhaps I'll come back, but I must go home. I've done pretty well, boys, you know—I've been gone three years—I must go home."

We knew he meant what he said, and, although we regretted his decision, we knew he would go. I will not dwell upon our regrets, nor on our leave-taking, but my brother miners well know the pain of parting with an old and valued friend, with whom they have shared the crust for many months, and especially, too, when they feel that he is going where their own hearts yearn to be—home.

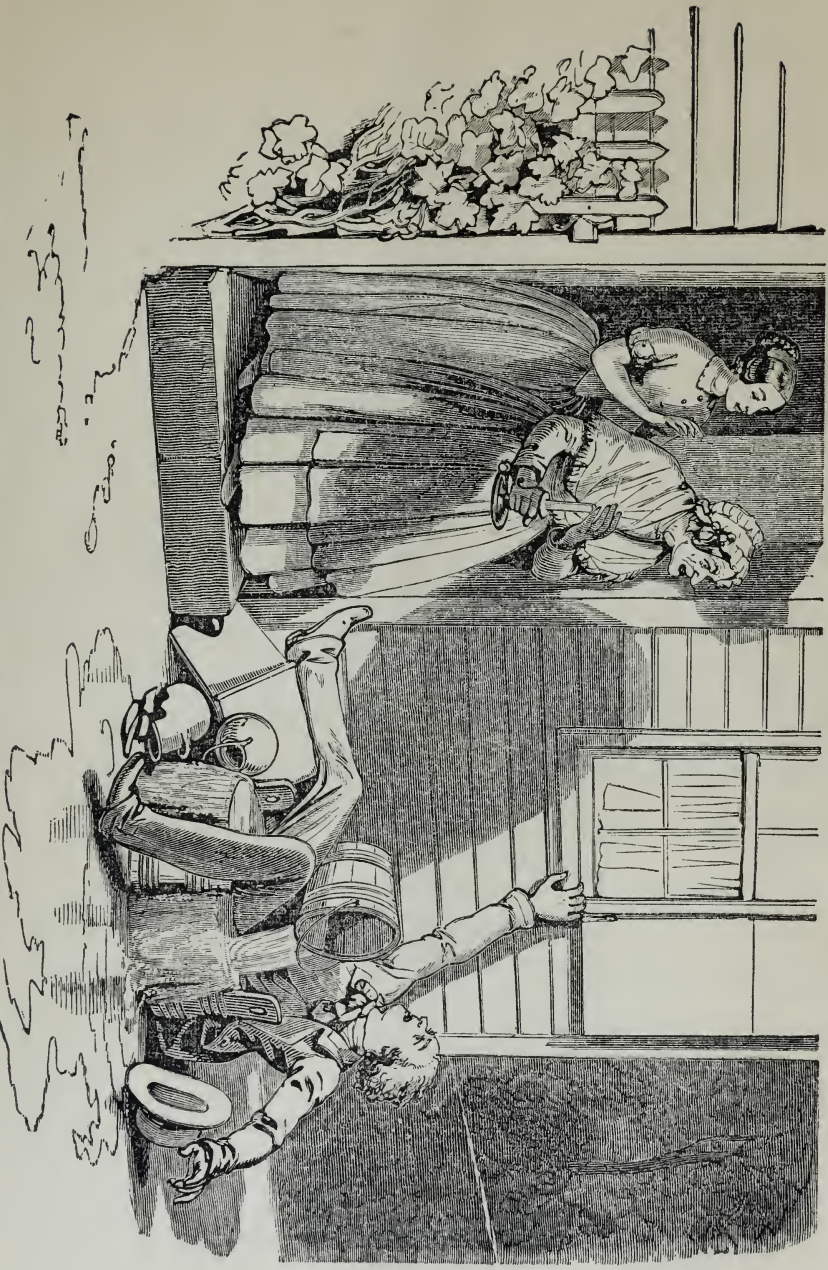
"Yes—yes—I'll write you, boys—soon," he said, as we wrung his hand for the last time.

He was gone.

It was about three months after our parting when I received a letter, directed "To Mr. Old Block, Esquire, Humbug Diggins, State of Calyorny, U. S. — County,—with care and spede." "Hurrah! for Old Swamp," I shouted, as I tore open the letter and read to this effect, for I have lost the letter, and give it from memory :

"DEAR SIR AND FRIEND, OLD BLOCK, ESQUIRE: I arriv at home ware I am at present without no accident only I found the steemer cussed poor stamping ground, with the licks and ranges more onsartin than a bear trail in a canebrake, but as she didn't upset I didn't grumble arter I'd cast up about three-quarters of my innards and found the rest wouldn't come, tho' I tried devlish hard to get 'em up. When I found they wouldn't come I jest let 'em stay where they war and piled in about two pouns of salt junk and hard bread on the top of 'em, and that kept what was left of me down in thar place. Got down to Pannyma, whar the clymat was so hot that we lited our pipes by each others noses, and where I rida nigger ashore for a bit, for you must know the wharves thar are made of niggers, and

“Heavens and airth! What kind of a quagmire am I in now?”—See page 18.



mighty mean ones they are, too—not worth a cuss for plantation, but good for catchin' land crabs and stealin' watermelons. They give me a mule to ride over the Ismus to Godamy, or sum sich place. I rid to the first mud hole where my mule stopped on a suddent, but I dident, for I kept on clene over his head and landed waist deep in the middle, saddle-bags and all. My mule kicked up his heels, blowed off steam and took the back track for Pannyma on the run, while I picked my heels out of the mud, gathered up my traps, and took a stampede for Gocorny, only wishin' I had the d—d varmint on the Feather river hills, where I think I could make him go as fast as he did me. I got among the haystacks and nigger wenchens in town an hour ahed of the first mule that started, and had a choice of lodgins among the fleas and cockroaches on the bar-room floor of a haystack hotel. But not to be tegus, I landed aboard of the steamer at Aspinwall, whar theyre getting up a railrode to run the niggers out above ground, and didn't camp out agin till I got to New York, only at Geemaca, where we lade up to take a little rum and stun cole to keep the injun warm enough to cool the wether, which was much more hotter than the steem-boat furnace itself. Wal, I weren't long in takin' a bee line for home arter I got to New York, where I am at present in my own cabin, with my wife Betsy on one side of me, and Jennie on t'other, and my dog in the corner asleep, and the varmint know'd me at onst, and thay're wonderin' what I'm ritin sich a devlish long letter for.

Bill Jackson came over next day; Jennie turned as red as a cockses comb, and made herself scace the minnit he opened the door. "Well, Bill," says I, "you want my gal, do you? You want to stampede my Jennie. You've set your traps nicely, while I was gone to Calyforny. Can't go it on my trace. Can't watch on my licks. Can't coon in my cornfield, Bill. Jenny is goin' to Calyforny." I had a quirk

in my head and wanted to try the varmint. "To Calyforny, Mr. Swamp! Oh, don't. Oh, Mr. Swamp, if you only know'd—I love your gal better nor all the men in the world," and he raally looked as if he did. "I'm poor, Bill," says I, "I've had bad luck—haint made a dime, and must go back to the diggins, truck, plunder and live stock."

"Mr. Swamp," and the varmint ris rite up—"I've got a hundred and sixty acres of land, half paid for—let me have Jennie—we'll both work and pay for it—you come and live with us—you needn't do no work at all—and needn't go back to Calyforny at all, and we'll be so happy all together." "Bill, I'll tell you what I'll do. Sign over the article of your land to me, and I won't go back." "Done," said Bill, and in less nor two hours the thing was did in black and white, the fool. I had him sure, his land anyhow, and when he began to talk about Jennie, I said I'd see about it. "Bill, come day after to-morrow, and I'll tell you what I'll do." I was pretty busy for a day or two, and Jennie was crying half the time. So when Bill come he looked as if he meant either to get Jennie, or take back the land by fair play or foul. "Well, Bill," says I, "I've changed my mind, I shan't keep the land—there's the papers again." And I laid them on the table. "Mr. Swamp, I shouldn't thought that of you," said Bill, gettin' wrathy—"You are a d—d mean old curmudgen. I'll have your gal anyhow, and keep the land too." So you shall, my boy," says I, "you shall have both—that paper, Bill, is a 'bona fide' deed of the land, made out in your own name, by a regular jackanips of a lawyer; I paid for it myself, for after all I aint so almighty poor. Bill, and Jennie, my darling, dry your eyes and come here—there—there, Bill—take her—take her—and God bless you both.

Yours, till death,

AMBROS E SWAMP.

CHAPTER II.—SUNDAY.

SUNDAY AT HOME.

It is a beautiful May morning. The sun rises brightly o'er the eastern horizon. The air is scented by sweet flowers. The fruit trees are in bloom. The birds are hopping from twig to twig; and the old homestead—the home of our hearts—never appeared more lovely.

How quiet and still everything is—Nature itself seems softened and subdued, as if it was taking a rest after a busy week of toil. The least noise seems to echo through the air as it never does in a week day, and the shrill crowing of the cock, or the cut-cut-ca-da-da of the old hen as she leaves her nest, rings out in tones that disturbs the stillness which universally reigns, and you can't help feeling in your heart, "confound those noisy chickens, they ought not to crow to-day."

How quietly mother steps about the house, preparing breakfast; while father, with his coat off, his shirt sleeves rolled half way up to his elbows, the collar turned back—exposing his bare neck, his hair—now turning grey—lays back half negligently on his head, is quietly strapping his razor, glancing now and then with a look of love at ambitious little Susy, as she is bringing a bowl of hot water for father to shave with, who, half afraid to trust his darling, cautions her with, "be careful, dear; don't scald yourself." James and Lucy, not yet dressed for the day, are sitting in a corner by themselves, looking over the Sunday school lesson, and reciting to each other so many verses, that they may be perfect when they recite to their teacher, and even old Caesar, that fine old Newfoundland, and Tippy, the cat, have ceased hostilities, and are quietly lying down together in the sunshine at the door, as if the one never worried and the other never spit at the other, when Jim, for a week day frolic, made them belligerent. Father has taken off his beard

and put on his Sunday suit—all but his coat, which hangs on the chair, ready brushed. Mother has, with tiny Susy's help—for she will help all she can with her little hands, and thinks she helps a great deal—has set the things on the table, and then, going softly up and laying her hand upon his shoulder, says in her quiet way, as if she was a child herself, "Come, father, breakfast is ready;" while Susy, getting hold of his forefinger, tugs away, repeating, like mother, "Come, pa, come to breakfast," and leads him smiling to the old arm chair, which she has shoved up to the table herself—she can't lift it, and nobody else must put it there for "dear father." Seated around the table, with bowed heads, but uplifted hearts, the happy circle listen reverently to the words, "Our father who art in Heaven, we thank thee for thy blessings," as they fall from the lips of their father now in life.

Breakfast is over, the hearth is swept clean, the children's clothes are laid out by mother; Susy, washed clean, stands in her white stockings and new shoes, her neat petticoat and pantalettes, with her little arms bare, at mother's knees, who is curling her hair in ringlets to fall down her neck, while the larger children are putting on for themselves their best Sunday "bib-and-tucker," soon to join father, who is sitting in the old arm chair, his hair combed straight, spectacles on his nose, engaged in perusing some useful book. Last of all, mother, who has put the finishing touch on Susy—making her look like a little angel, all but the wings—now retires to rig up for Sunday herself. Did you ever see anything like it, dear reader? Did you ever have a home? Did you ever love father and mother? Did you ever see any of those dear quiet old-home Sundays? Do you ever think of them, now that you live in California, and of Susy, or Mary, or Jenny?

Look through the street of your little New England village. There is scarcely a living thing in sight. On the steps of the hotel a few strangers may be seen, perhaps sitting under the piazza, and here and there a townsman may have strolled thus far towards church to chat, but a quiet stillness pervades the whole; and if, perchance, you see a loafer hanging about, you know that he does not feel at ease, and you will soon see him get out of sight behind the bar-room door, as if he felt guilty of being where he ought not to be. Hark! a sound breaks upon the ear—slow, deep, solemn—it is the old church bell that rings its chime from that weather-beaten steeple, and in a moment the scene is changed. Father lays down his book without a word, and slips on his well-brushed coat: little Susy takes his hat from the table and hands it to him with a smile; mother appears with her bonnet on and with Susy's in her hand, which she ties on the little thing, who stands tiptoe that it may be done properly; the other children get ready; father takes his cane; mother draws on her gloves, putting one arm through father's, and taking hold of Susy's hand, and, without haste or affectation, placidly walk out into the street on their way to the House of God. The street is alive with human beings. Men, women and children; whole families, dressed in their best, are seen wending their way quietly and with subdued feelings towards the church, with a soft, yet pleasant "good morning" for each neighbor; and to see this alone you would never dream that care, strife, or the elements of vice and evil, had a home in the hearts of the children of men. We need not look into the church. We need not speak of the calm that pervades the congregation, or the devoutness of the worshippers. It speaks its own happiness, of its own effects upon the morals of community. We know that when men are there engaged in the worship of Almighty God, whether they are sincere or not, they are not dealing monte or staking their last dollar. We know they are not patronizing a drinking saloon to the injury of their health and pockets, and breaking the hearts of an affectionate wife or

parent. We know they are not acquiring a vitiated appetite, and sowing the seeds of vice. We know they are not setting bad examples to their own children, to the younger members of their families, or to the rising generation. Even if we do not believe in creed or sect, we must approve the effect of a Sunday at home, rather than that of a "Sunday in California." Shall we show that up to you?

SUNDAY IN THE MINES.

