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LILLIAN MORRIS
AND OTHER STORIES

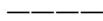
THE WRITINGS OF
HENRYK SIENKIEWICZ.



YANKO THE MUSICIAN, and
Other Stories.

LILLIAN MORRIS, and Other
Stories.

WITHOUT DOGMA, a Novel of
Modern Poland.



Historical Romances.

WITH FIRE AND SWORD.

THE DELUGE.

PAN MICHAEL.

LILLIAN MORRIS
AND OTHER
STORIES

BY HENRYK SIENKIEWICZ
AUTHOR OF "WITH
FIRE AND SWORD" ETC
TRANSLATED BY
JEREMIAH CURTIN WITH
ILLUSTRATIONS BY
EDMUND H. GARRETT



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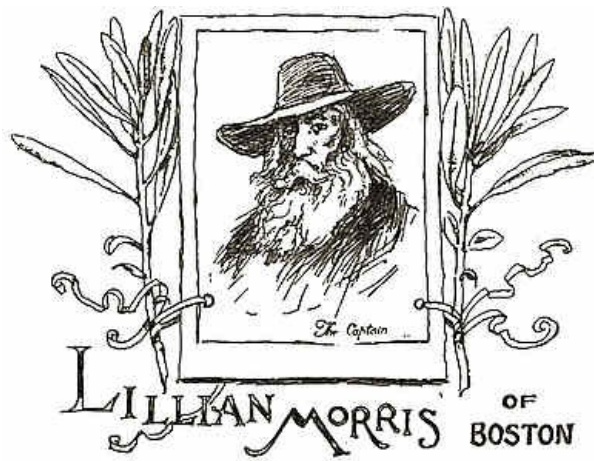
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LILLIAN MORRIS.

DURING my stay in California I went with my worthy and gallant friend, Captain R., to visit Y., a compatriot of ours who was living in the secluded mountains of Santa Lucia. Not finding him at home, we passed five days in a lonely ravine, in company with an old Indian servant, who during his master's absence took care of the Angora goats and the bees.

Conforming to the ways of the country, I spent the hot summer days mainly in sleep, but when night came I sat down near a fire of dry "chamisal," and listened to stories from the captain, concerning his wonderful adventures, and events which could happen only in the wilds of America.

Those hours passed for me very bewitchingly. The nights were real Californian: calm, warm, starry; the fire burned cheerily, and in its gleam I saw the gigantic, but shapely and noble form of the old pioneer warrior. Raising his eyes to the stars, he sought to recall past events, cherished names, and dear faces, the very remembrance of which brought a mild sadness to his features. Of these narratives I give one just as I heard it, thinking that the reader will listen to it with as much interest as I did.

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I CAME to America in September, 1849, said the captain, and found myself in New Orleans, which was half French at that time. From New Orleans I went up the Mississippi to a great sugar plantation, where I found work and good wages. But since I was young in those days, and full of daring, sitting in one spot and writing annoyed me; so I left that place soon and began life in the forest. My comrades and I passed some time among the lakes of Louisiana, in the midst of crocodiles, snakes, and mosquitoes. We supported ourselves with hunting and fishing, and from time to time

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floated down great numbers of logs to New Orleans, where purchasers paid for them not badly in money.

Our expeditions reached distant places. We went as far as "Bloody Arkansas," which, sparsely inhabited even at this day, was well-nigh a pure wilderness then. Such a life, full of labors and dangers, bloody encounters with pirates on the Mississippi, and with Indians, who at that time were numerous in Louisiana, Arkansas, and Tennessee, increased my health and strength, which by nature were uncommon, and gave me also such knowledge of the plains, that I could read in that great book not worse than any red warrior.

After the discovery of gold in California, large parties of emigrants left Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and other eastern cities almost daily, and one of these, thanks to my reputation, chose me for leader, or as we say, captain.

I accepted the office willingly, since wonders were told of California in those days, and I had cherished thoughts of going to the Far West, though without concealing from myself the perils of the journey. [7]

At present the distance between New York and San Francisco is passed by rail in a week, and the real desert begins only west of Omaha; in those days it was something quite different. Cities and towns, which between New York and Chicago are as numerous as poppy-seeds now, did not exist then; and Chicago itself, which later on grew up like a mushroom after rain, was merely a poor obscure fishing-village not found on maps. It was necessary to travel with wagons, men, and mules through a country quite wild, and inhabited by terrible tribes of Indians: Crows, Blackfeet, Pawnees, Sioux, and Arickarees, which it was well-nigh impossible to avoid in large numbers, since those tribes, movable as sand, had no fixed dwellings, but, being hunters, circled over great spaces of prairie, while following buffaloes and antelopes.

Not few were the toils, then, that threatened us; but he who goes to the Far West must be ready to suffer hardship, and expose his life frequently. I feared most of all the responsibility which I had accepted. This matter had been settled, however, and there was nothing to do but make preparations for the road. These lasted more than two months, since we had to bring wagons, even from Pittsburgh, to buy mules, horses, arms, and collect large supplies of provisions. Toward the end of winter, however, all things were ready. [8]

I wished to start in such season as to pass the great prairies lying between the Mississippi and the Rocky Mountains in spring, for I knew that in summer because of heat in those open places, multitudes of men died of various diseases. I decided for this reason to lead the train, not over the southern route by St. Louis, but through Iowa, Nebraska, and Northern Colorado. That road was more dangerous with reference to Indians, but beyond doubt it was the healthier. The plan roused opposition at first among people of the train. I declared that if they would not obey they might choose another captain. They yielded after a brief consultation, and we moved at the first breath of spring. [9]

Days now set in which for me were toilsome enough, especially till such time as men had grown accustomed to me and the conditions of the journey. It is true that my person roused confidence, for my daring trips to Arkansas had won a certain fame among the restless population of the border, and the name of "Big Ralph," by which I was known on the prairies, had struck the ears of most of my people more than once. In general, however, the captain, or leader, was, from the nature of things, in a very critical position frequently with regard to emigrants. It was my duty to choose the camping-ground every evening, watch over the advance in the daytime, have an eye on the whole caravan, which extended at times a mile over the prairie, appoint sentries at the halting-places, and give men permission to rest in the wagons when their turn came. [10]

Americans have in them, it is true, the spirit of organization developed to a high degree; but in toils on the road men's energies weaken, and unwillingness seizes the most enduring. At such times no one wishes to reconnoitre on horseback all day and stand sentry at night, but each man would like to evade the turn which is coming to him, and lie whole days in a wagon. Besides, in intercourse with Yankees, a captain must know how to reconcile discipline with a certain social familiarity,—a thing far from easy. In time of march,

and in the hours of night-watching, I was perfect master of the will of each of my companions; but during rest in the day at farms and settlements, to which we came at first on the road, my rôle of commander ended. Each man was master of himself then, and more than once I was forced to overcome the opposition of insolent adventurers; but when in presence of numerous spectators it turned out a number of times that my Mazovian fist was the stronger, my significance rose, and later on I never had personal encounters. Besides, I knew American character thoroughly. I knew how to help myself, and, in addition to all, my endurance and willingness were increased by a certain pair of blue eyes, which looked out at me with special interest from beneath the canvas roof of a wagon. Those eyes looked from under a forehead shaded by rich golden hair, and they belonged to a maiden named Lillian Morris. She was delicate, slender, with finely cut features, and a face thoughtful, though almost childlike. That seriousness in such a young girl struck me at once when beginning the journey, but duties connected with the office of captain soon turned my mind and attention elsewhere.

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During the first weeks I exchanged with Miss Morris barely a couple of words beyond the usual daily "good morning." Taking compassion, however, on her youth and loneliness,—she had no relatives in that caravan,—I showed the poor girl some trifling services. I had not the least need of guarding her with my authority of leader nor with my fist from the forwardness of young men in the train, for among Americans even the youngest woman is sure, if not of the over-prompt politeness for which the French are distinguished, at least of perfect security. In view, however, of Lillian's delicate health, I put her in the most commodious wagon, in charge of a driver of great experience, named Smith. I spread for her a couch on which she could sleep with comfort; finally, I lent her a warm buffalo-skin, of which I had a number in reserve. Though these services were not important, Lillian seemed to feel a lively gratitude, and omitted no opportunity to show it. She was evidently a very mild and retiring person. Two women, Aunt Grosvenor and Aunt Atkins, soon loved her beyond expression for the sweetness of her character. "Little Bird," a title which they gave her, became the name by which she was known in the caravan. Still, there was not the slightest approach between Little Bird and me, till I noticed that the blue and almost angelic eyes of that maiden were turned toward me, with a peculiar sympathy and determined interest.

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That might have been interpreted in this way: Among all the people of the train I alone had some social refinement; Lillian, in whom also a careful training was evident, saw in me, therefore, a man nearer to her than the rest of the company. But I understood the affair somewhat differently. The interest which she showed pleased my vanity; my vanity made me pay her more attention, and look oftener into her eyes. It was not long till I was striving in vain to discover why, up to that time, I had paid so little attention to a person so exquisite,—a person who might inspire tender feelings in any man who had a heart.

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Thenceforth I was fond of coursing around her wagon on my horse. During the heat of the day, which in spite of the early spring annoyed us greatly at noon, the mules dragged forward lazily, and the caravan stretched along the prairie, so that a man standing at the first wagon could barely see the last one. Often did I fly at such times from end to end, wearying my horse without need, just to see that bright head in passing, and those eyes, which hardly ever left my mind. At first my imagination was more taken than my heart; I received pleasant solace from the thought that among those strange people I was not entirely a stranger, since a sympathetic little soul was occupied with me somewhat. Perhaps this came not from vanity, but from the yearning which on earth a man feels to discover his own self in a heart near to him, to fix his affections and thoughts on one living beloved existence, instead of wasting them on such indefinite, general objects as plains and forests, and losing himself in remotenesses and infinities.

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I felt less lonely then, and the whole journey took on attractions unknown to me hitherto. Formerly, when the caravan stretched out on the prairie, as I have described, so that the last wagons vanished from the eye, I saw in that only a lack of attention, and disorder, from which I grew very angry. Now, when I halted on some eminence, the sight of those wagons white and striped, shone on by the sun and plunging in the sea of grass, like ships on the ocean, the sight of men, on horseback and armed, scattered in picturesque

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disorder at the sides of the wagons, filled my soul with delight and happiness. And I know not whence such comparisons came to me, but that seemed some kind of Old Testament procession, which I, like a patriarch, was leading to the Promised Land. The bells on the harness of the mules and the drawling, "Get up!" of the drivers accompanied like music thoughts which came from my heart and my nature.

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But I did not pass from that dialogue of eyes with Lillian to another, for the presence of the women travelling with her prevented me. Still, from the time when I saw that there was something between us for which I could not find a name yet, though I felt that the something was there, a certain strange timidity seized me. I redoubled, however, my care for the women, and frequently I looked into the wagon, inquiring about the health of Aunt Atkins and Aunt Grosvenor, so as to justify in that way and equalize the attentions with which I surrounded Lillian; but she understood my methods perfectly, and this understanding became as it were our own secret, concealed from the rest of the people.

Soon, glances and a passing exchange of words and tender endeavors were not enough for me. That young maiden with bright hair and sweet look drew me to her with an irresistible power. I began to think of her whole days; and at night, when wearied from visiting the sentries, and hoarse from crying "All is well!" I came at last to the wagon, and wrapping myself in a buffalo-skin, closed my eyes to rest, it seemed to me that the gnats and mosquitoes buzzing around were singing unceasingly in my ears, "Lillian! Lillian! Lillian!" Her form stood before me in my dreams; at waking, my first thought flew to her like a swallow; and still, wonderful thing! I had not noticed that the dear attraction which everything assumed for me, that painting in the soul of objects in golden colors, and those thoughts sailing after her wagon, were not a friendship nor an inclination for an orphan, but a mightier feeling by far, a feeling from which no man on earth can defend himself when the turn has come to him.

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It may be that I should have noticed this sooner, had it not been that the sweetness of Lillian's nature won every one to her; I thought, therefore, that I was no more under the charm of that maiden than were others. All loved her as their own child, and I had proof of this before my eyes daily. Her companions were simple women, sufficiently inclined to wordy quarrels, and still, more than once had I seen Aunt Atkins, the greatest Herod on earth, combing Lillian's hair in the morning, kissing her with the affection of a mother; sometimes I saw Aunt Grosvenor warming in her own palms the maiden's hands, which had chilled in the night. The men surrounded her likewise with care and attentions. There was a certain Henry Simpson in the train, a young adventurer from Kansas, a fearless hunter and an honest fellow at heart, but so self-sufficient, so insolent and rough, that during the first month I had to beat the man twice, to convince him that there was some one in the train with a stronger hand than his, and of superior significance. You should have seen that same Henry Simpson speaking to Lillian. He who would not have thought anything of the President of the United States himself, lost in her presence all his confidence and boldness, and repeated every moment, "I beg your pardon, Miss Morris!" He had quite the bearing of a chained mastiff, but clearly the mastiff was ready to obey every motion of that small, half-childlike hand. At the halting-places he tried always to be with Lillian, so as to render her various little services. He lighted the fire, and selected for her a place free from smoke, covering it first with moss and then with his own horse-blankets; he chose for her the best pieces of game, doing all this with a certain timid attention which I had not thought to find in him, and which roused in me, nevertheless, a kind of ill-will very similar to jealousy.

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But I could only be angry, nothing more. Henry, if the turn to stand guard did not come to him, might do what he liked with his time, hence he could be near Lillian, while my turn of service never ended. On the road the wagons dragged forward one after another, often very far apart; but when we entered an open country for the midday rest I placed the wagons, according to prairie custom, in a line side by side, so that a man could hardly push between them. It is difficult to understand how much trouble and toil I had before such an easily defended line was formed. Mules are by nature wild and untractable; either they balked, or would not go out of the beaten track, biting each other meanwhile, neighing and kicking;

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wagons, twisted by sudden movement, were turned over frequently, and the raising up of such real houses of wood and canvas took no little time; the braying of mules, the cursing of drivers, the tinkling of bells, the barking of dogs which followed us, caused a hellish uproar. When I had brought all into order in some fashion, I had to oversee the unharnessing of the animals and urge on the men whose work it was to drive them to pasture and then to water. Meanwhile men who during the advance had gone out on the prairie to hunt, were returning from all sides with game; the fires were occupied by people, and I found barely time to eat and draw breath.

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I had almost double labor when we started after each rest, for attaching the mules involved more noise and uproar than letting them out. Besides, the drivers tried always to get ahead of one another, so as to spare themselves trouble in turning out of line in bad places. From this came quarrels and disputes, together with curses and unpleasant delays on the road. I had to watch over all this, and in time of marching ride in advance, immediately after the guides, to examine the neighborhood and select in season defensible places, abounding in water, and, in general, commodious for night camps. Frequently I cursed my duties as captain, though on the other hand the thought filled me with pride, that in all that boundless desert I was the first before the desert itself, before people, before Lillian, and that the fate of all those beings, wandering behind the wagons over that prairie, was placed in my hands.

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ON a certain time, after we had passed the Mississippi, we halted for the night at Cedar River, the banks of which, grown over with cottonwood, gave us assurance of fuel for the night. While returning from the men on duty, who had gone into the thicket with axes, I saw, from a distance, that our people, taking advantage of the beautiful weather and the calm fair day, had wandered out on the prairie in every direction. It was very early; we halted for the night usually about five o'clock in the afternoon, so as to move in

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the morning at daybreak. Soon I met Miss Morris. I dismounted immediately, and leading my horse by the bridle, approached the young lady, happy that I could be alone with her even for a while. I inquired then why she, so young and unattended, had undertaken a journey which might wear out the strongest man.

"Never should I have consented to receive you into our caravan," said I, "had I not thought during the first few days of our journey that you were the daughter of Aunt Atkins; now it is too late to turn back. But will you be strong enough, my dear child? You must be ready to find the journey hereafter less easy than hitherto."

"I know all this," answered she, without raising her pensive blue eyes, "but I must go on, and I am happy indeed that I cannot go back. My father is in California, and from the letter which he sent me by way of Cape Horn, I learn that for some months he has been ill of a fever in Sacramento. Poor father! he was accustomed to comfort and my care,—and it was only through love of me that he went to California. I do not know whether I shall find him alive; but I feel that in going to him, I am only fulfilling a duty that is dear to me."

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There was no answer to such words; moreover, all that I might object to this undertaking would be too late. I inquired then of Lillian for nearer details touching her father. These she gave with great pleasure, and I learned that in Boston Mr. Morris had been judge of the Supreme Court, or highest tribunal of the State; that he had lost his property, and had gone to the newly discovered mines of California in the hope of acquiring a new fortune, and bringing back to his daughter, whom he loved more than life, her former social position. Meanwhile, he caught a fever in the unwholesome Sacramento valley, and judging that he should die he sent Lillian his last blessing. She sold all the property that he had left with her, and resolved to hasten to him. At first she intended to go by sea; but an acquaintance with Aunt Atkins made by chance two days before the caravan started, changed her mind. Aunt Atkins, who was from Tennessee, having had her ears filled with tales which friends of mine from the banks of the Mississippi had told her and others of my daring expeditions to the famed Arkansas, of my experience in journeys over the prairies, and the care which I gave to the weak (this I consider as a simple duty), described me in such colors before Lillian that the girl, without hesitating longer, joined the caravan going under my leadership. To those exaggerated narratives of Aunt Atkins, who did not delay to add that I was of noble birth, it is necessary to ascribe the fact that Miss Morris was occupied with my person.

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"You may be sure," said I, when she had finished her story, "that no one will do you any wrong here, and that care will not fail you; as to your father, California is the healthiest country on earth, and no one dies of fever there. In every case, while I am alive, you will not be left alone; and meanwhile may God bless your sweet face!"

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"Thank you, captain," answered she, with emotion, and we went on; but my heart beat with more violence. Gradually our conversation became livelier, and no one could foresee that that sky above us would become cloudy.

"But all here are kind to you, Miss Morris?" asked I again, not supposing that just that question would be the cause of misunderstanding.

"Oh yes, all," said she, "and Aunt Atkins and Aunt Grosvenor, and Henry Simpson too is very good."

This mention of Simpson pained me suddenly, like the bite of a snake.

"Henry is a mule-driver," answered I curtly, "and has to care for the wagons."

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But Lillian, occupied with the course of her own thoughts, had not noticed the change in my voice, and spoke on as if to herself,—

"He has an honest heart, and I shall be grateful to him all my life."

"Miss Morris," interrupted I, cut to the quick, "you may even give him your hand. I wonder, however, that you choose me as a confidant of your feelings."

When I said that she looked at me with astonishment but made no reply, and we went on together in disagreeable silence. I knew not what to say, though my heart was full of bitterness and anger toward her and myself. I felt simply conquered by jealousy of

Simpson, but still I could not fight against it. The position seemed to me so unendurable that I said all at once briefly and dryly,—

“Good night, Miss Morris!”

“Good night,” answered she calmly, turning her head to hide two tears that were dropping down her cheeks.

I mounted my horse and rode away again toward the point whence the sound of axes came, and where, among others, Henry Simpson was cutting a cottonwood. After a while I was seized by a certain measureless regret, for it seemed to me that those two tears were falling on my heart. I turned my horse, and next minute I was near Lillian a second time.

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“Why are you crying, Miss Morris?” asked I.

“Oh, sir,” said she, “I know that you are of a noble family, Aunt Atkins told me that, and you have been so kind to me.”

She did everything not to cry; but she could not restrain herself, and could not finish her answer, for tears choked her voice. The poor thing! she had been touched to the bottom of her pensive soul by my answer regarding Simpson, for there was evident in it a certain aristocratic contempt; but I was not even dreaming of aristocracy,—I was simply jealous; and now, seeing her so unhappy, I wanted to seize my own collar and throttle myself. Grasping her hand, I said with animation:—

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“Lillian, Lillian, you did not understand me. I take God to witness that no pride was speaking through me. Look at me: I have nothing in the world but these two hands,—what is my descent to me? Something else pained me, and I wanted to go away; but I could not support your tears. And I swear to you also, that what I have said to you pains me more than it does you. You are not an object of indifference to me, Lillian. Oh, not at all! for if you were, what you think of Henry would not concern me. He is an honest fellow, but that does not touch the question. You see how much your tears cost me; then forgive me as sincerely as I entreat your forgiveness.”

Speaking in this way I raised her hand and pressed it to my lips; that high proof of respect, and the truthfulness which sounded in my request, succeeded in quieting the maiden somewhat. She did not cease at once to weep, but her tears were of another kind, for a smile was visible through them, as a sun-ray through mist. Something too was sticking in my throat, and I could not stifle my emotion. A certain tender feeling mastered my heart. We walked on in silence, and round about us the world was pleasant and sweet.

