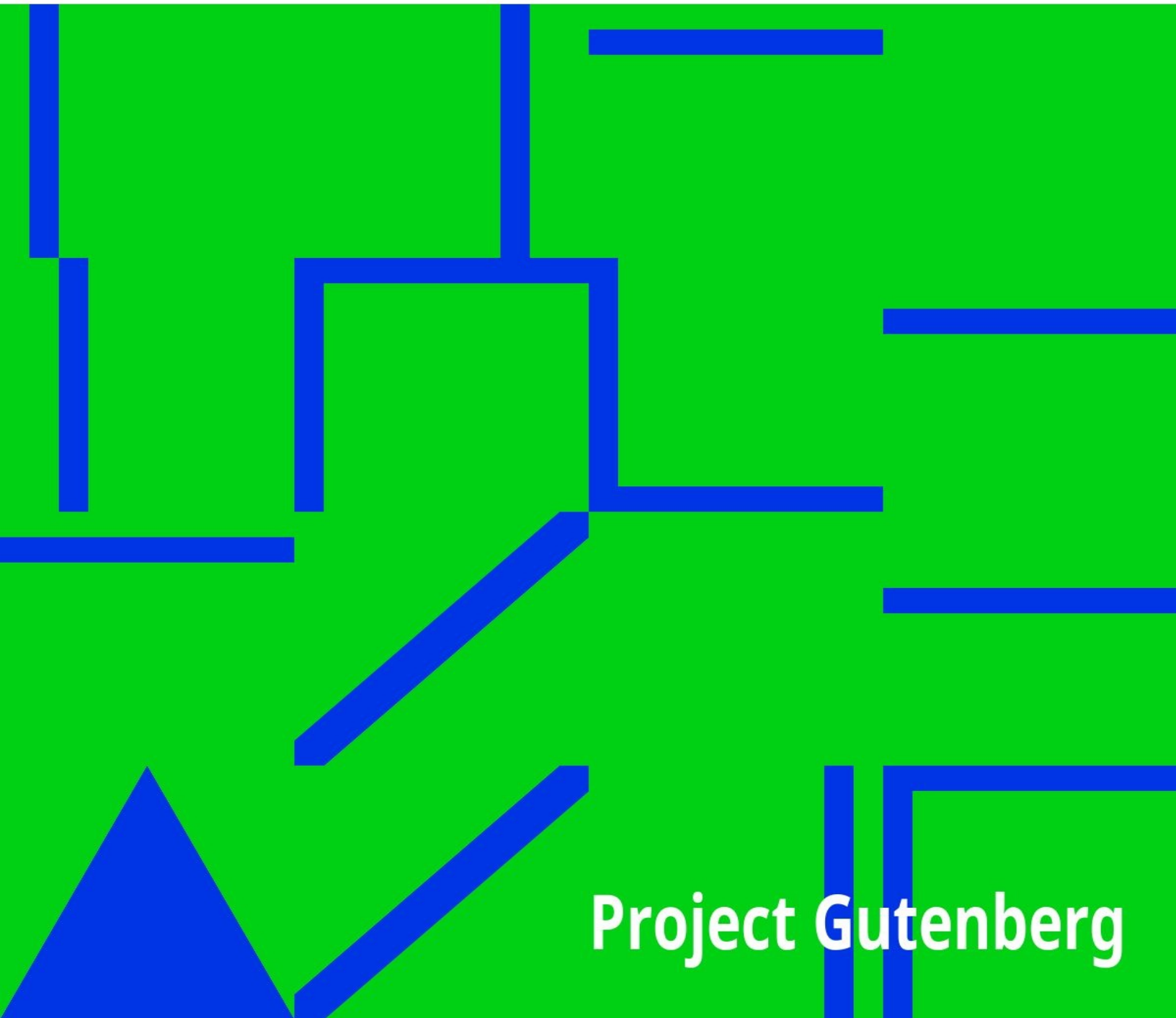
The Golden Canyon

G. A. Henty



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by

G.A. Henty

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Publishers' Introduction

George Alfred Henty has been called "The Prince of Story-Tellers." To call him

"The Boy's Own Historian" would perhaps be a more appropriate title, for time has proved that he is more than a story-teller; he is a preserver and propagator of history amongst boys.

How Mr. Henty has risen to be worthy of these enviable titles is a story which will doubtless possess some amount of interest for all his readers.

Henty may be said to have begun his preliminary training for his life-work when a boy attending school at Westminster. Even then the germ of his story-telling propensity seems to have evinced itself, for he was always awarded the highest marks in English composition.

From Westminster he went to Cambridge, where he was enrolled as a student at Caius College. It is a decided change of scenery and circumstances from Cambridge to the Crimea, but such was the change which took place in Mr. Henty's career at the age of twenty-one.

An appointment in connection with the commissariat department of the British army, took him from the scenes of student life into the excitement of the Muscovite war.

Previous to this, however, he had written his first novel, which he has characterized as "Very bad, no doubt, and was, of course, never published, but the plot was certainly a good one."

Whilst engaged with his duties at the Crimea he sent home several descriptive letters of the places, people, and circumstances passing under his notice. His father, thinking some of those letters were of more than private interest, took a selection of them to the editor of the *Morning Advertiser*, who, after perusal of them, was so well pleased with their contents that he at once appointed young Henty as war correspondent to the paper in the Crimea.

The ability with which he discharged his duties in the commissariat department at that time soon found for him another sphere of similar work in connection with the hospital of the Italian forces. After a short time this was relinquished for engagement in mining work, which he first entered into at Wales, and then in Italy.

Ten years after his Crimean correspondence to the *Morning Advertiser* he again took to writing, and at this time obtained the position of special correspondent to

the *Standard*. While holding this post, he contributed letters and articles on the wars in Italy and Abyssinia, and on the expedition to Khiva. Two novels came from his pen during this time, but his attention was mostly devoted to miscellaneous letters and articles.

It is a specially interesting incident in the career of Mr. Henty how he came to turn his attention to writing for boys. When at home, after dinner, it was his habit to spend an hour or so with his children in telling them stories, and generally amusing them. A story begun one day would be so framed as "to be continued in the next," and so the same story would run on for a few days, each day's portion forming a sort of chapter, until the whole was completed. Some of the stories continued for weeks. Mr. Henty, seeing the fascination and interest which these stories had for his own children, bethought himself that others might receive from them the same delight and interest if they were put into book form. He at once acted upon the suggestion and wrote out a chapter of his story for each day, and instead of telling it to his children in an extempore fashion, read what he had written. When the story was completed, the various chapters were placed together and dispatched to a publisher, who at once accepted and published it. It was in this way the long series of historical stories which has come from his powerful pen was inaugurated, and G.A. Henty was awarded the title of "The Prince of Story-Tellers."

There is in this incident a glimpse of the character of our author which endears him to us all. The story of his kindly interest in his own children surely creates a liking for him in the hearts of the children of others. The man who can spend an hour in telling stories to his little ones, and retain their attention and interest, has an evident sympathy with, and power over, the youthful nature. Time has proved such is the case with G.A. Henty, for up to the present he has written close on fifty stories for boys, which have been received with unbounded joy and satisfaction by all.

As an indication of the reception which his books have met with, the following may be quoted from an English paper:

"G.A. Henty, the English writer of juveniles, is the most popular writer in England to-day in point of sales. Over 150,000 copies of his books are sold in a year, and in America he sells from 25,000 to 50,000 during a year."

"All the world" is the sphere from which Mr. Henty draws his pictures and

characters for the pleasure of the young. Almost every country in the world has been studied to do service in this way, with the result that within the series of books which Mr. Henty has produced for the young we find such places dealt with as Carthage, Egypt, Jerusalem, Scotland, Spain, England, Afghanistan, Ashanti, Ireland, France, India, Gibraltar, Waterloo, Alexandria, Venice, Mexico, Canada, Virginia, and California. Doubtless what other countries remain untouched as yet are but so many fields to be attacked, and which every lad hopes to see conquered in the same masterly way in which the previous ones have been handled.

As a rule much of what boys learn at school is left behind them when classes are given up for the sterner work of the world. Unless there is a special demand for a certain subject, that subject is apt to become a thing of the past, both in theory and practice. This, however, is not likely to be the case with history, so long as G.A. Henty writes books for boys, and boys read them. History is his especial forte, and that he is able to invest the dry facts of history with life, and make them attractive to the modern schoolboy, says not a little for his power as a story-teller for boys. It is questionable if history has any better means of fixing itself in the minds of youthful readers than as it is read in the pages of G.A. Henty's works. There is about it an attraction which cannot be resisted; a most unusual circumstance in connection with such a subject. All this of course means for Mr. Henty a vast amount of research and study to substantiate his facts and make his situations, characters, places, and points of time authentic. To the reader it means a benefit which is incalculable, not only as a means of passing a pleasant hour, but in reviving or imparting a general knowledge of the history and geography, the manners and customs of our own and other lands.

There is a noticeable element of "Freedom" which runs through Mr. Henty's books, and in this may be said to lie their influence. From them lads get an elevating sense of independence, and a stimulus to patriotic and manly endeavor. His pages provide the purest form of intellectual excitement which it is possible to put into the hands of lads. They are always vigorous and healthy, and a power for the strengthening of the moral as well as the intellectual life.

In the present work, "The Golden Canyon," a tale of the gold mines, Mr. Henty has fully sustained his reputation, and we feel certain all boys will read the book with keen interest.

Chapter I.—A Run Ashore.

In the month of August, 1856, the bark *Northampton* was lying in the harbor of San Diego. In spite of the awning spread over her deck the heat was almost unbearable. Not a breath of wind was stirring in the land-locked harbor, and the bare and arid country round the town afforded no relief to the eye. The town itself looked mean and poverty-stricken, for it was of comparatively modern growth, and contained but a few buildings of importance. Long low warehouses fringed the shore, for here came for shipping vast quantities of hides; as San Diego, which is situated within a few miles of the frontier between the United States and Mexico, is the sole sheltered port available for shipping between San Francisco and the mouth of the Gulf of California. Two or three other ships which were, like the *Northampton*, engaged in shipping hides, lay near her. A sickening odor rose from the half-cured skins as they were swung up from boats alongside and lowered into the hold, and in spite of the sharp orders of the mates, the crew worked slowly and listlessly.

"This is awful, Tom," a lad of about sixteen, in the uniform of a midshipman, said to another of about the same age as, after the last boat had left the ship's sides, they leaned against the bulwarks; "what with the heat, and what with the stench, and what with the captain and the first mate, life is not worth living. However, only another two or three days and we shall be full up, and once off we shall get rid of a good deal of the heat and most of the smell."

"Yes, we shall be better off in those respects, Dick, but unfortunately we shan't leave the captain and mate behind."

"No, I don't know which I like worst of them. It is a contrast to our last sip, Tom. What a good time we had of it on board the *Zebra*! The captain was a brick, and the mates were all good fellows. In fact, we have always been fortunate since the day we first came on board together up to now. I can't think how the owners ever appointed Collet to the command; he is not one of their own officers. But when Halford was taken suddenly ill I suppose they had no others at home to put in his place, so had to go outside. My father said that Mr. Thompson had told him that

they heard that he was a capital sailor, and I have no doubt he is. He certainly handled her splendidly in that big storm we had rounding the Cape. I suppose they did not inquire much farther, as we took no passengers out to San Francisco, and were coming out to pick up a cargo of hides here for the return journey; but he is a tyrant on board, and when I get back I will tell my father, and he will let Thompson know the sort of fellow Collet is. It doesn't do one any good making complaints of a captain, but my father is such friends with Thompson that I know he will tell the other partners that he hears that Collet isn't the sort of man they care about having commanding their ships, without my name coming into it. If he does I can't help it. I know Thompson will see that I don't sail with Collet again, anyhow, and will get you with me, as he has often met you at my father's, and knows what chums we are. Collet brought Williams with him, and they were a nice pair. I believe the second and third are just as disgusted as we are, and as Allen is a nephew of one of the partners he will put a spoke in their wheel too, when he comes back."

"Well, we might be worse off in some respects, Dick. We have two good officers out of the four, and we have a very fair crew, and we have good grub; and the company always victual their ships well, and don't put the officers' messing into the hands of the captain, as they do in some ships."

Presently Mr. Allen, the second officer, came up with the two lads.

"I am going ashore in an hour, Preston," he said to Dick; "if you like, you can come with me."

"Thank you, sir; I should like it very much."

"I wish you were coming too, Tom," he went on when the officer moved away. "That is one of the nuisances, Collet never letting us go ashore together."

"It is a nuisance," the other said, heartily. "Of course, Allen is a very good fellow, but one can't have any larks as one could have if we were together."

"Well, there are not many larks to be had here, at any rate, Tom. It is about the dullest place I ever landed at. It is a regular Mexican town, and except that they do have, I suppose, sometimes, dances and that sort of thing, there is really nothing to be done when one does go ashore, and the whole place stinks of hides. Even if one could get away for a day there is no temptation to ride about that desert-looking country, with the sun burning down on one; no one but a

salamander could stand it. They are about the roughest-looking lot I ever saw in the town. Everyone has got something to do with hides one way or the other. They have either come in with them from the country, or they pack them in the warehouses, or they ship them. That and mining seem the only two things going on, and the miners, with their red shirts and pistols and knives, look even a rougher lot than the others. I took my pistol when last I went ashore; I will lend it you this evening."

"Oh, I don't want a pistol, Tom; there is no chance of my getting into a row."

"Oh, it is just as well to carry one, Dick, when you know that everyone else has got one about him somewhere, and a considerable number of them are drunk; it is just as well to take one. You know, it is small, and goes in my breast pocket."

"I will take my stick, the one I bought at San Francisco; it has got an ounce of lead in the knob. I would rather have that than a pistol any day."

However, as Dick was standing with the second officer at the top of the gangway, Tom Haldane, as he passed by, slipped the pistol into his hand and then walked on. Dick thrust it into his pocket, and then descended the ladder. It was almost dark now.

"I have two or three places to go to, Preston, and do not know how long I shall be detained. It is just nine o'clock now. Suppose you meet me here at the boat at half-past ten. It will be pleasanter for you to stroll about by yourself than to be waiting about outside houses for me."

"Very well, sir. I don't think there is much to see in the town, but I will take a bit of a stroll outside. It is cool and pleasant after the heat of the day."

They walked together to the first house that Mr. Allen had to visit; then Dick strolled on by himself. The place abounded with wine-shops. Through the open doors the sound of the strumming of mandolins, snatches of Spanish song, and occasionally voices raised in dispute or anger, came out. Dick felt no inclination to enter any of them. Had his chum been with him he might have looked in for a few minutes for the fun of the thing, but alone he would be the object of remark, and might perhaps get involved in a quarrel. Besides the freshness of the air was so pleasant that he felt disposed for a walk, for the moon was shining brightly, the stars seemed to hang from the skies, and after having been pent up in the ship for the last four days it was pleasant to stretch the limbs in a brisk walk. In ten

minutes he was outside the town, and followed the road for half an hour.

"It is a comfort," he said to himself, "to have got rid of the smell of hides. If ever cholera comes this way I should think it would make a clean sweep of San Diego."

Turning, he walked leisurely back; he entered the town, and had gone but a hundred yards or two when he heard a shout, followed by a pistol shot, and then, in English, a cry for help.

He dashed down the street toward a group of people who, he could see in the moonlight, were engaged in a sharp struggle. One man was defending himself against four, and the oaths and exclamations of these showed that they were Mexicans. Just as he reached them the man they were attacking was struck down, and two of his assailants threw themselves upon him.

Dick rushed upon the men, and felled one with a sweeping blow of his stick. The other man who was standing up sprang at him, knife in hand, with a savage oath.

So quick was the action that he was upon Dick before he had time to strike a blow with his stick. He threw up his left arm to guard his head, but received a severe gash on the shoulders. At the same moment he struck out with his right, full into the face of the Mexican, who, as he staggered back, fell across the three men on the ground. Dick seized the opportunity to draw his pistol, dropping his stick as he did so, as his left arm was disabled. It was a double-barreled pistol and as the three natives rose and rushed at him, he shot the first. The other two sprang at him and he received a blow that almost paralyzed him. He staggered against the wall, but had strength to raise his arm and fire again, just as the man was about to repeat his blow; he fell forward on his face, and his other assailant took to his heels. A moment later Dick himself sank to the ground.

Chapter II.—Dick's Escape.

When Dick opened his eyes it was broad daylight. He was lying in a barely furnished room. A surgeon was leaning over him bandaging his wounds, while on the other side of the bed stood three red-shirted men, whose rough beards and belts with bowie knives and pistols showed them to be miners. One of them had his face strapped up and his arm in a sling. An exclamation of satisfaction burst from him as Dick's eyes opened.

"That is right, lad. You will do now. It has been touch and go with you all night. My life aint no pertik'lar value to nobody, but such as it is you have saved it. But I won't talk of that now. Which ship do you belong to? We will let them know at once."

"The *Northampton*," Dick said in a whisper.

"All right; don't you talk any more. We will get your friends here in no time."

But when Mr. Allen came ashore Dick was again unconscious. The mate fetched two more surgeons, who, after conferring with the first, were all of opinion that although he might possibly recover from his wounds, weeks would elapse before he would be convalescent. Before night fever had set in, and it was a fortnight before he was again conscious of what was passing round him. He looked feebly round the room. One of the red-shirted men was attending to a pot over a charcoal fire. Turning his head he saw, standing looking out of the window, his friend Tom Haldane.

"Halloa, Tom," he said, in a whisper, which, however, reached the midshipman's ears. He turned sharply round, and hurried to the bedside.

"Thank God, Dick, you are conscious again. Don't try to talk, old fellow; drink this lemonade, and then shut your eyes again."

Dick tried to raise his hand to take the glass, but, to his surprise, found he was unable to do so. Tom, however, put it to his lips and poured it down his throat. It was cool and pleasant, and with a sigh of relief he again closed his eyes, and went off into a quiet sleep.

When he awoke it was evening; the window was open, and the fresh air came in, making the lamp on the table flicker.

"How do you feel now, old man?" Tom asked.