Shall we hold the mirror to your gaze? Will you not start at the reflection? I once went three months without taking a peep in the looking glass, and the first view of my own phiz, at no time very inviting, absolutely made me stare at myself; a beard of three months growth, an old worn out hat, from which my matted locks were sticking out in all directions, a greasy buckskin coat, wrinkled and dirty, with unmentionables ditto; my toes peeping out into daylight from my old dilapidated shoes, like frogs from the scum of a pond, made about as outlandish an appearance as a wild Arab from the desert of Sahara, and yet, under all this, a small portion of the soul was still left, and an innate sense of decency, so I went to work and cleaned up, and a decent suit of clothes and a sharp razor soon changed the Arab into something like civilization. Don't get mad, then, if the mirror reflects the appearance of a Sunday in the mines. It is all very well, my friend, to moralize on things as they should be, but the fact is, we must see things as they are to arrive at just conclusions. It is a beautiful morning here, too, as well as at home. The morning is always beautiful in California, except during the rainy season. Not a cloud is to be seen, and it seems as if "Our Father who art in Heaven," was smiling on this fair portion of man's heritage, to bless him—if he is willing to bless himself. It is nine o'clock, the breakfast bells have rung an hour and a half at the hotels, but the boarders still keep dropping in, for being out "late o' nights," they

must borrow of the day to make up the loss of the night. Crowds begin now to throng the streets, and ten o'clock exhibits a gathering of miners, idlers, or those having business in town, who take this day of "rest" to do it all up for the week. The scene is one of busy life, resembling somewhat a company or general training at home. The stores are generally open, for Sunday is the day for their best sales, the banking houses are doing a smashing business, and the ringing of coin upon the counters in exchange for gold dust is almost constant as if it were a song of thanksgiving to the God of Gold, instead of a desecration of the Most High, for Sunday is the day that the miners chiefly sell their dust, simply because they can; and—hark! is that a choir tuning up for a song of praise, on this beautiful morning, and is the crowd which is gathering around that door worshippers of God, to thank him for the rich gifts he has dispensed for their use during the past week? Poor soul! how simple you are! That music is the squeaking of a fiddle; the tum, tum, tum of a banjo; the zee, zee, zee, thump, thump, thump of a tambourine, interlarded with the clickey-clack of bones; or perhaps you hear the deep, sweet tones of a piano, discoursing some beautiful waltz or gallopade; that house is a gambling saloon, and the worshippers are those of Mammon, who would tempt the fickle Goddess of Fortune by offering at her shrine the results of their week's labor, so hardly and so honestly obtained. And from within the temple you hear the words of the preacher, as he exclaims, in earnest tones, "Come down, come down; don't be backward. On the red; on the black. How much? any more? all down? Make your pile! Walk up—walk up, gentlemen! Don't be backward." The table is covered with coin of various denominations, and at a turn of a card the genius of this temple, with a kind of wooden hoe, scrapes a large proportion of the coin over to himself, piles it up on his bank, and perhaps begins again with "Six brandy smashes and three sherry cobblers, in quick time, barkeeper."

All do not gamble. Some go to see the

fun—some to pass off the time in talking with others, and to take a social glass—some to play billiards or roll ten-pins, and some, it must be confessed, to gamble. The drinking saloons are well patronized too. Saturday night and Sunday are hours of rest, and with the *oro* in the pocket, the result of our week's labor, we can treat ourselves and our friends, and if we get drunk, it's nobody's business. Now, honestly, would you do so at home? in New England, the Middle States, or the West. I've never been South, but suppose it is not common there.

Take an old man's advice, and save your money for your families at home, or for yourselves in the hour of sickness or adversity. The sea of life is not always smooth, and you will not always be lucky. Some day you will NEED the money you are now spending without value received. Don't you really think it better to keep it, and pay your way like a man, rather than be dependent on charity in sickness or distress?

"A fight! a fight! don't preach morality here, old man; here's fun alive—a fight! a fight!" is echoed from mouth to mouth, and in a moment there is a life and animation in the scene, unrivalled at any other hour of the day. From the door of some groggery a couple of brutes, bearing the semblance of spewed out men, are ejected, with hat and coats off, shirt sleeves and collars in tatters, who, with loud, disgusting oaths, are pulling hair and pummeling each other worse than savages, and crowds on crowds of men rush forward, not to separate the half-drunken combatants, but to look on, enjoy the sport, and see which whips. What refinement, what delicacy, what a charming picture to present to a young and growing family? "A good hit, give it to him, Pete," shouts one in the crowd. "Give him Jesse, Tom," echoes another. "Tap his claret; by —, he's done it—smashed his nose flat," and the poor drunken fools, with their blood flowing freely, are rolling and tumbling in the dirt like brutes, beating and bruising each other like infuriated demons, while a cry is raised, "give 'em room, give 'em room—let 'em go



“Will You Go the Caper?”—See page 20.

it; capital, capital," till one or the other, sadly bruised or exhausted, gives up, when the victor is pulled off, and the friends of the vanquished take him to be washed up, and damages repaired by being properly bandaged. O, it is interesting—delightful, and we are so much ahead of the "old folks at home," in fact, we never knew anything of life till we came to California. What'll you drink, boys? Let me see—

Have any of you got a little son or brother at home? Wouldn't you like to have him here to take lessons in life from these delightful examples? Any of you got any daughters? How nice it would be to have them commit their happiness to the keeping of such brave, high-minded men, who can fight and drink and encourage such independence, such fun, and such social happiness. I am glad, however, to say that such scenes do not happen every Sunday—but not unfrequently they do. At the very moment of writing this, such a scene is being enacted within a few rods of me.

Get out of the way—clear the track, you'll get run over; and there is a scampering in the streets, as half a dozen half-cocked rowdy, but well-dressed, hombres dash along on horseback, at full speed, and bring up with such a jerk, that nearly sends them flying over their horse's heads, at the door of a hotel or drinking saloon. Perhaps one or two of them ride up on the steps and into the house for fun and —; it is so smart, to turn a dwelling house or place of business into a stable; it is such fun, shows such high-minded contempt for public opinion by bringing man and beast to the same stall, only the beast won't drink whisky and get drunk when his rider will.

But Sunday there is nothing else to do, and how could we pass off the time without amusement? We hate reading, we hate study

—it is too muck like work. Can't sleep all day, and want a day of rest after a hard week's work. What can we do? Well, I'm no Mentor, but it seems to me I hear a new sound. No!—Yes!—No!—it is in fact a church-bell—and see here and there a few, a very few, men, women and children, edging their way through the crowd in the streets in the direction of the church. There is a father leading his son by the hand, and by the mother trips a bright-eyed girl, neatly dressed in her Sunday clothes. Pshaw! They are old fogies, who are trying to teach their children old fashioned notions of propriety, and who are opposed to bringing them up according to the new code of morals.

If they go on so, that smart looking boy will never know a king from a knave, nor Old Sledge from Monte, he'll be of no account in California; and that little girl will know no more of life than—than—(um! twinge) our mothers and sisters at home, God bless them! Don't you wish they were here to witness your smartness, to see with what majestic carelessness you can spend money foolishly, while they may be working their nails off at home in trying to get enough honestly to live on. Ah! ha! couldn't you show 'em what's what?

As evening approaches, here and there you may see independent freemen, who have enjoyed the inalienable privilege of getting drunk, now staggering about the street; you hear the hip hurrah! of crazy equestrians, the noise of a dog fight or two, and what, with the squeaking of fiddles, the clang of ten-pins, the shouts of inebriates, the barking of dogs, the throng of idlers, a Sunday in the Mines is more like Pandemonium than the still quiet day of rest of a Sunday at home. Which picture do you prefer? Which would your own dear little Susy prefer?

CHAPTER III.—EVENINGS AT HOME.

BURNING OF GRASS VALLEY.

DID you ever know a young man go into the company of his sweetheart that he didn't make his best bow? Did you ever know an old lover meet his ancient love without saying "my dear?" Did you ever hear an ardent preacher commence his sermon without pre-facing it with "my dear hearers?" Well, then, if an Old Block, after years of absence, is about to revisit the home of his old love, to appear on the scene where former kindnesses met him at every turn, the memory of which is still as fresh and green as at the moment they were extended; as he offers his hand with the kindest feelings of his heart to greet you, will you not allow an old man to use the gentle cognomen of Dear Public, and accept his best bow with his kind greetings? Yes, yes—make your bow, but let us hear what you've got to say:

Well, then, dear public, I am not in the pumpkin trade now. I'm done with the squash business. My little cub-hole on Long Wharf has given place to a magnificent brick; all the old wharf rats are driven out years ago. Even the one-armed water carrier has disappeared with his little hand-cart. And my tail—my tale, I mean, has been cut short for months by the want of time and means to extend it. By degrees, I propose to unfold it from my den in the mountains, and if I can't talk like a green grocer on Long Wharf of cabbages and turnips, perhaps I can cabbage a little of your time, while I occasionally turn up a few items in the columns of the *Union* for your notice—I like to have said amusement. There, dear male public, (I like to make a distinction, sometimes—don't you?) here's my hand, and—dear ladies, here's my lips for you, and, though Old Time has been at work with the hair on my crown, for aught I know my kiss is as vigorous as—well I know age is garulous.

You've heard of Grass Valley, or "I s'pose you've read of it in the prints;" a mountain town, so named from the fact that it was first settled by grass widowers, and being incorporated since by that name, because it became the heaven or haven (I havn't got a dictionary at hand) of grass widows. Although its name is a little verdant, our people, taken as a whole or by sections, are not quite so green as the name would imply. In fact, we are making some noise in the world, although our "fathers don't beat the drum, nor our mothers cry clams." Yet the noise and thumping of a dozen quartz mills is proof positive that we can be heard at a distance, and we are where the air is clear enough. Besides, too, we have our papers of California naturalization, without which no town in the State is worthy of notice. We stand No. 23 on the list—ch! don't you know what constitutes a legal incorporation in California? Why, its being burnt down and built up again in a month, and coming out more fresh, more fair and beautiful than ever by the purification. As gold is more refined and bright by being submitted to the flames, so our towns are purified and rendered more beautiful than ever as they spring up from their own smoking ruins. True, it tries the metal, and the alloy and dross is swept off, but show me the town in California, from San Francisco to Grass Valley, which has been subjected to the seething flame—even wiped off the earth by the devouring element—when the energies of its people have not triumphed over the calamity which prostrated it, and renewed it, improved in appearance, and beautified and enlarged in its proportions. And with what calmness and determination the Californians look upon such calamities.

On the eventful night which laid our town in ruins, which left us no cover for our heads but the blue vault of Heaven; when we were

driven from our falling roofs to the streets, from the streets to hill, beyond the reach of fire, there stood mothers with their children, and men ruined in purse by the catastrophe, gazing calmly upon the greedy flames as they leaped from house to house, licking up their homes, and destroying the result of years of toil, did you hear one word of wailing—one single note of despair? No, not one. Even females, who scarcely saved their garments, coolly remarked, "It can't be helped; there's no use to cry. It's gone, and must be endured. We shall contrive] to get along somehow." And our men replied, "Yes, we've done all we can to stop the flames. The town is gone; we'll build it up again." Even at that moment stern resolution stood out, the leading feature of Californians, to meet trial and discomfiture like old and well-tried warriors.

Never in my life have I seen more fortitude or calmness displayed at misfortune than at that very hour; and what has been the result? In little more than a month, a stranger, to visit us, would scarcely know that a fire had occurred which had wiped a town from existence. What a moral spectacle does it present of California energy and enterprise.

And do Californians look for sympathy from abroad? So far as kind wishes are concerned, one for another, it is gratifying. A brother's love is always acceptable under misfortune; but our people depend upon themselves alone for the means of repairing their loss. I recollect reading, a year or two ago, of the destruction of some town in Germany by fire, when the sympathies of our Atlantic brethren were largely excited, and subscriptions were opened for the relief of the distressed foreigners. I have yet to learn of the first dime which was subscribed at home for the relief of ruined and suffering citizens, when San Francisco and Sacramento were burned under the most appalling circumstances. Thousands for a foreign people, but not a dime for their Pacific brethren! But it is a bright relief to witness the heartfelt kindness, the substantial sympathy which our suffering towns receive from a more fortunate one in

California. Assistance and offers of assistance are showered down, and good will and sympathy are the order of the day. I love California; I love Californians.

Our baskets may be upset, but our eggs are saved to be hatched. Old Philip H—— was as kind-hearted and honest a Quaker as ever wore a broad brim or drove an old pumpkin and milk-colored mare before a sleigh, and Becky, his wife, was as perfect a pattern of industry, economy and prudence as ever dressed in drab, or sported a plain bonnet. Heaven rest their souls, it is many years since they, and pumpkin and milk, have ceased going to market on earth, and what they are doing in the Spirit Land I shall never know till I go there.

One fine winter day, my sober friends were going at a sober pace to market in a sleigh, with a basket of eggs. Old Pumpkin-and-Milk, a pattern of sobriety, was never known to depart from a slow and dignified trot, especially for the last eight or ten years of her useful life, even when a gentle lash and a rather impatient "Will thee get up, foal," of Uncle Philip, tried to urge her to a faster gait.

On the eventful winter morning, on going down a somewhat precipitous hill, it seems that Satan, or an extra feed of oats in the morning, moved old Pumpkin-and-Milk to a deed which destroyed her character of quietness among the brethren, and made her a subject of church or raw-hide discipline, for she suddenly, without cause or provocation, started on a run. "Thou brute; thou old fool—whoa!" shouted Philip. "Wilt thee stop? will thee—whoa! Thou old Pumpkin——." But Pumpkin-and-Milk would not listen to the voice of reason, nor give Uncle Philip time to close his admonition, but by a sudden jolt threw Becky on the bottom of the sleigh, and tipping Uncle Philip off backwards into the snow, continued her mad career with Becky to the bottom of the hill, where she upset the sleigh, with Becky and basket, and then stopped and "gazed upon the ruin she had made." Philip, in agony, raised from the snow; his mare, his eggs, his Becky were gone, but he thought only of his

Becky. With the speed of an ox he flew down the hill, exclaiming, in heart-rending tones, "Becky, is thee hurt?" His dame, during the race, had convulsively clasped the basket, and, as she slid into the snow, carried it unharmed with her, and at the moment was "sitting on the cold ground" counting the eggs. "Is thee hurt, Becky?" shouted Philip," as he approached, out of breath. "There's not an egg broke, there's not an egg broke," she replied, with delight. "It don't signify, Becky, is thee hurt? is thee hurt, Becky?" "There's not an egg broke, Philip—there's not an egg broke." "Pshaw! it don't signify, Becky, is thee hurt!" "Every egg is good for a chicken, Philip; not one of 'em broke." And it was all the worthy Quaker could get from his excited and delighted wife—"Every egg is good for a chicken." Let Pumpkin-and-Milk run, boys, every California egg "is good for a chicken."

A LEGISLATIVE HORSE THIEF.

It was five miles to the next water, the Poison Lake, as it was called, from the innumerable quantity of animalculæ and *frogiponiana* in its waters, which could only be rendered drinkable by filtration, and Col. Watkins—Col. Joseph S. Watkins, for short—and I, agreed to walk on over the dry dusty plain to that point, which it was understood afforded the concomitants of a good camp, and where our trains intended to encamp for the day. Many a long and weary day had we traveled thus together, and upon my honor, when I had the Colonel for a companion, the miles seemed shorter, the way was less weary than when I was alone or with other company. I've loved several women—Pshaw! don't think, because Time is laying his hand upon my brow, that my heart is of adamant and can no longer appreciate the charms of woman's smile, and—I have loved some men in my life—between you and I, however, the feeling was somehow a *leetle* different—you know—I can't explain—I loved the Colonel then, and I love him still, and if he is ever a candidate—no matter—I'll show you what

I'll do for an honest man on the day of election. As usual, we had been spinning yarns, and the subject of conversation happened to turn upon the strange position which men sometimes fall into. You know the Colonel had spent twenty-one years in the service of his native Virginia. Don't draw up your face—I don't mean in the Penitentiary—but in the Legislature, and for a time was among the most prominent statesmen of the State. "One of the most ridiculous positions in which I ever found myself," said the Colonel, "was in being taken up for a horse thief."