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Meanwhile, the day was inclining toward evening; the weather was beautiful, and in the air, already dusky, there was so much light that the whole prairie, the distant groups of cottonwood-trees, the wagons in our train, and the flocks of wild geese flying northward through the sky, seemed golden and rosy. Not the least wind moved the grass; from a distance came to us the sound of rapids, which the Cedar River formed in that place, and the neighing of horses from the direction of the camp. That evening with such charms, that virgin land, and the presence of Lillian, brought me to such a state of mind that my soul was almost ready to fly out of me somewhere to the sky. I thought myself a shaken bell, as it were. At moments I wanted to take Lillian’s hand again, raise it to my lips, and not put it down for a long time; but I feared lest this might offend her. Meanwhile she walked on near me, calm, mild, and thoughtful. Her tears had dried already; at moments she raised her bright eyes to me; then we began to speak again,—and so reached the camp.

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That day, in which I had experienced so many emotions, was to end joyfully, for the people, pleased with the beautiful weather, had resolved to have a “picnic,” or open air festival. After a supper more abundant than usual, one great fire was kindled, before which there was to be dancing. Henry Simpson had cleared away the grass purposely from a space of many square yards, and sprinkled it with sand brought from Cedar River. When the spectators had assembled on the place thus prepared, Simpson began to dance a jig, with the accompaniment of negro flutes, to the admiration of all. With hands hanging at his sides he kept his whole body motionless; but his feet were working so nimbly, striking the ground in turn with heel and toe, that their movement could hardly be followed by the eye.

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Meanwhile the flutes played madly; a second dancer came out, a third, then a fourth,—and the fun was universal. The audience joined the negroes who were playing on the flutes, and thrummed on tin pans, intended for washing the gold-bearing earth, or kept time with pieces of ox-ribs held between the fingers of each hand,

which gave out a sound like the clatter of castanets.

Suddenly the cry of "minstrels! minstrels!" was heard through the whole camp. The audience formed a circle around the dancing-place; into this stepped our negroes, Jim and Crow. Jim held a little drum covered with snake-skin, Crow the pieces of ox-rib mentioned already. For a time they stared at each other, rolling the whites of their eyes; then they began to sing a negro song, interrupted by stamping and violent springs of the body; at times the song was sad, at times wild. The prolonged "Dinah! ah! ah!" with which each verse ended, changed at length into a shout, and almost into a howling like that of beasts. As the dancers warmed up and grew excited, their movements became wilder, and at last they fell to butting each other with blows from which European skulls would have cracked like nutshells. Those black figures, shone upon by the bright gleam of the fire and springing in wild leaps, presented a spectacle truly fantastic. With their shouts and the sounds of the drum, pipes, and tin pans, and the click of the bones, were mingled shouts of the spectators: "Hurrah for Jim! Hurrah for Crow!" and then shots from revolvers.

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When at last the black men were wearied and had fallen on the ground, they began to labor with their breasts and to pant. I commanded to give each a drink of brandy; this put them on their feet again. But at that moment the people began to call for a "speech." In an instant the uproar and music ceased. I had to drop Lillian's arm, climb to the seat of a wagon, and turn to those present. When I looked from my height on those forms illuminated by the fires, forms large, broad-shouldered, bearded, with knives at their girdles, and hats with torn crowns, it seemed to me that I was in some theatre, or had become a chieftain of robbers. They were honest brave hearts, however, though the rough life of more than one of these men was stormy perhaps and half wild; but here we formed, as it were, a little world torn away from the rest of society and confined to ourselves, destined to a common fate and threatened by common dangers. Here shoulder had to touch shoulder; each felt that he was brother to the next man; the roadless places and boundless deserts with which we were surrounded commanded those hardy miners to love one another. The sight of Lillian, the poor defenceless maiden, fearless among them and safe as if under her father's roof, brought those thoughts to my head; hence I told everything, just as I felt it, and as befitted a soldier leader who was at the same time a brother of wanderers. Every little while they interrupted me with cries: "Hurrah for the Pole! Hurrah for the captain! Hurrah for Big Ralph!" and with clapping of hands; but what made me happiest of all was to see between the network of those sunburnt strong hands one pair of small palms, rosy with the gleam of the fire and flying like a pair of white doves. I felt then at once, What care I for the desert, the wild beasts, the Indians and the "outlaws"? and cried with mighty ardor, "I will conquer anything, I will kill anything that comes in my way, and lead the train even to the end of the earth,—and may God forget my right hand, if this is not true!" A still louder "Hurrah!" answered these words, and all began to sing with great enthusiasm the emigrants' song: "I crossed the Mississippi, I will cross the Missouri." Then Smith, the oldest among the emigrants, a miner from near Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania, spoke in answer. He thanked me in the name of the whole company, and lauded my skill in leading the caravan. After Smith, from nearly every wagon a man spoke. Some made very amusing remarks, for instance Henry Simpson, who cried out every little while: "Gentlemen! I'll be hanged if I don't tell the truth!" When the speakers had grown hoarse at last, the flutes sounded, the bones rattled, and the men began to dance a jig again.

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Night had fallen completely; the moon came out in the sky and shone so brightly that the flame of the fires almost paled before its gleams; the people and the wagons were illuminated doubly by a red and a white light. That was a beautiful night. The uproar of our camp offered a strange but pleasing contrast to the calmness and deep slumber of the prairie.

Taking Lillian's arm, I went with her around the whole camp; our gaze passed from the fires to the distance, and was lost in the waves of the tall and dark grasses of the prairie, silvery from the rays of the moon and as mysterious as spirits. We strolled alone in that way. Meanwhile, at one of the fires, two Scottish Highlanders began to play on pipes their plaintive air of "Bonnie Dundee." We both

stopped at a distance and listened for some time in silence; all at once I looked at Lillian, she dropped her eyes,—and without knowing myself why I did so, I pressed to my heart long and powerfully that hand which she had rested on my arm. In Lillian too the poor heart began to beat with such force that I felt it as clearly as if on my palm; we trembled, for we saw that something was rising between us, that that something was conquering, and that we would not be to each other as we had been hitherto. As to me I was swimming already whithersoever that current was bearing me. I forgot that the night was so bright, that the fires were not distant, and that there were people around them; and I wanted to fall at her feet at once, or at least to look into her eyes. But she, though leaning on my arm, turned her head, as if glad to hide her face in the shade. I wished to speak but could not; for it seemed to me that I should call out with some voice not my own, or if I should say the words "I love" to Lillian I should drop to the earth. I was not bold, being young then, and was led not by my thoughts simply, but by my soul too; and I felt this also clearly, that if I should say "I love," a curtain would fall on my past; one door would close and another would open, through which I should pass into a certain new region. Hence, though I saw happiness beyond that threshold I halted, for this very reason it may be,—that the brightness beating from out that place dazzled me. Besides, when loving comes not from the lips, but the heart, there is perhaps nothing so difficult to speak about.

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I had dared to press Lillian's hand to my breast; we were silent, for I had not the boldness to mention love, and I had no wish to speak of aught else,—it was impossible at such a time.

It ended with this, that we both raised our heads and looked at the stars, like people who are praying. Then some one at the great fire called me; we returned; the festival had closed, but to end it worthily and well, the emigrants had determined to sing a psalm before going to rest. The men had uncovered their heads, and though among them were persons of various faiths, all knelt on the grass of the prairie and began to sing the psalm, "Wandering in the Wilderness." The sight was impressive. At moments of rest the silence became so perfect that the crackling of sparks in the fire could be heard, and from the river the sound of the waterfalls came to us.

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Kneeling near Lillian, I looked once or twice at her face; her eyes were uplifted and wonderfully shining, her hair was a little disarranged; and, singing the hymn with devotion, she was so like an angel, that it seemed almost possible to pray to her.

After the psalm, the people went to their wagons. I, according to custom, repaired to the sentries, and then to my rest, like the others. But this time when the mosquitoes began to sing in my ears, as they did every evening, "Lillian! Lillian! Lillian!" I knew that in that wagon beyond there was sleeping the sight of my eye and the soul of my soul, and that in all the world there was nothing dearer to me than that maiden.

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AT dawn the following day we passed Cedar River successfully and came out on a level, broad prairie, stretching between that river and the Winnebago, which curved imperceptibly to the south, toward the belt of forests lying along the lower boundary of Iowa. From the morning Lillian had not dared to look in my eyes. I saw that she was thoughtful; it seemed as though she were ashamed of something, or troubled for some cause; but still what sin had we committed the evening before? She scarcely left the wagon. Aunt Atkins and Aunt Grosvenor, thinking that she was ill, surrounded her with care and tenderness. I alone knew what that meant,—that it was neither weakness, nor pangs of conscience; it was the struggle of an innocent being with the presentiment that a power new and unknown is bearing it, like a leaf, to some place far away. It was a clear insight that there was no help, and that sooner or later she would have to weaken and yield to the will of that power, forget everything,—and only love.

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A pure soul draws back and is afraid on the threshold of love, but feeling that it will cross, it weakens. Lillian therefore was as if wearied by a dream; but when I understood all that, the breath in my breast was nearly stopped from joy. I know not whether it was an honorable feeling, but when in the morning I flew past her wagon and saw her, broken like a flower, I felt something akin to what a bird of prey feels, when it knows that the dove will not escape. And still I would not do an injustice to that dove for any treasure on earth, for with love I had in my heart at the same time an immense compassion. A wonderful thing however: notwithstanding my feeling for Lillian, the whole day passed for us as if in mutual offence, or at least in perplexity. I was racking my head to discover how I could be alone even for a moment with her, but could not discover. Fortunately Aunt Atkins came to my aid; she declared that the little one needed more exercise, that confinement in the stifling wagon was injuring her health. I fell upon the thought that she ought to ride on horseback, and ordered Simpson to saddle a horse for her; and though there were no side-saddles in the train, one of those Mexican saddles with a high pommel which women use everywhere on the frontier prairies, could serve her very well. I forbade Lillian to loiter behind far enough to drop out of view. To be lost in the open prairie was rather difficult, because people, whom I sent out for game, circled about a considerable distance in every direction. There was no danger from the Indians, for that part of the prairie, as far as the Winnebago, was visited by the Pawnees only during the great hunts, which had not begun yet. But the southern forest-tract abounded in wild beasts, not all of which were grass eating; wariness, therefore, was far from superfluous.

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To tell the truth I thought that Lillian would keep near me for safety; this would permit us to be alone rather frequently. Usually I pushed forward in time of march some distance, having before me only the two half-breed scouts, and behind the whole caravan. So it happened in fact, and I was at once inexpressibly and truly happy, the first day, when I saw my sweet Amazon moving forward at a light gallop from the direction of the train. The movement of the horse unwound her tresses somewhat, and care for her skirt, which was the least trifle short for the saddle, had painted her face with a charming anxiety. When she came up she was like a rose; for she knew that she was going into a trap laid by me so that we might be

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alone with each other, and knowing this she came, though blushing, and as if unwilling, feigning that she knew nothing. My heart beat as if I had been a young student; and, when our horses were abreast, I was angry with myself, because I knew not what to say. At the same time such sweet and powerful desires began to go between us, that I, urged by some unseen power, bent toward Lillian as if to straighten something in the mane of her horse, and meanwhile I pressed my lips to her hand, which was resting on the pommel of the saddle. A certain unknown and unspeakable happiness, greater and keener than all delights that I had known in life till that moment, passed through my bones. I pressed that little hand to my heart and began to tell Lillian, that if God had bestowed all the kingdoms of the earth on me, and all the treasures in existence, I would not give for anything one tress of her hair, for she had taken me soul and body forever.

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"Lillian, Lillian," said I further, "I will never leave you. I will follow you through mountains and deserts, I will kiss your feet and I will pray to you; only love me a little, only tell me that in your heart I mean something."

Thus speaking, I thought that my bosom would burst, when she, with the greatest confusion, began to repeat,—

"O Ralph! you know well! you know everything!"

I did not know just this, whether to laugh or to cry, whether to run away or to remain; and, as I hope for salvation to-day, I felt saved then, for nothing in the world was lacking to me.

Thenceforth so far as my occupations permitted, we were always together. And those occupations decreased every day till we reached the Missouri. Perhaps no caravan had more success than ours during the first month of the journey. Men and animals were growing accustomed to order and skilled in travelling; hence I had less need to look after them, while the confidence which the people gave me upheld perfect order in the train. Besides, abundance of provisions and the fine spring weather roused joyfulness and increased good health. I convinced myself daily, that my bold plan of conducting the caravan not by the usual route through St. Louis and Kansas, but through Iowa and Nebraska, was best. There heat almost unendurable tortured people, and in the unhealthy region between the Mississippi and Missouri fevers and other diseases thinned the ranks of emigrants; here, by reason of the cooler climate, cases of weakness were fewer, and our labor was less.

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It is true that the road by St. Louis was in the earlier part of it freer from Indians; but my train, composed of two or three hundred men well furnished with weapons and ready for fighting, had no cause to fear wild tribes, especially those inhabiting Iowa, who though meeting white men oftener, and, having more frequent experience of what their hands could do, had not the courage to rush at large parties. It was only needful to guard against stampedes, or night attacks on mules and horses,—the loss of draught-animals puts a caravan on the prairies in a terrible position. But against that there was diligence and the experience of sentries who, for the greater part, were as well acquainted with the stratagems of Indians as I was.

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When once I had introduced travelling discipline and made men accustomed to it, I had incomparably less to do during the day, and could devote more time to the feelings which had seized my heart. In the evening I went to sleep with the thought: "To-morrow I shall see Lillian;" in the morning I said to myself: "To-day I shall see Lillian;" and every day I was happier and every day more in love. In the caravan people began by degrees to notice this; but no one took it ill of me, for Lillian and I possessed the good-will of those people. Once old Smith said in passing: "God bless you, captain, and you, Lillian." That connecting of our names made us happy all day. Aunt Grosvenor and Aunt Atkins whispered something frequently in Lillian's ear, which made her blush like the dawn, but she would never tell me what it was. Henry Simpson looked on us rather gloomily,—perhaps he was forging some plan in his soul, but I paid no heed to that.

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Every morning at four I was at the head of the caravan; before me the scouts, some fifteen hundred yards distant, sang songs, which their Indian mothers had taught them; behind me at the same distance moved the caravan, like a white ribbon on the prairie,—and what a wonderful moment, when, about two hours later, I hear on a sudden behind me the tramp of a horse. I look, and behold the sight

of my soul, my beloved is approaching. The morning breeze bears behind her her hair, which either had been loosened from the movement, or badly fastened on purpose, for the little rogue knew that she looked better that way, that I liked her that way, and that when the wind threw the tress on me I pressed it to my lips. I feign not to notice her tricks, and in this agreeable meeting the morning begins for us. I taught her the Polish phrase: "Dzien dobry" (good morning). When I heard her pronouncing those words, she seemed still dearer; the memory of my country, of my family, of years gone by, of that which had been, of that which had passed, flew before my eyes on that prairie like mews of the ocean. More than once I would have broken out in weeping, but from shame I restrained with my eyelids the tears that were ready to flow. She, seeing that the heart was melting in me, repeated like a trained starling: "Dzien dobry! dzien dobry! dzien dobry!" And how was I not to love my starling beyond everything? I taught her then other phrases; and when her lips struggled with our difficult sounds, and I laughed at a faulty pronunciation, she pouted like a little child, feigning anger and resentment. But we had no quarrels, and once only a cloud flew between us. One morning I pretended to tighten a strap on her stirrup, but in truth the leopard Uhlan was roused in me, and I began to kiss her foot, or rather the poor shoe worn out in the wilderness. Then she drew her foot close to the horse, and repeating: "No, Ralph! no! no!" sprang to one side; and though I implored and strove to pacify her she would not come near me. She did not return to the caravan, however, fearing to pain me too much. I feigned a sorrow a hundred times greater than I felt in reality, and sinking into silence, rode on as if all things had ended on earth for me. I knew that compassion would stir in her, as indeed it did; for soon, alarmed at my silence, she began to ride up at one side and look at my eyes, like a child which wants to know if its mother is angry yet,—and I, wishing to preserve a gloomy visage, had to turn aside to avoid laughing aloud.

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But this was one time only. Usually we were as gladsome as prairie squirrels, and sometimes, God forgive me, I, the leader of that caravan, became a child with her. More than once when we were riding side by side I would turn on a sudden, saying to her that I had something important and new to tell, and when she held her inquisitive ear I whispered into it: "I love." Then she also whispered into my ear in answer, with a smile and blush, "I also!" And thus we confided our secrets to each other on the prairie, where the wind alone could overhear us.

In this manner day shot after day so quickly, that, as I thought, the morning seemed to touch the evening like links in a chain. At times some event of the journey would vary such pleasant monotony. A certain Sunday the half-breed Wichita caught with a lasso an antelope of a large kind, and with her a fawn which I gave to Lillian, who made for it a collar on which was put a bell, taken from a mule. This fawn we called Katty. In a week it was tame, and ate from our hands. During the march I would ride on one side of Lillian, and Katty would run on the other, raising its great black eyes and begging with a bleat for caresses.

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Beyond the Winnebago we came out on a plain as level as a table, broad, rich, primeval. The scouts vanished from our eyes at times in the grass; our horses waded, as if in a river. I showed Lillian that world altogether new to her, and when she was delighted with its beauties, I felt proud that that kingdom of mine was so pleasing to her. It was spring,—April was barely reaching its end, the time of richest growth for grasses of all sorts. What was to bloom on the plains was blooming already.

In the evening such intoxicating odors came from the prairie, as from a thousand censers; in the day, when the wind blew and shook the flowery expanse, the eye was just pained with the glitter of red, blue, yellow, and colors of all kinds. From the dense bed shot up the slender stalks of yellow flowers, like our mullein; around these wound the silver threads of a plant called "tears," whose clusters, composed of transparent little balls, are really like tears. My eyes, used to reading in the prairie, discovered repeatedly plants that I knew: now it was the large-leaved kalumna, which cures wounds; now the plant called "white and red stockings," which closes its cups at the approach of man or beast; finally, "Indian hatchets," the odor of which brings sleep and almost takes away consciousness. I taught Lillian at that time to read in this Divine book, saying,—

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"It will come to you to live in forests and on plains; it is well then

to know them in season."

In places on the level prairie rose, as if they were oases, groups of cottonwood or alder, so wreathed with wild grapes and lianas that they could not be recognized under the tendrils and leaves. On the lianas in turn climbed ivy and the prickly, thorny "wachtia," resembling wild roses. Flowers were just dropping at all points; inside, underneath that screen and beyond that wall, was a certain mysterious gloom; at the tree trunks were sleeping great pools of water of the spring-time, which the sun was unable to drink up; from the tree-tops and among the brocade of flowers came wonderful voices and the calling of birds. When for the first time I showed such trees to Lillian and such hanging cascades of flowers, she stood as if fixed to the earth, repeating with clasped hands,—

"Oh, Ralph! is that real?"

She said that she was a little afraid to enter such a depth; but one afternoon, when the heat was great, and over the prairie was flying, as it were, the hot breath of the Texan wind, we rode in, and Katty came after us.

We stopped at a little pool, which reflected our two horses and our two forms; we remained in silence for a time. It was cool there, obscure, solemn as in a Gothic cathedral, and somewhat awe-inspiring. The light of day came in bedimmed, greenish from the leaves. Some bird, hidden under the cupola of lianas, cried, "No! no! no!" as if warning us not to go farther; Katty began to tremble and nestle up to the horses; Lillian and I looked at each other suddenly, and for the first time our lips met, and having met could not separate. She drank my soul, I drank her soul. Breath began to fail each of us, still lips were on lips. At last her eyes were covered with mist, and the hands which she had placed on my shoulders were trembling as in a fever: she was seized with a kind of oblivion of her own existence, so that she grew faint and placed her head on my bosom. We were drunk with each other, with bliss, and with ecstasy. I dared not move; but because I had a soul overfilled, because I loved a hundred times more than may be thought or expressed, I raised my eyes to discover if through the thick leaves I could see the sky.

Recovering our senses, we came out at last from beneath the green density to the open prairie, where we were surrounded by the bright sunshine and warm breeze; before us was spread the broad and gladsome landscape. Prairie chickens were fluttering in the grass, and on slight elevations, which were perforated like a sieve by prairie dogs, stood, as it were, an army of those little creatures, which vanished under the earth at our coming; directly in front was the caravan, and horsemen careering around it.

It seemed to me that we had come out of a dark chamber to the white world, and the same thought must have come to Lillian. The brightness of the day rejoiced me; but that excess of golden light and the memory of rapturous kisses, traces of which were still evident on her face, penetrated Lillian as it were with alarm and with sadness.

"Ralph, will you not take that ill of me?" asked she, on a sudden.

"What comes to your head, O my own! God forget me if in my heart there is any feeling but respect and the highest love for you."

"I did that because I love greatly," said she; and therewith her lips began to quiver and she wept in silence, and though I was working the soul out of myself she remained sad all that day.