"I feel all right," he said, "but I am wonderfully weak. I suppose I must have lost a lot of blood. Has the skipper given you leave to stop with me for the night?"

Tom nodded. "I will tell you all about it in the morning, Dick. There is some chicken broth Dave has been cooking for you. You must try and drink a bowl of it, and then by to-morrow morning you will be feeling like a giant."

Dick laughed feebly. "It will be some time before there is much of a giant about me. Tom; but I feel as if I could drink some broth."

The next morning Dick woke feeling decidedly stronger. "Raise me up and put some pillows behind me, Tom. It is horrid being fed from a spoon, lying on one's back."

The man called Dave, and Tom, lifted him up as he wished, and then the latter fed him with the broth, in which some bread had been crumbled.

"Now, then," Dick said, when he had finished; "let us hear what the old man said. I suppose he was in a tremendous rage?"

"That he was! a brute!"

"Why, there is my chest. What has he sent that ashore for? I should think I could be taken on board again to-day."

"You won't be taken on board the *Northampton*," Tom said, "for by this time she is down somewhere near Cape Horn."

"Eh!" Dick exclaimed in astonishment. "Why, how long have I been here?"

"A fortnight to-day, Dick."

Dick was too surprised to make any remark for some time.

"But if the *Northampton* has gone, how is it that you are here, Tom?"

"Simply because she has gone without me, Dick. The old man was in a furious rage when he heard in the morning what had happened to you. Of course, we were in a great stew—I mean the third mate and myself—when Allen came off at twelve o'clock without you, after waiting an hour and a half at the wharf for you to turn up. We all felt sure that something must have happened, or you would never have been all that time late. There was a row between Allen and the skipper the first thing in the morning. Allen wanted to go ashore to make inquiries about you, and the old man would not let him, and said that no doubt you had deserted, but that if you came on board again he would have you put in irons.

"Well, there was a regular row going on when a boat came off with a man in a red shirt, who I know now is one of Dave's partners, and said that you were desperately wounded, and that the Spanish doctor they had called in thought that you would die. So then the old man couldn't help Allen's going ashore. Of course, he could do nothing, as you were insensible, but he got two other surgeons. Their opinion was that you would not get over it, but that if you did it would be a long time first. When Allen got back there was another row. He wanted to have you brought on board. The captain said that as you had chosen to mix yourself up in a row on shore, you might die on shore for anything he cared. Then I asked for leave to stay with you when the vessel sailed, and got sworn at for my pains. In the afternoon I filled up your chest chockfull with as many of my things as I could get into it, and sent it ashore. By the next night we had got all the cargo on board, and were to sail by the next morning, and I lowered myself down and swam ashore.

"Allen had told me exactly where you were lying, so I came here at once and told Dave who I was, and why I had come ashore, and as soon as it was light he took me round to the room the other two had. The captain came ashore in the morning and stormed and raved at the Consul's, but he had better have kept on board. I told our friends here all about it, and as he went back to the boat again one of them pitched into him, and gave him such a tremendous licking that I hear he had to be carried on board. As soon as he got on board the *Northampton*

sailed, so you see here we both are. I have written off to your father and mine, giving them a full account of the whole affair, and saying what a brute Collet had been on the whole voyage. They will be sure to lay the letters before the firm, and as Allen and Smith will, when they are questioned, speak out pretty straight, you may be sure the old man and his friend, the first mate, will have to look for a berth somewhere else."

"It is awfully good of you to have come ashore to nurse me, Tom."

"Bosh! Why, I have got away from the *Northampton*. I found, too, that as far as nursing was concerned I might as well have stayed on board, for Dave here and his two mates have, one or other of them, been with you night and day, and they could not have taken more care of you if they had been women. Still I have been very glad to be here, though till three days ago there seemed very little hope of your pulling through it. Now you have talked enough, or rather, I have talked enough, Dick; and you had better turn over and get another sleep."

Chapter III.—The Gold-Seekers.

Two days later the lad was able to sit up in bed and to enter upon a discussion as to the future with Tom and the miner. It was begun by the latter.

"I suppose you will be taking the first ship back as soon as you are strong enough?" he said.

"I don't know, Dave; now I am here I should certainly like a run ashore for a few weeks and to see something of the country. We have got twenty pounds between us; that will last for some time. I should think we could get a passage back without having to pay on this side for it, and if there was any difficulty about it, we could work our way back; but Tom agrees with me, we should like to see something of the country first.

"I suppose in another fortnight I shall be all right again; but there is the doctor to pay. I don't know what their charges are here, but I expect his bill will be a pretty long one. You had better tell him to-day that we have not got a great deal of cash between us, and that as I only want building up now, he need not come again."

"Don't you trouble yourself about that," Dave growled. "You don't suppose that when you have got yourself cut and sliced about in helping me you are going to have any trouble about doctors? We have got a tidy lot at present amongst us, and what is ours is yourn. We were going to set off among the hills a day or two after the time we had that trouble; only, of course, that stopped it all."

"Please don't stop on my account," Dick said. "I shall get on very well now, and I was saying to Tom, as soon as I can get about we will go off somewhere among the hills; for one might just as well be lying in an oven as here. If you will tell us where you and your mates are working, we might find our way there, and get a job. We are both pretty strong, you know—that is to say, when we are well—and we have often said that we should like to try our luck gold-mining."

"We aint agoing till you are strong enough to get about," Dave said; "so it is no use saying any more about that. Then, if you want to do some mining, we will put you in the way of it; but we are going on a long expedition, which may last months, and from which, as like as not, we shall never come back again. However, we can easy enough take you with us for a bit and drop you at one of the mining camps, and stop there with you till you get accustomed to it, or work for a few months with you if you like. Time is not of much consequence to us."

"That is awfully good of you, Dave," Tom said, "but as you have lost more than a fortnight at present, and I suppose it will be another fortnight before Dick is strong enough to travel, it isn't fair on you; and perhaps you might be able to introduce us to some men going up to the hills—that is, if you think that we could not go with you on this expedition you talk of."

"That won't be a job for young hands," Dave said. "It will be a mighty long journey over a terrible rough country, where one's life will be always in one's hands, where one's eyes will always be on the lookout for an enemy, and one will know that any moment, night or day, one may hear the war yell of the Indians. We are going into the heart of Arizona, to places where not half-a-dozen white men, even counting Mexicans as white men, have ever set foot; at least, where not half-a-dozen have ever come back alive from, though maybe there are hundreds who have tried."

"Then I suppose you are going to look for some very rich mine, Dave?"

"That is so; I will tell you how it came about, and queerly enough, it wur pretty well the same way as your friend and me came together. My mates and me were coming down from the hills when we heard a shot fired in a wood ahead of us. It wasn't none of our business, but we went on at a trot, thinking as how some white men had been attacked by greasers."

"What are greasers?" Tom asked.

Dave laughed.

"A greaser is just a Mexican. Why they call them so I don't know; but that has been their name always as long as I came in the country. Well, we ran down and came sudden upon two greasers who were kneeling by a man lying in the road, and seemed to be searching his pockets. We let fly with our Colts; one of them was knocked over, and the other bolted. Then we went to look at the man in the

road; he wur a greaser too. He had been shot dead. 'I wonder what they shot him for?' says I. 'Maybe it is a private quarrel; maybe he had struck it rich, and has got a lot of gold in his belt. We may as well look; it is no use leaving it for that skunk that bolted to come back for.' He had got about twenty ounces in his belt, and we shifted it into our bag, and were just going on when 'Zekel—that is one of my mates—said, 'I know this cuss, Dave; it's the chap that lived in that village close to where we were working six months ago; they said he had been fossicking all over Arizona, and that he was the only one who ever came back out of a party who went to locate a wonderful rich spot it was said he knew of.

"'He tried over and over again to get up another party, but no one would try after that first failure. We may just as well search him all over; it may be he has got a plan of the place somewhere about him, and it is like enough those fellows have killed him on the chance of finding it.'

"So we searched him pretty thorough, and at last we found a paper sewn up in the collar of his jacket. Sure enough it was a plan. We did not examine it then, for someone might have come along, and we might have been accused of the chap's murder; so I shoved it into the inside pocket of my shirt, and we went on. We looked at it that night; there was several marks on it and names, one of which we had heard of, though we had never been so far in the Indian country. Well, as you may guess, we had some big talks over it, and at last we reckoned we would have a try to find it.

"We had been lucky, and had struck it rich at the last place we had been at, and we agreed, instead of spending our money in a spree or at the monte tables, we would fit out an expedition and try it. Now I believe that attack was made on me to try and get that piece of paper. The chap who bolted may like enough have hid himself and watched us, and may have seen us find it and me take charge of it. We thought more than once since we came down here that we were being dogged by a greaser, but we never thought about the paper. That evening I had been out by myself, which I did not often do, for we in general went about together, and was going back along that street, and was pretty nigh home, when someone said in Spanish, 'That is the fellow,' and then five men jumped out with knives in their hands. I had just time to whip out my six-shooter and fire once. One fellow went down, but at the same moment I got a clip across my wrist with a knife, and down went the pistol. Then I got a slice across the head, and another on the shoulder, and down I went. Two of them threw themselves on me, and I shammed dead, knowing that if I moved it was all over with me. One of them

shoved his hand in my trousers pockets, and the other tore my shirt open. I heard a sudden row, a blow, and the fall of a body; then one of them came tumbling down on the top of us and knocked the two fellows over, then they jumped up, and I heard your pistol crack twice and two falls, and as I got up on to my feet to lend a hand I saw one of the fellows bolting down the street, running off in another direction. That was the one, I think, that came down on the top of us.

"I have been wondering since then how it was that that fellow fell, for you did not fire till they jumped up."

Dick explained that he had felled one with a blow from the stick, and not having time to strike with it again, had sent the second staggering over the group with a blow of his fist; "those are the two that got away, I expect," he said.

"I expect so; there were four bodies on the ground—yours, the two fellows you shot, and the one I wiped out to begin with."

"Has there been any row about it?" Dick asked.

"No; they take these things quietly. If it had been one of my mates and me who had killed three Mexicans, our story that we had been attacked might not have been believed, but as it was certain a young ship's officer would not have joined me in falling foul of three natives, they just took and buried them, and there was an end of it."

Chapter IV.—More Plans.

"I suppose this is Dave's room?" Dick Said when he and his friend were alone.

"Yes, from what he said they lodged here together, but the other two went somewhere else the day after you were brought in, so that the place should be quiet, but they come in by turns to sit up with you at night. I wish they would take us with them on this expedition, Dick."

"I wish they would; it would be a splendid adventure, and we might come back with no end of gold. At any rate, after being four months under Collet, I think we have a right to a holiday. I expect they will let us go with them if you make a strong point of it, Dick."

"It shan't be for want of trying, Tom, anyhow."

The lads had their way. As soon as the three men saw that they were really bent upon accompanying them, they raised no further objections.

"We shall be glad enough to have you with us," Dave said, "and though the work will be toilsome and hard, there is nothing in it that two active young chaps like you need be afraid of. It is just the Injuns—they are the worst kind, and have always set themselves against gold-seekers. That is natural enough, for they know that if gold mines were once opened in their country, the whites would pour in, and they would soon be wiped out. Anyhow, everyone who goes prospecting in that part of Arizona knows well enough that he takes his life in his hands.

"All along the country by the Gila River is the stronghold of the Apaches, the terror of Northern Mexico. Many parties of miners have set out, but very few have ever come back again; but those that have tell of gold richer by a hundred times than ever was seen in California, and have brought with them sacks of

nuggets to prove it. These are men who have had the luck to get in and out without ever having been seen by the Injuns; the large parties have never succeeded. So you see, young fellows, the odds are strongly agin you. Still, if you like to go with us, you are welcome; but if the time comes when the redskins have got us shut up in some place we can never get out of alive, remember that you are there on your own choice, and that we had no hand in getting you into the scrape."

"We will never blame you, whatever comes of it, Dave. If the risk is not too great for you and your comrades, it is not too great for us. There is nothing in the world we should like so much as such an adventure."

"Well, that is settled then, and no more words about it. We shall be glad to have two more with us, and we intended to go alone only because it is not everyone that can be trusted."

"What do we take with us?"

"We shall each take a horse, and a Mexican pony to carry our food and traps. If everything goes right and we find a bonanza, we can load them up on the way back. Twenty dollars will buy a pony here. Then you will want a critter each to ride. We are not going to get first-rate ones, for if the Indians come on us it is fighting that we shall have to do, not riding. Among those mountains no shod horse of the plains has a chance with those Indian ponies, which can climb like goats and go at a gallop along places where a horse from the plains wouldn't dare move. Then you will want rifles and six-shooters. That is about all; I am afraid our stock of money will hardly run to it, and I think we had better work for a while in one of the diggings to make up what we shall want."

"We have twenty pounds between us," Dick said, "and we can draw on our fathers for twenty-five pounds each. The Consul here has, of course, heard of my being wounded and left behind, and I expect he won't mind cashing our draft."

"There will be more than we want," the miner said. "Still, it is as well to be on the right side. If we don't find any gold up there, we shall want a little when we get back to keep us going until something turns up."

Three days later Dick was strong enough to go with his friend to the Consul's; they found that Mr. Allen had spoken about Dick, and told him that should he recover from his wounds, he could cash a draft for him without any fear.

Therefore in half an hour the lads returned to their lodgings with three hundred and fifty dollars, having changed their English gold into the currency of the country.

"You have not got your horses yet, I suppose, Dave?"

"No, we shall go up the river about a hundred and twenty miles. There we shall buy horses cheaper than we can get them here. We have got rifles and colts; they are things one can't very well do without in knocking about among the hills. I will go round the town, and I have no doubt I shall be able to pick you up what you want cheap. There are so many men get rubbed out one way or the other that such things are pretty often for sale."

The other two miners, who during Dick's illness had nothing to do but to stroll about the town, both knew of men who had rifles or revolvers to dispose of, and in a couple of hours the purchases were completed and a considerable stock of ammunition was also bought.

"I should recommend yer," the miner called 'Zekel said, as the party were talking matters over that evening, "to rig yourselves out miner fashion. Them uniforms looks very nice on board ship, but they aint much good for knocking about in the mountains; and yer can leave them here, and take to them again when yer gets back."

The lads thought the advice was good, and next day rigged themselves out in red shirts and high boots, in which were tucked the bottom of the thick moleskin trousers. They also bought jackets of the same material as the troupers.

"You will be glad of them at night," Dave said; "it gets pretty cold up in the mountains when the sun is down, and we shan't be lighting any fires, you bet."

They also bought a couple of rough blankets each, a spare shirt, and two or three pairs of stockings, a couple of long bowie knives, and two broad-brimmed felt hats.

Chapter V.—The Search For The Canyon.

Ten days later the party took passage in a large boat going up the river to Santa Fe. It had come down freighted with hides, and the odor still hung about it. However, by this time they had become accustomed to the smell, and scarcely noticed it. The boat was manned by six Mexicans, who sometimes poled it along, sometimes, when the stream was rapid, got ashore and towed from the bank.

It took them six days to arrive at Santa Fe. Although just inside the United States frontier, the population was almost entirely Mexican. There were, however, a few American stores, containing European goods of all kinds, for the use of the natives, and such articles as miners or prospectors going up among the hills would require. Here they had no difficulty in purchasing horses. Five rough, serviceable ponies for the carriage of the baggage were picked up at twenty dollars a piece, and five well-made and wiry horses for their own riding. Mexican saddles, with very high pommels and cantles, heavy and cumbersome to look at, but very comfortable for long distances, were also obtained without difficulty. At the stores were bought two sacks of flour and two sides of bacon, a frying pan, saucepan, baking pot, and a good supply of tea and sugar; four large water-skins, five small ones, completed their purchases, with the exception of shovels, picks, and pails for washing the gravel.

"Going up among the hills again, Dave?" remarked the store-keeper, with whom the miners had often dealt before.

"Yes, we are going to try a new direction this time, and don't want to have to come back directly we have struck anything. We have got enough grub here for three or four months, reckoning as we shall occasionally get hold of bear or deer meat."

"Well, you had better keep clear of the Indian country, Dave. They made a raid

down South, I hear, last month, and burnt half a dozen Mexican villages, and they would make short work with you if they came across you anywhere near their country. However, I suppose you aint going to be fool enough to go that way, especially as I see you have got two green hands with you."

"They are old enough to be useful," Dave said. "We can put them to cook and look after the horses, if they can't do anything else. They are Britishers, and one of them stood by me pluckily in a mess I got into in San Diego; so as they had left their ship and were out of a berth, I thought I would bring them with me, as they had a fancy for seeing a little of mining life, before they shipped back again."

Two days after their arrival at Santa Fe they started.

"We will strike due south as if intending to enter Mexico; one never knows who is watching one," Dave said the evening before. "There are always some pretty hard men about these border towns—miners who are down on their luck; men who have had to run from the northern diggings, and such like. We may say what we like, but they will make a guess that we have located something rich, and are going back to work it quietly and keep it to ourselves, and like enough some of them will take it in their heads to follow us. Anyhow, we will travel south for a day or two, and then turn off sharp to the west. It aint as I should grudge anyone else a share in the mine, but the more there are the more chance of the Injuns finding us. Besides, some of these chaps are so reckless that like as not they would light a big fire if they wanted to cook a loaf of bread. We three have been up that way before, although not so far as we are going now, and we know what we have got to expect, and that, if we are going to bring our scalps out again, we have got to sleep with our eyes open."

Another fortnight's traveling and they had passed the last settlements, had left Fort Mason behind them, and had entered the country that the Apaches and kindred tribes claimed as their own.

The two lads had enjoyed the journey immensely. They had traveled about fifteen miles a day, their pace being regulated by that of the pack animals. During the heat of the day they had all halted in the shade of some clump of tree or bush. Here the horses had picked up their sustenance, grass and leaves, while the men slept. At night they had camped, when they could find such a spot, on the banks of a stream. Then a big fire would be lighted, a dough of flour, water,

and soda would be mixed, and placed in the baking pot. This was put among the red embers, which were drawn over the lid so as to bake it from above as well as below. Then, if they had no other meat, rashers of bacon would be grilled over the fire, and eaten with the hot bread. Generally, however, they had been able to purchase a kid or some fowls at one or other of the little villages through which they passed.