"A horse thief, Colonel, for stealing a horse—*only* once?"

"On my honor, only once," he replied, with a kindred smile.

I was applied to, while I lived in Richmond, by Tom M——, to endorse a note for three thousand dollars; I didn't know much about him, personally, but as he was from a good and prominent family, I did not hesitate a moment to do it—and he got the money from the bank. He lived about a hundred miles from town. I heard nothing from him and thought nothing about the note, supposing of course all was right, till three days before the note was due, when the cashier told me that M—— had made no provision for its payment, and in case of protest they should look to me for payment. Well, it was pretty short notice, too short to write him and get a reply, and my only remedy was to get on to a horse and make the time by hard riding, see him, and return in time to prevent a protest. I had a fine yellow horse, a splendid traveler, with a light mane and tail, but blind of one eye. It was afternoon, but I thought that by riding about thirty miles, and then starting by daylight the following morning, I could reach M——'s residence in the evening of the second day, and so return in time to save the protest, and I decided to do so, and accordingly set out; passing through several settlements on my way, I rode as fast as I thought my horse could stand it, and about ten o'clock reached a tavern, where I stopped for the night. I told the landlord that I wished to start before daylight in the morning,



that I would pay my bill then, and lay down on a bench, instead of going to bed, and that when I got ready I would saddle my horse myself and go on without disturbing him. With this arrangement I took possession of the bench, which, though not quite as dignified as that of a judge's, fatigue made it quite as comfortable, and I was soon sound asleep. About two o'clock in the morning I got up, saddled my horse, and went on my way rejoicing—as well as a man could with the prospect of paying three thousand dollars without value received.

It was about ten o'clock in the morning, as I afterwards learned, while I was honestly plodding along, that a Sheriff, with a *posse comitatus*, rode up to the inn where I stopped, to inquire if they had seen a man pass, riding a yellow horse with a light mane and tail, and one eye out; that such a horse had been stolen the night before, and they had got on the track of the thief, and he had passed that way.

"My God! yes," replied the landlord, "the rascal staid here last night with the very horse. I thought then there was something wrong—he didn't go to bed at all, but slept on a bench, and was off before daylight this morning; he seemed to be in a terrible hurry."

"The very fellow," echoed the Sheriff. "We'll have him, boys! Let's be after him like lightning!" and, mounting their horses, away they sallied after the horse thief.

Well, I rode on as fast as I could, totally unconscious of my *crime*, and with no fear of iron bars to look through. Towards evening I came to a little town, and inquired of a man I met if there was any by-road which would take me across the country to a point I named, which was very near my destination, and which would be nearer than the way by the road.

He said there was one by which some miles could be saved; that I was to ride through the street, turn down a lane and take a trail over the hills, &c.

I followed the direction, riding as fast as I could, and I recollect seeing a knot of men before a public house, in the town, who

called out to me for something, but I rode on without reply. It was dark when I reached a public house within a few miles of M——'s residence, when I concluded I would stay there through the night, as I was very tired, and ride in to breakfast in the morning. I went early to bed.

In the meantime my pursuers tracked me without difficulty, and at the town through which I passed, they got an accurate description of my horse and person, and the direction which I had taken, and what corroborated suspicion to certainty was the fact of my taking a solitary and bad trail, to avoid observation.

It was eleven o'clock at night when the door of my bed-room was broken open, and I was suddenly aroused from my sleep by the entrance of a dozen men, who rushed up, and one of them told me I must get up, for I was his prisoner.

"Your prisoner?" said I, rubbing my eyes to get fairly awake. "What have I done?—what am I arrested for?"

"Why," responded the Sheriff, "for stealing a horse. A horse has been stolen and you are the thief. We have tracked you for nearly two days, and now we have got you. So hustle out of bed, and we shall take you before a Justice of the Peace and have you bound over."

It was rather a pretty fix to be in; but I had to make the best of it, and as they would not let me stay till morning, I got up, dressed myself, and enquired how far it was to Judge Marshall's.

"About nine miles."

"Well, take me before him; I prefer to have an examination before him."

To this they readily assented, and we set out; in the meantime they keeping a strong guard around me to prevent my escape. About sunrise we reached the Judge's residence, and tying our horses at the gate, walked up to the house. The Judge had just got up, and seeing a crowd coming towards the house, came out to see what was up. As the horse thief came up between the guard, the Judge instantly recognized me,

threw up his hands in surprise, exclaiming :

"Col. Watkins! my old friend. What in the world does all this mean? I am delighted to see you; but what has happened?"

"Why, Judge," said I, "there are horse thieves about—a horse has been stolen, and who do you think is the thief?"

"Ha! ha! ha! I should as soon think you the man as anybody—you, my old friend and colleague!"

"It is a fact, Judge, I am taken up for stealing a horse, and I've come to you for trial; this is the Sheriff, and I am under arrest."

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared the Judge, "this is capital. Mr. Sheriff, this is Col. Watkins, your representative in the Legislature, and my intimate friend. Come in, come in, gentlemen; take a glass of whisky and some breakfast, and I will order the Sheriff to return the writ—'horse thief *non est inventus non comatable!*'"

I need scarcely say the Sheriff was profuse in his apologies; but I assured him that I enjoyed the joke more than he could feel mortified at his mistake.

THIRST ON THE DESERT.

A TRUE HISTORY.

I've got the blues decidedly. I'm down in the mouth, for it is a rainy, snowy, cold, shivery, delectable night, and though the fire is burning brightly in the grate, nothing is heard without but the pattering of the half-frozen rain drops on the roof, and the wind sighing, with a melancholy sound, through the tall pines, and this sad feeling is imparted to me, notwithstanding the real comforts by which I am surrounded.

I am sad, dear reader, for I am alone. Yes, alone, without one soul to converse with, without one heart, however gentle, to commune with. Would that you were with me to chase off the heavy hour—would that you were sitting in that rocking chair by my side, to cheer my loneliness with your smiles; would that your hand was clasped in mine, and that dear, bright eye, was this moment reflecting

back the look of love that mine is. Get out you old curmudgeon, it's not you I'm talking to—such ill-looking mustaches, such a self-important air—such a cold-hearted expression will never cure a man of the blues, or attune his heart to the beautiful in nature. No, no, I have before me, in my mind's eye, you, dear Grace, and you, Mary, my darling, and Lizzie, and you—no—I don't feel like talking to but one of you—so go to bed, girls, and I'll keep Grace in my mind. I love you all, but I love one of you better than the rest—which one—aye, that's the question. Good night, good night, Heaven bless you, girls, as an old man blesses you, who wouldn't steal a ring from your finger, nor wring a sigh from your heart at the expense of the dearest love you have. There—draw your chair a little nearer, Grace—put your hand in mine—lay your head upon my shoulder—so—that's right, and now I'll tell you how it was. We had passed through many trying scenes, but the end had not come. When we reached to within sixtyfive miles of the sink of the Humboldt, our provisions were nearly exhausted, we were worn down by long, weary and arduous travel, and it seemed as if our very natures were changed. O, you little know what feelings wretchedness and suffering entail upon man. He seems to be a different being, for, where hilarity and good nature was a marked characteristic, he becomes morose and sullen, and if there's a spark of bad blood in him it is sure to be fanned into a blaze on the Plains. At this point we were met by reports that by turning off here we should avoid the desert entirely; that there was plenty of water on the route and forage for our animals, and that we should reach Feather River in a hundred miles. All these reports, and taking into account the shortness of our supplies, were listened to eagerly by our weary, ragged crew, and in an evil hour we determined to take that route. It was understood, however, that it was rather a long drive to the first water, but that once reached there was no further difficulty, and we earnestly desired to avoid the dreadful desert.

The sun was only an hour above the western

horizon, when, after filling a small keg with water, we started upon our experiment of reaching California by a new and untried route. We were to drive all night, for it was understood that our animals would suffer less for water than by day under the burning sun. In spite of a forced hilarity, consequent upon trying a new route, and varying the monotony of the old trail, there were misgivings and doubts, and it was not long before every indication of mirth subsided, and we walked along through the deep sand with noiseless tread, thoughtful and gloomy, with dubious anticipations for the future. And so it is Grace, dear, in life. If you are prompted to try a new and unbeaten path, with no map of experience to govern your course, with no compass of reflection to indicate the bearings, with no guide-board at the corners of doubt, it is an even chance that your wagon gets into a slough, your wheel-horse gets crippled for life, and your gearing gets awfully broken or twisted, so that a whole life cannot set you right side up. Stick to the well-known and well-beaten trails, my girl, and don't take any cut-offs, unless they have been proved better and shorter. Slowly and painfully we made our way across a lateral valley which extended westwardly from the valley of the mysterious Humboldt a long distance, and it was quite dark when we entered a mountain gorge in a south-west direction from our starting point. All that night we toiled on by the light of the stars, the high, bold mountains towering to a great height above us, casting a shade through the narrow gorge that made it difficult and often dangerous for us to pick our way, and the rising sun found us on the summit of a high hill, barren and bleak as—as an old man's heart, Grace, when he has nobody to love. We halted an hour to give our animals rest and to divide the little water which we had brought with us with them, for they were our mainstay now, and had they given out, we should have been like a ship at sea without a rudder or compass; and we were then over five hundred miles from the nearest settlement on that route. We hastily prepared a cup of coffee, and again set out. As

the sun arose in the heavens it became intensely hot; perspiration was streaming from every pore, and we began to feel the pangs of thirst. Our water was all gone, for in that desolate region there is water only at long intervals, and our thirst became more intolerable—perhaps heightened by our anxiety and the thought that we might not be able to stand it till we reached a spring. Oh, how the beautiful flowing streams at home danced through my imagination; how, in fancy, I have heard the rippling sound as the crystal water broke over the well-washed pebbles; how I thought of the "old oaken bucket" as I pressed my dry and parched lips together.

I never knew exactly what Jonah's gourd was, but I did think of Hoosier-land log cabins, with gourd vines growing about the windows, with gourds for dippers, hanging on a peg by the door; gourds for tunnels, gourds for cups, a smashing big gourd for a pail, filled with pure, clear, cool water, just from the spring. Water, water! oh, pure, clear, cool water! Grace, I've been two days without eating a mouthful, and suffered far less for food than I have at times for water. If Esau had sold his heritage for a cup of water, I could have forgiven him; but for a mess of pottage, when, by drawing his belt a little tighter, he might have stood it till he could have killed a rat or a weasel, like an old hunter on the Plains, I can't forgive him.

We had passed through defile after defile with fainting steps, with nothing to relieve the dull monotony of the barren hills, except now and then high cliffs of variegated soil, which exhibited all the colors of the rainbow—red, green, yellow, brown and white, with their immediate shades nicely blended—when about noon, as we came out of a defile, a shout arose from the boys in advance—"I see it, I see it; I see where the spring is." Joy lighted every eye; fatigue was forgotten, as we saw a cluster of trains congregated together on a particular spot, for we knew that here could be found the long desired, the life-saving element. Frantically we rushed forward to the so-called Rabbit Spring, and on arriving, what was our dismay on beholding

only a hole dug in the ground four or five feet deep, into which the water was percolating in a stream not larger than a small straw. Fifty men were standing around in line, while one was holding a tin cup to catch the precious fluid, and giving each his turn to drink. It was half an hour before our turn came, and oh, the agony of that half hour! to see that which we were nearly perishing for within our reach, yet unable to get it. One thoughtless man, after drinking, threw what was left upon the ground, as we all would have done at home, when a universal cry was raised, "For God's sake, don't throw it away—pass it round; pass it round if you don't want it; don't spill a drop," and before the cup had half made its circuit, those who had been served were eagerly calling for more,

In the course of an hour or two we yielded our places to others constantly arriving, and could then more calmly take a view of our situation. Our poor animals had been constantly traveling for eighteen hours without a morsel of food, and with their lips only moistened with water once, with which we had filled a small vinegar keg, and here it was utterly impossible to give them a drop, for the necessities of man demanded it all.

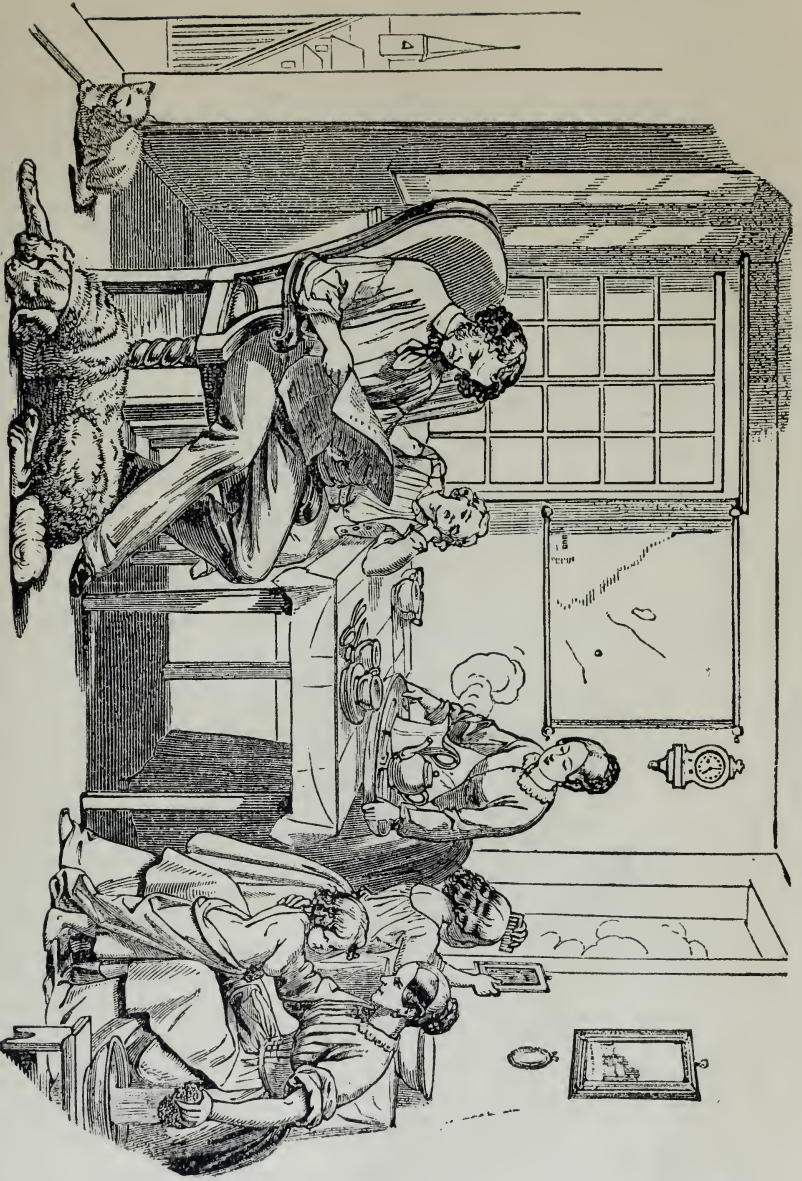
The scenery around was of the most desolate and forbidding character. Instead of avoiding the desert, instead of the water and forest of which we had been assured, instead of reaching Feather river, in California, in a hundred miles, we found, too late, that we had to cross the dreadful desert, where it was more than a hundred miles wide—water but twice in the distance, except this at Rabbit Spring—and with this exception we had to drive seventy-five miles from the Humboldt across the desert to a boiling spring, with neither water nor grass for our animals, and it afterwards proved that our route took us two or three hundred miles out of our way to Sacramento. In addition, we were compelled to pass through tribes of bold and thieving Indians; and, in short, our real sufferings had only commenced. Had we known the topography of the country, as it is

now known, we could have avoided much of our troubles, for new passes have been found, and springs and streams of the life-giving element discovered; but bear in mind, Grace, that this was in '49, and we were among the first trains that ever attempted that passage.