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AT last we came to the Missouri. Indians chose generally the time of crossing that river to fall upon caravans; defence is most difficult when some wagons are on one bank, and some in the river; when the draught-beasts are stubborn and balky, and disorder rises among the people. Indeed, I noticed, before our arrival at the river, that Indian spies had for two days been following us; I took every precaution therefore, and led the train in complete military order. I did not permit wagons to loiter on the prairie, as in the eastern districts of Iowa; the men had to stay together and be in perfect readiness for battle.

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When we had come to the bank and found a ford, I ordered two divisions, of sixty men each, to intrench themselves on both banks, so as to secure the passage under cover of small forts and the muzzles of rifles. The remaining hundred and twenty emigrants had to take the train over. I did not send in more than a few wagons at once, so as to avoid confusion. With such an arrangement everything took place in the greatest order, and attack became impossible, for the attackers would have had to carry one or the other intrenchment before they could fall upon those who were crossing the river.

How far these precautions were not superfluous the future made evident, for two years later four hundred Germans were cut to pieces by the Kiowas, at the place where Omaha stands at this moment. I had this advantage besides: my men, who previously had heard more than once narratives, which went to the East, of the terrible danger of crossing the yellow waters of the Missouri, seeing the firmness and ease with which I had solved the problem, gained blind confidence, and began to look on me as some ruling spirit of the plains.

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Daily did those praises and that enthusiasm reach Lillian, in whose loving eyes I grew to be a legendary hero. Aunt Atkins said to her: "While your Pole is with you, you may sleep out in the rain, for he won't let the drops fall on you." And the heart rose in my maiden from those praises. During the whole time of crossing I could give her hardly a moment, and could only say hurriedly with my eyes what my lips could not utter. All day I was on horseback, now on one bank, now on the other, now in the water. I was in a hurry to advance as soon as possible from those thick yellow waters, which were bearing down with them rotten trees, bunches of leaves, grass, and malodorous mud from Dakota, infectious with fever.

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Besides this, the people were wearied immensely, from continual watching; the horses grew sick from unwholesome water, which we could not use until we had kept it in charcoal a number of hours.

At last, after eight days' time, we found ourselves on the right bank of the river without having broken a wagon, and with the loss of only seven head of mules and horses. That day, however, the first arrows fell, for my men killed, and afterward, according to the repulsive habit of the plains, scalped three Indians, who had been trying to push in among the mules. In consequence of this deed an embassy of six leading warriors of the Bloody Tracks, belonging to the Pawnee stock, visited us on the following day. They sat down at our fire with tremendous importance, demanding horses and mules in return for the dead men, declaring that, in case of refusal, five

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hundred warriors would attack us immediately. I made no great account of those five hundred warriors, since I had the train in order and defended with intrenchments. I saw well that that embassy had been sent merely because those wild people had caught at the first opportunity to extort something without an attack, in the success of which they had lost faith. I should have driven them away in one moment, had I not wished to exhibit them to Lillian. In fact, while they were sitting at the council-fire motionless, with eyes fixed on the flame, she, concealed in the wagon, was looking with alarm and curiosity at their dress trimmed at the seams with human hair, their tomahawks adorned with feathers on the handles, and at their faces painted black and red, which meant war. In spite of these preparations, however, I refused their demand sharply, and, passing from a defensive to an offensive rôle, declared that if even one mule disappeared from the train, I would go to their tribe myself and scatter the bones of their five hundred warriors over the prairie.

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They went away, repressing their rage with difficulty, but when going they brandished their tomahawks over their heads in sign of war. However, my words sank in their memory; for at the time of their departure two hundred of my men, prepared purposely, rose up with threatening aspect, rattling their weapons, and gave forth a shout of battle. That readiness made a deep impression on the wild warriors.

Some hours later Henry Simpson, who at his own instance had gone out to observe the embassy, returned, all panting, with news that a considerable division of Indians was approaching us.

I, knowing Indian ways perfectly, knew that those were mere threats, for the Indians, armed with bows made of hickory, were not in numbers sufficient to meet Kentucky rifles of long range. I said that to Lillian, wishing to quiet her, for she was trembling like a leaf; but all the others were sure that a battle was coming; the younger ones, whose warlike spirit was roused, wished for it eagerly.

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In fact, we heard the howling of the redskins soon after; still, they kept at the distance of some gun-shots, as if seeking a favorable moment.

In our camp immense fires, replenished with cottonwood and willows, were burning all night; the men stood guard around the wagons; the women were singing psalms from fear; the mules, not driven out as usual to the night pasture, but confined behind the wagons, were braying and biting one another; the dogs, feeling the nearness of the Indians, were howling,—in a word, it was noisy and threatening throughout the camp. In brief moments of silence we heard the mournful and ominous howling of the Indian outposts, calling with the voices of coyotes.

About midnight the Indians tried to set fire to the prairie, but the damp grass of spring would not burn, though for some days not a raindrop had fallen on that region.

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When riding around the camp-ground before daybreak I had a chance of seeing Lillian for a moment. I found her sleeping from weariness, with her head resting on the knees of Aunt Atkins, who, armed with a bowie-knife, had sworn to destroy the whole tribe, if one of them dared to come near her darling. As to me, I looked on that fair sleeping face with the love not only of a man, but almost of a mother, and I felt equally with Aunt Atkins that I would tear into pieces any one who would threaten my beloved. In her was my joy, in her my delight; beyond her I had nothing but endless wandering, tramping, and mishaps. Before my eyes I had the best proof of this: in the distance were the prairie, the rattle of weapons, the night on horseback, the struggle with predatory redskin murderers; nearer, right there before my face, was the quiet sleep of that dear one, so full of faith and trust in me, that my word alone had convinced her that there could be no attack, and she had fallen asleep as full of confidence as if under her father's roof.

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When I looked at those two pictures, I felt for the first time how that adventurous life without a morrow had wearied me, and I saw at once that I should find rest and satisfaction with her alone. "If only to California!" thought I, "if only to California! But the toils of the journey—merely one-half of which, and that half the easiest, is over—are evident already on that pallid face; but a beautiful rich country is waiting for us there, with its warm sky and eternal spring." Thus meditating, I covered the feet of the sleeper with my

buffalo-robe, so that the night cold might not harm her, and returned to the end of the camp.

It was time, for a thick mist had begun to rise from the river; the Indians might really take advantage of it and try their fortune. The fires were dimmed more and more, and grew pale. An hour later one man could not see another if ten paces distant. I gave command then to cry on the square every minute, and soon nothing was heard in that camp but the prolonged "All's well!" which passed from mouth to mouth like the words of a litany.

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But the Indian camp had grown perfectly still, as if its occupants were dumb. This began to alarm me. At the first dawn an immense weariness mastered us; God knows how many nights the majority of the men had passed without sleep,—besides, the fog, wonderfully penetrating, sent a chill and a shiver through all.

Would it not be better, thought I, instead of standing on one place and waiting for what may please the Indians, to attack and scatter them to the four winds? This was not simply the whim of an Uhlan, but an absolute need; for a daring and lucky attack might gain us great glory, which, spreading among the wild tribes, would give us safety for a long stretch of road.

Leaving behind me one hundred and thirty men, under the lead of the old prairie wolf, Smith, I commanded a hundred others to mount their horses, and we moved forward somewhat cautiously, but gladly, for the cold had become more annoying, and in this way it was possible to warm ourselves at least. At twice the distance of a gunshot we raced forward at a gallop with shouting, and in the midst of a musket-fire rushed, like a storm, on the savages. A ball, sent from our side by some awkward marksman, whistled right at my ear, but only tore my cap.

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Meanwhile, we were on the necks of the Indians, who expected anything rather than an attack, for this was surely the first time that emigrants had charged the besiegers. Great alarm so blinded them, therefore, that they fled in every direction, howling from fright like wild beasts, and perishing without resistance. A smaller division of these people, pushed to the river and, deprived of retreat, defended themselves so sternly and stubbornly that they chose to rush into the water rather than beg for life.

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Their spears pointed with sharpened deer-horns and tomahawks made of hard flint were not very dangerous, but they used them with wonderful skill. We burst through these, however, in the twinkling of an eye. I took one prisoner, a sturdy rascal, whose hatchet and arm I broke in the moment of fighting with hatchets.

We seized a few tens of horses, but so wild and vicious that there was no use in them. We made a few prisoners, all wounded. I gave command to care for these most attentively, and set them free afterward at Lillian's request, having given them blankets, arms, and horses, necessary for men seriously wounded. These poor fellows, believing that we would tie them to stakes for torture, had begun to chant their monotonous death-songs, and were simply terrified at first by what had happened. They thought that we would liberate only to hunt them in Indian fashion; but seeing that no danger threatened, they went away, exalting our bravery and the goodness of "Pale Flower," which name they had given Lillian.

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That day ended, however, with a sad event, which cast a shade on our delight at such a considerable victory, and its foreseen results. Among my men there were none killed; a number, nevertheless, had received wounds more or less serious; the most grievously wounded was Henry Simpson, whose eagerness had borne him away during battle. In the evening his condition grew so much worse, that he was dying; he wished to make some confession to me, but, poor fellow, he could not speak, for his jaw had been broken by a tomahawk. He merely muttered: "Pardon, my captain!" Immediately convulsions seized him. I divined what he wanted, remembering the bullet which in the morning had whistled at my ear, and I forgave him, as becomes a Christian. I knew that he carried with him to the grave a deep, though unacknowledged feeling for Lillian, and supposed that he might have sought death.

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He died about midnight; we buried him under an immense cottonwood, on the bark of which I carved out a cross with my knife.



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ON the following day we moved on. Before us was a prairie still more extensive, more level, wilder, a region which the foot of a white man had hardly touched at that time,—in a word, we were in Nebraska.

During the first days we moved quickly enough over treeless expanses, but not without difficulty, for there was an utter lack of wood for fuel. The banks of the Platte River, which cuts the whole length of those measureless plains, were, it is true, covered with a dense growth of osier and willow; but that river having a shallow bed, had overflowed, as is usual in spring, and we had to keep far away. Meanwhile we passed the nights at smouldering fires of buffalo dung, which, not dried yet sufficiently by the sun, rather smouldered with a blue flame than burnt. We hurried on then with every effort toward Big Blue River, where we could find abundance of fuel.

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The country around us bore every mark of a primitive land. Time after time, before the train, which extended now in a very loose line, rushed herds of antelopes with ruddy hair and with white under the belly; at times there appeared in the waves of grass the immense shaggy heads of buffaloes, with bloodshot eyes and steaming nostrils; then again these beasts were seen in crowds, like black moving patches on the distant prairie.

In places we passed near whole towns formed of mounds raised by prairie dogs. The Indians did not show themselves at first, and only a number of days later did we see three wild horsemen, ornamented with feathers; but they vanished before our eyes in an instant, like phantoms. I convinced myself afterward that the bloody lesson which I had given them on the Missouri, made the name of "Big Ara" (for thus they had modified Big Ralph) terrible among the many tribes of prairie robbers; the kindness shown the prisoners had captivated those people, wild and revengeful, though not devoid of knightly feeling.

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When we had come to Big Blue River, I resolved to halt ten days at its woody banks. The second half of the road, which lay before us, was more difficult than the first, for beyond the prairie were the Rocky Mountains, and farther on the "Bad Lands" of Utah and Nevada. Meanwhile, our mules and horses, in spite of abundant

pasture, had become lean and road-weary; hence it was needful to recruit their strength with a considerable rest. For this purpose we halted in the triangle formed by the Big Blue River and Beaver Creek.

It was a strong position, which, secured on two sides by the rivers and on the third by the wagons, had become almost impregnable, especially since wood and water were found on the spot. Of camp labor there was scarcely any, excessive watching was not needed, and the emigrants could use their leisure with perfect freedom. The days, too, were the most beautiful of our journey. The weather continued to be marvellous, and the nights grew so warm that one might sleep in the open air.

The people went out in the morning to hunt, and returned at midday, weighed down with antelopes and prairie birds, which lived in millions in the country about; the rest of the day they spent eating, sleeping, singing, or shooting for amusement at wild geese, which flew in whole flocks above the camp.

In my life there has never been anything better or happier than those ten days between the rivers. From morning till evening I did not part from Lillian, and that beginning not of passing visits, but, as it were, of life, convinced me more and more that I had loved once and forever her, the mild and gentle. I became acquainted with Lillian in those days more nearly and more deeply. At night, instead of sleeping, I thought frequently of what she was, and that she had become to me as dear and as needful in life as air is for breathing. God sees that I loved greatly her beautiful face, her long tresses, and her eyes,—as blue as that sky bending over Nebraska,—and her form, lithe and slender, which seemed to say: "Support and defend me forever; without thee I cannot help myself in the world!" God sees that I loved everything that was in her, every poor bit of clothing of hers, and she attracted me with such force that I could not resist; but there was another charm in her for me, and that was her sweetness and sensitiveness.

Many women have I met in life, but never have I met and never shall I meet another such, and I feel endless grief when I think of her. The soul in Lillian Morris was as sensitive as that flower whose leaves nestle in when you draw near to it. Sensitive to every word of mine, she comprehended everything and reflected every thought, just as deep, transparent water reflects all that passes by the brink of it. At the same time that pure heart yielded itself to feeling with such timidity that I felt how great her love must be when she weakened and gave herself in sacrifice. And then everything honorable in my soul was changed into one feeling of gratitude to her. She was simply my one, my dearest in the world; so modest, that I had to persuade her that to love is not a sin, and I was breaking my head continually over this: how can I persuade her? In such emotions time passed for us at the meeting of the rivers, till at last my supreme happiness was accomplished.

One morning at daybreak we started to walk up Beaver Creek; I wanted to show her the beavers; a whole kingdom of them was flourishing not farther than half a mile from our wagons. Walking along the bank carefully, near the bushes, we came soon to our object. There was a little bay as it were, or a lakelet, formed by the creek, at the brink of which stood two great hickory-trees; at the very bank grew weeping-willows, half their branches in the water. The beaver-dam, a little higher up in the creek, stopped its flow, and kept the water ever at one height in the lakelet, above whose clear surface rose the round cupola-shaped houses of these very clever animals.

Probably the foot of man had never stood before in that retreat, hidden on all sides by trees. Pushing apart cautiously the slender limbs of the willows, we looked at the water, which was as smooth as a mirror, and blue. The beavers were not at their work yet; the little water-town slumbered in visible quiet; and such silence reigned on the lake that I heard Lillian's breath when she thrust her golden head through the opening in the branches with mine and our temples touched. I caught her waist with my arm to hold her on the slope of the bank, and we waited patiently, delighted with what our eyes were taking in.

Accustomed to life in wild places, I loved Nature as my own mother, though simply; but I felt that something like God's delight in Creation was present.

It was early morning; the light had barely come, and was

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reddening among the branches of the hickories; the dew was dropping from the leaves of the willows, and the world was growing brighter each instant. Later on, there came to the other shore prairie chickens, gray, with black throats, pretty crests on their heads, and they drank water, raising their bills as they swallowed.

"Ah, Ralph! how good it is here," whispered Lillian.

There was nothing in my head then but a cottage in some lonely canyon, she with me, and such a rosary of peaceful days, flowing calmly into eternity and endless rest. It seemed to us that we had brought to that wedding of Nature our own wedding, to that calm our calm, and to that bright light the bright light of happiness within us.

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Now the smooth surface described itself in a circle, and from the water came up slowly the bearded face of a beaver, wet and rosy from the gleam of the morning; then a second, and the two little beasts swam toward the lake, pushing apart with their noses blue lines, puffing and muttering. They climbed the dam, and, sitting on their haunches, began to call; at that signal heads, larger and smaller, rose up as if by enchantment; a plashing was heard in the lake. The herd appeared at first to be playing,—simply diving and screaming in its own fashion from delight; but the first pair, looking from the dam, gave a sudden, prolonged whistle from their nostrils, and in a twinkle half of the beavers were on the dam, and the other half had swum to the banks and vanished under the willows, where the water began to boil, and a sound as it were of sawing indicated that the little beasts were working there, cutting branches and bark.

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Lillian and I looked long, very long, at these acts, and at the pleasures of animal life until man disturbs it. Wishing to change her position, she moved a branch accidentally, and in the twinkle of an eye every beaver had vanished; only the disturbed water indicated that something was beneath; but after a while the water became smooth, and silence surrounded us again, interrupted only by the woodpeckers striking the firm bark of the hickories.

Meanwhile the sun had risen above the trees and began to heat powerfully. Since Lillian did not feel tired yet, we resolved to go around the little lake. On the way we came to a small stream which intersected the wood and fell into the lake from the opposite side. Lillian could not cross it, so I had to carry her; and despite her resistance, I took her like a child in my arms and walked into the water. But that stream was a stream of temptations. Fear lest I should fall made her seize my neck with both arms, hold to me with all her strength, and hide her shamed face behind my shoulder; but I began straightway to press my lips to her temple, whispering: "Lillian! my Lillian!" And in that way I carried her over the water.

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When I reached the other bank I wished to carry her farther, but she tore herself from me almost rudely. A certain disquiet seized both of us; she began to look around as if in fear, and now pallor and now ruddiness struck her face in turn. We went on. I took her hand and pressed it to my heart. At moments fear of myself seized me. The day became sultry; heat flowed down from the sky to the earth; the wind was not blowing, the leaves on the hickories hung motionless, the only sound was from woodpeckers striking the bark as before; all seemed to be growing languid from heat and falling asleep. I thought that some enchantment was in the air, in that forest, and then I thought only that Lillian was with me and that we were alone.

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Meanwhile weariness began to come on Lillian; her breathing grew shorter and more audible, and on her face, usually pale, fiery blushes beat forth. I asked if she was not tired, and if she would not rest.

"Oh, no, no!" answered she quickly, as if defending herself from even the thought; but after a few tens of steps she tottered suddenly and whispered,—

"I cannot, indeed, I cannot go farther."

Then I took her again in my arms and carried that dear burden to the edge of the shore, where willows, hanging to the ground, formed a shady corridor. In this green alcove I placed her on the moss. I knelt down; and when I looked at her the heart in me was straitened. Her face was as pale as linen, and her staring eyes looked on me with fear.

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"Lillian, what is the matter?" cried I. "I am with you." I bent to her feet then and covered them with kisses. "Lillian!" continued I, "my only, my chosen, my wife!"

When I said these last words a shiver passed through her from head to foot; and suddenly she threw her arms around my neck with a certain unusual power, as in a fever repeating, "My dear! my dear! my husband!" Everything vanished from my eyes then, and it seemed to me that the whole globe of the earth was flying away with us.

I know not to this day how it could be that when I recovered from that intoxication and came to my senses twilight was shining again among the dark branches of the hickories, but it was the twilight of evening. The woodpeckers had ceased to strike the trees; one twilight on the bottom of the lake was smiling at that other which was in the sky; the inhabitants of the water had gone to sleep; the evening was beautiful, calm, filled with a red light; it was time to return to the camp.

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When we had come out from beneath the weeping-willows, I looked at Lillian; there was not on her face either sadness or disquiet; in her upturned eyes was the light of calm resignation and, as it were, a bright aureole of sacrifice and dignity encircled her blessed head. When I gave her my hand, she inclined her head quietly to my shoulder, and, without turning her eyes from the heavens, she said to me:

"Ralph, repeat to me that I am your wife, and repeat it to me often."

Since there was neither in the deserts, nor in the place to which we were going, any marriage save that of hearts, I knelt down, and when she had knelt at my side, I said: "Before God, earth, and heaven, I declare to thee, Lillian Morris, that I take thee as wife. Amen."

To this she answered: "Now I am thine forever and till death, thy wife, Ralph!"

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From that moment we were married; she was not my sweetheart, she was my lawful wife. That thought was pleasant to both of us,—and pleasant to me, for in my heart there rose a new feeling of a certain sacred respect for Lillian, and for myself, a certain honorableness and great dignity through which love became ennobled and blessed. Hand in hand, with heads erect and confident look, we returned to the camp, where the people were greatly alarmed about us. A number of tens of men had gone out in every direction to look for us; and with astonishment I learned afterward that some had passed around the lake, but could not discover us; we on our part had not heard their shouts.

I summoned the people, and when they had assembled in a circle, I took Lillian by the hand, went into the centre of the circle, and said,—

"Gentlemen, be witnesses, that in your presence I call this woman, who stands with me, my wife; and bear witness of this before justice, before law, and before every one whosoever may ask you, either in the East or the West."

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"We will! and hurrah for you both!" answered the miners.

Old Smith asked Lillian then, according to custom, if she agreed to take me as husband, and when she said "Yes," we were legally married before the people.

In the distant prairies of the West, and on all the frontiers where there are no towns, magistrates, or churches, marriages are not performed otherwise; and to this hour, if a man calls a woman with whom he lives under the same roof his wife, this declaration takes the place of all legal documents. No one of my men therefore wondered, or looked at my marriage otherwise than with the respect shown to custom; on the contrary, all were rejoiced, for, though I had held them more sternly than other leaders, they knew that I did so honestly, and with each day they showed me more good will, and my wife was always the eye in the head of the caravan. Hence there began a holiday and amusements. The fires were stirred up; the Scots took from their wagons the pipes, whose music we both liked, since it was for us a pleasant reminiscence; the Americans took out their favorite ox-bones, and amid songs, shouts, and shooting, the wedding evening passed for us.