They always carried with them two of the large skins filled with water, in case none should be met with at their halting places; this sufficed for tea and for a good drink at night, and before starting in the morning for the horses. The villages, however, had become fewer and fewer, and at the last through which they had passed they had bought one of the little bullocks of the country, cut the flesh into strips, and hung it in the sun to dry, halting three days for the purpose.

Chapter VI.—The Map Again.

"Now," Dave said, as they finished their meal on the evening after leaving Fort Mason, "we have got to consider which course we had better take. First we will have another look at the map."

This was taken out from a wash-leather case, in which it had been sewn, Dave carrying it under his shirt by a string that went round his neck. It was the first time that the boys had seen it. As Dave opened it they examined it with much curiosity. It was divided in two; the upper one appeared to be a general map of the country, the lower one a plan of the immediate locality of the spot.

"It looks very confusing," Dick said, as he examined it.

"You see the chap as made it did not do it for other people, but so that he could find his way back by it. This line that runs along the bottom of the other map I take to be the Gila, which is a big river which runs right through the Indian country, and falls into the Rio Grande. I have gone up it from that side two or three hundred miles. We were a strong party, but we had to fight our way back again, and lost pretty near half our number. You see by the map it lies on the north side of the Gila. But as the Gila is eight or nine hundred miles long, that don't help us a great deal, and the map wouldn't be any good to us if it was not for this mark here up near the top. You see all these things are meant for mountains, but as one mountain on a map is just like another, we should be downright done if it was not for this mark. Do you see there are three little jags here close together? Now I take it those three jags are meant for a mountain the Indians call the Three Sisters, which is a mountain with three peaks close together. I never saw it myself, but I have spoken with miners who have seen it from the north. Now, here you see, to the south of the Three Sisters, is a cross, and I take it that's the mine. You see there is a black line waving about among the mountains that stops at that point. I guess that is the line they traveled by."

"But there is nothing to tell us what scale the map is on, Dave," Tom said; "it may mean five hundred miles from end to end, it may mean fifty. If it is five hundred it must be seventy or eighty miles from those peaks to the cross, if it is fifty it is only seven or eight."

"That is so," Dave agreed.

"Have you any idea how far it is from the three peaks to the river?"

"Yes, I have heard it is about fifty miles north of the Gila."

"Well, that would make this spot marked from fifteen to twenty miles from them. The length of the map would be about two hundred miles, and as the peaks are about a quarter of the distance from the right-hand side, this map begins about a hundred and fifty miles to the west of the peaks. I should think it would be at some well-known place that the maker of this map began; some place that he knew he could find again without difficulty."

"That is so; you will see the line begins at a stream running north and south. There is a mark here each side of the path-line. Of course they might mean anything; they might mean trees or rocks. Then look here; there are two more dots out here, and if you were to draw a line straight through them, it would come to the other dots. One must be three or four miles off, and the other twelve or fifteen. The farthest one may be a peak, and the one nearer some conspicuous tree or rock in a line with it."

"Yes, that is what we make it out to be," Boston Joe said. "We have the choice of either going up the Gila valley and mounting this side stream till we come upon something that agrees with these four marks, or of keeping along from the west by a valley about the right distance from the Gila."

"I should not think we can trust much to distances," Dick said; "this man was merely sketching out a plan to help him on his way up again, should he ever make up a party to return to the mine, and, though probably these bendings and turnings of the road are to be depended upon, the map itself cannot be done to any scale. Here the peaks are made twice as far from the left side as they are from the river, but they may be really four times as far, or they may be only the same distance; there is no saying at all; as he has drawn it, the point where the road begins is a good deal more to the south than the peaks are. If the scale is correct, it is not more than thirty miles at most north of the Gila that the path

begins. You see about halfway between this point and the river are five or six little marks like a V upside down. I see there are other marks like these at different places on the map. I should say they were meant for Indian villages."

"That is so, no doubt," Dave agreed. "Here is another thing beside them; what do you make that out to be, Dick?"

"It looks to me like a tiny bird; it is very small and very badly done, but I am pretty sure that that is what is meant. What in the world can he have put a bird there for? Let us look at the other villages." He examined them carefully. "Two of them have got figures. This one looks like a cat, and this is a snake—at least, I should think so."

"I have got it," Dave exclaimed. "Those are the names of the chiefs. I know the names of a good many of their chiefs, and there's Rattlesnake and the Mountain Lion among them."

"And there is the Crow, too, Dave," Boston Joe put in.

"So there is; I know he is the chief of the tribes whose country lies this side of the Arizona. No doubt that is his village. Now we have it. I know pretty well where his place is, for I have been further among the hills than that. I can find my way there easy enough. When we get to the stream his village is built on we have got to hunt along it till we find these marks, and then follow on the line he took. The Crow's village is about thirty miles north of the Gila. That will put these stops sixty miles from the river. Yes, this straightens out the distances pretty considerable, for I should say that from them to the three peaks it must be nigh three hundred miles. I don't think it is more than a hundred from here to the Crow's village. It should be an easy thing following that marked line, but it won't matter if we miss it. Our course will be pretty nigh due east, not, as he makes it, north, for we know the Sisters are not more than eighty miles from the Gila. When we get near them we can't help seeing them. Then we have only got to follow the direction of this map below. There are the peaks. Well, right in front of them is a lower hill with a tree on its top, and that tree exactly in line with the middle peak gives us the line, and as the tree just touches the bottom of the peak, it will give us the distance to within half a mile. Here are two lines, one on each side of the line from the peak through the trees. I don't know what they mean, but I guess they mark a canyon, and when we go up that we can hardly help striking the mine, wherever it is. I think we have got the thing pretty well down

to a point, and if we go wrong it is our own fault."

"Shall we have to come back this way?" Dick asked.

"That must depend upon circumstances," Dave replied. "We might make straight north and come down on a pass that crosses the mountains about a hundred and fifty miles north of the Sisters, but I reckon it would be a terrible journey to undertake with loaded mules. Then again we might strike east, and make either for Albuquerque or Socorro. Like enough we may find that our best way."

Chapter VII.—The Scarcity Of Water.

Five days later they reached the stream. The miners had all recognized points that they had passed on their former journey, and all agreed that it was lower down on this stream that the Crow's village was situated. For the moment this was a matter of inferior importance to them. It was enough that they had reached water, for they had for the last four days been traversing an arid waste of broken country, without as much as a tree under which they could lie during the day. They had filled up all their water skins before entering on this region, and these had sufficed for them and their animals, but for the last two days they had been obliged to husband it. What remained tasted so strongly of the skins that at any other time the boys could not have drank it, but men and horses were both filled with delight at the sight of the bright clear water. The baggage and saddles were removed, and the animals were allowed to drink their fill, and then to lie down in the stream while their riders enjoyed the luxury of a bath.

They had done no cooking for the last four days, as no fuel of any sort was to be obtained, and they lived upon the dried meat and a drink of flour and water. The banks of the stream were well wooded, and the animals, as soon as their thirst was quenched, fell to work upon the grass that grew knee-deep near its banks.

"We must do some cooking to-day," Dave said, "and a good batch of it; there is no saying when it will be safe to cook again. We must wait till night, and then light the fire in the thickest part of these trees, and fasten our blankets up round it to prevent its light being seen. We can collect the firewood in readiness before it gets dark."

The spot was carefully chosen, the horseropes were fastened from tree to tree around it, and all the blankets hung on them.

"We must take it by turns," Dave said, "to keep the fire up, and go on baking. We will make a dozen loaves if we can."

As they sat round the fire later on they discussed their next move, and agreed that as the river was shallow they would cross it at once, and then follow it up stream. Should they find no landmarks answering to those on the map, they would then return and go down the stream.

Next morning they started again, with fifteen loaves done up in a blanket on one of the ponies. The journey was toilsome, for the river ran in places through gorges where the rocks rose sheer from its edge, and they were forced to make considerable detours, and to come down upon it again. They had traveled, they calculated, but eight miles up the stream, when they came upon a valley running east. A small stream ran down it, and fell into the river they were following.

"This looks a likely sort of place," Dave said; "it is the sort of valley a party exploring would be likely to follow. There is wood, water, and grass. Now for the landmarks."

They went on until they reached the spot where the stream fell into the river.

"We can't do better than camp here, Dave," 'Zekel said; "it has been a rough journey for the ponies, and they will be all the better for another good feed."

"All right," Dave agreed, "I don't see any signs of the landmarks, but they may be somewhere about. We will unsaddle the ponies. Boys, you may as well walk up the stream a bit. Keep your eyes open, but don't go very far away. Keep your rifles ready for use; there is no saying but what some prowling Indian may not have caught sight of us as we came along."

The boys unslung their rifles, which were strapped tightly to their backs—they were already loaded—and started up the valley. In a quarter of a mile they passed through the low wood which filled the bottom of the valley. In front of them was an open space, bright with long grass and flowers. In the center of this stood two large trees, one on either side of the stream. They hurried on, and when they reached the trees saw, to the northwest, two peaks, one nearer and lower than the other, in an exact line. As the direction was exactly that of the two dots on the map, they had no doubt whatever that they had hit the right spot. They returned at once with the news to the men. Dave had already lighted a fire, for in this sheltered valley there was little fear of the slight smoke it made being seen, broken up as it was in its passage through the leaves overhead.

"We have found the marks," Dick said, as they arrived. "We don't think there can

be any mistakes about them."

"Have you? That is good," and the three men at once went on to the two trees.

"There is no doubt that is what was meant," Boston Joe said. "Wall, I am glad to see them—it shows, anyhow, that we are right in our guess-work as to the map, which we never felt quite sure of before, seeing them three peaks war the only thing we had to go on, and the marks might not have been meant for them arter all. Now the matter air clear and fixed, and we have only got to go ahead."

"Yes, we will stick to the line they have traveled as shown in the map, but if we miss it, it is no great odds; we know where we have got to go to, and we can find our way there, I guess, anyhow. Still, their line may be the best. They may have had some redskin as their guide, who knew the country, and took them the best way. Anyhow, we can't do better than try and follow it."

Chapter VIII.—The Golden Valley.

It was nearly a month later that the gold-seekers arrived at a point due south of the three peaks. The journey had been a toilsome one. At times they made their way through deep gorges. At others they had to climb rocky hills, where the horses could scarce obtain a foothold. One of their pack ponies had been lost, having slipped and fallen over a precipice many hundreds of feet deep, and they had lost a day making a long detour to reach the spot where he fell, in order to recover the articles he had carried. For the first half of the distance they had, they believed, followed the track marked on the map, but they then found themselves at the head of a deep valley from which they could discover no egress, and it was therefore clear that they must have misunderstood the marks and have taken a wrong turning somewhere.

From this time they had put aside the map, and made their way as nearly east as the inequalities of the ground permitted. They had no difficulties as to forage for their horses. In many of the valleys there was an abundance of coarse grass, and among the rocks the aloe and cactus grew thickly, and when, as was sometimes the case, no water was to be found, they peeled the thorny skin from the thick juicy leaves and gave the pulp to the animals.

For themselves they shot three bears and several small mountain deer. There was little fear of the sound of their rifles being heard in these mountain gorges, and should the report have reached the ear of an Indian he would have supposed that it was the gun of some red hunters. There were indeed only two villages marked on the map anywhere near the line they were following, as the great bulk of the Indians lived on the slopes of the hills on either side of the Gila, whence they could make their raids into Mexico to the south or to New Mexico to the east.

Here among the mountains they could subsist on the proceeds of the chase and the little plantations tended by the women, but this offered small attractions to the restless and warlike Indians, who preferred depending upon the plunder that

they could always gather by a raid upon the defenseless Mexican villages. Thus during the whole journey they had not once caught sight of an Indian, though they had two or three times made out, with the aid of a telescope Tom had brought with him, little clusters of wigwams far away among the hills.

"There will be more danger when we get near the place," 'Zekel said one evening when they were talking it over. "The redskins know well enough that it is gold the whites who come into their mountains are in search of, and I guess they know every place where it is to be found. A redskin always has his eyes open. A broken branch, a stone newly rolled down on a path, the ashes of a fire, the slightest thing that is new, he is sure to notice, and the glitter of gold, whether in a stream or in a vein, would be certain to catch his eye, and if this place is specially rich they are safe to know of it, and would keep some sort of watch to see that it is not found out by the whites."

"That is so," Dave agreed; "of course we don't know how the party that Mexican got the map from got wiped out. It may have been on their way back, but it is more likely it was at the mine itself, and we may find signs of them when we get there. I hope they had been at work some time before they were attacked; if so we may like enough find a store of gold without the trouble of working for it. It is no use to the redskins. They don't do any trade with the whites, and they don't wear gold ornaments. They are wise enough to know that if they were to show much gold about them it would make the whites more eager than ever to come in among their mountains in search of it, so if the Mexican party gathered some up afore they went under, like enough we shall find it."

It was with deep satisfaction that they at last caught sight of the mountain with three sharp peaks, but it was four days after they first saw it that they reached a point due south of it. They were now in a wide valley running east and west; to the south a wall of rock rose in a seemingly unbroken line. On the northern side of the valley the hills sloped away, rising one above another, with the peaks of the Sisters visible above them all.

They had left their animals in charge of Boston Joe, in a clump of trees four miles back, as the miners were of opinion that some Indian village might lie somewhere in the neighborhood, and that it would be safer to make their way on foot. One of the many branches of the Gila ran along the center of the valley, but except in deep pools it was now dry.

"Now we must keep a sharp lookout for marks on the hills," Dave said; "we know we are about right as to the line, but we may have to go two or three miles north or as much south before we get a mark just bearing on that middle peak. Stop," he broke off suddenly; "look up there just beyond the shoulder of that hill; there are some wigwams, sure enough."

Tom brought his telescope to bear.

"Yes, there are about twenty of them, but they never can see us at this distance."

"Don't you make any mistake, young fellow; there aint no saying what an Indian can see and what he can't see. I reckon their eyes is as good as that glass of yours, and I would not guarantee they could not see a rabbit run at this distance. There, get among those rocks at the foot of the cliff; we will make our way along them, hiding as much as we can. I suppose those are horses away there on the hillside to the right of the village; they can't be nothing else."

"Yes, they are horses, Dave."

For another half hour they made their way among the rocks, and then Dick exclaimed suddenly:

"Look, Dave, there is a tree standing by itself at the top of that hill. I believe in another fifty yards it will just be on the line of the peaks."

"I think you are right, Dick, and we have hit the very point at the first try; if it is right, there must be a break in this wall above us."

Chapter IX.—The Tree On The Peak.

They hastened on now with their eyes fixed on the tree. A minute later an exclamation broke from Dave, who was ahead, and the others on joining him saw that the great wall of rock had been split as if by an earthquake. The opening was not more than ten yards wide, and on looking up a narrow line of sky appeared between the walls of rock. Looking the other way, they saw that the tree on the hill bore exactly on the middle peak, the Indian village lying just in the same line halfway up the hill.

"Here is the place, sure enough," Dave said; "there can't be no mistake about it; it is just as the map made it, the tree on the middle peak and the line from them going right into this Canyon. Look, boys, there is a stream comes down here in the wet season, and runs into the one in the middle of the valley. See, I can make out gold sparkling in the sand; that is how it was the place was found; they were prospecting along the valley, and they came upon gold, and traced it up to the mouth of this Canyon."

"Shall we go in now, Dave?" Dick asked excitedly, for they were still standing among the rocks, which broke off abruptly opposite the mouth of the Canyon, those in front of it evidently having been swept away by the torrents flowing down it.

"No, don't go a step forward, Dick. Don't let us risk nothing by showing ourselves now. We will make our way back as we came to Boston, and bring up the horses after dark. We have not got a chance to throw away, I can tell you."

At night they returned with the horses; two blankets had been cut up, and the feet of the animals muffled.

"If one of them redskins was to come upon our track and saw the print of a horseshoe, it would be all up with us," Zeke said; "we had best do the same

ourselves; the heel of boot would be as ugly a mark as a horseshoe. We must keep well along at the edge of these fallen rocks. Like enough they come down here to fetch water up to their village, and the further we keep away from the stream the better."

The moon was half full, which was fortunate, as they would otherwise have had great difficulty in finding the narrow gap in the cliff. Its light, too, enabled them to avoid rocks that had rolled out farther than the rest; once inside the gorge it was pitch-dark, and they had to feel their way along.

In about a hundred yards it began to widen, and they soon found themselves in a narrow valley with perpendicular sides, which seemed to widen farther up. The horses, were at once unloaded.

"Now do you lie down," Dave said. "I will keep watch at the mouth. I don't think there is any danger; still, we may as well begin as we shall have to go on."

"Well, call me up in a couple of hours, then," Zeke said; "it will begin to get light in about four, and as soon as it does we will cover up the tracks."

With the first dawn of light the three miners, taking their blankets, went down to the mouth of the Canyon. The boys accompanied them to watch their operations. It was only in the sand and gravel swept down by the floods from the gorge that any footmarks could be seen; these were first leveled, and then with the blankets the surface of the sand was carefully swept so as to erase all signs of disturbance. Before the sun was up the operation was completed, twenty or thirty yards up the Canyon.

"That is enough for the present," Dave said; "we are safe from anyone passing. Now, let us have a look round up above."

"They must have been awful careless if they were surprised in here," Zeke said; "half a dozen men ought to hold this place against a hull tribe of redskins."

"That is so," Boston Joe agreed, "but the greasers are mighty bad watchmen, and no doubt they thought they were safe in here. That Indian village could not have been over on the hill opposite then, or it would have been put down on the map."

"Like enough they had been followed," Dave said. "If a redskin had caught sight of them, he might have followed on their trail for weeks, till he found where they

were going, and then made off to bring his tribe down on them. It may be that one has been hanging behind us just in the same way."

"It is a very unpleasant idea," Tom said.

"The redskins' ways aint pleasant," Dave said. "Well, let us be moving up. The first thing we have got to look for aint gold. There is no doubt about that being here somewhere. What we have got to look for is if there is any way out of this hole, because it is a regular trap, and if we were caught here we might hold the gorge for a long time, but they would have us at last certain; besides, they could shoot us down from the top."