As we looked around us at Rabbit Spring, there was nothing to cheer us in our extremity. Behind us were the barren hills we had already passed. Before us lay a flat sand plain which extended as far as the eye could reach in the direction of our route, with a soil so poor that the everlasting sage could scarcely find a foot-hold; while, looming up in the distance, thirty or forty miles off, the dark, forbidding outline of Black Rock Mountain, an old volcano, covered with cinders and melted debris, could be dimly seen through the murky, heated atmosphere, while on the south and west, towards Pyramid Lake, spurs of the mighty Sierra stood out as if to barricade our entrance to the land of gold, apparently an impassible barrier.

There was nothing green to relieve the eye; even the few stunted sage bushes were dry and parched; there seemed nothing for even hope to cling to, and our circumstances indeed seemed desperate. Could we recede? The hills and difficult passes over which we had just passed were not to be thought of. Should we advance? Could our worn-out and suffering animals make the passage of forty miles through the sand without food or water? Grace, with us, there was no dependency—it was a struggle for life. Prudence made us hesitate, but resolution decided the matter, and we resolved to do what many did not do—to go ahead—and risk the chances. Do you recognise anything Californian in this? Do you see anything in this spirit that has raised California to a State, that has built up her towns, that has dug up her mountains, that has developed her mineral resources, that is a guarantee of her future greatness? I do, Grace, and I can shout, from the sincerity of my heart, God bless California. Heaven protect Californians, for we are of them and with them.

We waited till near sunset before we started



The "Happy Family" at Home.—See page 25.

on our desperate adventure. To add to my own peculiar trials, during the afternoon I was seized with chills and fever, and lay in the shade of a wagon till the fit had passed, and then, with weak and tottering steps, I took my staff, with a little water in my rubber flask, and set out alone in advance of the train. I have told you in another place how I walked till midnight and fell exhausted on the sand, and lay till morning helpless as a child. Of the multitude of perishing animals, whose low moans for water touched my heart, as they sank to earth to rise no more. Of the last long struggle of sixteen miles over the salt plain, to reach the spring in the morning, and of our ultimate success.

I have told you, too, of the woman and the child to whom I gave my last drop of water on that horrid plain of salt; of her devotion to her child; of her maternal tenderness, that I cannot think of even now without the tear-drop rising in my eye; but there is one thing, dear Grace, which I have never told you, and that is the subsequent fate of that woman and her family. To follow up the incidents of our long travel, would make my story too long, and I see, darling, that your eyelids are heavy in spite of that glistening tear, so I'll come to the nub as soon as I can. After we had crossed the sand-plain, and were reposing a day or two in the beautiful valley, just before entering that strange, singular, providential work of Almighty Power, the Thirty-Mile Canon, the Indians made a raid and drove off in the night all the animals belonging to the team of our friend but one, and the family were left without the means of going either backward or forward, and in the heart of a hostile Indian country. Of course they were not left to perish, for as soon as their helpless condition was known, twenty wagons were offered them, and they found no other difficulty in getting forward than that which we all suffered.

On arriving at Lawson's, as there was a general breaking up of companies, and a rush for the mines, they were compelled to remain a month or more before an opportunity occurred for their going to Sacramento,

which they finally accomplished in a boat that was going down after supplies.

November had come; dark, cheerless November. The rain was pouring down in streams one evening, for the rainy season had commenced, and at that time Sacramento was but little better than a city of tents and canvas houses.

It seemed as if the elements had conspired to add to the misery of the unfortunate beings who had dared the perils of the plains to take up their abode in our really beautiful California. It was nearly dark when Captain A——, of the barque ——, which was moored along the bank of the river, was passing from the city on board of his craft, that he heard the sound of a child's voice crying, and of a woman trying to pacify it, and casting his eye one side he discovered on Front street a woman and child, with only an old shawl to protect them from the rain, leaning against a tree. With the true heart of an honest sailor at seeing one in distress, he advanced and exclaimed—"a woman and child—why are you here? why do you not seek a shelter?"

"Alas!" said the poor woman, "we have none—we have just arrived from across the plains. We have no friends—no money—no place to go to. My husband is seeking for a place, and for something for our child to eat, and I am waiting for him." I know how the honest sailor's sympathy was moved; I know how his heart swelled with kindness, as he replied, "Good Heavens, madam, you must not stay here—if you don't die your child will—come—give me the child, and come on board my ship."

"My husband," the poor woman replied. "I cannot leave my husband."

"No—no—he shall go too—you shall not be separated, and you shall stay in welcome till you find a place to live."

It was not long before the husband came, disconsolate and dejected, little dreaming of the good Samaritan who was waiting his arrival in the pitiless storm. Captain A—— took the poor family on board his ship, provided them with immediate comforts, and

finding the poor fellow a really worthy man, interested himself in procuring him a situation. It was not long before they had saved money enough to open a small eating house. I bought a loaf of bread once from the same woman myself. She did not recognise me, and I did not make myself known, or it is quite likely she would not have taken the dollar I paid her for the loaf, but would have applied it to the water account on the plains. I hate thanks. In little over a year, this poor half-starved family had twenty thousand dollars of their own money, earned by honest industry in Sacramento. Wheugh! how it storms—reach me my slippers, Grace, darling,—now kiss me—there—good night, good night.

THE MOUNTAIN STORM.

NINE O'CLOCK.—Charlie is there anything more to do? Any letters of advice to write—any package receipts to draw? any checks? any Post Office slips? any bills of exchange? Is the business of the day all square—nothing but the waybills to make out? Very well—I'll go up into my den, and—if anybody wants me, Charlie, just call me—and, Charlie, it is such a dismal and stormy night, I don't think anybody will be in, so just make out the waybills, put up the books, close the vault, and take your guitar and come up—my soul is thirsty for a little music to-night, so—ah! Charlie, have the crackers and cheese ready for the Messenger when he comes along at two o'clock in the morning, cold, wet and hungry; and, Charlie, let him finish that bottle of wine which Mr. H— so kindly sent me from San Francisco; and, Charlie—confound them girls—don't you hear them calling and scolding—I promised them a story to-night, and I 'spose I sha'n't have a minute's peace till I tell it, so—there, there you little fly-about, be quiet, I'm coming. Now, Mary, take that guitar. You don't get one word out of me till you give me a song. O, you can't? O, you can—bad cold! Pshaw! come, come, it's in tune and so are you, if you'd only think so. I sing? so can a crow as

much—I've music in my soul, that sings sometimes, but it never lets a note out of my lips, and I never heard that I was a singer till that funny reporter of the *Sun* told about my winding up my house-warming with a comic song. Ha! ha! ha! I sing! There, that's a good girl, Grace. Anne, Hattie, be quiet. Give us a song like the weather—a little sunshine, clouds, rain and snow!

I watch'd, but ye saw not; I hop'd, but ye came not near,

Thy step—O I listen'd, its light sound I could not hear;
Then mem'ry with its darker shade overcast the bright sky,

And sad grew my soul as the dew drop rose in my eye.

The deep stream is most silent as it flows calmly on,
While the torrent leaps wildly, tho' its force is soon gone;

So the heart may be suffering, while the face wears a smile,

And the wound may pain deeper than thought can beguile.

The dear birds have their bower, the robin hath its mate,

Lightly bounds the red deer along, regardless of fate;
But solitary is the being who treads life's path alone,
With no sympathising heart he may call all his own.

Exactly so, dear girls, but when you come to the footstep, why, I wear heavy boots with big heels, and you must be very deaf indeed, if you can't hear that I'm coming over the frozen ground.

In the fall of '49, an ever memorable year in the history of California, a portion of the emigration, as I have told you before, came to our beautiful State by the northern or Lawson route. You may, perhaps, recollect that many did not arrive till the latter part of October, or in November, of that year, and were caught in the snow on the ridge between the Big Meadows and the Valley of the Sacramento, and were only rescued from death by the troops and volunteers sent out to meet them, with mule trains and provisions.

Women and helpless children, worn down with suffering and hunger, were taken from the shelter of their wagons amid the deep snows, where they had lain down to die, and brought in, through the driving mountain storms, to a place of comparative safety at



“A Good Hit! Give it to Him, Pete!”—See page 89.

Lawson's, and, in the region of an almost unparalleled rainy season, were finally transported by the kind and provident care of the government and the sympathetic aid of philanthropists, to Sacramento, in boats provided for them. It was a most eventful year for the pioneer, as well as that of the succeeding one of 1850, and there is not a single heart, however successful they may have been in after years, can look back upon their sufferings without awakening a long sad train of reminiscences as they think of their perils, and a feeling of sympathy will arise for those in distress around them. O, girls, would that at that moment some poor unfortunate but worthy being would present himself to the successful emigrant—it would call forth the rich man's sympathy, and open his heart and his purse at the same moment, and his hoarded thousands would soon become a little less in affording that relief which he once received, but which in the midst of affluence and the pride of wealth he has forgotten. I am poor, girls, I always shall be, but if I had the wealth of a —, or a —, no, no—maybe I should forget too, and be just as close and mean as they are—I cannot tell. After leaving the beautiful and luxuriant valley of Pitt River, the road leads over a wild, rough mountain country till we approach the main fork of Feather River. As we descend the mountain a perfect paradise suddenly greets the eye. Through the immense pines, some of which are three hundred feet high, we catch a glimpse of a broad valley, perhaps twenty miles across, and some thirty or forty miles in length, enclosed on all sides by high and broken mountains, and the still crystal stream of the Feather is seen winding its way towards the hills of the south-west, till it is lost in the tall grass which covers the bosom of the valley with a rich carpet of green. Myriads of wild fowl cover its placid waters, and large herds of deer, antelope and elk are quietly grazing in the distance, never dreaming that man is their enemy, till the sharp crack of the rifle brings one of their number to the earth, when, with a few bounds, they stop and turn to see whence the cause of their alarm pro-

ceeded, only to give another chance to the hidden hunter. Girls, beware of hidden foes—you don't know how soon you may fall—start at the first sound of evil, nor stop till you know you are safe. Half a mile from where we enter the valley, a most astonishing scene meets the view. Feather River bursts out from the very base of the mountain at once a river, at least six rods wide, and eight or ten feet deep, and so clear are its waters that a pin could be discovered at the bottom. It is one of the wonders of California. After pursuing its way above ground across the valley, increasing in volume by numerous affluents, it enters the mountains on the south-west, and through a long course of almost impassable canons, it finally finds its way to the plains, and enters the Sacramento at Fremont. But I must not dwell too long on description of scenery, or I shall never get to my story.

Near the middle of October, in '49, on the margin of this beautiful valley, or as it is usually called the Big Meadow, amid a fine cluster of the graceful pines, which grow close to the side, a tent stood a little distance from the road.

Extended on a blanket lay a sick man, and by him sat a weak and weary-looking woman, watching over him with intense interest, as he now and then turned from side to side with pain.

Before the tent, a sad, but bright-eyed young woman, about eighteen, was making a little gruel for the sufferer, by the blazing fire of pine logs. Occasionally she left her employment, and, going with a still tread to the tent, inquired in subdued tones, "Mother, how is father now?" "A little better, I hope, darling—his fever has subsided—he thinks he can eat a little gruel—I hope in a day or two he will be able to go on." The girl made no reply, but with the corner of her apron hastily brushed away a rising tear, and went on with her work.

In a short time the gruel was done, and taken to the sick man. He took a few spoonfuls from the hands of his wife, when he observed, "Jenny, dear, I feel better—I've been very sick, haven't I?" "Yes, John—

but you are better now; you'll soon be able to ride." "God grant it," he responded. "O, Jenny, what would become of you and Clara, if I should die? Oh, I must get well, I—I am very weak, though." "Never mind us, John, we shall get along—don't worry; you are getting better; you'll soon be well; there, try to sleep; you are better, thank God," and the poor stricken woman arose and went out to conceal the emotions of her heart.

"Somebody sick here?" inquired a kind-hearted emigrant, whose soiled garments, unshaven beard of many week's growth, and gaunt and exhausted frame, too well attested that he, too, had been toiling long and wearily towards the promised land, but who had still health and strength and resolution left.

"Yes, my husband has had the mountain fever, but we think he is better. We were induced to leave the Humboldt by false representations, and come this route. After struggling through the sands of the desert and nearly perishing from thirst, we got along as well as others till we reached the Poison Lake, when my husband was taken sick, but with the help of others, we managed to get here, when we had to lay up for his sake."

"I hope he will be able to go on soon," replied the man, "for the season is late, the snow has already commenced falling, and I fear the ridges will soon be impassible. How are your supplies?"

"Nearly gone. We have had nothing but a little flour for the last four days, and there is only three day's supply left of that. I don't know what we shall do when that is gone."

"Indeed, it is a hard case. We will help you all we can, but everybody is out now. If worse comes to worse, you must eat one of your mules."

"Yes, I have thought of that; but if we lose one, the others have hardly strength to draw the wagon, and then there is no hope for us, but on foot through the deep snow."

"Keep a stout heart, madam, we will do our best to help you, we shall get through somehow;" and the poor fellow turned away because he felt that the consolation he was offering was more visionary than reality.