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Aunt Atkins embraced Lillian every little while, now laughing, now weeping, now lighting her pipe, which went out the next moment. But I was touched most by the following ceremony which is a custom in that movable portion of the American population which spends the greater part of its life in wagons. When the moon went down the men fastened on the ramrods of their guns branches of

lighted osier, and a whole procession, under the lead of old Smith, conducted us from wagon to wagon, asking Lillian at each of them, "Is this your home?" My beautiful love answered, "No!" and we went on. At Aunt Atkins' wagon a real tenderness took possession of us all, for in that one Lillian had ridden hitherto. When she said there also in a low voice, "No," Aunt Atkins bellowed like a buffalo, and seizing Lillian in her embrace, began to repeat: "My little one! my sweet!" sobbing meanwhile, and carried away with weeping. Lillian sobbed too; and then all those hardened hearts grew tender for an instant, and there was no eye to which tears did not come.

When we approached it, I barely recognized my wagon, it was decked with branches and flowers. Here the men raised the burning torches aloft, and Smith inquired in a louder and more solemn voice,

"Is this your home?"

"That's it! That's it!" answered Lillian.

Then all uncovered their heads, and there was such silence that I heard the hissing of the fire and the sound of the burnt twigs falling on the ground; the old white-haired miner, stretching out his sinewy hands over us, said,—

"May God bless you both, and your house, Amen!"

A triple hurrah answered that blessing. All separated then, leaving me and my loved one alone.

When the last man had gone, she rested her head on my breast, whispering: "Forever! forever!" and at that moment the stars in our souls outnumbered the stars of the sky.



NEXT morning early I left my wife sleeping and went to find flowers for her. While looking for them, I said to myself every moment: "You are married!" and the thought filled me with such delight, that I raised my eyes to the Lord of Hosts, thanking Him for having permitted me to live to the time in which a man becomes himself genuinely and rounds out his life with the life of another loved beyond all. I had something now of my own in the world, and

though that canvas-covered wagon was my only house and hearth, I felt richer at once, and looked at my previous wandering lot with pity, and with wonder that I could have lived in that manner hitherto. Formerly it had not even come to my head what happiness there is in that word "wife,"—happiness which called to my heart's blood with that name, and to the best part of my own soul. For a long time I had so loved Lillian that I saw the whole world through her only, connected everything with her, and understood everything only as it related to her. And now when I said "wife," that meant, mine, mine forever; and I thought that I should go wild with delight, for it could not find place in my head, that I, a poor man, should possess such a treasure. What then was lacking to me? Nothing. Had those prairies been warmer, had there been safety there for her, had it not been for the obligation to lead people to the place to which I had promised to lead them, I was ready not to go to California, but to settle even in Nebraska, if with Lillian. I had been going to California to dig gold, but now I was ready to laugh at the idea. "What other riches can I find there, when I have her?" I asked myself. "What do we care for gold? See, I will choose some canyon, where there is spring all the year; I will cut down trees for a house, and live with her, and a plough and a gun will give us life. We shall not die of hunger—" These were my thoughts while gathering flowers, and when I had enough of them I returned to the camp. On the road I met Aunt Atkins.

"Is the little one sleeping?" asked she, taking from her mouth for a moment the inseparable pipe.

"She is sleeping," answered I.

To this Aunt Atkins, blinking with one eye, added,—

"Ah, you rascal!"

Meanwhile the "little one" was not sleeping, for we both saw her coming down from the wagon, and shielding her eyes against the sunlight with her hand, she began to look on every side. Seeing me, she ran up all rosy and fresh, as the morning. When I opened my arms, she fell into them panting, and putting up her mouth, began to repeat:—

"Dzien dobry! dzien dobry! dzien dobry!"

Then she stood on her toes, and looking into my eyes, asked with a roguish smile, "Am I your wife?"

What was there to answer, except to kiss without end and fondle? And thus passed the whole time at that meeting of rivers, for old Smith had taken on himself all my duties till the resumption of our journey.

We visited our beavers once more, and the stream, through which I carried her now without resistance. Once we went up Blue River in a little redwood canoe. At a bend of the stream I showed Lillian buffaloes near by, driving their horns into the bank, from which their whole heads were covered as if with armor of dried clay. But two days before starting, these expeditions ceased, for first the Indians had appeared in the neighborhood, and second my dear lady had begun to be weak somewhat. She grew pale and lost strength, and when I inquired what the trouble was, she answered only with a smile and the assurance that it was nothing. I watched over her sleep, I nursed her as well as I was able, almost preventing the breezes from blowing on her, and grew thin from anxiety. Aunt Atkins blinked mysteriously with her left eye when talking of Lillian's illness, and sent forth such dense rolls of smoke that she grew invisible behind them. I was disturbed all the more, because sad thoughts came to Lillian at times. She had beaten it into her head that maybe it was not permitted to love so intensely as we were loving, and once, putting her finger on the Bible, which we read every day, she said sadly,—

"Read, Ralph."

I looked, and a certain wonderful feeling seized my heart too, when I read, "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever." She said when I had finished reading, "But if God is angry at this, I know that with His goodness He will punish only me."

I pacified her by saying that love was simply an angel, who flies from the souls of two people to God and takes Him praise from the earth. After that there was no talk between us touching such things, since preparations for the journey had begun. The fitting up of wagons and beasts, and a thousand occupations, stole my time from

me. When at last the hour came for departure we took tearful farewell of that river fork, which had witnessed so much of our happiness; but when I saw the train stretching out again on the prairie, the wagons one after another and lines of mules before the wagons, I felt a certain consolation at the thought that the end of the journey would be nearer each day, that a few months more and we should see California, toward which we were striving with such toil.

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But the first days of the journey did not pass over-successfully. Beyond the Missouri, as far as the foot of the Rocky Mountains, the prairie rises continually over enormous expanses; therefore the beasts were easily wearied, and were often tired out. Besides, we could not approach the Platte River, for, though the flood had decreased, it was the time of the great spring hunts, and a multitude of Indians circled around the river, looking for herds of buffaloes moving northward. Night service became difficult and wearying; no night passed without alarms.

On the fourth day after we had moved from the river fork, I broke up a considerable party of Indian plunderers at the moment when they were trying to stampede our mules. But worst of all were the nights without fire. We were unable to approach the Platte River, and frequently had nothing to burn, and toward morning drizzling rain began to fall; buffalo dung, which in case of need took the place of wood, got wet, and would not burn.

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The buffaloes filled me with alarm also. Sometimes we saw herds of some thousands on the horizon, rushing forward like a storm, crushing everything before them. Were such a herd to strike the train, we should perish every one without rescue. To complete the evil, the prairie was swarming at that time with beasts of prey of all species; after the buffaloes and Indians, came terrible gray bears, cougars, big wolves from Kansas and the Indian Territory. At the small streams, where we stopped sometimes for the night, we saw at sunset whole menageries coming to drink after the heat of the day. Once a bear rushed at Wichita, our half-breed; and if I had not run up, with Smith and the other scout, Tom, to help him, he would have been torn to pieces. I opened the head of the monster with an axe, which I brought down with such force that the handle of tough hickory was broken; still, the beast rushed at me once more, and fell only when Smith and Tom shot him in the ear from rifles. Those savage brutes were so bold that at night they came up to the very train; and in the course of a week we killed two not more than a hundred yards from the wagons. In consequence of this, the dogs raised such an uproar from twilight till dawn that it was impossible to close an eye.

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Once I loved such a life; and when, a year before, I was in Arkansas, during the greatest heat, it was for me as in paradise. But now, when I remembered that in the wagon my beloved wife, instead of sleeping, was trembling about me, and ruining her health with anxiety, I wished all the Indians and bears and cougars in the lowest pit, and desired from my soul to secure as soon as possible the peace of that being so fragile, so delicate, and so worshipped, that I wished to bear her forever in my arms.

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A great weight fell from my heart when, after three weeks of such crossings, I saw at last the waters of a river white as if traced out with chalk; this stream is called now Republican River, but at that time it had no name in English. Broad belts of dark willows, stretching like a mourning trail along the white waters, could afford us fuel in plenty; and though that kind of willow crackles in the fire, and shoots sparks with great noise, still it burns better than wet buffalo dung. I appointed at this place another rest of two days, because the rocks, scattered here and there by the banks of the river, indicated the proximity of a hilly country, difficult to cross, lying on both sides of the back of the Rocky Mountains. We were already on a considerable elevation above the sea, as could be known by the cold nights.

That inequality between day and night temperature troubled us greatly. Some people, among others old Smith, caught fevers, and had to go to their wagons. The seeds of the disease had clung to them, probably, at the unwholesome banks of the Missouri, and hardship caused the outbreak. The nearness of the mountains, however, gave hope of a speedy recovery; meanwhile, my wife nursed them with a devotion innate to gentle hearts only.

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But she grew thin herself. More than once, when I woke in the

morning, my first look fell on her beautiful face, and my heart beat uneasily at its pallor and the blue half circles under her eyes. It would happen that while I was looking at her in that way she would wake, smile at me, and fall asleep again. Then I felt that I would have given half my health of oak if we were in California; but California was still far, far away.

After two days we started again, and coming to the Republican River at noon, were soon moving along the fork of the White Man toward the southern fork of the Platte, lying for the most part in Colorado. The country became more mountainous at every step, and we were really in the canyon along the banks of which rose up in the distance higher and higher granite cliffs, now standing alone, now stretching out continuously like walls, now closing more narrowly, now opening out on both sides. Wood was not lacking, for all the cracks and crannies of the cliffs were covered with dwarf pine and dwarf oak as well. Here and there springs were heard; along the rocky walls scampered the wolverine. The air was cool, pure, wholesome. After a week the fever ceased. But the mules and horses, forced to eat food in which heather predominated, instead of the juicy grass of Nebraska, grew thinner and thinner, and groaned more loudly as they pulled up the mountains our well filled and weighty wagons.

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At last on a certain afternoon we saw before us beacons, as it were, or crested clouds half melting in the distance, hazy, blue, azure, with white and gold on their crests, and immense in size, extending from the earth to the sky.

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At this sight a shout rose in the whole caravan; men climbed to the tops of the wagons to see better, from every side thundered shouts: "Rocky Mountains! Rocky Mountains!" Caps were waving in the air, and on all faces enthusiasm was evident.

Thus the Americans greeted their Rocky Mountains, but I went to my wagon, and, pressing my wife to my breast, vowed faith to her once more in spirit before those heaven-touching altars, which expressed such solemn mysteriousness, majesty, unapproachableness, and immensity. The sun was just setting, and soon twilight covered the whole country; but those giants in the last rays seemed like measureless masses of burning coal and lava. Later on, that fiery redness passed into violet, ever darker, and at last all disappeared, and was merged into one darkness, through which gazed at us from above the stars, the twinkling eyes of the night.

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But we were at least a hundred and fifty miles yet from the main chain; in fact, the mountains disappeared from our eyes next day, intercepted by cliffs; again they appeared and again they vanished, as our road went by turns.

We advanced slowly, for new obstacles stood in our way; and though we kept as much as possible to the bed of the river, frequently, where the banks were too steep, we had to go around and seek a passage by neighboring valleys. The ground in these valleys was covered with gray heather and wild peas, not good even for mules, and forming no little hindrance to the journey, for the long and powerful stems, twisting around, made it difficult to pass through them.

Sometimes we came upon openings and cracks in the earth, impassable and hundreds of yards long; these we had to go around also. Time after time the scouts, Wichita and Tom, returned with accounts of new obstacles. The land bristled with rocks, or broke away suddenly.

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On a certain day it seemed to us that we were going through a valley, when all at once the valley was missing; in place of it was a precipice so deep that the gaze went down with terror along the perpendicular wall, and the head became dizzy. Giant oaks, growing at the bottom of the abyss, seemed little black clumps, and the buffaloes pasturing among them like beetles. We entered more and more into the region of precipices, of stones, fragments, debris, and rocks thrown one on the other with a kind of wild disorder. The echo sent back twice and thrice from granite arches the curses of drivers and squealing of mules. On the prairie our wagons, rising high above the surface of the country, seemed lordly and immense; here before those perpendicular cliffs, the wagons became wonderfully small to the eye, and vanished in those gorges as if devoured by gigantic jaws. Little waterfalls, or as they are called by the Indians, "laughing waters," stopped the road to us every few hundred yards;

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toil exhausted our strength and that of the animals. Meanwhile, when at times the real chain of mountains appeared on the horizon, it seemed as far away and hazy as ever. Happily curiosity overcame in us even weariness, and the continual change of views kept it in practice. None of my people, not excepting those who were born in the Alleghanies, had ever seen such wild regions; I myself gazed with wonder on those canyons, along the edges of which the unbridled fancy of Nature had reared as it were castles, fortresses, and stone cities. From time to time we met Indians, but these were different from those on the prairies, very straggling and very much wilder.

The sight of white men roused in them fear mingled with a desire for blood. They seemed still more cruel than their brethren in Nebraska; their stature was loftier, their complexion much darker, their wide nostrils and quick glances gave them the expression of wild beasts caught in a trap. Their movements, too, had almost the quickness and timidity of beasts. While speaking, they put their thumbs to their cheeks, which were painted in white and blue stripes. Their weapons were tomahawks and bows, the latter made of a certain kind of firm mountain hawthorn, so rigid that my men could not bend them. These savages, who in considerable numbers might have been very dangerous, were distinguished by invincible thievishness; happily they were few, the largest party that we met not exceeding fifteen. They called themselves Tabeguachis, Winemucas, and Yampas. Our scout, Wichita, though expert in Indian dialects, could not understand their language; hence we could not make out in any way why all of them, pointing to the Rocky Mountains and then to us, closed and opened their palms, as if indicating some number.

The road became so difficult, that with the greatest exertion, we made barely fifteen miles a day. At the same time our horses began to die, being less enduring than mules and more choice of food; men failed in strength too, for during whole days they had to draw wagons with the mules, or to hold them in dangerous places. By degrees unwillingness seized the weakest; some got the rheumatism, and one, through whose mouth blood came from exertion, died in three days, cursing the hour in which it came to his head to leave New York. We were then in the worst part of the road, near the little river called by the Indians Kiowa. There were no cliffs there as high as on the Eastern boundary of Colorado; but the whole country, as far as the eye could reach, was bristling with fragments thrown in disorder one upon another. These fragments, some standing upright, others overturned, presented the appearance of ruined graveyards with fallen headstones. Those were really the "Bad Lands" of Colorado, answering to those which extended northward over Nebraska. With the greatest effort we escaped from them in the course of a week.



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AT last we found ourselves at the foot of the Rocky Mountains.

Fear seized me when I looked from a proximate point at that world of granite mountains, whose sides were wrapped in mist, and whose summits were lost somewhere in eternal snow and clouds. Their size and silent majesty pressed me to the earth; hence I bent before the Lord, imploring Him to permit me to lead, past those measureless walls, my wagons, my people, and my wife. After such a prayer I entered the stone gullies and corridors with more confidence. When they closed behind us we were cut off from the rest of the world. Above was the sky; in it a few eagles were screaming, around us was granite and then granite without end,—a genuine labyrinth of passages, vaults, ravines, openings, precipices, towers, silent edifices, and as it were chambers, gigantic and dreamy. There is such a solemnity there, and the soul is under such pressure, that a man knows not himself why he whispers instead of speaking aloud. It seems to him that the road is closing before him continually, that some voice is saying to him: "Go no farther, for there is no passage!" It seems to him that he is attacking some secret on which God Himself has set a seal. At night, when those upright legions were standing as black as mourning, and the moon cast about their summits a silvery mantle of sadness, when certain wonderful shadows rose around the "laughing waters," a quiver passed through the most hardened adventurers. We spent whole hours by the fires, looking with a certain superstitious awe at the dark depths of the ravines, lighted by ruddy gleams; we seemed to think that something terrible might show itself any moment.

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Once we found under a hollow in the cliff the skeleton of a man; and though from the remnant of the hair which had dried to the skull, we saw that he was an Indian, still an ominous feeling pressed our hearts, for that skeleton with grinning teeth seemed to forewarn us that whoso wandered in there would never come out again.

That same day the half-breed, Tom, was killed suddenly, having fallen with his horse from the edge of a cliff. A gloomy sadness seized the whole caravan; formerly we had advanced noisily and joyfully, now the drivers ceased to swear, and the caravan pushed forward in a silence broken only by the squeaking of wheels. The mules grew ill-tempered more frequently, and when one pair stood as still as if lashed to the earth, all the wagons behind them had to stop. I was most tortured by this,—that in those moments which were so difficult and oppressive, and in which my wife needed my presence more than at other times, I could not be near her; for I had to double and treble myself almost, so as to give an example, uphold courage and confidence. The men, it is true, bore toil with the endurance innate with Americans, though they were simply using the last of their strength. But my health was proof against every hardship. There were nights in which I did not have two hours of sleep; I dragged the wagons with others, I posted the sentries, I went around the square,—in a word, I performed service twice more burdensome than any one of the company; but it is evident that happiness gave me strength. For when, wearied and beaten down, I came to my wagon, I found there everything that I held dearest: a faithful heart and a beloved hand, that wiped my wearied forehead. Lillian, though suffering a little, never went to sleep wittingly before my arrival; and when I reproached her she closed my mouth with a

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kiss and a prayer not to be angry. When I told her to sleep she did so, holding my hand. Frequently in the night, when she woke, she covered me with beaver skins, so that I might rest better. Always mild, sweet, loving, she cared for me and brought me to worship her simply. I kissed the hem of her garment, as if it had been the most sacred thing, and that wagon of ours became for me almost a church. That little one in presence of those heaven-touching walls of granite, upon which she cast her upraised eyes, covered them for me in such a way, that in presence of her they vanished from before me, and amid all those immensities I saw only her. What is there wonderful, if when strength failed others, I had strength still, and felt that so long as it was a question of her I would never fail?

After three weeks' journey we came at last to a more spacious canyon formed by White River. At the entrance to it the Winta Indians prepared an ambush which annoyed us somewhat; but when their reddish arrows began to reach the roof of my wife's wagon, I struck on them with my men so violently that they scattered at once. We killed three or four of them. The only prisoner whom we took, a youth of sixteen, when he had recovered a little from terror, pointed in turn at us and to the West, repeating the same gestures which the Yampa had made. It seemed to us that he wanted to say that there were white men near by, but it was difficult to give credit to that supposition. In time it turned out to be correct, and it is easy to imagine the astonishment and delight of my men on the following day, when, descending from an elevated plateau, we saw on a broad valley which lay at our feet, not only wagons, but houses built of freshly-cut logs. These houses formed a circle, in the centre of which rose a large shed without windows; through the middle of the plain a stream flowed; near it were herds of mules, guarded by men on horseback.

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The presence of men of my own race in that valley filled me with astonishment, which soon passed into fear, when I remembered that they might be "criminal outlaws" hiding in the desert from death. I knew from experience that such outcasts push frequently to very remote and entirely desert regions, where they form detachments, on a complete military footing. Sometimes they are founders of new societies as it were, which at first live by plundering people moving to more inhabited places; but later, by a continual increase of population, they change by degrees into ordered societies. I met more than once with "outlaws" on the upper course of the Mississippi, when, as a squatter, I floated down logs to New Orleans; more than once I had bloody adventures with them, hence their cruelty and bravery were equally well known to me.

I should not have feared them had not Lillian been with us; but at thought of the danger in which she would be if we were defeated and I fell, the hair rose on my head, and for the first time in my life I was as full of fear as the greatest coward. But I was convinced that if those men were outlaws, we could not avoid battle in any way, and that the conflict would be more difficult with them than with Indians.

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I warned my men at once of the probable danger, and arranged them in order of battle. I was ready either to perish myself, or destroy that nest of wasps, and resolved to strike the first blow.

Meanwhile they saw us from the valley, and two horsemen started toward us as fast as their horses could gallop. I drew breath at that sight, for "outlaws" would not send messengers to meet us. In fact, it turned out that they were riflemen of the American fur company, who had their "summer camp" in that place. Instead of a battle, therefore, a most hospitable reception was waiting for us, and every assistance from those rough but honest riflemen of the desert. Indeed, they received us with open arms, and we thanked God for having looked on our misery and prepared such an agreeable resting-place.

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A month and a half had passed since our departure from Big Blue River. Our strength was exhausted, our mules were only half alive; but here we might rest a whole week in perfect safety, with abundance of food for ourselves, and grass for our beasts. That was simply salvation for us.

Mr. Thorston, the chief of the camp, was a man of education and enlightenment. Knowing that I was not a common rough fellow of the prairies, he became friendly at once, and gave his own cottage to me and Lillian, whose health had suffered greatly.