They proceeded a few hundred yards up the valley, and then stopped suddenly on a cleared space of ground. In the center lay a score of skeletons, some separately, some in groups of twos and threes. The remnants of the rags that still hung on them showed that they had been Mexicans. The two lads felt a thrill of horror at this proof of the fate that had befallen their predecessors.

"Wall," Zeke exclaimed, "that was something like a surprise; there aint no sign they made a fight of it; they were just caught in their sleep, and never even gathered, for resistance. Well, well, what fools men are to be sure. I shouldn't have believed as even Mexicans would have been such fools as to sleep here without putting a guard at the entrance. I reckon the redskins must have come down from above somewhere, and so caught them unawares. Well, let us be moving on."

Chapter X.—Watched.

A little higher up the valley narrowed again, the sides came closer and closer, until they closed in abruptly in a rounded precipice, down which in the wet season it was evident that a waterfall leaped from a height above.

"They didn't come down here," Dave said. "If it were anywhere it was near where the attack was made; the sides slope away a bit there. Now keep your eyes skinned, and see if you can make out any place where a man might climb up or down. Our lives may depend on it."

Just as they reached the old encampment Dick said, "Look, Dave, there is a ledge running up behind that bush; it seems to me that it joins another ledge halfway up. Tom and I are accustomed to climbing; we will go up a bit and see if it goes anywhere."

The two lads stopped as they got behind the bush.

"It looks like a path here, Dave; it has certainly been trodden."

The miners came to the spot.

"You are right," Dave said; "it is a path, sure enough. Animals of some sort come up and down—bears, I should say; maybe goats, and lots of them, like enough; it is the only way they can get down from the top into the valley, and they come down to drink."

The ridge was wider than it looked, being, where it started, fully two feet across. The boys at once set off up it; as Dick had supposed, it met another ledge running along halfway up the face of the hill. From below this ledge seemed a mere line, but it was really two feet wide in most places, and even at the narrowest was not less than a foot. Two hundred yards along, another ascent was

met with, and after half an hour's climbing they found themselves on a level plateau, from which they could see across to the three peaks. The path was everywhere worn smooth, showing that it had been used for ages by animals of some kind.

"One would almost think it had been cut by hand," Dick said; "who would have thought from below that there was such a way as this out of the valley? The best of it is, that it is good enough for the horses to get up as well as us. Well, thank goodness, we have found a back door to that place. It was not a pleasant idea that we might be shut up there with the option of being either shot or starved."

"They would take some time to starve us, Dick; nine horses would last us for a long time."

"Yes, but it would come sooner or later, Tom. Anyhow, I shall feel a great deal more comfortable now I know that there is a way out."

"But the Indians know of it too, Dick, if, as Dave thinks, they came down this way to attack the Mexicans."

"Yes, that is not such a comfortable idea."

"Well, lads, what do you make of it?" Dave shouted to them as they approached the bottom.

"We have been right up to the top; the ponies could go anywhere. It is narrow in places, but we have passed many worse on the way; the cliffs never close up, so even at the worst places there is room for them to get along with their loads."

"What is it like at the top?"

"Level ground along to the drop of the cliffs, hills behind it to the south."

"Well, it is a comfort there is a way down into the valley. Anyhow, since you have been gone, we have been fossicking about, and there is no doubt about the gold; it is the richest place any of us have ever seed."

"Have you found water, Dave?"

"No, that is the one thing bad, we shall have to go out to fetch water, but maybe

if we dig in the center of the channel we shall find it. The best place to try will be at the end, right under where the waterfall comes down in winter. There is most always a deep hole in the rock there, where the water and stones and so on have come down and pounded away the bed rock. We found where the gold comes from too. There is a big quartz vein running right up the face of the cliff there; it is just full of gold. You can see it sparkle everywhere. Some day, when the Indians is all wiped out, fellows will bring machinery and powder, and will have one of the richest mines in the world. However, that don't concern us. I reckon there is enough in this gravel under our feet to make a hundred men rich. Now, Boston, what do you think is the best thing to do first?"

"See if we can get water, Dave. If we were shut up here without water they would have us in twelve hours, so we have got to get enough for ourselves and the horses to drink if we can, even if we have to fetch up what we want for the gravel. When we have got water, the next job will be to make a cradle; there are plenty of trees here, and we have got our hatchets, and we have brought the zinc screens, so we have got everything we want. I don't say we mightn't pick up a lot in nuggets. Still, I have got a dozen already, making, I should say, over an ounce between them. Still, the others is the real thing to depend on."

"And there is another thing, Dave," Zeke put in; "we must have a watch. We had intended that, but we thought we should have only one place to watch; now we have found this track up the hill we have two."

"That is so, Dave, though it is pretty hard on us having two out of five idle. Still, we have got a lesson there," Boston said, pointing to the spot where they had found the skeletons.

"Aye, aye, it has got to be done," Dave said. "Well, lads, will you take the watch to-day, one above and one at the mouth, and we will set to work at the water hole?"

"We will toss up which goes up the hill again, Dick. You spin. Heads; tails it is."

"Then I will choose the mouth here. You go up to the mouth's head."

"Don't you be walking about when you get to the top," Dave said. "Find some place where you can get a clear view all round, and then lie down. Choose a bit of shade, if you can find it. When we knock off work and have had a bit of grub, I will come up and take your place."

It was just getting dusk when Dave came up and relieved Dick.

"Are you going to stay here all night, Dick?"

"Yes, we have agreed I shall keep watch here to-night, Boston to-morrow night, and then I go on again. Zeke will take the watch below regular; he sleeps like a dog, and the least noise in the world will wake him, so he will do very well. Can you make out the Indian village across there from here?"

"Yes, quite plainly."

"You have not been using your glass, I hope," Dave said in alarm.

"No, I forgot to bring it up with me. But why shouldn't I?"

"Because if the sun were to flash on the glass or brasswork, it would be sartin to catch the eye of someone in the village, and if it did you may be sure they would send up to see what it was. Still, if you can make out the village, it will save us the need for keeping watch in the daytime down below. It is from there we have got to expect an attack the most, and if you saw them moving out strong, you could shout down to us and we should be ready for them. At night, in course, we must watch both places, for there may be, for anything we know, a big village half a mile from here, and the attack might come from one way or the other. I expect you would rather work than watch, Dick; so you had better arrange to change places with Tom in the middle of the day, then you can each work half a day. You will find that plenty, I warrant."

"Did you find water, Dave?"

"Yes, plenty of it, enough for the horses and the washing too."

Chapter XI.—Hard At Work.

Tom took the first watch in the morning. Dick rendered all the assistance he could to the men, who cut down a couple of the trees that stood in the gorge, chopped them into eight-feet lengths, and then with wedges split them into boards, which they smoothed up with an adze. All were accustomed to the work, and by nightfall a deep trough was constructed, resting upon rockers like a cradle.

Next morning the work began; two men threw the gravel and sand into the cradle, the third kept it in motion, while whichever of the boys was off watch brought water in two of the pails from the hole.

The horses were no trouble, finding plenty of coarse grass among the rocks, and only requiring watering night and morning. Thrice a day the contents of the cradle were cleared entirely out, and the gold that had sunk to the bottom collected. Much, of it was in fine dust, but there was also a large number of nuggets, varying in size from a pea to a marble. Each clear-up they obtained on an average eight or nine pounds of gold.

The fourth day Tom had come down from above at twelve o'clock, and found that the men had only just finished the clear-up, and had sat down to have some food.

Having nothing to do, he strolled away to the spot where the Mexicans had been massacred, a short distance away, on some ground at the side of the valley. Some three or four feet above the ground level of the bottom he saw a charred stump of a pole sticking up; he went across to it.

"I suppose this is where the leader of the party had a tent or rough hut," he said.

He was confirmed in the belief by a number of bits of charred wood lying round

the pole.

"It was sort of arbor, I suppose," he said to himself.

There were several relics lying about: two boots shriveled by fire, a tin cup flattened by some weight that had fallen on it, a pistol with its stock blackened by fire. He called the men to the spot.

"Yes, like enough it is as you say, Dick, but it is scarcely worth getting up to look at."

"No, there is not much to look at, Dave, but you have been wondering ever since you came that you had not come upon any of the gold they must have gathered, and you said you didn't believe the Indians had taken it away. Now if this was the hut of the leader of the party, it struck me that it would most likely be kept here, and that it may be buried somewhere under this circle of ashes."

"Tom is right, mates," Dave said, "that is just where the gold would be kept, and there aint much doubt that they would bury it as they got it, so as to prevent anyone from taking any of it till it was divided up. Let us fetch our picks, Boston, and we will soon see if it is here. Let us try round the post first," he went on, when the three men fetched their picks; "it will be either close to the middle of the hut, or else on one side under where he made his bed."

The ground was sand, which had been washed up by an, eddy in one of the floods, and they had struck but three or four blows with the pick, when Dave exclaimed:

"Here is something, boys!"

They had brought a shovel with them, and throwing aside the sand, they saw a piece of leather.

"It is a bag," Joe said; "this is their hoard, sure enough."

Going down on their hands and knees, they pulled up bag after bag, each about fifty pounds in weight, until they had a pile on the surface of eight bags.

"Eureka!" Dave exclaimed, as he lifted the last bag out of the hole. "They had made something like a pile; no doubt they were a strong party, but even with that

they must have been here a couple of months to have got this lot together. Well, Boston," and he held out his hand, "we can go east again; we have struck it rich at last."

"You bet," Joe said briefly.

"How much is it?" Dick asked.

"Each of them bags weighs about fifty pounds, Dick."

Dick looked incredulous, and stooped to pick up one of the bags, and was astonished at its weight.

"Fifty pounds if it weighs an ounce, and there are eight of them—four hundred pounds of gold; think of that, lad; that is pretty nigh eighty pounds apiece. I aint good at reckoning, but put it rough at two hundred and fifty dollars a pound, that is somewhere like two hundred thousand dollars each."

"Forty thousand pounds!" Dick exclaimed; "it does not seem possible."

"We aint got it to the settlements yet," Zeke said quietly; "them chaps had it, and they lost it. Don't let us figure it up much till we get beyond the sound of the Apache war-whoop."

"Well, I will go on watch at the mouth," Dick said, "and then you can talk things over together."

"Do, Dick; there is a lot more to look after than there was before, and it makes one feel one can't be too careful. Anyhow we won't stay a day longer in this place. We will be off to-night."

Dick went nearly down to the mouth of the narrow gorge. He had expected they would find a treasure, and although this far exceeded his anticipations, he did not feel the excitement the men had shown at the discovery of the treasure. He sat down on a rock, and amused himself with the thought of the wonder there would be at home. Suddenly he heard the sound of a horse's hoof, and grasping his rifle, stooped down behind a fallen rock. A moment later a mounted Indian dashed past the mouth of the rift. He was scarce twenty yards away, but Dick noticed the eagle feathers of his head-dress, the rifle slung across his shoulder, and the leggings decorated with tufts of hair. It was but a moment, and then he was gone.

Dick waited a minute or two, and then ran in to tell the miners. They uttered an exclamation of alarm.

"He went right on," Dick said. "He didn't check the speed of his horse or glance my way."

"That is no sign," Zeke said. "The chances are that fellow has happened on our trail maybe a mile, maybe fifty, back and he has just been following it. Why should he be riding so close to the cliffs if he was not tracking us?"

"But he didn't look in," Dick persisted.

"He warn't such a fool, lad. He knew well enough that if he glanced round, and there was anyone on watch there, he would have a bullet through him sartin."

"What shall we do? Shall we saddle up at once, Dave?" Boston Joe asked.

"We may as well pack the horses anyhow, Boston, but we can't go till it is dark. If a party like ours were to show up there, they would see us from the village sure. Do you run up, Dick, and keep a lookout with Tom at the village. You can crawl along, if you like, nearer to the edge, and make out if that fellow is riding there. If you see him go there come down with the news, and tell Tom to hurry down as quick as he can if he sees a party setting out. We will have the horses saddled up by the time you are down again."

Chapter XII.—Retreat.

Dick sprang up the hill, and, as soon as he joined Tom, astonished him with the account of the discovery of the treasure collected by the other party, and also by the news that it was probable that the Indians would be speedily upon them. All this he told him as he was crawling forward towards the edge of the cliff.

"There he goes!" he exclaimed, when they neared it. "Do you see him going up the slope toward the village? How clear the air is. Dave says it is six miles there if it is a foot; it does not look more than one.

"Well, I must go and tell them below. Mind, Tom, the moment you see a party issue out from there you crawl back to the path, and then hurry down as quick as you can, but mind you don't tumble in your haste."

"That settles it," Dave said, when he heard the news. "If he had been going to that village he would have made for it straight, and not come along under the cliffs until he was opposite to it. No; we have got to fight, that's sartin."

"If we were to mount that path at once, Dave, we could keep them from climbing up if there were hundreds of them."

"That is so, lad, but we could not stay there forever, and might be took in the rear by another party. Besides, as soon as they find out that we have left—they will do that pretty soon—they will be straight after us. No, we have been talking it over while you have been away, and we have agreed that we must hold the Canyon until it gets dark, and then make off. No doubt they know of this path, but they won't think as we have found it out, and they will fancy that they have got us sure. Like enough, as soon as they find we are ready for them here, they will send a messenger off to some village up behind us. There is one thing, he will have a good way to go for we have seen no break in the cliffs for the last twenty miles, and maybe they go much farther; anyhow, we have got to risk it."

"I should think," Dick said, "that anyhow we might as well get the horses up to the top of the path, ready to push on as soon as it gets dark. They can do it easily enough in daylight, but it would be a very awkward job at night."

"Right you are, lad, that is a capital plan. We will do it at once. We have got everything wrapped up ready. One of us will stay up there with Tom so as to guard the top of the path, in case any of the redskins should come down before we are ready to go forward. Three will be enough to hold the Canyon."

"I will undertake the horse job," Boston Joe said. "As you say, three is enough here. They will think they are going to take us by surprise, and as soon as they find we are ready for them they will draw off fast enough. I reckon that fellow has counted our numbers, and no redskin will try to force that pass with five Western rifles facing him."

Just as Joe began to mount the path, leading his horse, with the others tied head to tail in a long line behind it, Tom appeared on the path high up and shouted:

"Thirty or forty horsemen have just left the village, and are coming this way."

"All right, Tom," Dick shouted back. "You are not to come down. Joe is coming up with the horses."

"We have got plenty of time yet," Dave said, as soon as the string of horses had started on their way up; "it aint much past two o'clock yet, and it will be pretty nigh six hours afore we can make a start. There is a good fire, and we have kept down thirty pounds of flour; we shall have time to bake that into bread before we start. We shan't have much time for baking when we are once off, you can bet your boots."

Dick looked on with some wonder at the quiet and deliberate manner in which Dave mixed his dough.

"By the way, Dick," the latter said, looking up, "we have divided that lot of gold we got here ourselves into five lots, and put one lot into the blankets on each of our riding horses; it is like enough that if we carry our own scalps back to the Settlements we shan't get any of the four baggage ponies there with us. There is about twelve pound of gold in each blanket, so suppose we have to let the other ponies go, we shan't have made a bad job out of our journey after all."

"Have you filled the water-skins, Dave?"

"We filled the five small skins we carry ourselves, and one of the others we daren't carry. Each of the horses has got two sacks of gold, one of them has got the water-skin, two others have got twenty pounds of flour each, which will be enough to last us with the loaf we are baking here till we get out of the Indian country; the others have got the tea and sugar. The one with the skin will be the heaviest load at first; but the water will soon go, so that makes it even. Everything else we have got to leave behind, except a kettle and this baking pan. We will take them up as we go. Now that the loaf is fairly under way, we will get ready for the redskins."

Chapter XIII.—The Redskin.

They took their post behind some rocks in front of them. The bottom was composed of sand and gravel, the only rock being that behind which Dick had crouched, close to the entrance.

"Mind, we mustn't all fire at once," Dave said; "one must always be loading, and we will take it in turns to fire. Of course, if they make a rush we must take to our six-shooters; but they aint likely to do that. I will fire first, Zeke, you follow me; I reckon they aint likely to miss either of us."

Another quarter of an hour passed, and then suddenly a mounted Indian appeared at the mouth of the Canyon. He checked his horse and sat gazing up it. Dave's rifle cracked, and the Indian fell backward from his saddle; and a sudden yell of anger and surprise rose outside. Another moment and a dozen figures appeared at the entrance. Zeke fired.

"Now, Dick!" Dave said a moment later, and the lad, whose rifle was resting on the rock in front of him, pulled his trigger, and almost immediately Dave fired again. Another moment and the mouth of the Canyon was clear. Another Indian lay by the side of the first who had fallen.

"I reckon all the shots told," Dave said; "we could hardly miss that clump. Now I don't think you will see any more of them; they know we are here and they know we are ready for them, and it aint in Indian nature to throw away their lives charging up a place like this. They had reckoned the five first would go down anyhow. Then they will guess that we have got pistols, and the redskins hate six-shooters like poison."

The time passed slowly, but the quiet in the Canyon remained undisturbed.

"I expect it is as I said, Zeke; they won't attack again by daylight, though I don't

say as they won't try and crawl up when it gets dark, but I don't think as they will. If there is a village up in the hill behind us they will send round to it, and wait here till they hear a fight begin inside. If there aint no village, half of them will ride round to come down on us. However, they won't set about that at once. Injuns are never in a hurry, and they think that they have got us safe in here and can take things easy. If it is a long way round and they aint quite sure of the path, like enough they won't start until they calculate they will get there at daybreak, when they will guess that we shall be all pretty well worn out with keeping watch here."

"I guess that is about it, Dave. Anyhow, we can push out as soon as it begins to get too dark for them to see us from the village across there—that is, as soon as the sun has gone down behind the hills to the south."

Dave had from time to time left his post and gone to keep up the fire and to put a fresh batch of dough in the pan, and as soon as a shadow fell across the valley he said, "Now we will be off. I reckon there is no fear of the redskins getting round for a time; but I tell you that gold makes one mighty fidgety."