Two days later, a wagon drawn by four sorry-looking mules was seen on the road, driven by a fair girl, just budding into womanhood; while within the wagon lay a weak and emaciated man, reclining in the arms of a woman, who looked herself as if care and anxiety had scarcely left her strength enough to support her own feeble frame. O, woman, woman! of what strength is thy love? Where thy heart is, there is thy heaven also. To thee gold has no value, but for the happiness of him thou lovest, poverty has few pangs, labor no pain, when for him thou endurest. To share his misfortunes; to be his comfort in distress; to soothe his hours of weariness; to nurse him in sickness, is a boon thy own heart cravest, and of such is thy true province on earth. Woman, God bless thee! We are brutes not to love thee better than we do, and strive not more earnestly to make thee happy.

The fierce mountain storms began to rage; deeper and deeper grew the snow, as the trains slowly and painfully made their way over rocks and fallen trees, and now and then a cold, piercing blast, swept through the deep gulches and over the ridge, chilling the warm blood of the laboring emigrants; yet without murmuring, the young girl held the reins and chided the mules along as they half turned aside to avoid the gust and driving snow.

"It's very cold, Jenny," murmured the sick man, "but I'm better." The woman took the blanket which was wrapped around her own shoulders, and spread over the invalid, as she replied, with chattering teeth, "Yes, but only two or three days more—" She did not finish the sentence. That two or three days more might find them all only frozen, inanimate remains of humanity. Night came, but the storm still raged wildly, and the snow was piling still deeper and deeper, till it was almost impossible to move forward. Each one of the wagons took its turn to go forward to break the path, while men were in advance to search for and mark the trail, for the track was now entirely hidden, and they were governed only by the outline of the ground to find a feasible pathway. At length, fatigue



“Get Out of the Way!—Clear the Track!”—See page 83.

as well as darkness precluded all further effort for the time, and the exhausted emigrants gathered around fires, which were kindled with much difficulty, or took to the shelter of their wagons, and strove to forget their own wretchedness and hunger in disordered sleep. It seemed as if morning never would come; but at last faint streaks of light gilded the eastern horizon, and soon the sun arose, bright and beautiful, for that storm was over.

And was there help? The sick man was still better; the women, the wife and daughter were alive, and as they eagerly looked out to see what hope was left them, they saw four mules lying dead in the harness before their wagon. Their animals had perished in the storm, and dropped dead where they stood. Girls, I was told this by an eye-witness, and when the emigrants came in next year, an emigrant told me, that on the ridge, about a day's journey from the Big Meadows, he saw a wagon standing in the road, and the bones of four mules lying in the harness, as they had been left. "Oh," said he, "the road was lined with the bones of animals that had perished; with wagons that had been abandoned, and various implements and bits of goods that had been thrown away, which the Indians had not taken, being of no value to them. I never want to see such a sight again." I am telling no fancy sketch, my dears; there are hundreds in California at this moment who can corroborate my tale.

"I am very hungry, Jenny—is there anything to eat," inquired the sick man. The mother looked at the daughter, the daughter, with tearful eyes, looked at the mother. It was for a moment only. Woman fights the battle first and faints afterwards, and the wife replied: "The flour is all gone, John—there is not an ounce among the trains. There is fresh meat—could you eat a little broth, dear?" "O, yes—it is more nourishing, and my appetite is growing ravenous—Jenny leave a little of the meat in it, for it will do me good." The wife stepped from the wagon, and, with a knife, cut a steak from a quarter of one of the dead mules, and in a little while brought in a basin of broth, and she

smiled as John called it "so good—the beef is excellent," and not only the mother and child partook bountifully of the *beef* broth, but many of the emigrants helped themselves liberally, and pronounced it "excellent." "Why, girls, you need not pucker up your pretty lips—I've ate mule beef when there was really no necessity for it, and hang me if it isn't better and more agreeable to the palate than buffalo meat—that is, if the mule is not too old and too poor, and especially if the buffalo is an old bull.

I could tell you of the individual suffering of many others on that route at the same time, but I have selected this wagon from among many others, and shall confine myself to this text principally. The snow was nearly four feet deep when the road was level, but in hollows and ravines where it had drifted, it was frequently ten. Although the morning broke clear and beautiful, by ten o'clock the sky was again obscured by clouds, and in an hour another storm was raging with equal fury, so sudden are the winter blasts of the mountains. Consultations were held among the emigrants as to the best course to pursue.

The distance to Lawson's was between thirty and forty miles. Nearly all the animals had famished, provisions were about exhausted, indeed many had been living for two days on the dead carcasses of their worn-out animals, and when this miserable subterfuge was exhausted, there was nothing left but to yield their own bodies to the wolves and wild animals of the mountains. It was an act of desperation, but the only chance seemed to be for some of the stronger and most hardy men to make an attempt to get through, and, if possible, procure assistance. It was then only hope—death was certain, to remain where they were—it could be no more if they did not succeed. The attempt was made. My informant says he was one of two men, who started alone. Their provisions were only a loaf of bread, the remains of their last flour, and a little meat cut from the haunches of a dead ox. It was near night when by infinite exertion they had made about five miles, that they reached a wagon, in which was two

women and a small child. The child was crying for food, and the women assured them that they had given all to the child, and they had not tasted food themselves for two days. By the utmost exertion these men could only hope to reach the settlement in two days, yet with a kindness of heart, paralleled only in the settlement of California, they gave their last loaf, and divided their meat with these weak and helpless ones, and at early dawn they again commenced their desperate journey. "Why," I asked, "could you hope to get through with nothing to eat yourselves?"

"It did look a little dubious," he replied, "but you know we could not see the women and child starve, and we thought we might get through; so we did, but it was a tight squeeze."

As they proceeded down towards the valley they found the snow less and less, when they arrived to where there was little or none, his companion fell to the ground and declared his inability to proceed. But rumors of the distress of the emigrants had reached the settlements, besides people knew by intuition what must be their fate, and had already started relief trains for their rescue. Our heroic informant met them and urged them on, and his companion was saved, and so were all the others except two or three women and children, who became too weak, and nature yielded to fatigue and long suffering.

It was about the middle of the second day when despair began to seize the hearts of all, and even the anxiety of the mother and daughter could scarcely be concealed from the feeble husband and father, that a rumor passed from mouth to mouth that succor was at hand. Their heavy eyes now sparkled with hope; their hearts beat high, and their pulses throbbed quick as the rumor reached their ears. Their gaze was strained towards the pathway to the valley. Could it be possible—should they be saved. Soon a glad shout was raised—"they are coming, they are coming! O, God we are saved;" and as the long white train, well laden with provisions, appeared rising over a hill, as it made its way towards them, the welkin rang with

loud shouts of joy, and the mother and daughter, overcome by emotion, with tears streaming down their cheeks—as mine do at this instant—knelt before Heaven and offered their warm and heartfelt thanks to Almighty God for their preservation amid the perils of the mountain storm. Good night, my darlings—don't tell anybody that you saw the old man cry.

DRUNKEN ASHLEY.

A REMINISCENCE OF OHIO.

SAY, my lad, have you got a wife? Just a nice, pretty, tidy little body, who laughs so merrily when you'll let her; who puckers up her lips so sweetly when she puts her arm around your neck to kiss you, when you come home, tired and hungry, from labor at evening, and then bustles about so cheerily and sets the supper before you, cooked to a T., and warm as her own heart, to make you feel comfortable and happy? One that, when you are in trouble, sits down on your knee with her arm on your shoulder, and looking in your face as if her love could and should dispel the clouds of anxiety, and cheer you up with kind and courageous words to battle on with the world, and assures you victory? One that tells you when rent-day is near, or a debt coming due in hard times, "O, John, we'll make it out; let the silk dress go this quarter; I'll wear the calico still, and I'll put new lining into your coat, sew on new buttons and brush it up, so that it will be plenty good enough to go to church in; don't mind, dear, we'll make it out;"—mind, John, she says *we*, not *you*. If you have such a wife, just throw both arms around her waist, draw her to your bosom, and cherish her there as if she was a part of yourself, and with a smack that can be heard across the street, throw care to the dogs, for you will get along. Then tell the world to go to the d—l, and her, that "whither thou goest I will go; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

Don't think, because you are in California, it is right to break her heart by neglect, or in running after strange women, or in trying



“Thou Brute; thou Old Fool—Whoa?”—See page 35.

to find a happier resort than your own fire-side. Do your part to make your own home happy, and my word for it, she will do hers. Don't fret, don't scold, particularly on washing day; but see that there is plenty of wood cut, water handy, meat in the barrel and flour in the store-room; and then try your luck under your own roof and not at the monte table. Don't make a fool of yourself as Ashley C—— did, even if you don't come out at the little end of the horn at last.

In my earlier years I was a "counter jumper," in Ohio, and Ashley C—— was a customer of mine. He was as generous, industrious, good-hearted young fellow as you ever saw; had a new farm that he was clearing up, a nice little wife, whom he thought he should make happy, for he thought a world of her, and so did she of him.

It was before the days of Temperance Societies, and every farmer thought he could'n't get along without a jug of whisky always on hand for his men, and a dram—for himself; and it too often happened that he would drink with his men for sociability, and by himself because it was his prerogative—being boss.

Well, I lived in a sort of an out of the way place — a four corners, where there was a blacksmith shop, a tavern, an empty school-house, and near by a distillery, where they boasted of making whisky at hydrometer proof, but I'll be hanged if we ever could buy any that was not fifteen per cent. below. Even their high wines or pure spirit wouldn't pay transportation to New York, and I finally gave up sending whisky there, as it wouldn't pay. One thing, however, was a fact—you could get drunk on it by drinking enough, and if you doubt me, I just refer to old—no I wont, either, for he's dead. One night he was going home drunk—too drunk to walk, just like some of our California knobs: so he squatted down behind some bushes, when he was mistaken in the shades of night for a bear, by a party passing along the road. Thinking him game, they up with a rifle and put a bullet through his heart—shot him so dead that he could'n't kick—a

lesson to you, my friend. Don't get so drunk as to squat. Squatting is bad business in Ohio or in Frisco. You might get shot!

Ashley was one of my best customers, and the old brown jug, holding just two gallons—I knew the size so well at last that I never measured it, but just put it under the tap and let the liquor run—that jug used to come four miles just twice a week to be filled, and Ashley never disputed the bill. He was looked upon as a thriving young man; but bye-and-bye it began to be whispered that Ashley C—— drank too much sometimes, and was cross to his wife, that nice little wife of his. It ran along for months, and he became intoxicated where he only got merry; and, besides letting his fences get down and neglecting his affairs, he scolded and fretted till his little wife's temper was sorely tried, and she couldn't help scolding too; and when at last it was announced that Ashley C—— had whipped his wife, the neighbors had to interfere, and soon after that, at one time, he became so outrageous that she—that nice little wife of his, whom he was once determined to make so happy—had to fly for life with the baby—what a pretty one she had, with its cherry lips and laughing eyes, just like father and mother both. In short, Ashley C——'s draws from that old brown jug of whisky, fifteen per cent. below proof hydrometer, had done the job, and made him a besotted drunkard on the high road to ruin, which was leading him fast down to the pigs in the gutter, as you can see men about town now, who had as high aspirations, as pretty a wife, as nice a baby, for aught I know, before they went from "champagne" to "white eye," and from a dress coat, paid for, to no coat, tattered pants, and hole-y shirt, begged or stolen. Nobody would trust him, nobody had any confidence in him, and his farm was mortgaged a round sum for whisky debts. Poor devil!

After trying whisky corners two or three years, I found myself nearly cornered in business, and concluded to dodge before it was too late; so I closed up my matters before the Sheriff was called in to close 'em up for

me, and got ready to emigrate west. I was for the time being staying at another whisky town (then, but changed since,) about ten miles distant, where there was another hydrometer distillery in full blast, on the bank of a river. Water was handy there to make whisky drinkable in large quantities. I was standing one day on the bridge over the river, where the water was very deep, when a fellow, three sheets in the wind, came staggering up to me, whom I recognized as Ashley C—. Of course we were rejoiced to see each other, especially he, as he was just drunk enough. Throwing his arms around me, he swore I was the best man in the world, except himself—(I couldn't drink quite as much as he could, that's a fact.)

He liked me so well he could die for me; he should like to die for me; he would die with me. "Come, come," he shouted, with impassioned impulse, "let us die!" In a moment he became frantic, and seizing me in his arms, (and I seemed to be of no weight, for he raised me like a child,) he shouted—"We'll drown—we'll drown"—and made toward the end of the plank. Resistance was in vain. He was a perfect madman, and on the impulse of the moment he would have plunged with me into the deep stream, where we should, in all probability, have both perished. I can't tell why it was, but at the moment I felt perfectly calm, while at the same time I was conscious of the futility of using any argument with a madman, and yet a thought passed through my mind to divert his attention till I could extricate myself from his grasp. "Ashley," says I, "hold a moment; I had as lief drown with you as any man, but don't you see that if we jump into the river we shall get wet only on the outside? Let us go into the distillery, take a little whisky, and wet the inside first, and then we can jump into the river and have both the outside and inside of our skins wet at the same time." "Ha! ha! ha! so we can," laughed he in perfect phrenzy—"I didn't think of that—come on, then," he shouted, dropping me from his grasp; "drink first, and drown afterwards; ha! ha! ha!

come on, come on! ha! ha! ha!" and with lengthened strides he made for the door of the distillery. On reaching the door, he entered, calling for whisky, while I slipped one side out of his way, and was safe. Shortly after he found I was gone he seized an axe in his rage, swearing he would kill somebody, and ran after a gentleman standing near, who only escaped by running into the mill at hand, and locking the door behind him. It was not long before the effect of the liquor he had drank made him stupid, and he sank down a helpless, puling, loathsome wretch—a drunkard in the gutter. Poor, miserable devil! And the sorrowing little wife and innocent blue-eyed child at home! God help them, and keep their hearts whole; is there any comfort for them in their extremity? *Is there a God in Heaven?*

I had been a citizen of Indiana five or six years, when I once more visited the little town of P—, where I had many friends. I found it much changed. It had become a pretty village; the old distillery had long been destroyed. In fact, nothing but the old foundation remained to mark its site. Even that has now long since disappeared. The town had become perfectly renovated in morals, and a pretty church raised its spire heavenward, while, instead of the discordant notes of drunken revelry, on Sabbath morn, the cheerful sound of its clear toned bell announces the hour of worship of the Almighty. The whole country had changed in appearance so much that I could hardly identify it. Beautiful farms had been opened, fine houses built, and in various places new churches announced that a different feeling existed in the community. A few days were spent delightfully in social intercourse with my friends, and when I got ready to return a gentleman took me in his carriage to drive me to Cleveland, where I was to take the steamer. We were passing through the town of A—, once a den of corruption, but now a fine township, with a population exemplary in their habits, and I was speaking of the change to my friend, when directly we came in view of a neat country church. "Yes," replied he, "the



"We Have Just Arrived from Across the Plains."—See page 45.

change has been indeed great. Do you remember Ashley C——, and the time he was about jumping off the bridge with you, and who afterwards tried to kill me with an axe?"