I kept her two days in bed. She was so wearied that she barely

opened her eyes for the first twenty-four hours; during that time I took care that nothing should disturb her. I sat at her bedside and watched hour after hour. In two days she was strengthened enough to go out; but I did not let her touch any work. My men, too, for the first few days slept like stones, wherever each one dropped down. Only after they had slept did we repair our wagons and clothing and wash our linen. The honest riflemen helped us in everything earnestly. They were Canadians, for the greater part, who had hired with the company. They spent the winter in trapping beavers, killing skunks and minks; in summer they betook themselves to so-called "summer camps," in which there were temporary storehouses of furs. The skins, dressed there in some fashion, were taken under convoy to the East. The service of those people, who hired for a number of years, was arduous beyond calculation; they had to go to very remote and wild places, where all kinds of animals existed in plenty, and where they themselves lived in continual danger and endless warfare with redskins. It is true that they received high wages; most of them did not serve, however, for money, but from love of life in the wilderness, and adventures, of which there was never a lack. The choice, too, was made of people of great strength and health, capable of enduring all toils. Their great stature, fur caps, and long rifles reminded Lillian of Cooper's tales; hence she looked with curiosity on the whole camp and on all the arrangements. Their discipline was as absolute as that of a knightly order. Thorston, the chief agent of the company, and at the same time their employer, maintained complete military authority. Withal they were very honest people, hence time passed for us among them with perfect comfort; our camp, too, pleased them greatly, and they said that they had never met such a disciplined and well-ordered caravan. Thorston, in presence of all, praised my plan of taking the northern route instead of that by St. Louis and Kansas. He told us that on that route a caravan of three hundred people, under a certain Marchwood, after numerous sufferings caused by heat and locusts, had lost all their draught-beasts, and were cut to pieces at last by the Arapahoe Indians. The Canadian riflemen had learned this from the Arapahoes themselves, whom they had beaten in a great battle, and from whom they had captured more than a hundred scalps, among others that of Marchwood himself.

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This information had great influence on my people, so that old Smith, a veteran pathfinder, who from the beginning was opposed to the route through Nebraska, declared in presence of all that I was smarter than he, and that it was his part to learn of me. During our stay in the hospitable summer camp we regained our strength thoroughly. Besides Thorston, with whom I formed a lasting friendship, I made the acquaintance of Mick, famous in all the States. This man did not belong to the camp, but had wandered through the deserts with two other famous explorers, Lincoln and Kit Carson. Those three wonderful men carried on real wars with whole tribes of Indians; their skill and superhuman courage always secured them the victory. The name of Mick, of whom more than one book is written, was so terrible to the Indians, that with them his word had more weight than a United States treaty. The Government employed him often as an intermediary, and finally appointed him Governor of Oregon. When I made his acquaintance he was nearly fifty years old; but his hair was as black as the feather of a raven, and in his glance was mingled kindness of heart with strength and irrestrainable daring. He passed also for the strongest man in the United States, and when we wrestled I was the first, to the great astonishment of all, whom he failed to throw to the ground. This man with a great heart loved Lillian immensely, and blessed her, as often as he visited us. In parting he gave her a pair of beautiful little moccasins made by himself from the skin of a doe. That present was very timely, for my poor wife had not a pair of sound shoes.

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At last we resumed our journey, with good omens, furnished with minute directions what canyons to take on the way, and with supplies of salt game. That was not all. The kind Thorston had taken the worst of our mules and in place of them given us his own, which were strong and well rested. Mick, who had been in California, told us real wonders not only of its wealth, but of its mild climate, its beautiful oak forests, and mountain canyons, unequalled in the United States. A great consolation entered our hearts at once, for we did not know of the trials which awaited us before entering that land of promise.

In driving away, we waved our caps long in farewell to the honest Canadians. As to me, that day of parting is graven in my heart for the ages, since in the forenoon that beloved star of my life, putting both arms around my neck, began, all red with embarrassment and emotion, to whisper something in my ear. When I heard it I bent to her feet, and, weeping with great excitement, kissed her knees.

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TWO weeks after leaving the summer camp, we came out on the boundary of Utah, and the journey, as of old, though not without labors, advanced more briskly than at the beginning. We had yet to pass the western part of the Rocky Mountains; forming a whole network of branches called the Wasatch Range. Two considerable streams, Green and Grand Rivers, whose union forms the immense Colorado, and numerous tributaries of those two rivers, cut the mountains in every direction, opening in them passages which are easy enough. By these passages we reached after a certain time Utah Lake, where the salt lands begin. A wonderful country surrounded us, monotonous, gloomy; great level valleys encircled by cliffs with blunt outlines,—these, always alike, succeed one another, with oppressive monotony. There is in those deserts and cliffs a certain sternness, nakedness, and torpor, so that at sight of them the Biblical deserts recur to one's mind. The lakes here are brackish, their shores fruitless and barren. There are no trees; the ground over an enormous expanse exudes salt and potash, or is covered by a gray vegetation with large felt-like leaves, which, when broken, give forth a salt, clammy sap. That journey is wearisome and oppressive, for whole weeks pass, and the desert stretches on without end, and opens into plains of eternal sameness, though they are rocky. Our strength began to give way again. On the prairies we were surrounded by the monotony of life, here by the monotony of death.

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A certain oppression and indifference to everything took gradual possession of the people. We passed Utah,—always the same lifeless lands! We entered Nevada,—no change! The sun burnt so fiercely that our heads were bursting from pain; the light, reflecting from a surface covered with salt, dazzled the eye; in the air was floating a kind of dust, coming it was unknown whence, which inflamed our eyelids. The draught-beasts, time after time, seized the earth with their teeth, and dropped from sunstroke, as if felled by lightning. The majority of the people kept themselves up only with the thought that in a week or two weeks the Sierra Nevada would appear on the horizon, and behind that the desired California.

Meanwhile days passed and weeks in ever increasing labors. In the course of a certain week we were forced to leave three wagons

behind, for there were no animals to draw them.

Oh, that was a land of misfortune and misery! In Nevada the desert became deeper, and our condition still worse, for disease fell upon us. [134]

One morning people came to inform me that Smith was sick. I went to see what his trouble was, and saw with amazement that typhus had overthrown the old miner. So many climates are not changed with impunity; severe labor, in spite of short rests, makes itself felt, and the germs of disease are developed from hardship and toil. Lillian, whom Smith loved, as if she had been his own daughter, and whom he blessed on the day of our marriage, insisted on nursing him. I, weak man, trembled in my whole soul for her, but I could not forbid her to be a Christian. She sat over the sick man whole days and nights, together with Aunt Atkins and Aunt Grosvenor, who followed her example. On the second day, however, the old man lost consciousness, and on the eighth he died in Lillian's arms. I buried him, shedding ardent tears over the remains of him who had been not only my assistant and right hand in everything, but a real father to Lillian and me. We hoped that after such a sacrifice God would take pity on us; but that was merely the beginning of our trials, for that very day another miner fell ill, and almost every day after that some one lay down in a wagon, and left it only when borne on our arms to a grave. [135]

And thus we dragged along over the desert, and after us followed the pestilence, grasping new victims continually. In her turn Aunt Atkins fell ill, but, thanks to Lillian's efforts, her sickness was conquered. The soul was dying in me every instant, and more than once, when Lillian was with the sick, and I somewhere on guard in front of the camp, alone in the darkness, I pressed my temples with my hands and knelt down in prayer to God. Obedient as a dog, I was whining for mercy on her without daring to say: "Let Thy will and not mine be done." Sometimes in the night, when we were alone, I woke suddenly, for it seemed to me that the pestilence was pushing the canvas of my wagon aside and staring in, looking for Lillian. All the intervals when I was not with her, and they formed most of the time, were for me changed into one torture, under which I bent as a tree before a whirlwind. Lillian, however, had been equal to all toils and efforts so far. Though the strongest men fell, I saw her emaciated it is true, pale, and with marks of maternity increasingly definite on her forehead, but in health, and going from wagon to wagon. I dared not even ask if she were well; I only took her by the shoulders and pressed her long and long to my breast, and even had I wished to speak, something so oppressed me, that I could not have uttered a word. [136]

Gradually, however, hope began to enter me, and in my head were sounding no longer those terrible words of the Bible: "Who worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator." [137]

We were nearing the western part of Nevada, where, beyond the belt of dead lakes, the salt lands and desert rocks find an end, and a belt of prairie begins, more level, greener, and very fertile. During two days' journey no one fell ill; I thought that our misery was over. And it was high time!

Nine men had died, six were ailing yet; under the fear of infection discipline had begun to relax; nearly all the horses were dead, and the mules seemed rather skeletons than beasts. Of the fifty wagons with which we had moved out of the summer camp, only thirty-two were dragging now over the desert. Besides, since no one wished to go hunting lest he might fall somewhere away from the caravan and be left without aid, our supplies, not being replenished, were coming to an end. Wishing to spare them, we had lived for a week past on black ground squirrels; but their malodorous meat had so disgusted us that we put it to our mouths with loathing, and even that wretched food was not found in sufficiency. Beyond the lakes, however, game became more frequent, and grass was abundant. Again we met Indians, who, in opposition to their custom, attacked us in daylight and on the open plain; having firearms, they killed four of our people. In the conflict I received such a severe wound in the head from a hatchet that in the evening of that day I lost consciousness from loss of blood; but I was happy since Lillian was nursing me, and not patients from whom she might catch the typhus. Three days I lay in the wagon, pleasant days, since I was with her continually. I could kiss her hands when she was changing the bandages, and look at her. On the third day I was able to sit on horseback; but the soul was weak in [138]

me, and I feigned sickness before myself so as to be with her longer.

Only then did I discover how tired I had been, and what weariness had gone out of my bones while I was lying prostrate. Before my illness I had suffered not a little concerning my wife. I had grown as thin as a skeleton, and as formerly I had been looking with fear and alarm at her, so now she was looking with the same feelings at me. But when my head had ceased to fall from shoulder to shoulder there was no help for it; I had to mount the last living horse and lead the caravan forward, especially as certain alarming signs were surrounding us on all sides. There was a heat well-nigh preternatural, and in the air a dull haze as if of smoke from a distant burning; the horizon became dull and dark. It was impossible to see the sky, and the rays of the sun came to the earth red and sickly; the draught-beasts showed a wonderful disquiet, and, breathing hoarsely, bared their teeth. As to us, we inhaled fire with our breasts. The heat was caused, as I thought, by one of those stifling winds from the Gila desert, of which men had told me in the East; but there was stillness round about, and not a grass blade was stirring on the plain. In the evening the sun went down as red as blood, and stifling nights followed. The sick groaned for water, the dogs howled. Whole nights I wandered around a number of miles from the camp to make sure that the plains were not burning; but there was no fire in sight anywhere. I calmed myself finally with the thought that the smoke must be from a fire that had gone out already. In the daytime I noticed that hares, antelopes, buffaloes, even squirrels, were hastening eastward, as if fleeing from that California to which we were going with such effort. But since the air had become a little purer and the heat somewhat less, I settled finally in the thought that there had been a fire which had ceased, that the animals were merely looking for food in some new place. It was only needful for us to push up as soon as possible to the burnt strip, and learn whether the belt of fire could be crossed or whether we should go around it. According to my calculation it could not be more than three hundred miles to the Sierra Nevada, or about twenty days' journey. I resolved, therefore, to reach it, even with our last effort.

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We travelled at night now, for during the hours of midday heat weakened the animals greatly, and among the wagons there was always some shade in which they could rest.

One night, being unable to remain on horseback because of weariness and my wound, I sat in the wagon with Lillian. I heard all at once a sudden wheezing and biting of the wheels striking on some peculiar ground; at the same time shouts of "Stop! stop!" were heard along the whole length of the train. I sprang from the wagon at once. By the light of the moon I saw the drivers bent to the earth and looking at it carefully. At the same moment a voice called:

"Ho, captain, we are travelling on coals."

I bent down, felt the earth,—we were travelling on a burnt prairie. I stopped the caravan at once, and we remained the rest of the night on that spot. With the first light of morning a wonderful sight struck our eyes: As far as we could see, there lay a plain black as coal,—not only were all the bushes and grass burnt, but the earth was so glossy that the feet of our mules and the wheels of the wagons were reflected in it as they might have been in a mirror. We could not see clearly the width of the fire, for the horizon was still hazy from smoke; but I gave command without hesitation to turn to the south, so as to reach the edge of that tract instead of venturing on the burnt country. I knew from experience what it is to travel on burnt prairie land where there is not a blade of grass for draught-beasts. Since evidently the fire had moved northward with the wind, I hoped by going toward the south to reach the beginning of it.

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The people obeyed my order, it is true, but rather unwillingly, for it involved God knows how long a delay in the journey. During our halt at noon the smoke became thinner; but if it did, the heat grew so terrible that the air quivered from its fervency, and all at once something took place which might seem a miracle.

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On a sudden the haze and smoke parted, as if at a signal, and before our eyes rose the Sierra Nevada, green, smiling, wonderful, covered with gleaming snow on the summits, and so near that with the naked eye we could see the dents in the mountains, the green lakes, and the forests. It seemed to us that a fresh breeze filled with odors from the pitchy fir was coming to us above the burnt fields, and that in a few hours we should reach the flowery foothills. At this

sight the people, worn out with the terrible desert and with labors, went out of their minds almost with delight; some fell on the ground sobbing, others stretched forth their hands toward heaven or burst into laughter, others grew pale without power to speak. Lillian and I wept from delight too, which in me was mingled with astonishment, for I had thought that a hundred and fifty miles at least separated us yet from California; but there were the mountains smiling at us across the burnt plain, and they seemed to approach as if by magic, and bend toward us and invite us and lure us on.

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The hours fixed for rest had not passed yet, but the people would not hear of a longer halt. Even the sick stretched out their yellow hands from beneath the canvas roofs and begged us to harness the mules and drive on. Briskly and willingly we moved forward, and to the biting of the wheels on the charred earth were joined the cracking of whips, shouts, and songs; of driving around the burnt tract there was not a word now. Why go around when a few tens of miles farther on was California and its marvellous snowy mountains? We went straight across toward them.

Meanwhile the smoke covered the bright view from us again with a wonderful suddenness. Hours passed; the horizon came nearer. At last the sun went down; night came. The stars twinkled dimly on the sky, but we went forward without rest; still the mountains were evidently farther than they seemed. About midnight the mules began to squeal and balk; an hour later the caravan stopped, for the greater number of the beasts had lain down. The men tried to raise them, but there was no chance of doing so. Not an eye closed all night. At the first rays of light our glances flew eagerly into the distance and—found nothing. A dark mourning desert extended as far as the eye could see, monotonous, dull, defining itself with a sharp line at the horizon; of yesterday's mountains there was not a trace.

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The people were amazed. To me the ominous word "mirage" explained everything, but also it went with a quiver to the marrow of my bones. What was to be done,—go on? But if that burnt plain extended for hundreds of miles? Return, and then seek some miles distant the end of the burnt tract?—but had the mules strength to go back over the same road? I hardly dared to look to the bottom of that abyss, on the brink of which we were all standing. I wished, however, to know what course to take. I mounted my horse, moved forward, and from a neighboring elevation I took in with my eye a wider horizon with the aid of a field-glass. I saw in the distance a green strip. When I reached it, however, after an hour's journey, the place turned out to be merely a lake along the bank of which the fire had not destroyed vegetation completely. The burnt plain extended farther than vision through the glass. There was no help, it was necessary to turn back the caravan and go around the fire. For that purpose I turned my horse. I expected to find the wagons where I had left them, for I had given command to wait for me there. Meanwhile, disobeying my command, they had raised the mules, and the caravan went on. To my questions they answered moodily: "There are the mountains, we will go to them."

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I did not try even to struggle, for I saw that there was no human power present to stop those men. Perhaps I should have gone back alone with Lillian, but my wagon was not there, and Lillian had gone on with Aunt Atkins.

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We advanced. Night came again, and with it a forced halt. Out of the burnt plain rose a great lurid moon and lighted the distance, which was equally black. In the morning only half of the wagons could be moved, for the mules of the others had died. The heat of that day was dreadful. The sun's rays, absorbed by the charred land, filled the air with fire. On the road one of the sick men expired in dreadful convulsions, and no one undertook his burial; we laid him down on the plain and went farther.

The water in the lake at which I had been the day before refreshed men and animals for a time, but could not restore their strength. The mules had not nipped a grass blade for thirty-six hours, and had lived only on straw which we took out of the wagons; but even that failed them now. We marked the road as we went with their bodies, and on the third day there was left one only, which I took by force for Lillian. The wagons and the tools in them, which were to give us bread in California, remained in that desert,—be it cursed for all ages!

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Every one now except Lillian went on foot. Soon a new enemy

looked us in the eyes,—hunger. A part of our provisions had been left in the wagons, that which each one could carry was eaten. Meanwhile there was not a living thing in the country around us. I alone in the whole caravan had biscuits yet and a piece of salt meat; but I hid them for Lillian, and I was ready to rend any man to pieces who would mention that food. I ate nothing myself, and that terrible plain stretched on without end.

As if to add to our torments the mirage appeared in the midday hours on the plain again, showing us mountains and forests with lakes; but the nights were more terrible than ever. All the rays which that charred land stole from the sun in the daytime came out at night, scorching our feet and parching our throats. On such a night one man lost his mind, and sitting on the ground burst into spasmodical laughter, and that dreadful laughter followed us long in the darkness. The mule on which Lillian was riding fell; the famishing people tore it to bits in a twinkling, but what food was that for two hundred!

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The fourth day passed and the fifth. From hunger, the faces of the people became like those of birds of some kind, and they began to look with hate at one another. They knew that I had provisions; but they knew, too, that to ask one crumb of me was death, hence the instinct of life overcame in them hunger. I gave food to Lillian only at night, so as not to enrage them with the sight of it. She implored me by all that was holy to take my share, but I threatened to put a bullet in my brain if she even mentioned it. She was able, however, to steal from my watchfulness crumbs which she gave to Aunt Atkins and Aunt Grosvenor. At that time hunger was tearing my entrails with iron hand, and my head was burning from the wound.

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For five days there had been nothing in my mouth but water from that lake. The thought that I was carrying bread and meat, that I had them with me, that I could eat, became a torture; I was afraid besides, that being wounded, I might go mad and seize the food.

“O Lord!” cried I in spirit, “suffer me not to become so far brutalized as to touch that which is to keep her in life!” But there was no mercy above me. On the morning of the sixth day I saw on Lillian’s face fiery spots; her hands were inflamed, she panted loudly. All at once she looked at me wanderingly, and said in haste, hurrying lest she might lose presence of mind,—

“Ralph, leave me here; save yourself, there is no hope for me.”

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I gritted my teeth, for I wanted to howl and blaspheme; but saying nothing I took her by the hands. Fiery zigzags began to leap before my eyes in the air, and to form the words: “Who worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator?” I had broken like a bow too much bent; so, staring at the merciless heavens, I exclaimed with my whole soul in rebellion,—

“I!”

Meanwhile I was bearing to the mount of execution my dearest burden, this my only one, my saint, my beloved martyr.

I know not where I found strength; I was insensible to hunger, to heat, to suffering. I saw nothing before me, neither people nor the burning plain; I saw nothing but Lillian. That night she grew worse. She lost consciousness; at times she groaned in a low voice,—

“Ralph, water!” And oh, torments! I had only salt meat and dry biscuits. In supreme despair I cut my arm with a knife to moisten her lips with my blood; she grew conscious, cried out, and fell into a protracted faint, from which I thought she would not recover. When she came to herself she wished to say something, but the fever had blunted her mind, and she only murmured,—

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“Ralph, be not angry! I am your wife.”

I carried her farther in silence. I had grown stupid from pain.

The seventh day came. The Sierra Nevada appeared at last on the horizon, and as the sun was going down the life of my life began to quench also. When she was dying I placed her on the burnt ground and knelt beside her. Her widely opened eyes were gleaming and fixed on me; thought appeared in them for a moment, and she whispered,—

“My dear, my husband!” Then a quiver ran through her, fear was on her face,—and she died.

I tore the bandages from my head, and lost consciousness. I have no memory of what happened after that. As in a kind of dream I remember people who surrounded me and took my weapons; then

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they dug a grave, as it were; and, still later, darkness and raving seized me, and in them the fiery words: "Who worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator!"

I woke a month later in California at the house of Moshynski, a settler. When I had come to health somewhat I set out for Nevada; the prairie had grown over again with grass, and was abundantly green, so that I could not find even her grave, and to this day I know not where her sacred remains are lying. What have I done, O God, that Thou didst turn Thy face from me and forget me in the desert? —I know not. Were it permitted me to weep even one hour at her grave, life would be easier. Every year I go to Nevada, and every year I seek in vain. Since those dreadful hours long years have passed. My wretched lips have uttered more than once, Let Thy will be done! But without her it is hard for me in the world. A man lives and walks among people, and laughs even at times; but the lonely old heart weeps and loves, and yearns and remembers.