Six loaves had been baked, and each taking two, while Dave, in addition, took the pan and kettle, they mounted the path. When they reached the tail of the string of horses Dave hailed Boston Joe, and a moment later the miner's head appeared on the edge of the cliff above them.

"Is it all clear?"

"Aye. I have seen nothing of them—ne'er a thing moving."

"Well, we will go at once, Joe. Even a redskin's eyes could not make us out from that village now."

The horses were at once set in motion. As soon as they had left the path the cords were unfastened, and the five mounted.

"Which way, Dave?" Boston Joe asked.

"We had better make west. It is lucky we shall have the moon, for there is no traveling over the hills in the dark if you don't know the way. Anyhow, we will make straight back at present, or we may come upon those fellows riding round. We will go in Indian file. I will go first, with a pony tied to mine. The two lads

will follow, then either you, Zeke, or Joe, can take the last pony, and the other one ride in the rear, so that you can keep us well in sight, and yet be far enough off to use your ears."

For an hour they continued their course south, the ground rising as they went. Then they reached a dip running west.

"We will follow this," Dave said; "it is the right direction anyhow, and it is as likely to take us down into the valleys again in time."

As they proceeded, the dip became more decided, and after two hours' riding the sides narrowed in.

"We shall strike a water-course soon," Dave said, turning round to speak to Tom, who was riding next to him. "The water that falls here has got to make its way out somewhere, and this is the only way as it can go. Not that there is much water, for it is often months without rain."

Presently they found that the ground was covered with pebbles.

"There is the water-course, you see," Dave said.

The fall became steeper and steeper, and the ground more stony; low trees and bushes rose on the slopes on either side.

"We had best dismount here," Dave said; "it is growing mighty steep, and we may come upon a sudden fall anywhere, and it is mighty difficult to judge about depth in the moonlight."

The lads were heartily glad at the order, for they had for some time been momentarily expecting that their horses would come down over the bowlders.

"I will go twenty yards ahead," Dave said. "You had better loose the baggage-ponies and let them pick their own way. Throw your bridles on your horses' necks: they will go a deal safer so than if you were leading them; the critters can pick their way anywhere if they have got time and can look about."

Luckily the moon was still high and shot full down upon the path they were traveling. Even on foot the lads found it difficult to make their way down. Sometimes they had to climb over heaps of bowlders, sometimes to slide down

smooth faces of rock so steep that they could not keep their feet upon them, and often it seemed so perilous that they would have hesitated to attempt it had they not seen that Dave with his two horses kept steadily on below them.

Chapter XIV.—In The Ravine.

The lads were surprised at the way their own horses followed, sliding on their haunches down the steepest places and picking their way among rocks and bowlders. Six hours after starting they found themselves in a deep ravine, whose sides were covered with trees. They had now lost the moon, and it was far too dark for them to progress further.

"We will give them four hours' rest," Dave said; "that long halt on the path was worse than traveling. We shall go three times as fast when we get light to help us as in the dark; besides, we have got to look for some place where we can double on them. We shan't find that till we are out of this valley. We shall have to be pretty spry if we are going to get away from them; they will come along fast when they once take up the trail. It has taken us six hours to get down here; it won't take them three. Well, I hope we shall get on the move an hour or two before they do. If they wait until daylight before advancing there will be a lot of hubbub and talk before they really make up their minds that we have really slipped through their fingers, and arrange for a start. Still, by midday we shall be having them behind us if we can't find the way to throw them off."

"I'd willingly take twenty ounces for my share of that gold, to be paid to me at Santa Fe," Boston Joe said.

"So would I, Joe; there ain't no denying it, we are in a tight place, and unless we find some way out of it in the morning, my own opinion is that we have only got one chance, and that is to leave all the horses behind us and to take our rifles and a loaf of bread each, and to start back on foot."

"I should not wonder if we came to that," Zeke said; "but we will hold on for a few hours, and, anyhow, before we leave them we will hide them bags. Possibly we might come back some day; anyhow, we could each tote along what we have got in our blankets; it aint as if we were going to run all the way from here to the

settlements. Twelve pound weight aint nothing one way or the other."

"No, nor twenty," Boston agreed. "I vote if we do have to leave the horses we slip open one of the bags and take another eight pounds or so each. Twenty pounds aint much for a man to carry besides his gun and ammunition and a chunk of bread. Well, let the rest of you lie down and get a couple of hours' sleep. I was off once last night."

"All right; wake us directly you see a change in the sky. We should give the horses a chunk of bread and a drink each before we start."

It seemed to the lads that they had been asleep for five minutes only when they were roused. It was but the work of a few minutes to adjust the loads again and to give the horses the bread and water. It was still hardly light in the ravine when they were ready to start, but all were too anxious to get on to delay a moment. As soon as the day had broadened a little they were able to pick their way along on the comparatively level ground beyond the edge of the water-course, and the horses were put into a trot.

"If we can keep on like this," Joe said, "the Apaches won't be up to us before night. They will know that we have got nigh twelve hours' start of them, and though they may start off fast at first, they will soon settle down into a pace that they can keep up all day."

After journeying for three hours they came upon the spot where two other ravines fell into that along which they were journeying.

"Let us hold a council," Dave said. "Now, what do you think had best be done—push straight forward or take one of these other gulches?"

"They seem to run back almost the same line as that ye have been following," Dick said.

"All the better, lad. They will be less inclined to think that we have taken it. What do you say, Zeke?"

"I think we had better push straight on, Dave. If they were coming along in the dark it would be a different thing; but they would not go a horse's length afore they missed our tracks, and even if we muffle the critters' feet, they are strong enough to send a party each way."

"So they are, Zeke; but it would be a sight better to fight a third of them than the hull lot."

"I think that it would be better to push on, Dave," Boston Joe said. "There ain't no saying where these narrow valleys lead, they wind and double every way; besides, they are dry, so I says let us push on till we get into one of the main valleys."

"Well, we will do it, Joe; anyhow, we may as well do as I say and muffle their feet. The Injuns will know what we have done when they see the tracks stop here, but, as you say, they won't know whether we have gone straight on or turned up one side or the other. I guess most likely they will think that we have turned up; anyhow, they are sure to divide."

No further talking was necessary. The blankets were all cut up, bunches of dry grass were laced under the horses' feet to form a pad, and the strips of blankets wound round and round and securely fastened.

"Now, on we go again, lads," Dave said, setting the example, and they rode straight down the ravine ahead of them. Two hours later the blankets were taken off and thrown among the bushes, the rocks having cut through them, they were useless any longer to conceal the tracks, and they incommoded the horses. A mouthful of water was given to the animals, and they again started at a brisk pace. The sides of the valley were now narrowing in again, and becoming much steeper; the trees had ceased, and the bare rock rose in some places almost precipitously.

"The water rises high here when there is a storm," Zeke said. "You see, it is pretty nigh closed up somewhere in front here."

"All the better," Dave said; "we can make a fight for it in a place like that, and hold it till dark. They can't be far behind us now. Stop the horses a moment and listen."

A faint sound was heard.

"That is them," Dave said; "they aint above a mile behind; push on till we find a good place to make a stand."

Chapter XV.—Rifle-Shots.

Another five minutes they entered a gorge so blocked with rocks that had fallen from above that they had the greatest difficulty in leading the horses over them.

"It could not be better," Dave said. "We can stop them here. Zeke, do you go on with Dick, see how far this goes, and what the chances are when we get out of it. If you can see any way of climbing the side of the valley come back and tell us. Then I reckon the best thing will be for you to take the horses down and go straight up, leaving Dick to tell us exactly where you have gone up; then, as soon as it is quite dark, we will be off and follow you; they won't be able to pick up the trail and will guess we have gone straight down the valley. Anyhow, it will give us another twelve hours' start."

Zeke nodded. "We may as well take the critters down at once," he said; "it may be two or three miles before we can find a place where we can get out of this valley, and there aint no use making two journeys of it."

Somewhat reluctantly Dick followed Zeke, driving the horses before them.

They had been gone but five minutes when he heard the crack of a rifle behind them.

"Do you think they are sure to be able to hold that place?"

"They are safe for some time, anyhow," Zeke said. "As soon as the redskins see they are brought to a stand they will draw off and wait till the bands that have gone up the other valleys join them. No doubt, as soon as they had made out our tracks again, they sent a kipple of men off to fetch them back, but I reckon they wouldn't have seen them till they got four or five miles down, and by that time the other bands would have been as much farther up the side-valleys, and the messengers would have a long ride before they overtook them—ten or twelve

miles, maybe—and they would have all that to come down again, so they would be pretty well four hours before they had joined the first band, and in four hours it will be dark enough for Dave to draw off."

"There they go again!"

Shot after shot echoed among the cliffs. The gorge extended for another mile, and then widened rapidly. A mile and a half farther the sides were clad with trees, and the slope, although still steep, was, Zeke said, possible for horses to scramble up.

"They will go up there safe enough," he said, "five of them with nothing to carry, and the other four ain't heavy loaded. You see them two trees standing alone on the crest there?"

"I see them, Zeke."

"Well, that is to be your mark. You will make them out plainly enough in the moonlight. I shall be just down beyond them. I need not tell you to be keerful how you go when you get beyond the shelter of the trees below. Dave will know all about that. Now you can be off back again."

Dick started back at a run, and in less than half an hour joined the other three among the rocks.

"Found a place, lad?"

"Yes; they have started up."

"I am glad you are back. These fellows look as if they were going to make an attack on us. They are about five-and-twenty of them, and I guess they know as well as we do that it will be dark before their friends join them. However, I don't think they will make a rush; they will lose heart when three or four of their number get shot, and weaken when it comes to climbing these rocks in face of our six-shooters. Now, do you two lads keep below; get down right among the rocks, so that you can fire out through some hole between them, and directly you have fired get out of the line, for a stray bullet might come in."

Scarcely had the boys taken their position, and looked along their barrels, when they saw a dozen dark figures spring up among the rocks fifty yards away.

Two shots were fired by the miners, and two of the Indians fell forward; then, one after another, the lads fired, as they felt sure of their aim, while at the same moment two sharper cracks sounded close to them, for the Colt at forty yards is as deadly a weapon as a rifle. Three more of the Indians fell, and the rest sank down behind rocks and opened fire at the position held by the whites. These reloaded rapidly.

"Now keep a sharp lookout," Dave said, "but don't fire unless they rise again. Joe and I will make it hot for them as they raise their heads to take aim."

The rifles were fired but twice, and then the fire of the Indians ceased.

"I think we have accounted for two more," Joe said. "We shan't hear any more of them. Seven out of twenty-five is a sharp lesson, and the first man who fell was their chief, I reckon, and they will wait till the sub-chiefs with the other bands come up. Now, the sooner the sun goes down the better. There is one thing, it will be dark down here an hour before it is on the hill-tops."

"Why shouldn't we fall back at once?" Tom asked.

"Because, like enough, they will open fire occasionally, and if we didn't reply they would think we had made off, and would follow us, and pick up the trail where the horses left the valley. We have got to wait here until it is too dark for them to follow the trail. The moment it is dark enough for that we are off."

It was just getting dusk, when Dave said, suddenly:

"There is one of the other bands coming up. They are a good bit away yet, but I can hear them."

Dick could only make out a low, continuous murmur that sounded to him like a distant waterfall.

"What do you think, Joe," Dave said; "would it be safe to make a run for it? We might beat off the first attack, but some of us are safe either to get killed or hurt too badly to travel. They will talk for a quarter of an hour at least after they come up, and by the time they find we have gone, and got their horses over these rocks, and got down to the mouth of this gorge, it will be too dark for them to follow the tracks."

"I am with you, Dave," Joe said, as he discharged his rifle. "That is one more wiped out. He was just going to fire to see whether we were here still. That has answered the question; now let us be off. Go as quiet as you can, lads, and don't make the slightest noise. Just creep along until we are three or four hundred yards away. You may be sure that they are listening."

For a quarter of a mile they moved very cautiously.

"Now I think we are safe," Dave said, breaking into a run.

At a steady trot they kept on down the gorge. Just as they reached its mouth, they heard a faint yell in the distance.

"They have found we are off. They will be five minutes and more before they have brought up their horses and got over the rocks, and they will go pretty cautious, because they will be expecting to be ambushed. It is getting pretty dark now; we shall be in among the trees before they are out."

Chapter XVI.—On The Return.

The trees began fully half a mile above the point where Zeke had made his way up with the horses, and, running now at the top of their speed, they were among them before the Indians issued from the gorge.

The fugitives went on at a slower pace among the trees, until they heard a war-whoop, and knew that the leading Indians had passed out.

"Now throw yourselves down," Dave said, "and just lie as still as mice—the slightest noise would tell them we had taken to the wood. We want them to go straight on for a bit."

In four or five minutes they heard the tramping of horses, and a party of Indians rode down the valley.

"There are over fifty of them," Dave whispered. "I expect the other two bands must have come up together. Now let us get up as high as we can. As long as they are galloping they won't hear any little noise we may make, but mind how you go, lads. Don't step on a twig, don't brush against any dead wood that might crack, and mind you don't set a stone rolling."

They climbed for ten minutes, and then came to a spot where they had a view through the trees down the valley.

"There they are in a heap about a mile down," Joe said, and the boys in the moonlight could see a dark mass gathered in the middle.

"They are having a talk over it," Dave said; "they know if we held on down the valley they would have overtaken us by this time, and they know we have taken to the wood one side or the other. I recken they won't think it any use searching for us to-night, but maybe they will go straight on for a bit. They won't know

how long a start the horses may have had, and will think we may have had them in the gorge, and have mounted and ridden down. Yes; there they go. Now we can move on again without fear of being heard."

Half an hour later they joined Zeke, who was with the horses a hundred yards over the crest of the hill in a line with the two trees.

"No one hurt?" he asked, as they approached.

"Nary a scratch, Zeke. We have wiped out eight of them. The rest have just gone tearing down the valley."

"Well, we had best be moving so as to get as far as we can before we lose the moon."

"That won't be till within an hour of daylight," Zeke said. "Now, which way shall we go?"

"I think we had better keep along the hillside, Zeke. We can travel fast here, and can get so far that when they find the trail in the morning, and follow us, we shall be too far away for them to overtake us before nightfall."

So day after day they traveled, sometimes in deep ravines, sometimes high up among the hills, sometimes coming upon a stream and taking in a supply of water, and sometimes well-nigh mad with thirst. They had cut up two of the empty water-skins and had made rough shoes for their horses, and believed that they had entirely thrown their pursuers off the trail, winding along on what was little more than a goat's track up the steep face of a valley, the opposite side of which was a perpendicular cliff. They had nearly gained the top when the crack of a rifle was heard from the opposite cliff, which was not more than two hundred yards away, although the depth of the gorge was fully a thousand feet. Looking across they saw that nearly opposite to them stood an Indian village, and that a number of redskins were running toward the edge.

"Hurry up, hurry up!" Dave shouted. "It is too far for them to shoot straight, but a stray bullet might hit us. Push on, lads, with the ponies. We will give them a shot or two. Our rifles will carry that distance easy enough."

The lads pushed on while the three miners opened fire. There was but another fifty yards to climb. They could hear the sharp ping of the bullets round them.

One of the ponies gave a sudden start, stumbled forward, and then rolled over the edge. In another minute the rest gained the plateau.

"Oh, Dick, it is one of the treasure ponies," Tom exclaimed.

"That is a bad job, Tom; which is it?"

"The gray."

"Better him than the others. It was one of his bags that we took the gold out of to make us up twenty pounds each, so there aint above seventy pounds lost. Come on, let us get beyond range. We don't want to lose any more." When they got two or three hundred yards further the three men ran up.

"One pony has gone, I see," Dave said.

"Yes; it is the gray. He had only seventy pounds, you know, so if one was to go it were best it should be him."

"Well, let us mount and be off, lads; like enough those Indians will have to ride forty or fifty miles to get round this canyon, and come here, but, anyhow, we may as well push on. It is lucky the horses have done well the last day or two, and that we have got our water-skins full."

Chapter XVII.—Conclusion.

Another ten days of arduous toil, and, in turning a sharp corner in a defile, they saw a number of men at work. As these heard the sound of the horses' feet they threw down their picks and shovels, and seized their guns.

"Don't say anything about the gold," Dave exclaimed to the others. "It is lucky it is all covered up."

As soon as the miners saw that the new-comers were whites they lowered their guns.

"Why, where on earth have you come from?" one of them asked, as they rode up.

"We have been making a prospecting tour among the hills."

"Have you found anything?"

"Yes; we have found a first-rate place, but the Apaches drove us off from it when we had been at work only four days, and we have had hard work to save our scalps. I have no objection to give you the indications, for I will not go back again among them ramping Apaches not to find solid gold. There is the map as I steered by. Them three points are the Three Sisters, and that tree bears on the mouth of a narrow canyon. There is gold there, you bet, and likewise the skeletons of about thirty Mexicans who got killed there three or four years ago. Now, let us have some grub; we finished our last ounce of flour yesterday, and have been short for the last fortnight."

"You have had to leave everything behind, I see," the miner said, looking at the eight horses.

"Yes; we had to make a clean bolt for it. However, in the four days we were there

we got about seventy pounds of gold, and we have stuck to that. Now you know as much about it as we do. There is gold enough to make you all rich, but you will have to fight, and fight hard, to get there and come away again."

The horses were unsaddled and picketed, Dave and Joe taking care themselves to unload the three packed ponies, and that the flat bags, over which blankets had been stuffed, should not be noticed. They stopped there for two days to rest the horses, and then proceeded on their way, arriving at Pueblo a fortnight later. Thence they traveled together to Santa Fe, and then hired a wagon and joined a large caravan going across the plains east. When they reached St. Louis they separated. A division was made of the gold, and the lads started by train for New York, and the next day took their passages for England.

When Dick reached home he was received by his family as one from the dead. The *Northampton* had arrived three weeks before, and, from the report Mr. Allen had given, they had slight hopes indeed that Dick would recover from his wounds, although the letter that Tom had written three days after he landed had given them some slight grounds for hope. The letter had been shown to the owners of the *Northampton*, and as the statements respecting the captain and the first mate were confirmed by Mr. Allen and the third officer, the captain and first mate had been summarily discharged from the service.