"Perfectly," I responded; "what ever became of the wretch—though he is dead, I suppose, for he could not live long, miserable drunkard that he was."

"Ashley C—— is not dead," replied my friend, "and that was his last drunken frolic. When told of his conduct, on coming to his senses, it produced such an effect upon him, that he swore he would never drink another drop. He kept his vow. In a short time he became pious, a good and happy man, worked steadily, and paid off the mortgage on his farm, with the help of his industrious and prudent little wife, became a prominent man in the township, and," said he, with emphasis, pointing at the church, "Ashley C——, that wild, dissolute, worthless Ashley C——, as you knew him, is at this moment the beloved Pastor of that Church!"

A PERIL OF THE PLAINS.

SACRAMENTO!—beautiful Sacramento, City of the Plains, a gem of California. Without ostentation thou hast risen to greatness, and though overwhelmed by repeated misfortune, thou hast struggled through, and thy days of sore trial, when flood and fire prostrated thee to earth, have yielded to thy indomitable perseverance, and success has crowned thy effort. Thou hast checked the overflow of the mighty waters, and driven them back to their legitimate channel; from the few canvas tents, which six years ago alone marked thy site, thou hast gilded thy fair streets with palaces, rich in architectural design, and massive in strength; thy wastes, which but a few short years ago were covered with tangled vines and gnarled and impervious chapparal, are now smiling with beautiful gardens, fragrant with sweet odors, or green with delightful shrubbery. Though thou hast felt the curse of reckless men, who rioted in dissipation, that bane of California, the steeples of thy

churches pointing heavenward, and the crowds that weekly assemble within their sacred precincts, proclaim that the "still small voice" is heard, and is being felt as well as heard, till it is now no longer reputable to be an inmate of a gambling saloon, and vice and immorality are driven from the public gaze to seek refuge in obscure corners and by-places, instead of raising its shameless front in open day, to call forth the blush of shame to the cheek of the good and virtuous.

O, Sacramento—thou hast improved the elements of greatness, and I may well add of beauty, by which thou art surrounded, and if thou but continue as thou hast begun, the energy of thy people, the indomitable perseverance of thy citizens will make thee respected at home, and renowned abroad, till the measure of thy glory and greatness is full. Heaven prosper thee. I love thee, Sacramento—I love thy people—some of 'em in particular anyhow—and how the deuce you contrived to pick up so many good, clever, nice, intelligent, fascinating, sociable specimens of humanity—I can account for in only two ways, the beauty of thy location and thy peculiar local advantages for making money. To the latter, some cynical individuals would attribute the main cause. No matter how—you've got 'em, and ——, I've just rubbed my hand on my bald pate, and taken a look in the glass at the wrinkles in my face, that my new fledged whiskers do not hide. If I knew any of your beautiful ladies whom I've heard so much about, I don't doubt for a moment I should fall in love with 'em at the first glance, old whittled Block as I am. So don't offer me the temptation, for alas! dear Sacramento, I am mortal.

I shall never forget the first day I made my *debut* in Sacramento, about the last of September, 1849. I had just arrived from across the plains, and think I must have looked older then than now, with six years piled upon my back. I wont describe my dress, but I know I had a piece of a hat on, and one leg had a piece of a boot. I stopped in the outskirts of the city, where is now about 107 J street. I had been rioting and "feasting sumptuously

every day" for the four weeks previous, on hard pilot bread "and nothing else," when my eye caught the sight of a pork-barrel in a small grocery. It was too much for human nature to withstand. I told you I was mortal—so my hand dived into my pocket, when, after prospecting awhile, it found just four dollars, and with it I dived—not into the barrel, but into the grocery, and soon became the delighted owner of a pound of pork, a loaf of bread, a sprinkle of butter, a little coffee and sugar—perfect luxuries, and thirty minutes found me enjoying a sumptuous meal under one of the oaks that the woodman has not spared. It does not take much in this world to make us happy if we will be content with what we have and can get, but ah! pride and the effect of example often ruin us. I was not exempt, and came near being ruined. It had been long since I had had such a feast—I was now full and happy. Mark the consequences—I was not content to let well enough alone, but grew aristocratic beyond my means. I had not slept beneath a roof for many months, and I had found the bedroom of the Almighty sufficiently comfortable and roomy, but now I thought I would indulge in luxuries, so at night I spread my blanket on the ground beneath the roof of a vacant, untenanted canvas house. I was not troubled with indigestion nor bad dreams, but when I arose in the morning, a monster greeted my eyes and demanded four bits for the privilege of sleeping in his house.

It appeared that he was up to snuff, and I was a fledgeling that he caught napping, so I reduced my funds on hand to two dollars, by paying him four bits for the use of five feet six of his enclosure, and thenceforth took up lodgings with a kind and beneficent Providence, with whom I fear I have not fully settled yet. But I thanked my Heavenly Lord more for his kindness than I did my landlord.

It was on the 18th of June, 1849, that a long train of emigrant wagons were seen slowly winding their way along the south bank of the North Platte, in the long and arduous

journey towards the El Dorado of the Pacific. For weeks they had been toiling over hill and plain, patiently yet surely lessening, with each day's sun, the distance to the haven of their hopes, and thus increasing the span from the home and friends of a civilized clime. Although the journey had become monotonous with its daily repetition of almost unvaried toil, yet hope was buoyant as ever, the goal was still before them a long distance, and the grand object of their experiment was yet to be reached, and so "hope kept the heart whole." It was a strange, wild country. On the south, bristling above the narrow valley of the Platte, the Black Hills arose in the distance like an immense, gloomy wall, to shut out a last view of home, with its endearing associations, while the plateaux between the ridge and the river valley presented a strange combination of cones, dykes, and huge mound-like pyramids, with their tops apparently smoothly cut off, while scattered around in places were vast deposits of lime, of ochre, and various decomposed mineral substances, strange to the eye, and curious to behold. Swiftly, between its earthy and crumbling banks, the turbid and alkaline waters of the Platte rolled along, to mix its gray flood with the Father of Rivers, and the weary emigrant, as he looked down upon it, sighed to think that it alone was the only moving thing that was directed towards the home of his heart, and the dear ones he had left behind. The emigrants were seeking a place where they could cross the river and gain the north bank, to leave it forever. The only means which presented itself was by rafts, which might be made of the cottonwoods which sparsely lined the low places along the river banks, for except these there was little or no vegetation in that desolate region, save upon the southern mountain many miles distant.

To form a raft would require many trees of sufficient capacity to sustain the weight of a wagon, and though it might answer for a while, it would soon be water-logged, and become unweildy and dangerous, and too slow to pass over the hourly increasing



“Their Animals had Perished in the Storm.”—See page 53.

numbers who were approaching the spot where a ferry might be made, and a long detention might be the consequence, where supplies could not be obtained, and where provisions should be husbanded with care, for the journey of many weeks was before them, in an almost unknown country. It was with these considerations that a party of emigrants had stopped at a feasible point for crossing, and were discussing the best mode of effecting a passage. Among them was a young Scotchman, whom I shall call Wilson, who was emigrating with an interesting family, consisting of a wife and two children, a boy of about seven years of age, and a beautiful little girl, perhaps two years younger. But a year before he came to New Orleans with his family, from Scotland, and when the gold excitement was at its height he took the fever, and determined to seek his fortune on the shores of the Pacific.

They had reached this point without suffering, and with nothing to mar the pleasure of the journey, save the daily routine of weary travel and the standing guard at night, to protect their property from predatory bands of thieving Indians, and they were still fresh and vigorous. It had been the intention of Mr. Wilson to go to Sutter's Fort, for Sacramento was not known to be in existence by the emigrants; and, indeed, when they started from home for California, Sacramento City had really no "local habitation nor a name;" but before they reached the summit of the snowy mountains, a city had sprung into existence, with its thousands of inhabitants, its millions of merchandise, and with almost the same rapidity as with the changes of the magician's wand, the city resounded to the echo of the busy laborer, the streets were crowded with trains seeking supplies for the mines, and the dark hulls of many ships which had breasted the waves around the stormy Cape, lay snugly moored along the banks of the Sacramento, laden with merchandise to supply the wants of thousands of gold-seekers in California, of which this was the mart—second, as it still is, only to its Bay Sister—San Francisco.

With an eye to the art of money-making, in which the bonny Scots are no way behind the shrewd Yankee, Wilson saw the advantage of establishing a ferry, and by remaining a few days he justly thought an honest penny might be turned, even in that barren region. He had an excellent fit-out for a journey across the plains; a good wagon and four strong mules, besides an extra one for riding, with a bountiful supply of provisions, which his provident care provided for his family, and he determined to go into the speculation. In order to lose no time, he determined to send his family on in the care of a young man, whom he had engaged to assist him on his journey; and, as they were associated with an excellent company, who promised to render them any needful assistance, he felt quite easy with regard to their safety, and he at once acted upon his resolution. He sent them on with a promise of overtaking them in a week or ten days, and then went resolutely to work felling the cotton-wood on the bank, and, assisted by others, soon had three canoes formed, which, lashed together, made a float of sufficient capacity to sustain the weight of a loaded wagon. Ropes were fastened to each end, and by these means this primitive ferry-boat was drawn back and forth; and as the charge was five dollars for every wagon, he was rapidly making money, for the crowd of emigrants was hourly increasing, and it soon became necessary to make application one or two days in advance for the privilege of crossing, while the boat was kept constantly going day and night. It was during this state of things that my train arrived, and seeing the doubtful chance of getting over, we were induced to build a raft at a point below, on which we crossed safely, thereby saving some days' time. To secure the services of two young men in his train, Wilson offered them a share of his earnings, which they accepted and remained with him.

In the meantime his family went on with hopeful hearts, feeling sure that a few days at most would reunite them. A week passed thus, and the wife and mother began to think she should soon see her husband. At length,

ten days rolled around, and anxiously she looked back to see if George was coming. The hours began to roll tediously along, the distance was each moment increasing. Another day passed and he did not come up with the train. The twelfth was at its close, still George was not there. Why does he stay, was her anxious thought. Thirteen, fourteen, he does not come. What has happened? About noon of the fifteenth day, the two young men who had been engaged with him rode up to the last wagon of the train, and answered the anxious inquiries of Wilson's friends, that they had done well, that Wilson had remained one day behind them to close a sale of his boats, and that he would follow and, without doubt, be up with them by the next day.

They seemed to be in a hurry to proceed, and instead of answering all inquiries, gave as a reason that they must reach a certain point that evening, but gave the assurance that Wilson would be up by evening of the next day. They rode on, but instead of stopping at Mrs. Wilson's wagon to give her tidings of her husband, they rode hastily by, without even looking into the folds of its weather-beaten cover. As they were sitting at their frugal meal by the camp fire that evening, the little boy inquired, "Mother, why don't father come? what makes him stay so long?" "Father will be here to-morrow, Johnny," responded the mother, putting back his light hair, "to-morrow we shall see him."

"O, father is coming to-morrow," echoed little Alice, "and I'll kiss his eyes out—I'll put my arms about his neck, and—and"—and because father was not there the wee thing threw her tiny arms about her mother and gave the kiss that was father's due. "Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Johnny, with childish glee, "I'll pull father's long beard, for he's a naughty boy to stay so long."

"Come children, it is time you were in bed, so climb into the wagon and let me hear you say your prayers, for to-morrow father is coming and we'll all be happy then," said Mrs. Wilson, as she lifted the little ones into their snug but close quarters. Listen to that

artless sound, which got its first impulse in the land of the "Cotter's Saturday Night," and which now broke the stillness of the mighty desert of the west. "Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name, bless father and mother, and Johnny and Alice, and make us happy to-morrow, and thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. Amen."

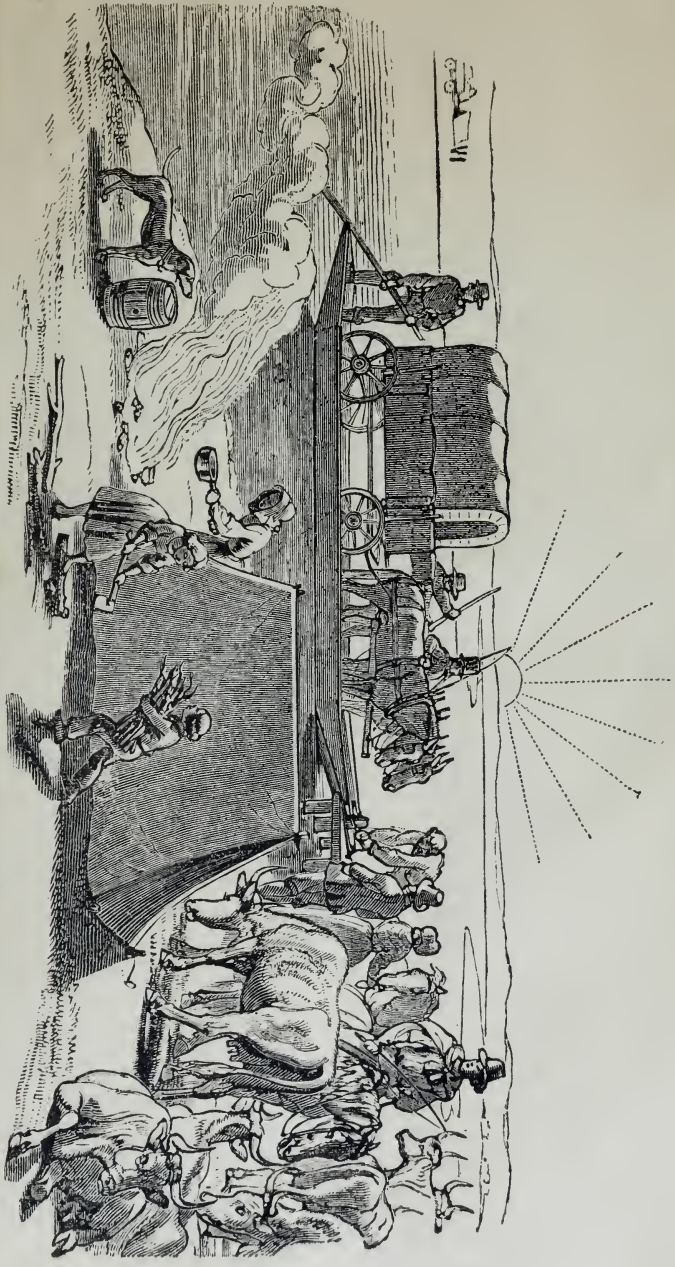
"Good night, good night, my darling—a kiss for each—father is coming to-morrow, we'll be so happy now."