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I am old, and it is not long till I shall make another journey, the journey to eternity; and for one thing alone I ask God,—that on those celestial plains I may find my heavenly one, and not part from her ever again.



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IN the town of Antelope, situated on a river of the same name in the State of Texas, every living person was hurrying to the circus. The inhabitants were interested all the more since from the foundation of the town that was the first time that a circus had come to it with dancing women, minstrels, and rope-walkers. The town was recent. Fifteen years before not only was there not one house there, but in all the region round about there were no white people. Moreover, on the forks of the river, on the very spot on which Antelope was situated, stood an Indian village called Chiavatta. That had been the capital of the Black Snakes, who in their time were such an eyesore to the neighboring settlements of Berlin, Gründenu, and Harmonia, that these settlements could endure them no longer. True, the Indians were only defending their "land," which the State government of Texas had guaranteed to them forever by the most solemn treaties; but what was that to the colonists of Berlin, Gründenu, and Harmonia? It is true that they took from the Black Snakes earth, air, and water, but they brought in civilization in return; the redskins on their part showed gratitude in their own way,—that is, by taking scalps from the heads of the Germans. Such a state of things could not be suffered. Therefore, the settlers from Berlin, Gründenu, and Harmonia assembled on a certain moonlight night to the number of four hundred, and, calling to their aid Mexicans from La Ora, fell upon sleeping Chiavatta.

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The triumph of the good cause was perfect. Chiavatta was burned to ashes, and the inhabitants, without regard to sex or age, were cut to pieces. Only small parties of warriors escaped who at that time were absent on a hunt. In the town itself not one soul was left living, mainly because the place lay in the forks of a river, which, having overflowed, as is usual in spring-time, surrounded the settlement with an impassable gulf of waters. But the same forked position which ruined the Indians, seemed good to the Germans. From the forks it was difficult to escape, but the place was defensible. Thanks to this thought, emigration set in at once from Berlin, Gründenu, and Harmonia to the forks, in which in the twinkle of an eye, on the site of the wild Chiavatta, rose the civilized town of Antelope. In five years it numbered two thousand inhabitants.

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In the sixth year they discovered on the opposite bank of the forks a quicksilver mine; the working of this doubled the number of inhabitants. In the seventh year, by virtue of Lynch law, they hanged on the square of the town the last twelve warriors of the Black Snakes, who were caught in the neighboring "Forest of the Dead,"—and henceforth nothing remained to hinder the development of

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Antelope. Two "Tagblätter" (daily papers) were published in the town, and one "Montagsrevue" (Monday Review). A line of railroad united the place with Rio del Norte and San Antonio; on Opuncia Gasse (Opuncia Street) stood three schools, one of which was a high school. On the square where they had hanged the last Black Snakes, the citizens had erected a philanthropic institution. Every Sunday the pastors taught in the churches love of one's neighbor, respect for the property of others, and similar virtues essential to a civilized society; a certain travelling lecturer read a dissertation "On the rights of nations."

The richest inhabitants had begun to talk of founding a university, to which the government of the State was to contribute. The citizens were prosperous. The trade in quicksilver, oranges, barley, and wine brought them famous profits. They were upright, thrifty, industrious, systematic, fat. Whoever might visit in later years Antelope with a population nearing twenty thousand would not recognize in the rich merchants of the place those pitiless warriors who fifteen years before had burned Chiavatta. The days passed for them in their stores, workshops, and offices; the evenings they spent in the beer-saloon "Golden Sun" on Rattlesnake Street. Listening to those sounds somewhat slow and guttural of "Mahlzeit, Mahlzeit!" (meal-time, meal-time), to those phlegmatic "Nun ja wissen Sie, Herr Müller, ist das aber möglich?" (Well, now, Herr Müller, but is that possible?), that clatter of goblets, that sound of beer dropping on the floor, that plash of overflowing foam; seeing that calm, that ness, those Philistine faces covered with fat, those fishy eyes,—a man might suppose himself in a beer-garden in Berlin or Monachium, and not on the ruins of Chiavatta. But in the town everything was "ganz gemüthlich" (altogether cosy), and no one had a thought of the ruins. That evening the whole population was hastening to the circus, first, because after hard labor recreation is as praiseworthy as it is agreeable; second, because the inhabitants were proud of its arrival. It is well-known that circuses do not come to every little place; hence the arrival of the Hon. M. Dean's troupe had confirmed the greatness and magnificence of Antelope. There was, however, a third and perhaps the greatest cause of the general curiosity.

No. Two of the programme read as follows:

"A walk on a wire extended fifteen feet above the ground will be made to the accompaniment of music by the renowned gymnast Black Vulture, sachem of the Black Snakes, the last descendant of their chiefs, the last man of the tribe. 1. The walk; 2. Springs of the Antelope; 3. The death-dance and death-song."

If that "sachem" could rouse the highest interest in any place, it was surely in Antelope. Hon. M. Dean told at the "Golden Sun" how fifteen years before, on a journey to Santa Fé, he had found, on the Planos de Tornado, a dying old Indian with a boy ten years of age. The old man died from wounds and exhaustion; but before death he declared that the boy was the son of the slain sachem of the Black Snakes, and the heir to that office.

The troupe sheltered the orphan, who in time became the first acrobat in it. It was only at the "Golden Sun," however, that Hon. M. Dean learned first that Antelope was once Chiavatta, and that the famous rope-walker would exhibit himself on the grave of his fathers. This information brought the director into perfect humor; he might reckon now surely on a *great attraction*, if only he knew how to bring out the effect skilfully. Of course the Philistines of Antelope hurried to the circus to show their wives and children, imported from Germany, the last of the Black Snakes,—those wives and children who in their lives had never seen Indians,—and to say: "See, we cut to pieces men just like that fellow, fifteen years ago!" "Ach, Herr Je!" It was pleasant to hear such an exclamation of wonder from the mouth of Amalchen, or little Fritz. Throughout the town, therefore, all were repeating unceasingly, "Sachem! Sachem!"

From early morning the children were looking through cracks in the boards with curious and astonished faces; the older boys, more excited by the warrior spirit, marched home from school in terrible array, without knowing themselves why they did so.

It is eight o'clock in the evening,—a wonderful night, clear, starry. A breeze from the suburbs brings the odor of orange groves, which in the town is mingled with the odor of malt. In the circus there is a blaze of light. Immense pine-torches fixed before the principal gate are burning and smoking. The breeze waves the

plumes of smoke and the bright flame which illuminates the dark outlines of the building. It is a freshly erected wooden pile, circular, with a pointed roof, and the starry flag of America on the summit of it. Before the gate are crowds who could not get tickets or had not the wherewithal to buy them; they look at the wagons of the troupe, and principally at the canvas curtain of the great Eastern door, on which is depicted a battle of the whites with the redskins. At moments when the curtain is drawn aside the bright refreshment-bar within is visible, with its hundreds of glasses on the table. Now they draw aside the curtain for good, and the throng enters. The empty passages between the seats begin to resound with the steps of people, and soon the dark moving mass fills all the place from the highest point to the floor. It is clear as day in the circus, for though they had not been able to bring in gas pipes, a gigantic chandelier formed of fifty kerosene lamps takes its place. In those gleams are visible the heads of the beer drinkers, fleshy, thrown back to give room to their chins, the youthful faces of women, and the pretty, wondering visages of children, whose eyes are almost coming out of their heads from curiosity. But all the spectators have the curious, self-satisfied look that is usual in an audience at a circus. Amid the hum of conversation interrupted by cries of "Frisch wasser! frisch wasser!" (fresh water), all await the beginning with impatience.

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At last a bell sounds, six grooms appear in shining boots, and stand in two ranks at the passage from the stables to the arena. Between those ranks a furious horse rushes forth, without bridle or saddle; and on him, as it were a bundle of muslin ribbons and tulle, is the dancer Lina. They begin manoeuvring to the sound of music. Lina is so pretty that young Matilda, daughter of the brewer on Opuncia Gasse, alarmed at sight of her beauty, inclines to the ear of Floss, a young grocer from the same street, and asks in a whisper if he loves her yet. Meanwhile the horse gallops, and puffs like an engine; the clowns, a number of whom run after the dancer, crack whips, shout, and strike one another on the faces. The dancer vanishes like lightning; there is a storm of applause. What a splendid representation! But No. One passes quickly. No. Two is approaching. The word "Sachem! sachem!" flies from mouth to mouth among the spectators. No one gives a thought now to the clowns, who strike one another continually. In the midst of the apish movements of the clowns, the grooms bring lofty wooden trestles several yards in height, and put them on both sides of the arena. The band ceases to play Yankee Doodle, and gives the gloomy aria of the Commandore in Don Juan. They extend the wire from one trestle to the other. All at once a shower of red Bengal light falls at the passage, and covers the whole arena with a bloody glare. In that glare appears the terrible sachem, the last of the Black Snakes. But what is that? The sachem is not there, but the manager of the troupe himself, Hon. M. Dean. He bows to the public and raises his voice. He has the honor to beg "the kind and respected gentlemen, as well as the beautiful and no less respected ladies, to be unusually calm, give no applause, and remain perfectly still, for the chief is excited and wilder than usual." These words produce no little impression, and—a wonderful thing!—those very citizens of Antelope who fifteen years before had destroyed Chiavatta, feel now some sort of very unpleasant sensation. A moment before, when the beautiful Lina was performing her springs on horseback, they were glad to be sitting so near, right there close to the parapet, whence they could see everything so well; and now they look with a certain longing for the upper seats of the circus, and in spite of all laws of physics, find that the lower they are the more stifling it is.

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But could that sachem remember? He was reared from years of childhood in the troupe of Hon. M. Dean, composed mainly of Germans. Had he not forgotten everything? This seemed probable. His environment and fifteen years of a circus career, the exhibition of his art, the winning of applause, must have exerted their influence.

Chiavatta, Chiavatta! But they are Germans, they are on their own soil, and think no more of the fatherland than *business* permits. Above all, man must eat and drink. This truth every Philistine must keep in mind, as well as the last of the Black Snakes.

These meditations are interrupted suddenly by a certain wild whistle in the stables, and on the arena appears the sachem expected so anxiously. A brief murmur of the crowd is heard: "That is he, that is he!"—and then silence. But there is hissing from Bengal lights, which burn continually at the passage. All eyes are

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turned toward the chief, who in the circus will appear on the graves of his fathers. The Indian deserves really that men should look at him. He seems as haughty as a king. A mantle of white ermine—the mark of his chieftainship—covers his figure, which is lofty, and so wild that it brings to mind a badly tamed jaguar. He has a face as if were forged out of bronze, like the head of an eagle, and in his face there is a cold gleam; his eyes are genuinely Indian, calm, indifferent as it were,—and ominous. He glances around on the assembly, as if wishing to choose a victim. Moreover, he is armed from head to foot. On his head plumes are waving, at his girdle he has an ax and a knife for scalping; but in his hand, instead of a bow, he holds a long staff to preserve his balance when walking on the wire. Standing in the middle of the arena he gives forth on a sudden a war cry. *Herr Gott!* That is the cry of the Black Snakes. Those who massacred Chiavatta remember clearly that terrible howl,—and what is most wonderful, those who fifteen years before had no fear of one thousand such warriors are sweating now before one. But behold! the director approaches the chief and says something to him, as if to pacify and calm him. The wild beast feels the bit; the words have their influence, for after a time the sachem is swaying on the wire. With eyes fixed on the kerosene chandelier he advances. The wire bends much; at moments it is not visible, and then the Indian seems suspended in space. He is walking as it were upward; he advances, retreats, and again he advances, maintaining his balance. His extended arms covered with the mantle seem like great wings. He totters! he is falling!—No. A short interrupted bravo begins like a storm and stops. The face of the chief becomes more and more threatening. In his gaze fixed on the kerosene lamps is gleaming some terrible light. There is alarm in the circus, but no one breaks the silence. Meanwhile the sachem approaches the end of the wire, stops; all at once a war-song bursts forth from his lips.

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A strange thing! The chief sings in German. But that is easy to understand. Surely he has forgotten the tongue of the Black Snakes. Moreover, no one notices that. All listen to the song, which rises and grows in volume. It is a half chant, a kind of half call, immeasurably plaintive, wild, and hoarse, full of sounds of attack.

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The following words were heard: "After the great yearly rains, five hundred warriors went from Chiavatta on the war-path or to the spring hunts; when they came back from war they brought scalps, when they came back from the hunt they brought flesh and the skins of buffaloes; their wives met them with gladness, and they danced in honor of the Great Spirit.

"Chiavatta was happy. The women worked in the wigwams, the children grew up to be beautiful maidens, to be brave, fearless warriors. The warriors died on the field of glory, and went to the silver mountains to hunt with the ghosts of their fathers. Their axes were never dipped in the blood of women and children, for the warriors of Chiavatta were high-minded. Chiavatta was powerful; but pale-faces came from beyond distant waters and set fire to Chiavatta. The white warriors did not destroy the Black Snakes in battle, but they stole in as do jackals at night, they buried their knives in the bosoms of sleeping men, women, and children.

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"Now there is no Chiavatta. In place of it the white men have raised their stone wigwams. The murdered nation and ruined Chiavatta cry out for vengeance."

The voice of the chief became hoarse. Standing on the wire, he seemed a red archangel of vengeance floating above the heads of that throng of people. Evidently the director himself was afraid. A silence as of death settled down in the circus. The chief howled on,

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"Of the whole nation there remained only one little child. He was weak and small, but he swore to the spirit of the earth that he would have vengeance,—that he would see the corpses of white men, women, and children, that he would see fire and blood."

The last words were changed into a bellow of fury. In the circus murmurs were heard like the sudden puffs of a whirlwind. Thousands of questions without answer came to men's minds. What will he do, that mad tiger? What is he announcing? How will he accomplish his vengeance,—he alone? Will he stay here or flee? Will he defend himself, and how? "Was ist das, was ist das?" is heard in the terrified accents of women.

All at once an unearthly howl was rent from the breast of the chief. The wire swayed violently, he sprang to the wooden trestle,

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standing at the chandelier, and raised his staff. A terrible thought flew like a flash through all heads. He will hurl around the lamps and fill the circus with torrents of flaming kerosene. From the breasts of the spectators one shout was just rising; but what do they see? From the arena the cry comes, "Stop! stop!" The chief is gone! Has he jumped down? He has gone through the entrance without firing the circus! Where is he? See, he is coming, coming a second time, panting, tired, terrible. In his hand is a pewter plate, and extending it to the spectators, he calls in a voice of entreaty: "Was gefällig für den letzten der Schwarzen Schlangen?" (What will you give to the last of the Black Snakes?)

A stone falls from the breasts of the spectators. You see that was all in the programme, it was a trick of the director for effect. The dollars and half dollars came down in a shower. How could they say "No" to the last of the Black Snakes, in Antelope reared on the ruins of Chiavatta? People have hearts.

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After the exhibition, the sachem drank beer and ate dumplings at the "Golden Sun." His environment had exerted its influence, evidently. He found great popularity in Antelope, especially with the women,—there was even scandal about him.





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IN the little town of Lupiskory, after the funeral of widow Kaliksta, there were vespers, and after vespers old women, between ten and twenty in number, remained in the church to finish the hymn. It was four o'clock in the afternoon; but, since twilight comes in winter about that hour, it was dark in the church. The great altar, especially, was sunk in deep shade. Only two candles were burning at the ciborium; their flickering flames barely lighted a little the gilding of the doors, and the feet of Christ, hanging on a cross higher up. Those feet were pierced with an enormous nail, and the head of that nail seemed a great point gleaming on the altar.

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From other candles, just quenched, streaks of smoke were waving, filling the places behind the stalls with a purely church odor of wax.

An old man and a small boy were busied before the steps of the altar. One was sweeping; the other was stretching the carpet on the steps. At moments, when the women ceased their singing, either the angry whisper of the old man was heard scolding the boy, or the hammering on the snow-covered windows of sparrows that were cold and hungry outside.

The women were sitting on benches nearer the door. It would have been still darker had it not been for a few tallow candles, by the light of which those who had prayer-books were reading. One of those candles lighted well enough a banner fastened to the seat just beyond; the banner represented sinners surrounded by devils and flames. It was impossible to see what was painted on the other banners.

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The women were not singing; they were, rather, muttering with sleepy and tired voices a hymn in which these words were repeated continually,—

"And when the hour of death comes,
Gain for us, gain from Thy Son."

That church buried in shadow, the banners standing at the seats,

the old women with their yellow faces, the lights flickering as if oppressed by the gloom,—all that was dismal beyond expression; nay, it was simply terrible. The mournful words of the song about death found there a fitting background.

After a time the singing stopped. One of the women stood up at the seat, and began to say, with a trembling voice, "Hail, Mary, full of grace!" And others responded, "The Lord is with Thee," etc.; but since it was the day of Kaliksta's funeral, each "Hail, Mary," concluded with the words, "Lord, grant her eternal rest, and may endless light shine on her!"

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Marysia, the dead woman's daughter, was sitting on a bench at the side of one of the old women. Just then the snow, soft and noiseless, was falling on the fresh grave of her mother; but the little girl was not ten years old yet, and seemed not to understand either her loss, or the pity which it might rouse in another. Her face, with large blue eyes, had in it the calmness of childhood, and even a certain careless repose. A little curiosity was evident,—nothing beyond that. Opening her mouth, she looked with great attention at the banner on which was painted hell with sinners; then she looked into the depth of the church, and afterward on the window at which the sparrows were hammering.

Her eyes remained without thought. Meanwhile, the women began to mutter, sleepily, for the tenth time,—

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"And when the hour of death comes."

The little girl twisted the tresses of her light-colored hair, woven into two tiny braids not thicker than mice tails. She seemed tired; but now the old man occupied her attention. He went to the middle of the church, and began to pull a knotty rope hanging from the ceiling. He was ringing for the soul of Kaliksta, but he did this in a purely mechanical manner; he was thinking, evidently, of something else.

That ringing was also a sign that vespers were ended. The women, after repeating for the last time the prayer for a happy death, went out on the square. One of them led Marysia by the hand.

"But, Kulik," asked another, "what will you do with the girl?"

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"What will I do? She will go to Leschyntsi. Voytek Margula will take her. But why do you ask me?"

"What will she do in Leschyntsi?"

"My dears, the same as here. Let her go to where she came from. Even at the mansion they will take in the orphan, and let her sleep in the kitchen."

Thus conversing, they passed through the square to the inn. Darkness was increasing every moment. It was wintry, calm; the sky was covered with clouds, the air filled with moisture and wet snow. Water was dropping from the roofs; on the square lay slush formed of snow and straw. The village, with wretched and tattered houses, looked as gloomy as the church. A few windows were gleaming with light; movement had ceased, but in the inn an organ was playing.

It was playing to entice, for there was no one inside. The women entered, drank vodka; Kulik gave Marysia half a glass, saying,—

"Drink! Thou art an orphan; thou wilt not meet kindness."

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The word "orphan" brought the death of Kaliksta to the minds of the women. One of them said,—

"To you, Kulik, drink! Oh, my dears, how that *paralus* [paralysis] took her so that she couldn't stir! She was cold before the priest came to hear her confession."

"I told her long ago," said Kulik, "that she was spinning fine [near her end]. Last week she came to me. Said I, 'Ah, better give Marysia to the mansion!' But she said, 'I have one little daughter, and I'll not give her to any one.' But she grew sorry, and began to sob, and then she went to the mayor to put her papers in order. She paid four zloty and six groshes. 'But I do not begrudge it for my child,' said she. My dears, but her eyes were staring, and after death they were staring still more. People wanted to close them, but could not. They say that after death, even, she was looking at her child."

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"Let us drink half a quarter over this sorrow!"

The organ was playing continually. The women began to be somewhat tender. Kulik repeated, with a voice of compassion, "Poor

little thing! poor little thing!" and the second old woman called to mind the death of her late husband.

"When he was dying," said she, "he sighed so, oh, he sighed so, he sighed so!—" and drawling still more, her voice passed into a chant, from a chant into the tone of the organ, till at last she bent to one side, and in following the organ began to sing,—

"He sighed, he sighed, he sighed,
On that day he sighed."

All at once she fell to shedding hot tears, gave the organist six groshes, and drank some more vodka. Kulik, too, was excited by tenderness, but she turned it on Marysia,—

"Remember, little orphan," said she, "what the priest said when they were covering thy mother with snow, that there is a yamyol [an angel] above thee—" Here she stopped, looked around as if astonished, and then added, with unusual energy, "When I say that there is a yamyol, there *is* a yamyol!"

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No one contradicted her. Marysia, blinking with her poor, simple eyes, looked attentively at the woman. Kulik spoke on,—

"Thou art a little orphan, that is bad for thee! Over orphans there is a yamyol. He is good. Here are ten groshes for thee. Even if thou wert to start on foot to Leschyntsi, thou couldst go there, for he would guide thee."

The second old woman began to sing:

"In the shade of his wings he will keep thee eternally,
Under his pinions thou wilt lie without danger."