The astonishment of the lads' fathers when they found that each lad had brought home a hundred pounds of gold, worth about five thousand pounds, was great indeed. With it shares were bought in the ships of the company, and when in time both attained the rank of master they had the satisfaction of sailing in ships in which they held shares. Neither had any inclination ever to embark again upon the operation of gold-mining.

The Stone Chest;

or,

The Secret Of Cedar Island.

The Stone Chest.

Chapter I.—A Mystery Of The Storm.

"What a fearful night, Bob!"

"Yes, mother; it's about the worst storm of the season," replied Bob Cromwell, as he entered the seaside cottage and shook the water from his cap. "It will go hard on any vessel near the coast. The wind is rising to a perfect gale. Just listen to it sing."

There was no need to listen. The storm was so violent one could scarcely hear aught else. The little cottage, standing so boldly out upon the sea cliff, shook and rocked from end to end as if preparing to leave its foundations.

"I see supper is ready," went on Bob. "By the way, was Mr. Vasty here?"

At once Mrs. Cromwell's face grew dark and troubled. It was an aristocratic face, and plainly indicated that the lady had seen better days.

"Yes, he was here, Bob."

"And what did he say?"

"We must leave on Monday. The cottage has been sold over our heads."

Tears stood in Mrs. Cromwell's eyes as she spoke.

"Sold!"

"Yes, my boy. He said he could wait no longer. He believes, as do all in Sea Cove, that your father is dead."

"Perhaps he is," sighed Bob. "It is now over six months since the *Bluebell* went down. If he escaped in a small boat we should have heard from him before this."

"Oh, I cannot believe your father dead, Bob," cried the mother, bursting into tears. "If I thought that—" She did not finish.

Bob sat down to the supper table in silence. He had little heart to eat, and swallowed the food mechanically.

Bob was seventeen years of age, bright, handsome, and fearless. He was Mrs. Cromwell's only son and his father had been a sea captain.

We say, had been, for the *Bluebell* had been wrecked some time before and all in Sea Cove thought the captain dead—all saving Mrs. Cromwell, who still hoped for his safe return—hoping, as it were, against hope.

Years before the Cromwells had been rich, owning four large trading vessels. But bad luck had come and continued until the fortune dwindled down to nothing but the ownership of the old *Bluebell*. It was then that the captain had determined on a voyage to Alaska, taking with him a party of men who wished to explore the new gold mines in that territory.

The *Bluebell* was supposed to have gone down in sight of the coast and only two of the survivors had thus far returned.

As time went by the little cottage, a poor affair at the best, was mortgaged to pay outstanding debts. It was the last of the Cromwell belongings.

Bob worked at the docks, handling freight. It was not what he had been brought up to, but it was the best employment he could obtain in the vicinity.

"I don't see what's to be done, Bob," said Mrs. Cromwell, during a lull in the storm. "We must move and I have only three dollars in all."

"Oh, I forgot!" he suddenly exclaimed, and pulled a ten-dollar bill from his pocket. "Here, mother, is a little to help us."

"Why, where in the world did you get that, Bob?" she ejaculated.

"A young gentleman gave it to me—insisted I should take it."

"What for?"

"He said I saved his life."

"And did you?"

"Well, I don't know—perhaps," mused Bob. "You see, it was Captain Randolph Sumner, the gentleman who owns that splendid new yacht down to Marcey's. He fell into the water right in front of the incoming steamer *Flag*, and I fished him out just as he was on the point of being struck. He was very grateful and made me keep the money, although I didn't want it and told him so."

That was all Bob said. He was too modest to mention that Randolph Sumner had called him a hero and that the crowd standing by had given him a cheer for his bravery.

"Ten dollars is a windfall," began Mrs. Cromwell. "Now if we—Gracious, the signal gun, Bob!"

Boom!

Bob sprang up from the table. He knew that sound only too well.

Boom!

"Ship has struck, mother!" he cried. "I must go down and see if I can help in any way."

And waiting for no reply, the youth grabbed up his cap and storm coat and rushed out into the storm.

Bob was right—a ship had struck. Away off through the mist and rain he could see the colored lights and the flash of the gun, calling for help.

The lifeboat men were already out and getting ready to launch their heavy craft.

"Look! look! The ship is going down!"

The cry thrilled everyone to the very heart. It was true. The stately ship was sinking fast. Down she went and came up again, once, twice —and then no more.

The lifeboat went out in a hurry, but it was of no avail. The storm had done its work and all on board had perished.

No, not all. Walking at the foot of the cliff a little later, Bob heard a low moan, and soon came upon the body of an aged seaman jammed in between the rocks. The man was fearfully bruised and did nothing but moan as the youth bore him up to the cottage.

Here he was made as comfortable as possible on a cot. It was an hour before he was able to open his eyes.

"Where am I?" he asked faintly. "Oh, the storm. I was hit in the back—I am dying; I know it. Take me to Mrs. Leon Cromwell."

At this utterance Mrs. Cromwell and Bob were both greatly astonished.

"I am Mrs. Cromwell, sir."

"You! It is not possible!"

"Mother tells the truth," put in Bob. "What do you want?"

"You are the wife of Leon Cromwell?"

"I am," said the woman.

"Heaven be praised! Who brought you to me?"

"I brought you to our cottage," returned Bob. "You lay unconscious on the rocks."

"It is the work of Providence," murmured the sufferer. "I was on my way hither when the storm overtook the *Mary Lee*. I—I—a drink—I am fainting!"

Water with brandy was brought and the man revived a little. He glared strangely at Mrs. Cromwell.

"I must speak quickly, for I am dying—I know it, feel it. I was sick on board; that's why I know. The doctor said I couldn't live, and the storm has only hastened matters. I want to talk to you about your husband."

"Is he alive?" came from mother and son simultaneously.

"He is—or was three months ago. At Zaruth, on the Siberian coast—where the stone chest was left—we—more drink—quick!"

Again the sufferer had a relapse.

"The stone chest caused the trouble. There was gold and silver, and after the wreck——"

"Never mind the gold and silver. Where is my husband?" interrupted Mrs. Cromwell.

"I was going to tell you. We started for—for——" The man gasped for breath. "It's my head. We started for the coast, when the people living there who had seen the stone chest, got together and—oh!"

The sufferer fell back in a spasm of pain, from which it was almost impossible to revive him. At last he spoke again.

"He was made a prisoner, and;—water, or I die—I can't drink—it is growing dark—the papers in my pocket are for you—and may Heaven forgive me!"

The man leaped almost to his feet, then fell back in another spasm. A minute later he was dead. With tenderness mother and son cared for the body. In one of the seaman's pockets was found a packet of papers yellow with age.

Bob opened the packet and looked over the paper with interest. An hour passed. Then the youth sprang to his feet.

"Mother, I am going to Cedar Island on the Siberian coast and to father's rescue!" he cried, with sudden determination.

Chapter II.—Off For Zaruth.

"To Siberia—Cedar Island!"

"Yes, mother. From what I can make out, father is there, a prisoner of some people called the Svlachkys, and all on account of a wonderful stone chest, said to be filled with gold and silver."

"It cannot be true, Bob."

"I think it is. This dead sailor's name was Ruel Gross——"

"Ruel Gross!" Mrs. Cromwell started. "I heard of him before. Your father said he possessed a wonderful secret."

"He did—about the stone chest. The whole truth is, so far as I can understand, he got father to go up there in search of it. After it was found they got into some trouble with the natives, and Ruel Gross abandoned father to his fate. Here is a handmade map of the locality."

"Pray Heaven your father still lives," murmured Mrs. Cromwell. "But you say you are going up there. How?"

"I don't know. But I'll find a way, even if I have to go up on a whaler."

Mrs. Cromwell shook her head.

On the following morning the dead body of the sailor was turned over to the village authorities.

Between them mother and son decided for the present to say nothing to the simple fisher-folks concerning Ruel Gross' revelation.

"They'll sneer at us—that's all," said Bob.

But Bob confided in his chum, Jack Larmore, an orphan boy of his own age. Jack was tremendously interested.

"Say, Bob, I'll go along, if you say the word," he said. "I'm sick of Sea Cove and the mean folks living around here."

"All right."

That noon, when Bob returned home he found Captain Sumner present, talking to his mother.

The captain had come to offer Bob a position on his yacht.

"I would like to go—if you're going up the coast," said Bob. "I want to get to Alaska, and then to Cedar Island, off Siberia."

The rich yacht owner was much astonished. He proceeded to draw Bob out, and an hour later had the youth's story in full. With Mrs. Cromwell he looked over the papers and map.

Then he lit a cigar and began to pace up and down the parlor of the cottage.

"I've half a mind to cruise up there," he said. "To me, one place is as good as another. I love to roam the wide world over, and have already been to the South Seas and to the coast of Africa. What if I should take you up there, my boy?"

"Will you?" shouted Bob, in quick delight. "Do it, and you shall have the contents of that stone chest—if we can get it."

"No, I'll only want my share of it," laughed Captain Sumner.

On the next day they talked the matter over once more. The captain was a widower with one child, a girl of fifteen. The girl, whose name was Viola, said she would like to go up the coast to new lands. But she would like Mrs. Cromwell, or some other lady, to go along.

Persuaded by Bob, Mrs. Cromwell said she would undertake the trip, and before they knew it, all arrangements were made.

The *Dart*, as the yacht was named, was sent to San Francisco for stores, and three days later Bob and Mrs. Cromwell and Jack Larmore left Sea Cove, and left it forever!

It is not the purpose of this tale to tell of all that happened ere the *Dart* put to sea on that memorable voyage up the coast to Alaska.

For awhile all went well on board. But one day there was trouble among the crew. The trouble grew worse and three of the fellows had to be put into irons.

They were let go later on, but ever after they showed their ugliness only too plainly.

Bob and Jack were not idle while on board. Both did their full share of work and both proved themselves good sailors.

A strong friendship sprang up between Mrs. Cromwell and Viola Sumner, and the two became almost inseparable.

Bob found Captain Sumner a fine man to get along with, stern at times, but always fair and square. He had, as he said, been a great rover, and often told interesting stories of his adventures.

As days went by and they got further north it became colder. Then a storm was encountered which took them many miles out of their course.

So suddenly did it fall upon them that the sails were blown to ribbons.

Viola Sumner, who was on deck, got drenched and nearly drowned. She was saved by Bob only at peril of his life, and carried down into the cabin nearly senseless.

And now we find the *Dart* storm-beaten, but still water-tight, blown far out to sea.

Bob, who had just come on deck, cast his eye first aloft, like the true sailor he was becoming, and then around him.

Not more than half a mile distant towered an immense iceberg, its topmost pinnacles glowing in the bright morning sun.

Other bergs floated to the southward, while to both east and west could be seen long floes of rugged ice.

The yacht was trying to beat to the northward by making short tacks through the ice-floes, but, as Bob could see, she made but little way.

"Have we done any good since I went below?" he asked Bok, a sailor who was steering.

"No, faith, yer honor. The current sets so fast to the south that sorra a bit more north do we make in an hour than I could throw a cat by her tail. It's wearisome work, yer honor, and, be jabers! it's bitterly cold."

Bob buttoned his pilot coat closer around him and shivered.

"You are right, Bok."

"Hullo, Bob!"

Our hero looked around and perceived Jack Larmore's head above the companion.

"Come down to breakfast, before it's cold," cried Jack.

Our hero made a bolt down the ladder after his friend.

"What is your opinion, Bob, about the men?" asked Captain Sumner, as Bob took his place at the table. "I mean the rascals I had to iron up last week."

"Well, sir," replied our hero, "they seem to go about their duty all right, but after our experience, we must never trust them."

"It's that scoundrel, Nockey, that I mistrust. The others are more fools than knaves. He will never forgive that flogging I gave him."

"It served him all right," broke in Bob. "When we gave them the choice of taking a couple of dozen or going ashore, not one hesitated."

"Well, even now, we have only eight hands and ourselves."

"What do you mean to do, papa?" broke in Viola. "Surely not go further among

these dreadful icebergs? I have read that ships are often crushed by them."

"I should be only too glad to be out of these regions, dear; but, with the wind and current against us, I don't know what to do."

As soon as breakfast was finished the captain went on deck. His eye rested on the floe to the westward.

"Where are your eyes, you Irish lubber?" he shouted to the steersman. "Don't you see yon ice closing in on us? You ought to have let me know of this."

"Blest if I can see much change," muttered Bok.

"But I can. The channel is narrowed by half. We shall never get clear of it before we are nipped. 'Bout ship, boys, and be smart!"

"All hands!" bellowed the mate.

In a couple of minutes the small crew were on deck, hauling in the ropes and halyards.

The topsail-yards swung round, the helm was put hard down.

The sails shivered in the wind as the yacht came about.

"Put both the main- and fore-sails on her, Leeks. We must be out of this trap as soon as possible," cried the captain.

It took some time to get full sail on the *Dart*.

Once done, however, she flew onward, with the wind on her quarter, at a tremendous speed.

"Sixteen knots an hour! Bravo!" cried the captain. "Can't she move, Bob?"

"That she can, sir. But I can't help dreading this still going through the ice. There are few ships, except whalers, that have penetrated as far as we, I should think."

"Right, sir. But desperate circumstances require desperate means. None of us want to spend a winter here, and, though we happen to be fortunate as to the time

of year, another month or six weeks will see this sea covered with ice."

Chapter III.—Among The Icebergs.

Bang! crash!

At that instant a shock nearly threw them off their feet.

Viola caught Bob's arm, and Mrs. Cromwell and the captain almost fell together.

"We are foul of the ice!" shouted the mate, rushing forward.

"What!" roared the captain. "Where's that rascally lookout? Down with helm! The sea is full of loose ice."

For the rest of the day the *Dart* was dodging through hummocks of ice, which looked as if a floe had been broken up by a storm.

When Bob came on deck for his watch at midnight, it was intensely dark.

A thin scud shut out the light of the stars and moon.

He was joined by Jack, for the two lads usually kept watch together.

"I am afraid we are in a tight fix," said the latter. "I doubt if we shall ever again find our way home."

"Never say die," cried our hero. "But look! What's that yonder?"

The two chums peered into the darkness ahead.

"I think there is a blacker spot than the rest over the starboard bow," said Bob, after a while.

"There are some blue signal-lights here. I'll ignite one," suggested

Jack.

Retiring under shelter of the companionway he struck a light and ignited the blue fire.

Clambering on to the bulwarks, and holding on to the forestay with one hand, he held it above his head.

Right in front of them loomed two bergs, not a quarter of a mile apart, the sea dashing in spray along their sides.

There was not a moment for hesitation.

"Port your helm!" sang out our hero. "Keep her so!" he added, as he saw the bows of the schooner point for the narrow passage.

Jack lit another blue light, and thumped on the deck to wake those below.

In half a minute Captain Sumner and the mate were beside them.

"The bergs are closing in on us," said the captain quietly. "Go to your helm, Bok; it will be safer."

The bergs were more than a mile long, and the vessel, under easy sail, was not making more than six knots an hour.

"Here, gentlemen, take the halyards, and rouse up the topgallant sails.
I won't trust the crew on deck till the last minute."

With the assistance of the man Bob had relieved at the wheel, they soon had the topgallant sails, which had been furled, chock-a-block.

"It will be a narrow squeak," muttered the captain, as he glanced at the icebergs, whose tops seemed quite close, though the bases were yet some distance from the schooner.

"Is there any hope?" whispered a soft voice in our hero's ear.

"I trust so, Miss Viola," he answered. "See! yonder is the end of the ice mountain on the starboard bow."

"But how close they are!"

"They look closer than they are in reality," he replied.

All the time he was wondering if their end had really come.

Suppose the wind were to fail!

Fortunately for them, however, caught between the two bergs, it rather increased in force than diminished.

The icy tops seemed now ready to topple down on the deck.

The waves, running up the sides of the bergs, lifted the vessel on their swell as they rebounded.

Fifty yards on either side towered the glittering mountains.

Thirty yards, twenty yards! and the salt spray of the billows, which dashed on the icy cliffs, fell on deck.

Viola's hand was clasped in Bob's, and our hero felt some relief in facing death with her and his mother.

"Call your comrades," cried Captain Sumner to the sailor. "Give them a chance for life. Come, Mrs. Cromwell, Viola, Bob, Jack—all of you. Prepare to jump for the ice, when we strike! It's our only hope!"

Chapter IV.—The Escape From The Icebergs.

To Captain Sumner it looked as if the *Dart* would surely be crushed.

"Be prepared to jump!" he sang out again.

But even as he spoke a strong gust filled the yacht's topsails.

She plunged forward.

The starboard berg was left behind, and the sea on that bow was open.

Bok instantly shifted the helm.

The *Dart's* head fell away from the danger on the port bow.

A few minutes passed.

Then, with a crash as if an earthquake had riven a mountain chain, the two bergs met.

Our hero, who, with the others, was watching with breathless interest, saw them rebound.

Huge blocks and pinnacles of ice, thousands of tons in weight, fell into the gap between them.

Before these could rise to the surface the ice mountains had again collided.

A crunching, rending sound struck the ears of our friends, as the two monsters ground their sides against one another.

The rugged summits fell into the sea, and formed smaller bergs.

The yacht was lifted on to the top of the giant waves caused by the concussion, then sank into the hollow, only to be caught up again by the still higher swell.

But the danger was over!

After escaping so narrowly being crushed the *Dart* found the sea free from ice, and made good way to the southward.

However, about eight bells on the following day, a gale sprang up from the northeast, which drove down the eastern floe in dangerous proximity.

The waves rose, and sheets of spray flew ever the fast-driven schooner.

It was so cold that, in spite of all the warm clothing they could find on board, all hands felt numbed.

"Land ahead!" was an appalling cry which rang out suddenly.

Captain Sumner himself hurried forward.

A rough, rocky island, the waves dashing in foam against its low cliffs, was discerned through the flying spray.

Already the edge of the eastern floe was crushing itself to pieces against the projecting reefs.

On the right, or western side, was a lane of broken water.

To venture into it was very dangerous, but seemed their only chance.

Bok and another sailor were at the wheel.

Over it went, strained down by their united strength, and the *Dart* dashed through the breaking water.

The western side of the island was about a mile long.