Slowly rolled the wagon along on the happy day which was to unite their loving hearts, and every moment their eyes were strained to catch the first glimpse of the absent one. Wearily time sped onward, and the sun marked the meridian. Night began to cast its sable mantle over the earth, but George came not.

"Why don't father come!" was repeated oft by the expecting little ones—"I want to see father before I go to sleep," and the children wept. "Go to sleep darlings, I'll wake you when he comes," replied the hoping mother; and they slept and were not awakened for the father came not that night. "Where's father?" cried the wee ones as they opened their eyes at early dawn, with hearts of joyful expectation. "Where's father?" was the response of the mother's heart, though the words were not uttered. Alas! where was he. The day passed—another—another—he came not—he never came! The train halted for days. Messengers were sent back to make inquiries, and returned. No tidings of George Wilson ever came, and when at length it became absolutely necessary for the train to move forward, slowly and painfully the conviction was forced upon Mrs. Wilson, that her husband was dead. Gracious Heaven! murdered! and by whom?

"O, thou Father of the widow and the orphan, look down in mercy now. Protect these helpless ones in their great peril, and bind the wounds of a broken heart. Give them strength in their utmost need to bear this heavy dispensation of thy Providence."

Poor unhappy mother, may God protect thee now. Alone in the wilderness, with the



Pioneer Ferry on Platte River.—See page 62.

care of thy helpless ones, separated from civilized life by many, many hundred miles, with no friend to counsel with, to whom thy whole heart may be opened, a stranger indeed in a strange land, without money or scrip in thy purse, with still a long, heavy and perilous journey before thee, and even at its close with scarcely a hope of relief. What wilt thou do—who can assuage thy agony of thought? Ah! days and weeks passed thus, but at length a “still, small voice” was heard and heeded, “Put thy trust in God,” and hope soothed the widow’s heart. “Put thy hope in God and he will buckle on the armor of strength,” and he raised friends for the widow and the fatherless. There were kind-hearted men in the train who nobly did their whole duty, and the stricken family reached Sacramento in safety.

IN the fall of 1850, on the corner of — and J streets, in Sacramento, stood a canvas house, with a sign that indicated that “washing and ironing” was done there, and before the door two young children, a boy and girl, were playing together in erecting a tiny house with sticks. A stranger stopped to observe their artless innocence, and to admire their healthful beauty. “I don’t want to build any more houses,” exclaimed the little boy, with half impatience—“Let’s play boat—this is the river.” As he drew a long line on the ground, and tying a string to a stick he added—“This is my boat—now this is the wagon.” The little girl raised her blue eyes, and a tear glistened as she spoke—“O, Johnny, Johnny, don’t play boat, you know father”—the boy stopped instantly, a sadness came over them, and they walked slowly into the house.

The stranger learned their story, and, strange to say, he had seen the father once in the boat on the Platte.

I wish I could end my tale happily, but truth compels me otherwise. The mother, by industry and economy, had accumulated a comfortable sum of money, and was beginning to think of going back to dear Auld Scotia, to end her remaining years with a blessing on Sacramento, which had rewarded

her exertions, when she was taken with fever which closed her earthly career, in a few days—and the children? Why, my dears, a kind friend sent them safely back to their mother’s relatives, where they probably are at this moment.

THE PHANTOM COURT, OR A TRIP TO SPIRIT LAND.

DID you ever go to the Spirit Land? Did your soul ever commune with the spirits of the departed—beings of another sphere? No! Mine has, and while I am a medium to communicate what I saw in another world, I cannot forbear saying that although I must fulfill my mission, the wealth of the world nor the honors attached, would ever induce me to go into another table-tipping operation voluntarily on this side of the world I visited. What a sad commentary on the splendor of wealth, the dignity of office, the love of power, is the winding sheet of death, the sunken and closed eye, the rigid limbs, just lowered into the charnel house of mortality. Be it a Napoleon or a Bigler, a Demosthenes or a Weller, a Sampson or a Broderick, it is all the same in death; a sepulcher of bones not to be distinguished from the veriest beggar who, in life, ate the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table, and all their honors, which in life delighted their senses, are resolved into the immortal Falstaff’s just conclusion, “an empty sound.”

It was a quiet Sabbath day when Benton’s gong sounded for dinner, (curse the gongs—I wonder they ever got into fashion,) and with about fifty others I sat down to the table. The first course, of course, was soup—oyster soup—always oyster soup on Sunday. Now, I am fond of oyster soup when there are plenty of oysters and but little gravy, but when the gravy is all milk and water, and no oysters, I prefer clam pie, and—I hate clams. It doesn’t matter to you, dear reader, what our second and third courses were, but the “Lager” was good, and eating creates thirst, and thirst creates a desire for fluid, and fluid helps digestion—but I’m not on phrenology

now. After dinner I went into my quiet, snug little room, in the stern of my office, and, opening my portfolio, I took half a quire of paper, and was soon deeply engaged in writing. I was soon lost to all the external world; I was completely absorbed in my subject, and I am not able to say at this moment whether lager beer is intoxicating or not, and respectfully leave that matter wholly to legal investigation.

While thus intently engaged, I was suddenly startled by a terrific—mew! raising my head, I saw sitting on one corner of my table a monstrous big black cat. "The d—l!" I exclaimed, involuntarily dropping my pen, and looking the animal in the face. "Yes," said the cat, in as broad English as the Queen of the English language could have articulated herself. In utter astonishment I asked—"What do you want?" "You." "Me!" "Yes!" "Who sent you after me?" I inquired with trepidation, for to tell you the truth, my heart beat like a sledge hammer.

"Your masters," replied the cat sententiously.

"Who—Wells, Fargo & Co.? I didn't know they had any messengers on this route. They've been talking about putting one on, but you are the last messenger, I should think, they'd employ."

If a cat ever grinned a smile that old cat attempted one—he showed his teeth anyhow. "I'm a messenger from a higher power than any earthly express," rejoined the cat, composing his countenance. "You are wanted up there," he said, with a significant motion of his fore paw.

"I—I—didn't know before that a regular organized Express Company had started to run between California and—and—he—I mean the Spirit Land. What is the capital stock! How many shares? How many directors?" I asked quite innocently.

"I can't stay to answer questions," he replied, tartly. "Come, I'm in a hurry."

"Why," said I, "I can't leave my business here. I'm satisfied where I am, and another thing, I don't think it honorable or just to

leave old employers without giving due notice—I must have time."

"No, you must go now," and the cat frowned awfully, and gave a most unearthly "Mew! Wough!"

"Why, who'd attend to business in my absence, if I leave?"

"Charlie Haskell, you fool, and he'll do it up so that your earthly employers will never feel your absence, only by business being better done than usual. Come—there's no dodging—you must go."

"Well—if I must, I must"—but wishing to gain a little time before starting off into an unexplored country without some preparation, I asked, "Who's the head of your concern up there?"

"You'll know soon enough," he tartly replied, and raising his paws and showing his long nails, with a most menacing attitude, "Come, are you ready?" "Why, if there's no backing out, I—I s'pose I may as well go now as any time." I resolutely closed my portfolio, laid down my pen, and run my fingers through my hair.

"Good," said the cat; "open that window." I arose and quietly did his bidding. There was a strong smell of sulphur in the room. I felt in my pocket to see if a piece of brimstone had by any accident got in. "Now get on my back." "Your back?" said I, in astonishment; "I ride a cat out of this world into he—another one? You aint big enough; I shall *squash* you into jelly."

He actually gave a broad "Humph," and began to swell till he was as large as a mastiff. "Now try it—get on," and he came alongside handsomely. I had to do it, my dear friend; if you had been in my place you would have had to have done the same. You couldn't have helped yourself. I raised my right leg, "Stop!" said the cat, "mount with the left leg." "Why that will bring my face to your tail." "Exactly," said the cat. "You must have something to hold on by, for I travel pretty fast." I got on with some misgivings, and thinking what Wells, Fargo & Co. would think of my going off

so without leave of absence. I hadn't time even to speak to Charlie.

The cat raised his tail. "Catch hold of it," said he; "hold tight;" and in an instant I was leaving this world on a black cat's back, with my face towards his tail, and rushing through space like a streak of lightning through a thunder cloud.

I can't tell how long we were on the way, nor what the distance was, for time and space seemed to be annihilated; but in less time than it takes to write this, I found myself in a most delightful region, apparently without any inhabitants, yet the most harmonious sounds of music from invisible beings reached my ears. Soft, sweet æolian notes seemed borne along by gentle zephyrs in beautiful symphony, and voices swelled the song with thrilling harmony. My soul seemed filled with pleasure and rejoicing, and yet I could not tell why. I felt charmed, delighted, happy. Suddenly we stopped before an immense walled castle, built of the purest alabaster. The massive gates (and there were several) were of solid gold, the keys of which were made from single diamonds, while the columns and fresco work on each side were of shining platina. I observed over one of the gates, in brilliant letters, a sign in English characters, "Entrance for Males." A little beyond was a similar gate, with the words, "Entrance for Females." I looked in vain for a "letter box," but discovered none. The gate to which we came was guarded by a singular looking porter, with a head like a miner, from whose chin a reverend and ancient beard hung down to his breast, while, instead of legs and feet, he had a tail like a mermaid. As we stopped at the portals of this magnificent building, my cat spoke to me—"Get off." I slid gracefully from his back, and thrusting my hands into my pockets, observed, "Had a fine passage; hope you was not overloaded with freight; fine establishment you have here; must be doing a smashing business to make it pay." My conductor did not condescend to answer me, but turning to the catfish porter, briefly observed, "Announce the arrival of Old Block." Taking

up a sledge hammer, and striking the gate three times, a wicket was opened, and the face of an inside guardian appeared, between whom and the porter a brief colloquy ensued, when I heard the words, "Poke him through the wicket, can't take the trouble to open the door for him," when I was seized by the porter as if I had been made of straw, and squeezed through a hole scarcely big enough to force a small sized cat through. It was, indeed, a tight squeeze, and it seemed as if my skin was peeling off; but they got me in. Once in, a most singular scene met my view. I found myself in a large court, filled with a multitude of human beings. In the background was the most noble palace which the imagination can conceive, built of gold and silver, with single diamonds for windows, and presenting a combination of architecture which no human mind could unite. It was splendid beyond description. Immediately in front was a throne of cornelian, over which was a canopy of transparent light. Seated on the throne was a venerable looking man, who I at once recognized as the Judge, and over his head was emblazoned in burning letters of fire, the awful name of

"EDMONDS."

Near him on the right, and seated at a desk by himself, I saw another plain but amiable looking individual, with a pen behind his ear and a telescope in his hand, which he frequently used in looking at the Judge, occasionally taking notes; indeed, he seemed to be a kind of censor over the Judge, for I could not help observing that the judge, with all his power, was sometimes exceedingly annoyed when that telescope was brought to bear on him, and he actually winced under it. Over this personage's head, in bright characters, was written

"EWER."

On the left of the throne, and a little removed from it, was what I thought the criminals' box, for it was pretty well filled with an anxious-looking crowd, among whom I recognized several acquaintances, and I felt certain, from their career on earth, that they must have been brought up for trial. Adjoining

the criminals' box was what appeared to be a liquor or coffee stand, for it bore the sign of

"Phoenix Bitters—One bit a glass.

SQUIBBOB, PROPRIETOR."

And on looking inside, there stood behind the counter the veritable Squibbob himself, with his coat off, his shirt sleeves rolled up, his hair rather awry, with a merry twinkle in his blue eye, with his round, happy countenance, beaming with his own bright thoughts, as he dealt out his incomparable bitters to the multitude who waited to be served, and I couldn't help thinking that whether on earth or in the spirit land he fulfilled his mission with the spirit of a wit or the grace of an experienced bar-keeper, to perfection.

Leading from the gate to the throne was a broad aisle, fenced on each side by rays of light of the most gorgeous colors of the rainbow, over which no spirit could pass without permission from the Judge. That portion on the right of the throne was filled with a multitude of beings, bright, beautiful and happy, while those on the left were dirty and ragged in the extreme, with bloated faces, bunged eyes, spitting tobacco juice or smoking old stubs of pipes, begging for bitters, or quarreling for straws, showing that they evidently belonged to the great unwashed scavengers of creation. As a new comer appeared within the gate, they greeted him with groans or shouts of derision, and asked him to treat if he wished to join their crowd; while the beautiful beings on the other side beckoned him on with, "Truth will prevail; honesty of purpose fears not derision." As I came head first into their presence, I was saluted from the left with—

"Old Block—huzzah! Come at last. Your chips wont pass for even shavings here. What's the price of lager now below? Walk up to the Captain's office and settle; we're waiting for you; nothing less than a bottle!"

As I approached the throne I was duly announced, when the Judge put on his spectacles, and staring at me a moment, observed: "Small potatoes to make such a fuss about—put him in a corner, ready for the sprouts—we'll dispatch him in turn." I was then seated

and had an opportunity to gaze about a little more at leisure.

I soon discovered that instead of an express office, I was in a high court room, and that instead of being employed as an agent I was a criminal brought up for trial. On the left, I saw booths ranged around, which appeared to be offices. I read, variously—"Banking; gold dust cleaned and sold—by I. C. Woods & Co.;" "Lumber and city scrip for sale—money loaned on good security—Saunders, Meiggs & Co.;" "Insurance against steam-boat explosions; fare for (I couldn't make out where,) reduced; Savings Banks, all deposits retained at sight—Wright, Robinson & Co."

Soon the Judge raised a stone mallet, struck a huge gong that sent its infernal echoes through the furthest corner of the ear—indeed, I feel a ringing sensation yet—and called out: "Tom, open the Court, we'll proceed to business." In a moment the cat flew among the great unwashed, and by dint of scratching, biting and mewing, succeeded in quieting the noisy crowd, when the Court was declared duly opened. "Make your returns, Tom," said the Judge. "There they are, your Honor," said Tom, pointing to the criminal's box. I felt qualms—but there I was, in spite of myself. The Judge wiped his spectacles and deliberately scanned the line, "Where's Rust, of the *Express*, Tom? I don't see him." "Why, your Honor," said Tom, "he's been employed as steward on a Salt River packet that was just ready to sail, and he begged so hard for time to get his witnesses, that I thought I'd let him make the trip, as I knew your honor had enough to do till he came back." "Very well, where's the *State Journal* man?" "He's going out as cook on the same craft, and so I let him go." "Well, where's the *Times and Transcript*, and the *Alta* men, and the others." May it please your Honor they live in San Francisco, and that place is so much worse than—than—than you know what, Judge—but I dare not venture there without a posse, for fear of being kidnapped. In fact, your Honor, the Old Devil himself would not dare to serve a summons there; if he did they'd get out a writ of

habeas corpus, and laugh in his face." "Right—right, Tom—let them go—to themselves, and that's the worst place I know of." "Where's Allen, of the *Herald*, Tom?" "Your Honor forgets that he and Johnson, the *Union* men, Waite, Murray & Co., have taken a change of venue, and are about being tried by the People's Court below." "Ah! so they have—time enough for them here—after, when they appeal from the decision of that Court to ours. Let them go, we'll look after them in due time. We'll proceed—call Honest John. Stand on your feet and answer our questions. The rules of this Court are different from all lower ones—so stand on your feet where you are. Are you ready for trial?" "May it please the Court," said a portly looking individual, rising with evident trepidation, "I'm here, but the heat is rather oppressive, and I feel faint, and should like a little refreshment. If your Honor please, I should like a glass of lager beer."