"Be quiet!" said Kulik. And then she turned again to the child,—

"Knowest thou, stupid, who is above thee?"

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"A yamyol," said, with a thin voice, the little girl.

"Oh, thou little orphan, thou precious berry, thou little worm of the Lord! A yamyol with wings," said she, with perfect tenderness, and seizing the child she pressed her to her honest, though tipsy, bosom.

Marysia burst into weeping at once. Perhaps in her dark little head and in her heart, which knew not yet how to distinguish, there was roused some sort of perception at that moment.

The innkeeper was sleeping most soundly behind the counter; on the candle-wicks mushrooms had grown; the man at the organ ceased to play, for what he saw amused him.

Then there was silence, which was broken by the sudden plashing of horses' feet before the door, and a voice calling to the horses,—

"Prrr!"

Voytek Margula walked into the inn with a lighted lantern in his hand. He put down the lantern, began to slap his arms to warm them, and at last said to the innkeeper,—

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"Give half a quarter."

"Margula, thou chestnut," cried Kulik, "thou wilt take the little girl to Leschyntsi."

"I'll take her, for they told me to take her," replied Margula.

Then looking closely to the two women he added,—

"But ye are as drunk as—"

"May the plague choke thee," retorted Kulik. "When I tell thee to be careful with the child, be careful. She is an orphan. Knowest thou, fool, who is above her?"

Voytek did not see fit to answer that question, but determined evidently to raise another subject, and began,—

"To all of you—"

But he didn't finish, for he drank the vodka, made a wry face, and putting down the glass with dissatisfaction, said,—

"That's pure water. Give me a second from another bottle."

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The innkeeper poured from another. Margula twisted his face still more:

"Ai! haven't you arrack?"

Evidently the same danger threatened Margula that threatened the women; but at that very time, in the mansion at Lupiskory, the landowner was preparing for one of the journals a long and exhaustive article, "On the right of landowners to sell liquor, this

right being considered as the basis of society." But Voytek co-operated only involuntarily to strengthen the basis of society, and that all the more because the sale here, though in a village, was really by the landowner.

When he had co-operated five times in succession he forgot, it is true, his lantern, in which the light had gone out, but he took the half-sleeping little girl by the hand, and said,—

"But come on, thou nightmare!"

The women had fallen asleep in a corner, no one bade farewell to Marysia. The whole story was this: Her mother was in the graveyard and she was going to Leschyntsi.

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Voytek and the girl went out, sat in the sleigh. Voytek cried to the horses, and they moved on. At first the sleigh dragged heavily enough through the slush of the town, but they came out very soon to fields which were broad and white. Movement was easy then; the snow barely made a noise under the sleigh-runners. The horses snorted at times, at times came the barking of dogs from a distance.

They went on and on. Voytek urged the horses, and sang through his nose, "Dog ear, remember thy promise." But soon he grew silent, and began to "carry Jews" (nod). He nodded to the right, to the left. He dreamt that they were pounding him on the shoulders in Leschyntsi, because he had lost a basket of letters; so, from time to time, he was half awake, and repeated: "To all!" Marysia did not sleep, for she was cold. She looked with widely opened eyes on the white fields, hidden from moment to moment by the dark shoulders of Margula. She thought also that her "mother was dead;" and thinking thus, she pictured to herself perfectly the pale and thin face of her mother with its staring eyes,—and she felt half consciously that that face was greatly beloved, that it was no longer in the world, and would never be in Leschyntsi again. She had seen with her own eyes how they covered it up in Lupiskory. Remembering this, she would have cried from grief; but as her knees and feet were chilled, she began to cry from cold.

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There was no frost, it is true, but the air was penetrating, as is usual during thaws. As to Voytek he had, at least in his stomach, a good supply of heat taken from the inn. The landowner at Lupiskory remarked justly: "That vodka warms in winter, and since it is the only consolation of our peasants, to deprive landowners of the sole power of consoling peasants is to deprive them of influence over the populace." Voytek was so consoled at that moment that nothing could trouble him.

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Even this did not trouble him, that the horses when they came to the forest slackened their pace altogether, though the road there was better, and then walking to one side, the beasts turned over the sleigh into a ditch. He woke, it is true, but did not understand well what had happened.

Marysia began to push him.

"Voytek!"

"Why art thou croaking?"

"The sleigh is turned over."

"A glass?" asked Voytek, and went to sleep for good.

The little girl sat by the sleigh, crouching down as best she could, and remained there. But her face was soon chilled, so she began to push the sleeping man again.

"Voytek!"

He gave no answer.

"Voytek, I want to go to the house."

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And after a while again: "Voytek, I'll walk there."

At last she started. It seemed to her that Leschyntsi was very near. She knew the road, too, for she had walked to church over it every Sunday with her mother. But now she had to go alone. In spite of the thaw the snow in the forest was deep, but the night was very clear. To the gleam from the snow was added light from the clouds, so that the road could be seen as in the daytime. Marysia, turning her eyes to the dark forest, could see tree-trunks very far away outlined distinctly, black, motionless, on the white ground; and she saw clearly also snow-drifts blown to the whole height of them. In the forest there was a certain immense calm, which gave solace to the child. On the branches was thick, frozen snow, and from it drops of water were trickling, striking with faint sound against the branches and twigs. But that was the only noise. All else around was still, white, silent, dumb.

The wind was not blowing. The snowy branches were not stirring with the slightest movement. Everything was sleeping in the trance of winter. It might seem that the snowy covering on the earth, and the whole silent and shrouded forest, with the pale clouds in the heavens, were all a kind of white, lifeless unity. So it is in time of thaw. Marysia was the only living thing, moving like a little black speck amid these silent greatneses. Kind, honest forest! Those drops, which the thawing ice let down, were tears, perhaps, over the orphan. The trees are so large, but also so compassionate, above the little creature. See, she is alone, so weak and poor, in the snow, in the night, in the forest, wading along trustfully, as if there is no danger.

The clear night seems to care for her. When something so weak and helpless yields itself, trusts so perfectly in enormous power, there is a certain sweetness in the act. In that way all may be left to the will of God. The girl walked rather long, and was wearied at last. The heavy boots, which were too large, hindered her; her small feet were going up and down in them continually. It was hard to drag out such big boots from the snow. Besides, she could not move her hands freely, for in one of them, closed rigidly, she held with all her strength those ten groshes which Kulik had given her. She feared to drop them in the snow. She began at times to cry aloud, and then she stopped suddenly, as if wishing to know if some one had heard her. Yes, the forest had heard her! The thawing ice sounded monotonously and somewhat sadly. Besides, maybe some one else had heard her. The child went more and more slowly. Could she go astray? How? The road, like a white, broad, winding ribbon, stretches into the distance, lies well marked between two walls of dark trees. An unconquerable drowsiness seized the little girl.

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She stepped aside and sat down under a tree. The lids dropped over her eyes. After a time, she thought that her mother was coming to her along the white road from the graveyard. No one was coming. Still, the child felt certain that some one must come. Who? A yamyol. Hadn't old Kulik told her that a yamyol was above her? Marysia knew what a yamyol is. In her mother's cottage there was one painted with a shield in his hand and with wings. He would come, surely. Somehow the ice began to sound more loudly. Maybe that is the noise of his wings, scattering drops more abundantly. Stop! Some one is coming really; the snow, though soft, sounds clearly; steps are coming, and coming quietly but quickly. The child raises her sleepy eyelids with confidence.

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"What is that?"

Looking at the little girl intently is a gray three-cornered face with ears, standing upright,—ugly, terrible!

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THE BULL FIGHT



A Reminiscence of Spain ••

IT is Sunday! Great posters, affixed for a number of days to the corners of Puerta del Sol, Calle Alcalá, and all streets on which there was considerable movement, announce to the city that to-day, "Si el tiempo lo permite" (if the weather permits), will take place bull-fight XVI., in which Cara-Ancha Lagartijo and the renowned Frascuello are to appear as "espadas" (swords).

Well, the weather permits. There was rain in the morning; but about ten o'clock the wind broke the clouds, gathered them into heaps, and drove them away off somewhere in the direction of the Escorial. Now the wind itself has ceased; the sky as far as the eye can reach is blue, and over the Puerta del Sol a bright sun is shining,—such a Madrid sun, which not only warms, not only burns, but almost bites.

Movement in the city is increasing, and on people's faces satisfaction is evident.

Two o'clock.

The square of the Puerta del Sol is emptying gradually, but crowds of people are advancing through the Calle Alcalá toward the Prado. In the middle is flowing a river of carriages and vehicles. All that line of equipages is moving very slowly, for on the sidewalks there is not room enough for pedestrians, many of whom are walking along the sides of the streets and close to the carriages. The police, on white horses and in showy uniforms and three-cornered hats, preserve order.

It is Sunday, that is evident, and an afternoon hour; the toilets are carefully made, the attire is holiday. It is evident also that the crowds are going to some curious spectacle. Unfortunately the throng is not at all many-colored; no national costumes are visible,—neither the short coats, yellow kerchiefs *á la contrabandista*, with one end dropping down to the shoulder, nor the round Biscay hats, nor girdles, nor the Catalan knives behind the girdles.

Those things may be seen yet in the neighborhood of Granada, Seville, and Cordova; but in Madrid, especially on holidays, the cosmopolitan frock is predominant. Only at times do you see a black mantilla pinned to a high comb, and under the mantilla eyes blacker still.

In general faces are dark, glances quick, speech loud. Gesticulation is not so passionate as in Italy, where when a man laughs he squirms like a snake, and when he is angry he gnaws off the top of his hat; still, it is energetic and lively. Faces have well-defined features and a resolute look. It is easy to understand that even in amusement these people retain their special and definite character.

However, they are a people who on weekdays are full of sedateness, bordering on sloth, sparing of words, and collected. Sunday enlivens them, as does also the hope of seeing a bloody spectacle.

Let us cut across the Prado and enter an alley leading to the circus.

The crowd is becoming still denser. Here and there shouts are rising, the people applauding single members of the company, who are going each by himself to the circus.

Here is an omnibus filled with "capeadors," that is, partakers in the fight, whose whole defence is red capes with which they mislead

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and irritate the bull. Through the windows are visible black heads with pigtailed, and wearing three-cornered hats. The coats of various colors worn by the capeadors are embroidered with gold and silver tinsel. These capeadors ride in an omnibus, for the modest pay which they get for their perilous service does not permit a more showy conveyance.

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Somewhat farther, three mounted "picadors" push their way through the people. The sun plays on their broad-brimmed white hats. They are athletic in build, but bony and lean. Their shaven faces have a stern, and, as it were, concentrated look. They are sitting on very high wooden saddles, hence they are perfectly visible over the crowd. Each of them holds in his hand a lance, with a wooden ball at the end of it, from which is projecting an iron point not above half an inch long. The picador cannot kill a bull with a weapon like that,—he can only pierce him or stop him for a moment; but in the last case he must have in his arm the strength of a giant.

Looking at these men, I remember involuntarily Doré's illustrations to "Don Quixote." In fact, each of these horsemen might serve as a model for the knight "of the rueful visage." That lean silhouette, outlined firmly on the sky, high above the heads of the multitude, the lance standing upright, and that bare-boned horse under the rider, those purely Gothic outlines of living things,—all answer perfectly to the conception which we form of the knight of La Mancha, when we read the immortal work of Cervantes.

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But, the picadors pass us, and urging apart the crowd slowly, push forward considerably. Now only three lances are visible, three hats, and three coats embroidered on the shoulders. New men ride up, as incalculably similar to the first as if some mill were making picadors for all Spain on one pattern. There is a difference only in the color of the horses, which, however, are equally lean.

Our eyes turn now to the long row of carriages. Some are drawn by mules, but mules so large, sleek, and beautiful that, in spite of the long ears of the animals, the turn-out does not seem ridiculous. Here and there may be seen also Andalusian horses with powerful backs, arched necks, and curved faces. Such may be seen in the pictures of battle-painters of the seventeenth century.

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In the carriages are sitting the flower of Madrid society. The dresses are black, there is very black lace on the parasols, on the fans, and on the heads of ladies; black hair trimmed in forelocks, from under which are glancing eyes, as it were, of the lava of Vesuvius. Mourning colors, importance, and powder are the main traits of that society.

The faces of old and of young ladies also are covered with powder, all of them are equally frigid and pale. A great pity! Were it not for such a vile custom, their complexion would have that magnificent warm tone given by southern blood and a southern sun, and which may be admired in faces painted by Fortuni.

In the front seats of the carriages are men dressed with an elegance somewhat exaggerated; they have a constrained and too holiday air,—in other words, they cannot wear fine garments with that free inattention which characterizes the higher society of France.

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But the walls of the circus are outlined before us with growing distinctness. There is nothing especial in the building: an enormous pile reared expressly to give seats to some tens of thousands of people,—that is the whole plan of it.

Most curious is the movement near the walls. Round about, it is black from carriages, equipages, and heads of people. Towering above this dark mass, here and there, is a horseman, a policeman, or a picador in colors as brilliant as a poppy full blown.

The throng sways, opens, closes, raises its voice; coachmen shout; still louder shout boys selling handbills. These boys squeeze themselves in at all points among footmen and horsemen; they are on the steps of carriages and between the wheels; some climb up on the buttresses of the circus; some are on the stone columns which mark the way for the carriages. Their curly hair, their gleaming eyes, their expressive features, dark faces, and torn shirts open in the bosom, remind me of our gypsies, and of boys in Murillo's pictures. Besides programmes some of them sell whistles. Farther on, among the crowds, are fruit-venders; water-sellers with bronze kegs on their shoulders; in one place are flower dealers; in another is heard the sound of a guitar played by an old blind woman led by a little girl.

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Movement, uproar, laughter; fans are fluttering everywhere as if they were wings of thousands of birds; the sun pours down white light in torrents from a spotless sky of dense blue.

Suddenly and from all sides are heard cries of "mira, mira!" (look, look!) After a while these cries are turned into a roar of applause, which like real thunder flies from one extreme to another; now it is quiet, now it rises and extends around the whole circus.

What has happened? Surely the queen is approaching, and with her the court? [210]

No! near by is heard "eviva Frascuello!" That is the most famous espada, who is coming for laurels and applause.

All eyes turn to him, and the whole throng of women push toward his carriage. The air is gleaming with flowers thrown by their hands to the feet of that favorite, that hero of every dream and imagining, that "pearl of Spain." They greet him the more warmly because he has just returned from a trip to Barcelona, where during the exhibition he astonished all barbarous Europe with thrusts of his sword; now he appears again in his beloved Madrid, more glorious, greater,—a genuine new Cid el Campeador.

Let us push through the crowd to look at the hero. First, what a carriage, what horses! More beautiful there are not in the whole of Castile. On white satin cushions sits, or reclines, we should say, a man whose age it is difficult to determine, for his face is shaven most carefully. He is dressed in a coat of pale lily-colored satin, and knee-breeches of similar material trimmed with lace. His coat and the side seams of his breeches are glittering and sparkling from splendid embroidery, from spangles of gold and silver shining like diamonds in the sun. The most delicate laces ornament his breast. His legs, clothed in rose-colored silk stockings, he holds crossed carelessly on the front seat,—the very first athlete in the hippodrome at Paris might envy him those calves. [211]

Madrid is vain of those calves,—and in truth she has reason.

The great man leans with one hand on the red hilt of his Catalan blade; with the other he greets his admirers of both sexes kindly. His black hair, combed to his poll, is tied behind in a small roll, from beneath which creeps forth a short tress. That style of hair-dressing and the shaven face make him somewhat like a woman, and he reminds one besides of some actor from one of the provinces; taken generally, his face is not distinguished by intelligence, a quality which in his career would not be a hindrance, though not needed in any way. [212]

The crowds enter the circus, and we enter with them.

Now we are in the interior. It differs from other interiors of circuses only in size and in this,—that the seats are of stone. Highest in the circle are the boxes; of these one in velvet and in gold fringe is the royal box. If no one from the court is present at the spectacle this box is occupied by the prefect of the city. Around are seated the aristocracy and high officials; opposite the royal box, on the other side of the circus, is the orchestra. Half-way up in the circus is a row of arm-chairs; stone steps form the rest of the seats. Below, around the arena, stretches a wooden paling the height of a man's shoulder. Between this paling and the first row of seats, which is raised considerably higher for the safety of the spectators, is a narrow corridor, in which the combatants take refuge, in case the bull threatens them too greatly. [213]

One-half of the circus is buried in shadow, the other is deluged with sunlight. On every ticket, near the number of the seat, is printed "sombra" (shadow) or "sol" (sun). Evidently the tickets "sombra" cost considerably more. It is difficult to imagine how those who have "sol" tickets can endure to sit in such an atmosphere a number of hours and on those heated stone steps, with such a sun above their heads.

The places are all filled, however. Clearly the love of a bloody spectacle surpasses the fear of being roasted alive.

In northern countries the contrast between light and shadow is not so great as in Spain; in the north we find always a kind of half shade, half light, certain transition tones; here the boundary is cut off in black with a firm line without any transitions. In the illuminated half the sand seems to burn; people's faces and dresses are blazing; eyes are blinking under the excess of glare; it is simply an abyss of light, full of heat, in which everything is sparkling and gleaming excessively, every color is intensified tenfold. On the other hand, the shaded half seems cut off by some transparent curtain, [214]

woven from the darkness of night. Every man who passes from the light to the shade, makes on us the impression of a candle put out on a sudden.

At the moment when we enter, the arena is crowded with people. Before the spectacle the inhabitants of Madrid, male and female, must tread that sand on which the bloody drama is soon to be played. It seems to them that thus they take direct part, as it were, in the struggle. Numerous groups of men are standing, lighting their cigarettes and discoursing vivaciously concerning the merits of bulls from this herd or that one. Small boys tease and pursue one another. I see how one puts under the eyes of another a bit of red cloth, treating him just as a "capeador" treats a bull. The boy endures this a while patiently; at last he rolls his eyes fiercely and runs at his opponent. The opponent deceives him adroitly with motions of a cape, exactly again as the capeador does the bull. The little fellows find their spectators, who urge them on with applause.

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Along the paling pass venders of oranges proclaiming the merits of their merchandise. This traffic is carried on through the air. The vender throws, at request, with unerring dexterity, an orange, even to the highest row; in the same way he receives a copper piece, which he catches with one hand before it touches the earth. Loud dialogues, laughter, calls, noise, rustling of fans, the movement of spectators as they arrive,—all taken together form a picture with a fulness of life of which no other spectacle can give an idea.

All at once from the orchestra come sounds of trumpets and drums. At that signal the people on the arena fly to their places with as much haste as if danger were threatening their lives. There is a crush. But after a while all are seated. Around, it is just black: people are shoulder to shoulder, head to head. In the centre remains the arena empty, deluged with sunlight.

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Opposite the royal box a gate in the paling is thrown open, and in ride two "alguazils." Their horses white, with manes and tails plaited, are as splendid as if taken from pictures. The riders themselves, wearing black velvet caps with white feathers, and doublets of similar material, with lace collars, bring to mind the incomparable canvases of Velasquez, which may be admired in the Museo del Prado. It seems to us that we are transferred to the times of knighthood long past. Both horsemen are handsome, both of showy form. They ride stirrup to stirrup, ride slowly around the whole arena to convince themselves that no incautious spectator has remained on it. At last they halt before the royal box, and with a movement full of grace uncover their heads with respect.

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Whoso is in a circus for the first time will be filled with admiration at the stately, almost middle-age, ceremonial, by the apparel and dignity of the horsemen. The alguazils seem like two noble heralds, giving homage to a monarch before the beginning of a tournament. It is, in fact, a prayer for permission to open the spectacle, and at the same time a request for the key of the stables in which the bulls are confined. After a while the key is let down from the box on a gold string; the alguazils incline once again and ride away. Evidently this is a mere ceremonial, for the spectacle was authorized previously, and the bulls are confined by simple iron bolts. But the ceremony is beautiful, and they never omit it.

In a few minutes after the alguazils have vanished, the widest gate is thrown open, and a whole company enters. At the head of it ride the same two alguazils whom we saw before the royal box; after them advance a rank of capeadors; after the capeadors come "banderilleros," and the procession is concluded by picadors. This entire party is shining with all the colors of the rainbow, gleaming from tinsel, gold, silver, and satins of various colors. They come out from the dark side to the sunlit arena, dive into the glittering light, and bloom like flowers. The eye cannot delight itself sufficiently with the many colors of those spots on the golden sand.

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Having reached the centre, they scatter on a sudden, like a flock of butterflies. The picadors dispose themselves around at the paling, and each one drawing his lance from its rest, grasps it firmly in his right hand; the men on foot form picturesque groups; they stand in postures full of indifference, waiting for the bull.

This is perhaps the most beautiful moment of the spectacle, full of originality, so thoroughly Spanish that regret at not being a painter comes on a man in spite of himself. How much color, what sunlight might be transferred from the palette to the canvas!