Twice, by porting the helm, the little vessel escaped clear of rocks, over which the water spurted.

As she approached the southern end of the isle, Bok, who had been sent into the

foretop, shouted that again there was land ahead, and that the passage between was full of ice.

The captain ascended the shrouds himself, halfway to the top.

"It's like a cauldron," he exclaimed on descending. "No ship, except perhaps a very powerful steam whaler, could live in it.

"There is only one chance for us," he continued. "We must get under shelter of this island."

As the south coast line opened, the helm was put down, and the vessel was hove to under a high cliff and jutting cape, which protected her from the rush of the ice-laden current.

Both anchors were at once let go.

Fortunately they found good holding ground.

All the rest of that day, and till dawn the next, did the gale rage; but as the short night passed, the wind sank, and by midday it was but a breeze.

The current running between the islands soon swept the ice away.

But before trusting himself in these strange waters the captain determined to send a boat across to the greater island, on which rose a rugged hill of considerable height.

Both Mrs. Cromwell and Viola begged for a run on shore, so the larger boat was manned by Bok and three seamen, Bob and Jack each taking an oar, while the captain and the women occupied the stern-sheets.

Chapter V.—The Arctic Island.

Once on the island, it was seen that the hill rose on its southernmost point.

The ground was rocky, and covered with deep patches of snow in sheltered places.

"I don't like the look of that," observed the captain. "That is this year's snow. Once the frost sets in we are done."

Finding it hard work to traverse the direct route, they made for the western shore.

Here, though they had to clamber over hillocks and steep rocks, they got along quicker.

Suddenly Bok, who was in front, uttered a shout.

On the others hastening up they saw the cause of his astonishment.

Beached in a little bay, with her topmasts gone and the hulk lying over on the port side, was a brig.

The water only washed her rudder-case, and the captain noticed, to his dismay, a thin coating of ice fringing the shore of the inlet.

Not a sign of life was to be seen.

"We must examine her before we do anything else," exclaimed Bob.

Captain Sumner looked at his watch.

"We can spare an hour," he said, "but not more."

There was a rush down the steep rocks on to the sand.

Arriving alongside, for some time they could find no means of climbing on board, till our hero found a rope hanging from the port-bow, which, on being pulled, seemed strong and firm.

As soon as he, the captain, Bok, and one of the men were on deck, which sloped acutely, Bob called to the ladies to say that he would fetch a chair, or something to serve as one, and hoist them up.

To their surprise the companionway was not blocked with ice and the doorway was shut.

It opened easily, and our hero was the first to descend.

An extraordinary scene presented itself to his eyes directly they got accustomed to the gloom.

Seated at a table, some upright, others with their heads sunk in their folded arms, which rested on the table, were the shrunken bodies of a dozen or more men.

So life-like were they that not until he had summoned up courage to touch one did Bob believe them dead.

Some empty bottles, and a cup or two, stood on the table.

They might have dropped to sleep after a carouse.

If they had it was the sleep of death.

Remembering his promise, Bob looked around for a chair.

Not seeing one unoccupied, he was obliged to lift up one of the bodies and lay it on a locker.

Within another locker was found a length of stout rope, which seemed uninjured, and, accompanied by Bok, he repaired on deck and hastened to the side.

The chair was soon rigged, and Mrs. Cromwell and Viola were hauled on board.

To prepare them for the ghastly sight, our hero told them and Jack what they

would see.

Opening a door at the bulkhead, Captain Sumner, closely followed by the two lads and the others, stepped into a narrow passage, which had berths on each side.

Passing through a second door they came into a square room, in which was built a clay and stone fireplace.

The captain stopped short.

A fire smoldered on the hearth.

"Hullo!" cried the captain. "Someone still lives!"

"Yonder lies the body of a man!" exclaimed Viola, who had crept to Bob's side and taken his arm between her hands.

"Don't be afraid," he whispered. "We must be glad that we have arrived in time, if indeed we have."

The captain and Bob advanced to the prostrate man's side.

He was lying on a rug of seals' skins, with another pulled over him, under which was a blanket.

"He lives!" cried the captain, placing his hand over the heart of the unconscious man.

After a minute a faint color mantled his white cheek and he heaved a long sigh.

Presently the eyelids trembled, and a moment later he opened them.

They rested on the captain, who was stooping over him.

A look of surprise came into them, but they almost immediately closed again.

A dose of hot brandy was given.

This time he recovered considerably, and looked round him inquiringly.

"You will do now, my man," cried the captain encouragingly. "Try him with the food," he added.

Mrs. Cromwell brought the roughly minced meat and soddened bread and placed a spoonful in the sufferer's mouth.

He swallowed it eagerly.

After he had taken some half-dozen spoonfuls he turned his head on the pillow and fell asleep.

"He will be all right now," whispered the captain. "But someone must stay with him while we ransack the ship."

A second door led forward, and, leaving the watchers, the rest of the party passed through it.

Forward was found a number of great casks, such as are used to receive the blubber cut from the whale.

"She is a whaler, evidently," exclaimed the captain.

In the forecastle there was nothing except some hammocks and a chest or two.

"We can get warmer clothing than what we possess, anyhow," remarked the captain. "Now, what's the best thing to do?"

"We can carry the man back in a hammock," suggested one. "I doubt it," replied the captain. "What I propose is that some of us stay the night with him, and we will return in the morning, by which time he will be much stronger."

On their return to the square room, Bob and Jack volunteered to remain.

This done, Bok was delegated to bring them some supper.

On arriving Bok first fastened to the rope the package he had brought, which was drawn on board, and then the rope was lowered again.

"Be jabers! but it's cold, it is," he cried. "If I might be so bold, I would jist suggest that we should go down below. How is the dead man?"

"He isn't dead yet," replied Bob, laughing. "But he is sleeping still. I hope you have brought something good for him."

"Good, is it? There's a tin of soup, and another of salmon, besides a piece of seal, that Leeks shot while we were away.

"Then there is a bottle of wine—that's for yerselves and the sick man—and half a bottle of good rum, which I hope I may have my share in.

"Faith, there is enough to make us as merry and comfortable as if we were waking the dead man below there."

Chapter VI.—The Madman.

Taking the things with them, they hastily descended the companionway.

It was not without a shudder that they passed the many bodies.

As they were preparing supper they noticed the sick man stirring.

"Who are you?" he suddenly muttered.

"We are Americans, like yourself," replied Bob. "Here, have something to eat?"

The man's eyes glistened.

"Give it me—quick!" he exclaimed, in a hoarse voice.

Jack, who had warmed some of the soup, brought it in a basin he had found, with a spoon and a piece of bread.

Bob took it from him and fed the invalid slowly.

"More," cried the latter, when it was finished.

"Not yet," replied our hero. "Have a doze, and you shall have as much as you want next time."

Giving him a glass of wine, they left him, and in a few minutes his regular breathing showed that he slept again.

By this time the joint of seal was roasted, and the little party of three sat down together.

"What can that noise come from?" exclaimed our hero, as he stayed his fork

halfway to his mouth to listen.

"I heard it once or twice before," returned Jack, "but thought it rats."

"Faith, but I hope there's no ghosts here," cried Bok. "Heaven stand between us and harm."

"Bah! don't be foolish. It's rats, sure enough."

It was not long after this that the sick man sat up to partake of more food.

This done, he told his story.

He said he belonged to the whaler, *Cross of Gold*, which had been caught in a large icepack.

"This pack we attempted to cross," continued the sailor, "by dragging our boats over rollers we had brought with us.

"On the third day, however, a snow-storm set in, and continued for hours.

"Knowing as how time was valuable, after a rest, we tried to make our way through the drifting snow.

"But, after toiling for a long while, we found ourselves back where we started from.

"The captain, I and one or two others wanted to try again, but the rest outvoted us.

"We, therefore, tried to turn the pack by coasting along it, but, although we ran over a hundred miles along its edge, in a westerly direction, never a lead did we come across which offered any hopes of getting through.

"At length we came to the end, where it was joined on to another pack, which extended to the south.

"This we ran along till we saw high land before us.

"But all the shore was a rampart of old ice, so that it was next to impossible to approach.

"However, we killed quantities of seals and saw many whales floating in the open water.

"We then determined to make once more for the brig and start anew, taking an easterly route.

"But our luck was out. We lost many days in finding these islands, and when we did get back to them, hardly had we got on board than the weather broke up.

"For days the snow was driven in whirling clouds all around us.

"The decks were covered feet deep.

"It was impossible to get out in search of food, and we were almost starved.

"At length the weather cleared up, and we, with difficulty, forced our way on deck.

"The whole view was changed.

"A sharp frost had set in, and bound the snow-covered country with iron bands.

"Fresh ice had formed round the brig.

"I don't want to tell of the horrors of that winter.

"Some of us were mad, I guess."

"But what of the men frozen to death in the cabin?" asked Bob.

"Well, sir, we had built this kitchen, and the fireplace, and most of us in an evening would sit here and smoke.

"But dinner and supper was mostly taken in the cabin, where the big table was.

"It was the very bitterest of weather.

"Food at last there was none, except a lump of seal.

"It had been so awfully cold that none had dared venture out hunting.

"It was my day for being cook, and as soon as the joint was done we carried it into the cabin, which was warmed with a stove."

"Well, go on, man," exclaimed our hero, for the sailor had suddenly stopped in his narrative, as if some distant sound had caught his ear.

"Beg pardon, sir. Well, in spite of the stove, the meat was no sooner cut in slices than it was cold.

"I took mine back to the fire and rewarmed it.

"There was still a good supply of rum, and I took a swig at the bottle, and then, whether because of the cold or the rum, I don't know, but I fell sound asleep in front of the blaze.

"I woke up numbed with cold.

"The fire was nearly out, and the first thing I did was to make it up.

"Then, after heating myself a drop of grog, I fell to wondering what had become of my comrades.

"I stumbled along the passage, which felt as cold as the grave, and there, just as you see them now, sat our cap'n and his crew, frozen to death.

"The fire in the stove was out, and the companion door open.

"I took up one of the bodies, after I had recovered my nerve a bit, and dragged it along the passage into the kitchen.

"But I could not restore it to life, though I tried hard.

"So you see, sir, here have I been—Heaven in mercy! what's that?"

The sick sailor had risen to his feet.

Bob and Jack had done the same.

Bok crouched near the fire, with a horror-struck look in his eyes.

"It's the dead walking, maybe," he gasped.

A muffled thump, thump, thump! was again heard.

A minute or more passed.

Then our hero again seized a brand, and made a rush along the cabin passage.

Jack followed, and after him Bok.

A glance sufficed.

The body from the head of the table had disappeared.

"What can it mean?" exclaimed Jack. "I don't think I am a coward, but this is horrible."

"Something in that sick man's face tells me he has not spoken all the truth. We must have it out of him," said our hero.

But at that moment a mournful howl came from above.

Rushing to where their arms were stacked, Bob and Jack seized each a rifle and made their way on deck, not heeding, in their excitement, a cry not to fire from Horton, the sick man.

On lifting their eyes aloft they beheld a singular-looking object gazing at them over the edge of the foretop.

It appeared to be some huge animal, though of what kind they could not make out.

Scarcely waiting to consider what they were doing, Bob and Jack prepared to fire.

A wild shriek echoed along the deck.

"Stop that noise!" cried Bob, glancing round and seeing that Horton had managed to ascend the companion ladder.

Bob had thrown up his rifle to his shoulder, when the weak voice of the sailor arrested him in the act of firing.

"For heaven's sake, sir, don't fire! It's murder, nothing else."

As Horton spoke, the object of his solicitude, with incredible speed, slid down the forestay and disappeared through the scuttle of the forecastle.

"Please, sir, listen to me."

"All right; only be quick, and don't talk such nonsense about it's being murder."

With their guns in their hands, and taking good care to shut the door both at the top and bottom of the companionway, the two lads followed Bok and Horton through the dark death-cabin and passage to the kitchen, lit up by the cheerful firelight.

"Now, say what you have to, and be quick about it," cried our hero. "I can't rest quiet when a huge wild animal is within a few yards of us, though how it got there I can't imagine, for I thought there were no such things in the polar regions."

"That animal, as you call him, is Charlow, one of our sailors. He has gone mad."

No more was just then seen or heard of the crazy sailor, and the party retired for the balance of the night.

When the captain came from the yacht he brought Mrs. Cromwell and Viola with him, but left them in the small boat.

Bob quickly repeated Horton's tale.

"We must capture that madman and bind him with ropes," said Captain Sumner.

To this all, including Horton, agreed.

The descent to where the madman had disappeared was quickly made, but he could not be found.

"Hark!" cried Bob suddenly.

A wild cry of alarm arose on the cold air, coming from off the water.

"It's my mother and Miss Viola crying for help!" Bob went on.

"We must get to them at once!" returned Captain Sumner.

The party were quickly on the snow, running toward the small boat, Bob and Jack leading.

When they came in sight of the craft a scene met their gaze which filled them with horror.

The madman had boarded the boat and was in the act of shoving off.

Terror-stricken, Mrs. Cromwell and Viola shrank back on the stern sheets.

"Stop! stop!" yelled Bob.

With a snarl the madman bent to his work. Soon the boat was in deep water.

In desperation Bob leaped into the water after it.

Ere he could reach the craft the madman picked up the long ice pole and aimed a vicious prod with it at our hero's breast.

Bob was struck squarely, and on the instant disappeared beneath the surface with the shrill laugh of the crazy sailor ringing in his ears.

Chapter VII.—A Fearful Fall.

"Where am I? Where are mother and Miss Viola?"

It was Bob who spoke. Jack Larmore stood over him in the snow.

"You're all right—I got you out of the water," Jack made answer.

"And the others?"

"Gone."

"Gone! In the power of that madman?"

"Yes."

Bob gave a groan and leaped up. His breast hurt him not a little.

"Where is Captain Sumner?"

"The yacht has given chase. Look!"

Jack pointed up the coast. The yacht was disappearing around a distant point.

But in a hour the vessel returned. The captain's sad face told his story. He had been unable to catch the crazy fugitive and rescue his daughter and Mrs. Cromwell.

What was to be done? Night came on rapidly, and they were compelled to wait until morning.

At early dawn Bob and Jack commenced to climb a near-by hill of ice to look for the small boat.

It was perilous work, but they did not falter.

At length they reached the level summit and glanced down.

The yacht looked beautiful as she lay to, with her topsails backed, and every movement of the figures on deck could be distinctly seen.

Crossing some rough, porous ice, they came to the pinnacle.

This was rougher than it had looked from below, and they found not much difficulty in mounting.

Soon they reached the summit, or, rather, within a few yards of it, where there was a tolerably safe and level spot.

With anxious speed, Bob extended the telescope, which he had carried slung over his shoulder.

For some time he swept the ocean in vain, but at length, far to the westward, just on the edge of the horizon, he caught sight of a white speck, which could be nothing but a sail.

"Look, Jack, and tell me what you think!" he exclaimed.

"I can see it!" cried the latter, after a lengthened search. "I agree with you—it must be a boat-sail; anyway, it's too distant to be a bird's wing. It must be many miles off."

"Let's make haste and descend!" cried our hero. "My chest, where the fellow struck me, is getting stiff up here in this rare air."

Most haste less speed.

They had reached within twenty feet of the level portion of the berg when our hero slipped.

His arm could not bear his weight, and he half fell, half slid rapidly to the bottom of the peak.

"Are you much hurt, old fellow?" exclaimed Jack, as soon as he could reach his

friend's side.

"Only bruised, I think. Just help me up."

When assisted to his feet it was evident that Bob had twisted his ankle, or slightly strained it.

"Misfortunes never come alone," he said, with a laugh. "We must get on. If I find the descent difficult, you must help me."

A stream of water from the melting of the ice on the peak ran along in a little channel it had worn, to where it came to the ravine.

Here it fell over in a cascade, and divided, one part, now joined by other trickling streams, descended the gorge into the sea, the other flowing into the mouth of an ice cavern.

The friends had crossed about half the summit of the berg when a sudden gust of wind, forming an eddy, blew up a cloud of ice dust.

These tiny particles stung like needle points when carried by the breeze against the faces of the two boys.

They had to stand still and cover their eyes with their hands.

When the dust subsided they again hurried forward.

At the edge of the ravine a fiercer gust than the first hurled up millions of icy particles.

They glittered like a cloud of diamond dust in the sun's rays.

Wishing to escape, both the lads dropped on to the lower ledge.

"It's worse here than ever," exclaimed Bob, holding his rifle in one hand and placing the other so as partly to protect his face. "Let's get into yonder cave."

They both ran toward it—that is, Jack ran, and Bob hobbled after.

The former had only just time to see that the floor of the cavern sank at a sharp angle, when he felt his feet fly from under him.

Our hero, arriving at the cave's mouth at the instant of his friend's fall, was horror-struck to see him slide on his side toward the edge of a dark abyss, over which the water trickled.

"Help, Bob!" cried Jack, in vain trying to regain his feet.

Our hero clearly saw the fearful danger of his comrade's position.

Jack's feet were already over the edge.

"I am gone! Help!" he gasped.

Then, with a stifled cry, he disappeared over verge of the abyss.

Chapter VIII.—A Remarkable Story.

"Jack! Jack!" shouted Bob.

A sound as of falling rocks or ice blocks reached his ears, but no answering voice.

The echoes of the falling masses died away.

Bob was filled with dismay at the dreadful ending of his chum.

He had reached his gun to him, but Larmore had been unable to grasp it.

He shuddered as he thought of Jack's feelings as he felt himself shooting over the precipice.

There was nothing to do but to return.

He found, lame as he was, the path extremely difficult.

But at length he reached the yacht and told his story.

"It's dreadful," said Captain Sumner. "First my daughter and your mother, and now your friend, a young gentleman we all liked and I, for one, looked on as a comrade, for we fought side by side against that rascally crew of ours."

The captain was quite affected.

When the *Dart* was once more going through the water in the direction in which Bob had seen what he took for a boat sail, he came to the side of our hero, who stood leaning on the after-bulwarks, gazing at the berg, whose southern point they were now passing.

"He was a fine young fellow!" he exclaimed, "and would have made a good officer.