"Sir," returned the Judge, with dignity, "this is not a beer saloon. I pardon your ignorance of our institutions, however, and will allow you something to revive you. Tom, take his Excellency to Squibob."

Crowding through the prisoners, Tom led the thirsty soul to the bar, who ordered a glass of Squibob's best.

"A bit a glass, your Ex—pay in advance, here—tip us a bit, and I'll tip you the dew."

"I haven't a cent in my pocket," said John. "I'm good for it, however. Don't you know me—don't you know who I am?"

"To be sure I do," grinned Squibob. "No respect for persons here, John—pay as you go, and I'll make no bad debts."

"It's but a trifle, anyhow; the liquor I must have; I'll give you a draft on P. C. & Co."

"Who endorses your paper here?" inquired Squibob, with an eye to business.

His Excellency looked about, and observed, "I see Woods. I think he has sufficient confidence in me," and on being called he readily consented to endorse; provided John would in future make his deposits with him, to which John at once assented.

Squibob hesitated at taking the paper, when the Judge called out, "Squibob take his draft with Woods' endorsement, and give it to Tom for collection; when he goes below, it will be paid to him, and let John have a drink."

The bar-keeper, thus assured, turned out a stiff glass, which his customer poured off at a draught, but immediately exclaimed, with many grimaces:

"It's d——d bitter stuff."

"Well, my honest fellow," said the Judge, "now just tell me what you've been about below?"

"Serving the people, your Honor."

"How did you make it go?"

"Pretty well for two terms, I thank you."

"And at the end, how?"

"They made me go."

"I admire frankness, John. Clerk, credit him one. Were you ever ambitious of office—I mean unduly so?"

"Never, your Honor. I only run twice on my own hook; and once was run by my friends."

"With what success?"

"Why, they run me off the track. I burst my boiler and smashed up"—with a groan of "Save me from my friends."

"Clerk, credit him another."

"Now, John, for the test; hast thou, while serving the people, done unto all men as thou wouldst have them do unto thee? hast thou dealt honestly, ruled righteously, and with an earnest desire to do justice to all, without selfishness of purpose on thy part to promote thy own glory, and fill thy own purse—and this in California?"

The culprit stood silent a moment, then bending low, he whispered in the ear of his neighbor, "I say, Dave, can't we contrive to buy the Judge off; get up our own party, and run in our own ticket?"

The individual addressed shook his head despondingly, as he replied, "Can't come it here."

"Why, your Honor," replied John, "I paid all my lager bills, and I don't think there is a laundry woman on earth who has a dime against me for washing."

"No equivocation in this court. Speak out the whole truth."

"May it please the Court, I'm sorely troubled with the cholic, and beg permission to retire a moment before further investigation."

"I'll prescribe for your case, John, said the Judge, kindly. "Tom, hand him the dusting brush. You must sweep cobwebs on the left for a thousand years. By close attention to business we doubt not that we shall raise you then to a higher sphere. Observe one thing, however, no electioneering—no getting up of cliques—no forming parties here. The parties you form in this region will only send you lower than you've been yet. Pass him on, Tom, and set him to work."

"John Bee, stand up."

The culprit not only arose to his feet, but stood up on his seat, and, with a graceful bow, signified that he was ready.

"Is your name Samuel?"

"No; may it please the Court, I'm no connexion of the Pickwicks."

"Have you ever been engaged in any legitimate business?"

"Yes, your Honor."

"What?"

"I gained an honest livelihood by politics."

"Did you ever run for office?"

"Never!"

"Are you quite sure? or is your memory a little treacherous?"

"Not at all. The offices all ran after me, and I did my best to get out of the way. They ran me down alleys and lanes, into groceries and bar-rooms; in fact, into everything except churches, and, in spite of all I could do to double them, they overtook me at last, half-blown, and stuck to me like a flea to a blanket. You know what is said in Proverbs, Judge, or in Deuteronomy, by Malvolio—I forget which—'Some men are born to greatness—others have greatness thrust upon them.'" Here the shade of Shakspeare arose on the right, and indignantly exclaimed, "Out of thy own mouth shall thy words condemn thee:

"Most learned Judge let me pass
To mend the blunders of an —."

"Silence! Shakspeare, be quiet. No harm is done in giving your words a higher origin;" and the shade flitted away from the rail.

"You led a chaste, moral and virtuous life on earth?"

"Always. I always respect the sex."

Here an intense excitement was got up on the right towards the female department, when the shade of Lola Montez rushed to the rail, and in spite of all opposition, sprung over the bars with a skip into the aisle, exclaiming, with flashing eyes:

"Judge, I'm a witness in this case. I came to California in the same ship with that animal. Didn't I give him a lecture on the subject of respect to females? didn't I tell him some things as well as others? didn't I tell him?"—

"Yes, yes; we know all that, Lola—so jump back my darling, and practice the aerial spider dance a century or two, till we send you to the stars above."

Gracefully she bowed to the Court and floated away like a thing of air out of sight, and it was not until she was fairly out of view that the culprit regained his composure, which he had entirely lost on her appearance.

"You see, Samuel—I beg pardon—John Bee," said the Court, "that even the most virtuous and moral man is liable to be traduced, and have his motives misinterpreted. Your case is a peculiar one. We commend you for your amiable attempt to keep out of the way of temptation in running away from office, and deeply regret that your legs were not longer, and your wind better, so that you might have succeeded. Your constituents are now of the same opinion, and would never again start the office after you, even if you should return to earth. In your present state you need a little renovation before you occupy Lola's side of the house. Therefore, Tom hand the gentleman a polishing brush, and set him to brightening the shoes of those who are about to be raised to a higher sphere, at which he will continue nine hundred and ninety-nine years, two hours and three seconds.

"David, where art thou?"



"The D—l!" I exclaimed, involuntarily.—See page 70.

"Here," said a muscular, independent looking man, rising to his feet with folded arms.

"Are you ready for trial?"

"Yes, your Honor, the minnte my backers come."

"Who are your backers—I presume you mean witnesses?"

"Yankee Sullivan and Tom Hyer."

"You need not wait for them; they were here and sent off before you came—we have their testimony."

"Well, if I must fight on my own hook, I'll go it—I'm neither to be bluffed off or backed down. Walk into the ring, Judge."

"Were you ever a member of the Vigilance Committee?"

"Yes, over the left; didn't I use up their resolutions on the three days, hey?"

"Did you ever fight a duel?"

"Never—I scorn such a thing."

"Were you never a party to one?"

"Yes—I held the pistol and it went off—I only pulled the trigger a little."

"Did you ever go to Congress?"

"No, sir-ee, and what's more, I don't believe I ever shall."

"Did you ever try?"

"I Peck'd away at it awhile, but I got Peck'd out; somehow the wires were rusty and didn't work well."

"Well, David, we cannot dwell on your case; you can't go on the right; if you go on the left a row will ensue directly; I am rather at a loss how to dispose of you. Tophet raises objections to your coming there, and ——— Stay, where do you hail from?"

"From San Francisco, your Honor."

"Well, then, go back there again—I regret sending you back to such a God-forsaken place, but there is not one who will receive you in this region. I will, however, relieve you as soon as we have a vacancy—Tom, turn him out." As the Judge disposed of this case, a tumult was heard outside the gate, and a woman's voice shrilly piping:

"I will come in—I tell you I will, Mr. Codfish."

"You can't, madam, this is the man's en-

trance—go to the woman's gate," replied the porter.

"I tell you I wont—I will come in here—I know he must be here, and I will come in; I'll see the Judge anyhow!"

"What is the cause of that disturbance outside? asked the Judge sternly of the inside guardian, "inquire the cause."

The guardian opened the wicket and exclaimed—"It's a woman, may it please your Honor; she is determined to come in, and she has got the porter by the hair and is scratching his face terribly."

"Fly to the rescue—relieve the porter," said the Judge in alarm; when, as the guardian opened the gate to step out, he was overthrown by the Amazon, who rushed past him, and was half-way up the aisle before he regained his feet.

"There," she exclaimed triumphantly, "I told you I would come in, and I am in—if I will go in, I will—so there."

"Woman!" said the Judge, sternly, "what do you want here? this is no place for you."

"I want to know, Judge," she replied, not at all abashed, "if my husband, John Smith, is here? He went to California, ran off with another man's wife, and left me all lorn and alone"—here she began to cry—"I've hunted all over California and can't find him. Somebody told me he had gone to the devil, and I thought I'd come up and see; and if I get hold of him, I wont leave a hair in his head—I'll scratch his eyes out"—here her tears ceased flowing—"I'll run off with another man—I'll, I—ll—O, let me get hold of him once,"—and the affectionate creature wiped her eyes.

"Madam," responded the Judge, "these gates are never opened to runaway husbands or wives. Your husband is not here. There is no such John Smith on our records. Seek him in Oregon. Retire!"

She turned, and, as she went out, she exclaimed, as if involuntarily: "I'll go to Oregon, and if I don't find him there, I'll—I'll get another man—but if I do get hold of him once, if I don't give him ———" here she passed the gate, and the rest was lost. How happy

I felt that I had never had the temptation offered of running away with another man's wife.

Many cases were decided, and but few were set over to the right, and I began to get sleepy, when I was aroused by the Judge calling, "Old Block, stand up." My knees felt weak and my legs trembled.

"What are you doing here?"

"Waiting for my sentence, please the Court."

"Are you an author?"

"I've shed some ink, your Honor."

"On what subjects?"

That was a poser; I tried to think—at last I had to give it up and reply:

"I don't think I ever had any subject."

"What in the world did you string words together for?"

"I don't know, sir; they'd kind o' go off anyhow."

"Have your efforts benefitted mankind in any way?"

"Judge, mayn't I take a glass of Phoenix Bitters? I feel very weak."

"Squibob, hand the culprit a glass of half-and-half; don't make it strong, it will upset the little wit he has left."

As I took the glass, I glanced towards the happy multitude on the right, when I discovered my old friend on earth, Yellow Bird, who returned my look with a benevolent smile. I took courage for a moment at seeing him there, and raised my glass in token of respect to drink his health. He instantly put his left thumb to his nose, with his fingers extended, and with the right made the motion of turning a crank.

"Are you 1001?" he inquired solemnly.

"A. M. A.," I immediately responded, when he raised his right thumb to the little finger of his left hand, shaking his fingers dubiously, as much as to say, "you can't come it here;" when he turned and stalked majestically away into realms of bliss.

Examination resumed.

"Did you ever write poetry?"

"Once, Judge."

"On what subject?"

"Bed-bugs, your Honor."

"On what occasion?"

"Why a friend of mine came up from the city to see me. The bed-bugs routed him out of his lodging place at midnight, and he flew to me for relief."

"Did you relieve him?"

"Yes, your Honor?"

"How?"

"I put him into a bed filled with fleas, and there wasn't a bed-bug that bit him all the rest of the night. But he was quite feverish in the morning."

"What did you do for him?"

"I wrote a poem of eight lines to soothe his excitability."

"Did you succeed?"

"I think so, for he took the first stage that came along, vowing he'd be pendergast if he ever slept another night in Grass Valley."

"Is that the only good deed you ever performed?"

I ran my mind through a long course of actions, and I'll be hanged if I could think of a single thing to save me. I felt that I was a goner. I would have hid under a petticoat, a wash tub—anything—I felt desperate. I slipped off my boots with a determination to run somewhere; I didn't care where, for I had lived so long in the world without doing any good, I felt mortified—ashamed. As I was about to fly, the Judge spoke with dignity:

"Old Block, your chips are trash; they aint fit even to kindle a fire with; if you were useless on earth, you are still more so here. Tom, call Old Sooty."

Immediately a horrible monster appeared, having but one eye in his forehead, a hook bill nose of awful proportions, his body covered with black scales, his long arms adorned with huge claws, instead of hands, his feet were like the gnu's, and he bore in his claws a large three-pronged sluicing fork, which he brandished as an Irishman would a shillalah. I shrunk at his approach; but I was still more horrified when the stern Judge ordered him "to stick the subject and throw him out, for he was of no use to any one there."

The monster "grinned horribly a ghastly smile," and making a pass, thrust the fork entirely through my body, and sent me whirling through the air, till I recovered consciousness only by Delavan putting his hand on my shoulder, saying: "Come, wake up, old fellow, you've slept long enough—its almost tea time." A-h! hum! y-a-h!

CONCLUSION.

TO THE PIONEERS:

BRETHREN : There is probably no country in the world whose early settlement abounds in more thrilling incident, more daring adventure, or more hardy and chivalrous deeds, than that of our beloved California.

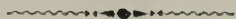
The footprints of our indomitable Anglo-Saxon race, are plainly seen wherever they go. The most severe suffering is only a difficulty to be overcome. Success, however distant, however apparently impossible to achieve, is the star of hope for our people, and no matter what obstacles are met by the wayside, the goal will be reached, or life sacrificed in the attempt. Such is the genius of our people, and it is this mighty lever which has converted the wilderness into a garden ; has dug down our hills, has built up our towns, has compelled the earth to yield up its treasures, and has made a rich and growing State on the Pacific. Surely, then, it is well to make a record of passing events, and to keep in mind, not only for ourselves but for the use of the future historian, the men who have dared the perils of the early settlement of California. This, then, is one of the principal causes of association, where its objects can be made available, and it is a matter of pride to me that I am deemed worthy, as an Old Californian, to take a seat in such an Association. In my humble way I have endeavored to illustrate the character and incidents of a few of our hardy Pioneers, although it is but an atom of the adventures, by field and flood, of the many thousands who, giving up comfort and comparative happiness in their Atlantic homes, have met danger, and a full measure of weariness and toil, to make new ones here, and to raise the Gem of the Pacific to a high place among the galaxy of Stars of our Union. If my efforts, as far as I have pursued them, meet your approval, I shall be gratified. If they are not deemed worthy a place in your memory, why, charge my delinquencies—not to the town pump, but where they belong—to

OLD BLOCK.

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