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Soon blood will be flowing on that sand. In the circus it is as still

as in time of sowing poppy seed,—it is barely possible to hear the sound of fans, which move only in as much as the hands holding them quiver from impatience. All eyes are turned to the door through which the bull will rush forth. Time now is counted by seconds.

Suddenly the shrill, and at the same time the mournful, sound of a trumpet is heard in the orchestra; the door of the stable opens with a crash, and the bull bursts into the arena, like a thunderbolt.

That is a lordly beast, with a powerful and splendid neck, a head comparatively short, horns enormous and turned forward. Our heavy breeder gives a poor idea of him; for though the Spanish bull is not the equal of ours in bulk of body, he surpasses him in strength, and, above all, in activity. At the first cast of the eye you recognize a beast reared wild in the midst of great spaces; consequently with all his strength he can move almost as swiftly as a deer. It is just this which makes him dangerous in an unheard of degree. His forelegs are a little higher than his hind ones; this is usual with cattle of mountain origin. In fact, the bulls of the circus are recruited especially from the herds in the Sierra Morena. Their color is for the greater part black, rarely reddish or pied. The hair is short, and glossy as satin; only the neck is covered somewhat with longer and curly hair.

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After he has burst into the arena, the bull slackens his pace toward the centre, looks with bloodshot eyes to the right, to the left,—but this lasts barely two seconds; he sees a group of capeadors; he lowers his head to the ground, and hurls himself on them at random.

The capeadors scatter, like a flock of sparrows at which some man has fired small-shot. Holding behind them red capes, they circle now in the arena, with a swiftness that makes the head dizzy; they are everywhere; they glitter to the right, to the left; they are in the middle of the arena, at the paling, before the eyes of the bull, in front, behind. The red capes flutter in the air, like banners torn by the wind.

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The bull scatters the capeadors in every direction; with lightning-like movements he chases one,—another thrusts a red cape under his very eyes; the bull leaves the first victim to run after a second, but before he can turn, some third one steps up. The bull rushes at that one! Distance between them decreases, the horns of the bull seem to touch the shoulder of the capeador; another twinkle of an eye and he will be nailed to the paling,—but meanwhile the man touches the top of the paling with his hand, and vanishes as if he had dropped through the earth.

What has happened? The capeador has sprung into the passage extending between the paling and the first row of seats.

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The bull chooses another man; but before he has moved from his tracks the first capeador thrusts out his head from behind the paling, like a red Indian stealing to the farm of a settler, and springs to the arena again. The bull pursues more and more stubbornly those unattainable enemies, who vanish before his very horns; at last he knows where they are hidden. He collects all his strength, anger gives him speed, and he springs like a hunting-horse over the paling, certain that he will crush his foes this time like worms.

But at that very moment they hurl themselves back to the arena with the agility of chimpanzees, and the bull runs along the empty passage, seeing no one before him.

The entire first row of spectators incline through the barrier, then strike from above at the bull with canes, fans, and parasols. The public are growing excited. A bull that springs over the paling recommends himself favorably. When people in the first row applaud him with all their might, those in the upper rows clap their hands, crying, "Bravo el toro! muy buen! Bravo el toro!" (Bravo the bull! Very well, bravo the bull!)

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Meanwhile he comes to an open door and runs out again to the arena. On the opposite side of it two capeadors are sitting on a step extending around the foot of the paling, and are conversing without the slightest anxiety. The bull rushes on them at once; he is in the middle of the arena,—and they sit on without stopping their talk; he is ten steps away,—they continue sitting as if they had not seen him; he is five steps away,—they are still talking. Cries of alarm are heard here and there in the circus; before his very horns the two daring fellows spring, one to the right, the other to the left. The bull's horns strike the paling with a heavy blow. A storm of handclapping breaks out in the circus, and at that very moment

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these and other capeadors surround the bull again and provoke him with red capes.

His madness passes now into fury: he hurls himself forward, rushes, turns on his tracks; every moment his horns give a thrust, every moment it seems that no human power can wrest this or that man from death. Still the horns cut nothing but air, and the red capes are glittering on all sides; at times one of them falls to the ground, and that second the bull in his rage drives almost all of it into the sand. But that is not enough for him,—he must search out some victim, and reach him at all costs.

Hence, with a deep bellow and with bloodshot eyes he starts to run forward at random, but halts on a sudden; a new sight strikes his eye,—that is, a picador on horseback.

The picadors had stood hitherto on their lean horses, like statues, their lances pointing upward. The bull, occupied solely with the hated capes, had not seen them, or if he had seen them he passed them.

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Almost never does it happen that the bull begins a fight with horsemen. The capes absorb his attention and rouse all his rage. It may be, moreover, that the picadors are like his half-wild herdsmen in the Sierra Morena, whom he saw at times from a distance, and before whom he was accustomed to flee with the whole herd.

But now he has had capes enough; his fury seeks eagerly some body to pierce and on which to sate his vengeance.

For spectators not accustomed to this kind of play, a terrible moment is coming. Every one understands that blood must be shed soon.

The bull lowers his head and withdraws a number of paces, as if to gather impetus; the picador turns the horse a little, with his right side to the attacker, so the horse, having his right eye bound with a cloth, shall not push back at the moment of attack. The lance with a short point is lowered in the direction of the bull; he withdraws still more. It seems to you that he will retreat altogether, and your oppressed bosom begins to breathe with more ease.

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Suddenly the bull rushes forward like a rock rolling down from a mountain. In the twinkle of an eye you see the lance bent like a bow; the sharp end of it is stuck in the shoulder of the bull,—and then is enacted a thing simply dreadful: the powerful head and neck of the furious beast is lost under the belly of the horse, his horns sink their whole length in the horse's intestines; sometimes the bull lifts horse and rider, sometimes you see only the upraised hind part of the horse, struggling convulsively in the air. Then the rider falls to the ground, the horse tumbles upon him, and you hear the creaking of the saddle; horse, rider, and saddle form one shapeless mass, which the raging bull tramples and bores with his horns.

Faces unaccustomed to the spectacle grow pale. In Barcelona and Madrid I have seen Englishwomen whose faces had become as pale as linen. Every one in the circus for the first time has the impression of a catastrophe. When the rider is seen rolled into a lump, pressed down by the weight of the saddle and the horse, and the raging beast is thrusting his horns with fury into that mass of flesh, it seems that for the man there is no salvation, and that the attendants will raise a mere bloody corpse from the sand.

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But that is illusion. All that is done is in the programme of the spectacle.

Under the white leather and tinsel the rider has armor which saves him from being crushed,—he fell purposely under the horse, so that the beast should protect him with his body from the horns. In fact the bull, seeing before him the fleshy mass of the horse's belly, expends on it mainly his rage. Let me add that the duration of the catastrophe is counted by seconds. The capeadors have attacked the bull from every side, and he, wishing to free himself from them, must leave his victims. He does leave them, he chases again after the capeadors; his steaming horns, stained with blood, seem again to be just touching the capeadors' shoulders. They, in escaping, lead him to the opposite side of the arena; other men meanwhile draw from beneath the horse the picador, who is barely able to move under the weight of his armor, and throw him over the paling.

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The horse too tries to raise himself: frequently he rises for a moment, but then a ghastly sight strikes the eye. From his torn belly hangs a whole bundle of intestines with a rosy spleen, bluish liver, and greenish stomach. The hapless beast tries to walk a few steps; but his trembling feet tread on his own entrails, he falls, digs the

ground with his hoofs, shudders. Meanwhile the attendants run up, remove the saddle and bridle, and finish the torments of the horse with one stab of a stiletto, at the point where head and neck come together.

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On the arena remains the motionless body, which, lying now on its side, seems wonderfully flat. The intestines are carried out quickly in a basket which is somewhat like a wash-tub, and the public clap their hands with excitement. Enthusiasm begins to seize them: "Bravo el toro! Bravo picador!" Eyes are flashing, on faces a flush comes, a number of hats fly to the arena in honor of the picador. Meanwhile "el toro," having drawn blood once, kills a number of other horses. If his horns are buried not in the belly but under the shoulder of the horse, a stream of dark blood bursts onto the arena in an uncommon quantity; the horse rears and falls backward with his rider. A twofold danger threatens the man: the horns of the bull or, in spite of his armor, the breaking of his neck. But, as we have said, the body of the horse becomes a protection to the rider; hence, every picador tries to receive battle at the edge of the arena, so as to be, as it were, covered between the body of the horse and the paling. When the bull withdraws, the picador advances, but only a few steps, so that the battle never takes place in the centre.

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All these precautions would not avail much, and the bull would pierce the horseman at last, were it not for the capeadors. They press on the bull, draw away his attention, rush with unheard of boldness against his rage, saving each moment the life of some participant in the fight. Once I saw an espada, retreating before the raging beast, stumble against the head of a dead horse and fall on his back; death inevitable was hanging over him, the horns of the bull were just ready to pass through his breast, when suddenly between that breast and the horns the red capes were moving, and the bull flew after the capes. It may be said that were it not for that flock of chimpanzees waving red capes, the work of the picadors would be impossible, and at every representation as many of them as of horses would perish.

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It happens rarely that a picador can stop a bull at the point of a lance. This takes place only when the bull advances feebly, or the picador is gifted with gigantic strength of arms, surpassing the measure of men. I saw two such examples in Madrid, after which came a hurricane of applause for the picador.

But usually the bull kills horses like flies; and he is terrible when, covered with sweat, glittering in the sun, with a neck bleeding from lances and his horns painted red, he runs around the arena, as if in the drunkenness of victory. A deep bellow comes from his mighty lungs; at one moment he scatters capeadors, at another he halts suddenly over the body of a horse, now motionless, and avenges himself on it terribly,—he raises it on his horns, carries it around the arena, scattering drops of stiff blood on spectators in the first row; then he casts it again on the stained sand and pierces it a second time. It seems to him, evidently, that the spectacle is over, and that it has ended in his triumph.

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But the spectacle has barely passed through one-half of its course. Those picadors whose horses have survived the defeat, ride out, it is true, from the arena; but in place of them run in with jumps, and amid shouts, nimble banderilleros. Every one of them in his upraised hands has two arrows, each an ell long, ornamented, in accordance with the coat of the man, with a blue, a green, or a red ribbon, and ending with a barbed point, which once it is under the skin will not come out of it. These men begin to circle about the bull, shaking the arrows, stretching toward him the points, threatening and springing up toward him. The bull rolls his bloodshot eyes, turns his head to the right, to the left, looking to see what new kind of enemies these are. "Ah," says he, evidently, to himself, "you have had little blood, you want more—you shall have it!" and selecting the man, he rushes at him.

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But what happens? The first man, instead of fleeing, runs toward the bull,—runs past his head, as if he wished to avoid him; but in that same second something seems hanging in the air like a rainbow: the man is running away empty-handed with all the strength of his legs, toward the paling, and in the neck of the bull are two colored arrows.

After a moment another pair are sticking in him, and then a third pair,—six altogether, with three colors. The neck of the beast seems

now as if ornamented with a bunch of flowers, but those flowers have the most terrible thorns of any on earth. At every movement of the bull, at every turn of his head, the arrows move, shake, fly from one side of his neck to the other, and with that every point is boring into the wound. Evidently from pain the animal is falling into the madness of rage; but the more he rushes the greater his pain. Hitherto the bull was the wrong-doer, now they wrong him, and terribly. He would like to free himself from those torturing arrows; but there is no power to do that. He is growing mad from mere torment, and is harassed to the utmost. Foam covers his nostrils, his tongue is protruding; he bellows no longer, but in the short intervals between the wild shouts, the clapping, and the uproar of the spectators, you may hear his groans, which have an accent almost human. The capeadors harassed him, every picador wounded him, now the arrows are working into his wounds; thirst and heat complete his torments.

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It is his luck that he did not get another kind of "banderille." If— which, however, happens rarely—the bull refuses to attack the horses and has killed none, the enraged public rise, and in the circus something in the nature of a revolution sets in. Men with their canes and women with their parasols and fans turn to the royal box; wild, hoarse voices of cruel cavaliers, and the shrill ones of señoritas, shout only one word: "Fuego! fuego! fuego!" (Fire, fire, fire!)

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The representatives of the government withhold their consent for a long time. Hence "Fuego!" is heard ever more threateningly, and drowns all other voices; the threat rises to such an intensity as to make us think that the public may pass at any instant from words to a mad deed of some kind. Half an hour passes: "Fuego! fuego!" There is no help for it. The signal is given, and the unfortunate bull gets a banderille which when thrust into his neck blazes up that same instant.

The points wound in their own way, and in their own way rolls of smoke surround the head of the beast, the rattle of fireworks stuns him; great sparks fall into his wounds, small congreve rockets burst under his skin; the smell of burnt flesh and singed hair fill the arena. In truth, cruelty can go no further; but the delight of the public rises now to its zenith. The eyes of women are covered with mist from excitement, every breast is heaving with pleasure, their heads fall backward, and between their open moist lips are gleaming white teeth. You would say that the torment of the beast is reflected in the nerves of those women with an answering degree of delight. Only in Spain can such things be seen. There is in that frenzy something hysterical, something which recalls certain Phœnician mysteries, performed on the altar of Melitta.

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The daring and skill of the banderilleros surpass every measure. I saw one of them who had taken his place in the middle of the arena in an arm-chair; he had stretched his legs carelessly before him,— they were in rose-colored stockings,—he crossed them, and holding above his head a banderille, was waiting for the bull. The bull rushed at him straightway; the next instant, I saw only that the banderille was fastened in the neck, and the bull was smashing the chair with mad blows of his head. In what way the man had escaped between the chair and the horns, I know not,—that is the secret of his skill. Another banderillero, at the same representation, seizing the lance of a picador at the moment of attack, supported himself with it, and sprang over the back and whole length of the bull. The beast was dumb-founded, could not understand where his victim had vanished.

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A multitude of such wonders of daring and dexterity are seen at each representation.

One bull never gets more than three pairs of banderilles. When the deed is accomplished, a single trumpet is heard in the orchestra with a prolonged and sad note,—and the moment the most exciting and tragic in the spectacle approaches. All that was done hitherto was only preparation for this. Now a fourth act of the drama is played.

On the arena comes out the "matador" himself,—that is, the espada. He is dressed like the other participants in the play, only more elaborately and richly. His coat is all gold and tinsel: costly laces adorn his breast. He may be distinguished by this too,—that he comes out bareheaded always. His black hair, combed back carefully, ends on his shoulders in a small tail. In his left hand he

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holds a red cloth flag, in his right a long Toledo sword. The capeadors surround him as soldiers their chief, ready at all times to save him in a moment of danger, and he approaches the bull, collected, cool, but terrible and triumphant.

In all the spectators the hearts are throbbing violently, and a moment of silence sets in.

In Barcelona and Madrid I saw the four most eminent espadas in Spain, and in truth I admit, that besides their cool blood, dexterity, and training, they have a certain hypnotic power, which acts on the animal and fills him with mysterious alarm. The bull simply bears himself differently before the espada from what he did before the previous participants in the play. It is not that he withdraws before him; on the contrary, he attacks him with greater insistence perhaps. But in former attacks, in addition to rage, there was evident a certain desire. He hunted, he scattered, he killed; he was as if convinced that the whole spectacle was for him, and that the question was only in this, that he should kill. Now, at sight of that cold, awful man with a sword in his hand, he convinces himself that death is there before him, that he must perish, that on that bloody sand the ghastly deed will be accomplished in some moments.

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This mental state of the beast is so evident that every man can divine it. Perhaps even this, by its tragic nature, becomes the charm of the spectacle. That mighty organism, simply seething with a superabundance of vitality, of desire, of strength, is unwilling to die, will not consent to die for anything in the world! and death, unavoidable, irresistible, is approaching; hence unspeakable sorrow, unspeakable despair, throbs through every movement of the bull. He hardly notices the capeadors, whom before he pursued with such venom; he attacks the espada himself, but he attacks with despair completely evident.

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The espada does not kill him at once, for that is not permitted by the rules of the play. He deceives the bull with movements of the flag, himself he pushes from the horns by turns slight and insignificant; he waits for the moment, withdraws, advances. Evidently he wishes to sate the public; now, this very instant, he'll strike, now he lowers his sword again.

The struggle extends over the whole arena; it glitters in the sun, is dark in the shade. In the circus applause is heard, now general, now single from the breast of some señorita who is unable to restrain her enthusiasm. At one moment bravos are thundering; at another, if the espada has retreated awkwardly or given a false blow, hissing rends the ear. The bull has now given some tens of blows with his horns,—always to the flag; the public are satisfied; here and there voices are crying: "Mata el toro! mata el toro!" (Kill the bull! kill the bull!)

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And now a flash comes so suddenly that the eye cannot follow it; then the group of fighters scatter, and in the neck of the bull, above the colored banderilles, is seen the red hilt of the sword. The blade has gone through the neck, and, buried two thirds of its length, is planted in the lungs of the beast.

The espada is defenceless; the bull attacks yet, but he misleads him in the old fashion with the flag, he saves himself from the blows with half turns.

Meanwhile it seems that people have gone wild in the circus. No longer shouts, but one bellow and howl are heard, around, from above to below. All are springing from their seats. To the arena are flying bouquets, cigar-cases, hats, fans. The fight is approaching its end.

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A film is coming over the eyes of the bull; from his mouth are hanging stalactites of bloody saliva; his groan becomes hoarse. Night is embracing his head. The glitter and heat of the sun concern him no longer. He attacks yet, but as it were in a dream. It is darker and darker for him. At last he collects the remnant of his consciousness, backs to the paling, totters for a moment, kneels on his fore feet, drops on his hind ones, and begins to die.

The espada looks at him no longer; he has his eyes turned to the spectators, from whom hats and cigar-cases are flying, thick as hail; he bows; capeadors throw back to the spectators their hats.

Meanwhile a mysterious man dressed in black climbs over the paling in silence and puts a stiletto in the bull, where the neckbone meets the skull; with a light movement he sinks it to the hilt and turns it.

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That is the blow of mercy, after which the head of the bull drops

on its side.

All the participants pass out. For a moment the arena is empty; on it are visible only the body of the bull and the eviscerated carcasses of four or five horses, now cold.

But after a while rush in with great speed men with mules, splendidly harnessed in yellow and red; the men attach these mules to the bodies and draw them around so that the public may enjoy the sight once again, then with speed equally great they go out through the doors of the arena.

But do not imagine that the spectacle is ended with one bull. After the first comes a second, after the second a third, and so on. In Madrid six bulls perish at a representation. In Barcelona, at the time of the fair, eight were killed.

Do not think either that the public are wearied by the monotony of the fight. To begin with, the fight itself is varied with personal episodes caused by temperament, the greater or less rage of the bull, the greater or less skill of the men in their work; secondly, that public is never annoyed at the sight of blood and death.

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The "toreadores" (though in Spain no participant in the fight is called a toreador), thanks to their dexterity, rarely perish; but if that happens, the spectacle is considered as the more splendid, and the bull receives as much applause as the espada. Since, however, accidents happen to people sometimes, at every representation, besides the doctor, there is present a priest with the sacrament. That spiritual person is not among the audience, of course; but he waits in a special room, to which the wounded are borne in case of an accident.

Whether in time, under the influence of civilization, bull-fights will be abandoned in Spain, it is difficult to say. The love of those fights is very deep in the nature of the Spanish people. The higher and intelligent ranks of society take part in them gladly. The defenders of these spectacles say that in substance they are nothing more than hazardous hunting, which answers to the knightly character of the nation. But hunting is an amusement, not a career; in hunting there is no audience,—only actors; there are no throngs of women, half fainting from delight at the spectacle of torment and death; finally, in hunting no one exposes his life for hire.

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Were I asked if the spectacle is beautiful, I should say yes; beautiful especially in its surroundings,—that sun, those shades, those thousands of fans at sight of which it seems as though a swarm of butterflies had settled on the seats of the circus, those eyes, those red moist lips. Beautiful is that incalculable quantity of warm and strong tones, that mass of colors, gold, tinsel, that inflamed sand, from which heat is exhaling,—finally those proofs of bold daring, and that terror hanging over the play. All that is more beautiful by far than the streams of blood and the torn bellies of the horses.

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He, however, who knows these spectacles only from description, and sees them afterwards with his own eyes, cannot but think: what a wonderful people for whom the highest amusement and delight is the sight of a thing so awful, so absolute and inevitable as death. Whence comes that love? Is it simply a remnant of Middle-age cruelty; or is it that impulse which is roused in many persons, for instance at sight of a precipice, to go as near as possible to the brink, to touch that curtain, behind which begin the mystery and the pit?—that is a wonderful passion, which in certain souls becomes irresistible.

Of the Spaniards it may be said, that in the whole course of their history they have shown a tendency to extremes. Few people have been so merciless in warfare; none have turned a religion of love into such a gloomy and bloody worship; finally, no other nation amuses itself by playing with death.

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FOOTNOTE:

- [1] The Polish word for angel is *anioł*, distorted by the old woman into *jamiol*, which is pronounced *yamyol*.

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