"But what are you looking at?"

"A seal, sir," said Bob. "Don't you see it, lying in the shade of that block of ice, on the ledge, lapped by the swell?"

"Seals don't lie in the shade—they bask in the sun. Give me the glass, Bob."

But our hero was already drawing it out to his focus.

No sooner did he get it pointed correctly than he uttered a cry of surprise.

"That's his body!" he exclaimed. "At all events, a man's body. How on earth did it come there?"

A small boat was still towing astern.

Bob, forgetful of his sprain, lowered himself into her, and grasped the oars, while the captain followed.

"Hold hard!" shouted the mate.

Our hero impatiently, though he never for a moment expected to find his friend alive, complied.

In two minutes Leeks reappeared and let down a flask into the boat.

Our hero dashed the oars into the water, and the small boat moved faster over the heaving face of the ocean than she had ever done before.

"Don't deceive yourself. If it is your friend, he can't be alive," said the captain, as they approached the body of the ledge.

"It is Jack!" he added, a couple of minutes later. "But how on earth did he come there?"

Another score of vigorous strokes brought the little boat alongside the berg.

Hardly waiting to fasten the painter, they rushed to the body.

It was lying on its back, and as Bob bent over it he noticed a faint tinge of color on the cheek.

"He's only stunned, I believe, after all," cried our hero.

The captain unscrewed the top of the flask and poured a mouthful of wine between the teeth of the senseless lad.

In a minute it took effect.

Jack sighed and opened his eyes.

"Let's get him on board the yacht at once," exclaimed the captain.

First, however, he passed his hand along each limb, and then felt Jack's ribs.

The patient winced at the last experiment and uttered a low cry.

"Legs and arms all right," muttered the captain, as he with our hero's help carried the boy to the small boat; "so, if a rib's broken, he must consider himself well out of a bad scrape."

Bob again pulled his hardest, and when alongside the yacht his comrade with some difficulty was got on board.

It was not until late that evening that Jack was able to tell of his wonderful escape.

"I don't know much about it," he said, "but never shall I forget the awful feeling as I shot over the edge of the precipice.

"Of course I thought that I should fall down a well that penetrated right through the berg into the sea.

"However, instead of that, I did not fall a great distance before I came down feet first among a lot of pieces of loose ice, or, if not loose, they gave way with me, and together we went clattering down a second slope.

"All of a sudden I was pulled up by my rifle, which was slung round my

shoulders, getting jammed across the passage.

"I tried to gain my feet, but failed; the slope was too smooth and steep.

"There was but one thing for it, and that was to go on.

"I slipped the sling over my head, and away I went again.

"Then came another fall.

"This nearly knocked me senseless.

"I just remember another slide, then daylight, then a last fall, and I lost all consciousness, only coming to myself to find you leaning over me."

"How is your side?" asked the captain. "Your escape was most wonderful. Another foot farther, and you would have been drowned."

"It was, as you say, a narrow escape. As for my side, I must say it's rather painful."

However, on the captain pressing it, he came to the conclusion that no ribs were broken.

It was bandaged up, and Jack was able to walk about, thankful that things were not worse.

Chapter IX.—The Volcano Of Ice.

For three long days the *Dart* bore away northwest, the direction in which the last had been seen of the missing boat.

"Luckily it's the right course to steer for the Siberian coast," remarked the captain, as he sat over his wine after midday dinner. "We shall sight the high land to-morrow morning, if not before"

"Surely we shall come across the boat in time, captain?" remarked Bob.

"Well, we have had wonderfully fine weather," replied the captain. "But, after all she was but a cutter, handled by a lunatic."

And he and Bob interchanged looks of despair as they ascended the companion ladder.

"Bok, go to the foremast-head," ordered the captain. "Take the glass, and have a look around."

The sailor slung the telescope over his shoulder and nimbly mounted the rigging.

When he arrived at the topgallant-yard he passed his arm round the skypole, and, adjusting the glass, swept the line of the horizon.

There was a long pause.

"Deck ahoy!"

"What is it?" bellowed the captain.

"Sure, there is a mist, or smoke right ahead, and above it I see what looks like the top of a mountain," replied the Irishman.

"Nothing else?"

"There is a low, flat berg."

"Nothing more? No sign of a boat-sail?"

"Nothing the size of a pocket handkerchief, yer honor."

"Well, we must give up the search for the present and start for the Siberian shore. But I give you my word, Bob, I shall not give up this hunt for many a week."

The wind fell light, and the *Dart* did not make more than three knots an hour during that afternoon.

The strange misty appearance still hung over the water.

They were gradually approaching it, and it was not more than a couple of miles ahead, when, as the sun set, the captain and the two boys went to supper, leaving Leeks in charge of the deck.

They had just finished their meal when the latter shouted down the companion for them to come up.

An extraordinary scene met their gaze when they reached the deck.

The yacht was still in moderately smooth water, but a quarter of a mile before her the sea was covered with a thick mist, while it was tossed hither and thither in tumbling waves, which met and crossed one another in wild confusion.

As they looked a thick body of smoke was belched from the midst of the turmoil.

"Port! hard aport!" shouted the captain. "Round with the yards! Flatten in the jib! Be smart, there!"

Rushing forward, followed by Bok and Jack, the captain himself seized the rope and aided the sailors to execute his orders, while Leeks attended to the jib.

Bok was at the wheel.

When on the new tack the *Dart* was not a cable's length from the boiling water.

"It's a subterranean eruption!" exclaimed the captain. "Look—look yonder!"

Where he pointed, from the midst of the curling waves, a great black patch of what seemed to be mud rose above the surface.

Round it were thick columns of smoke, which instantly shut it out from view.

The wind chopped round, and a fierce gust came, laden with steam and smoke, from the north.

The yacht heeled over till her copper sheeting gleamed above the water-line.

Gasping for breath, for a fearful stench accompanied the smoke, which enveloped them, all on board could do nothing but hold on to whatever was handiest.

A rushing, roaring sound filled their ears as the *Dart* dashed onward, throwing the boiling water in showers of spray over her bows.

The men forward were forced to stagger aft.

It looked as if the *Dart* was doomed!

Chapter X.—The Escape Of The "Dart."

For fully ten minutes no one could tell whether the yacht would right herself or not.

Captain Sumner, aided by our hero and Jack, at length found the topgallant halyards, and lowered the sail in the peak.

We say found, for the darkness was intense.

Then the gallant little vessel, as if freed from an overpowering load, came up to her bracings.

Once more she flew with increased speed through the water.

A few seconds and the star-lit sky again appeared overhead, and the rolling smoke wreaths were left behind.

"Heavens!" cried the captain; "never in all my life have I seen the like. What a death to have escaped!"

As if exhausted with its own fury, the squall subsided as suddenly as it had sprung up. The smoke gradually blew away.

And there, over the starboard quarter, some two miles distant, lay a long, low, black island.

"Look! look!" yelled Bob suddenly.

All eyes followed his outstretched hand.

There on the shore rested a familiar-looking boat, containing three figures—Mrs. Cromwell, Viola, and the madman.

Mrs. Cromwell and Viola were waving their hands. Then, assured they were seen, both fell back unconscious.

As for the mad sailor, he never stirred. He was dead.

It did not take the captain and Bob long to reach the women folks. They were taken on board the *Dart*, and, after Bob had kissed his mother and the captain had hugged his daughter, and both were given food, they told their story.

"When the madman struck Bob I nearly fainted," said Mrs. Cromwell. "When I came to he had hoisted the sail, and we were leaving the shore. The crazy fellow was eating some ship biscuit, which lay in a basket.

"When the madman had appeased his hunger he looked at us for some minutes without speaking.

"We were dreadfully frightened, but he never once came aft to annoy us.

"He placed some tinned meat and water near us, and then sat by the mast, singing loudly and rocking himself backward and forward.

"Viola and myself slept in turn; but the madman sat in the bow, looking out ahead, hour after hour.

"When the wind rose and the waves broke into the cutter he reefed the sail, and managed her wonderfully well.

"Still he never spoke.

"A shower fell, and Viola and myself collected the water and had a good drink.

"Another time snow fell.

"This also we collected and put into the barrel.

"Time after time a fresh can of meat was placed out for us.

"But we ate very sparingly.

"I think at this period the man's senses were returning to him, for soon after he spoke.

"He told us he did not know where we were, but trusted it was off the coast of Siberia, and that we had every chance of being picked up.

"He said that his name was Charlow, and that he had been mate of a brig that had been wrecked, but he had gone mad through misery, loneliness, and want.

"We had just sighted the coast, when first the smoke from your vessel came into view.

"Charlow was very weak, but he altered the direction the boat was going, and told us how to steer toward you.

"Presently the yacht came in sight, and we tried to get him to put us on board; but he was too weak, and just before Bob saw us he breathed his last."

Such was Mrs. Cromwell's narrative, and Viola corroborated it.

A happy day was spent on board of the *Dart*. "I trust we are never separated again," said Bob to his mother.

"So do I, Bob," she returned fondly. Then she gave a sigh. "I wonder when we will reach Cedar Island. I see nothing like cedar trees around here."

"The map has but one cedar on it," he returned. "It must have floated up here in the water and taken root in the ice. Even Captain Sumner can't understand that part of it."

On the following day the *Dart* again set sail for the coast of Siberia.

They were well into the sea of Kamtchatka, and felt that they must soon strike the spot mentioned in Ruel Gross' memorandums, if the old sailor had taken his observations correctly.

"If only we were sure father was alive!" Bob murmured more than once.

Three days passed, and Bob was one morning in the foretop when suddenly he gave a wild shout.

"Land ahoy!"

"Where away?" asked Captain Sumner quickly.

For from the deck nothing but icebergs were to be seen.

"To the northwest, sir. Will you let me have the glass?"

The glass was quickly brought and adjusted. The captain gave one glance.

"Ah! Bob, look!"

The boy did so, and then gave a shout that brought everyone on board on deck.

"Cedar Island!"

Chapter XI.—Among A Strange Foe.

It was true.

Far off to the northwest they could see the shore of a land that was covered with ice and snow.

The snow was of a reddish color, and the ice a deep blue.

But this was not all, nor by far the strangest part of the picture.

On the top of a hill, amid the snow, there stood a large cedar tree.

Its heavy branches swayed in the breeze mournfully; for though standing as if planted, the tree was dead.

For several minutes those on the *Dart* viewed the scene.

Then Bob broke the spell.

"Do you know what I think?" he said.

"I think that dead cedar was stuck up on the hill for a guide."

"Perhaps you are right," returned Captain Sumner. "One thing is certain—we have reached Cedar Island, as Gross called it. Probably the ground has a Russian name a yard long."

"Let us waste no time in getting ashore," cried Bob. "My father may be waiting for us!"

At this the captain said nothing, not wishing to hurt the boy's feelings. But the *Dart* continued on her course, and soon they dropped anchor in deep water but a

few rods from the edge of the land.

Bob was the first to enter the small boat. He was followed by the captain and Jack and two sailors.

The shore of the land reached, they gazed around curiously.

"Looks deserted," said Bob, in a disappointed tone of voice. "But come on up to the cedar. We may be able to discover something from the top of the hill." The ascent was quickly made by Bob, but scarcely was the top gained than a shout was heard from below.

"Savages!"

Bob was right. The sight that met his eyes startled him as he had never been startled before.

Rushing forward, they perceived the yacht surrounded by a half-score of canoes.

Two others were drawn up on the beach, and half a dozen or more copper-colored savages were standing round the dingy.

"We must save our boat at any cost!" cried Captain Sumner.

As they dashed down the hill the savages turned, armed with clubs, to face them.

One was bending a bow, but a shot from Bob's gun broke his arm.

Jack also fired, and the aborigines, all save one, took to flight, jumping into one of the canoes.

This brave chief, for such he looked, wielding a heavy club with both hands, rushed at our hero.

Bob threw up his gun to parry the blow.

The weapon was struck from his hand, but the blow fell harmless.

Before the tall savage could regain his balance Bob bounded on him, clasping him round the body.

But if our hero was strong, the native was stronger.

Dropping his club, he seized his adversary's throat, and, forcing back his head, made him relinquish his hold.

Then, seizing him round the waist, he flung him at the captain, whom he upset, at the same instant springing into the sea and swimming after his companions.

The whole affair did not last a minute.

Jack, who had reloaded, fired upon the overcrowded canoe.

Two paddles fell into the water and drifted away.

No sooner did they clamber on board than they were saluted with a score of spears, which stuck in the masts and deck, one passing through the fleshy part of a sailor's arm.

"Here, man, go below and bathe it in brandy," cried the captain. "Drink some, too. The rest of you get under shelter of the bulwarks.

"I have heard that these fellows poison their spears and arrowheads," he continued to our hero.

"Will they come back, do you think?" questioned Bob.

"Perhaps—we must remain on guard."

The next few hours were very anxious ones on board of the *Dart*.

Chapter XII.—Bob's Discovery.

Night came, and the hostile natives showed no sign of returning.

A strict watch was kept until morning, but nothing out of the ordinary happened.

In the meantime Captain Sumner and Bob examined the map with great care and also read and reread the papers Ruel Gross had left behind him.

"Let us go on another tour of exploration," said the captain, on the following day. "If those natives come back Bok can fire a gun to warn us."

The boy readily agreed and they set off without delay.

Once under the dead cedar tree they looked around them curiously.

A short distance further inland they saw a hollow, which had evidently at one time been a camp.

Tin cans were strewn around, along with a number of fish and animal bones.

"I wonder if father and Ruel Gross once encamped here?" thought Bob.

Hardly had the idea occurred to him than Captain Sumner set up a shout.

He was pointing to a post set up in the ice. To the top of the post was attached a rude sign, which read:

"To the Svlachkys' Camp—One Mile."

"Hurrah! here's a discovery!" cried Bob. "Shall we go on?"

"Yes; but let us advance with extreme caution. These Svlachkys may be very bad

people."

"Undoubtedly there are, or they wouldn't keep my father a prisoner," rejoined Bob.

"That signpost must be the work of Ruel Gross," went on the captain. "The savages haven't dared to touch it, thinking there was something supernatural attached to it—something to injure them."

On went the captain and Bob, down one hill of ice and up another. It was extremely cold, but neither minded that.

At last they reached a portion of the island that was very uneven. Great chasms yawned to the right and left of them. It was with difficulty that they pushed forward.

But they were bound to go on, and go they did, until at the mouth of what looked like a cave of ice the captain called a halt.

"Listen!" he whispered. "I hear voices."

Bob listened. Captain Sumner was right. From the cavern came the sounds of several human tongues.

"They are not speaking Russian," said the captain. "Perhaps we have stumbled upon more savages."

Hardly had he spoken when three human beings came into view.

They were bundled up in furs, in strong contrast to the other natives, who had scarcely any body-covering.

The new-comers were jabbering among themselves at a great rate.
Presently they came to a halt before a large slab of ice.

They tugged and pounded on this until the slab fell to one side, revealing a strange-looking opening.

"What are they up to now?" whispered Bob.

"I don't know—wait."

They waited. Presently the three men disappeared within the opening. Soon a smoke came out, and they saw that firebrands had been lit to light up the scene.

"That may be the place where the stone chest is kept," said Bob.

"More likely it is a burial place," replied Captain Sumner. "I've seen such spots before. Maybe they're preparing for a funeral."

"Can't we get a little closer to them?"

"It would not be safe. Hark!"

From a distance they heard the mournful toot of a large horn.

"That's a funeral horn, I'm sure," said the captain. "If they are coming this way we had better—Hullo! look!"

The captain pointed to an opening to their left.

A band of men were advancing.

They were guarding a prisoner—a white man, who walked in their midst.

Bob gave the white man one swift look, and then shrieked out at the top of his voice:

"It's my father!"

Chapter XIII.—The Big Polar Bear.

"Your father!" cried Captain Sumner.

"Yes, my father," repeated Bob, in high excitement. "What shall we do?"

He felt like rushing forward, but the captain restrained him.

"We can do nothing against such a force of men," he said. "Wait—or—"
He hesitated.

"What?"

"You or I might go back to the *Dart* for help. Every man on board can come heavily armed. When these people see our number they may be willing to talk reasonably to us."

"That's so, but I hate to leave," returned Bob. "They may do some harm to my father in the meantime."

"Then I will go, Bob. But mind, keep shady, unless they do something very bad."

Bob promised, and without delay Captain Sumner started on the return to the *Dart*.

With a wildly beating heart Bob watched the people who held his father a captive.

They were marching along silently now and did not stop until the center of the cave of ice was reached.

Here the party assembled in a circle at a point where there was a slight elevation.

Two of the men had axes, and with these they began to chop at the elevation, causing the pieces of ice to fly in all directions.

"Now what are they going to do?" thought our hero.

Presently he heard a slight noise behind him. Somewhat startled, he turned around to find himself face to face with a monstrous polar bear!

The beast had just discovered Bob. For a moment he stood still.

Then with a growl he leaped directly for the astonished youth.

Had Bob not sprung out of the way the bear would have landed on his head.

But Bob moved with the quickness of lightning, and this saved his life.

The bear, however, came down so close to the boy's side that our hero had no time left to fire at him.

He struck the bear one hasty blow with his gun stock and then ran for dear life.

Recovering, the huge beast came after him.

Although a heavyweight, the bear managed to cover the ground with incredible swiftness.

Down the side of the icy hill went Bob, with the bear less than a dozen feet in the rear.

The plain below reached, Bob scarcely knew which way to turn.

The bear uttered growl after growl, showing that he was working himself up to a perfect fury.

"I must get to the yacht, if possible," thought Bob, and headed in the direction without delay.

On and on came the polar bear.

He did not seem to gain, neither did he lose.

So far the race had been about even, but Bob felt he could not keep up that terrific strain much longer.

As he ran he fingered his gun nervously.

Should he risk a shot?

"I must do something," he said to himself desperately.

And wheeling about he took hasty aim and blazed away.

The shot was not a bad one. The bullet struck the polar bear in the side of the head, causing him to stagger back and halt.

On went Bob again, and by the time the bear recovered sufficiently to continue the pursuit he was nearly fifty yards in advance.

But the bear was undaunted, and on he came as swiftly as before.

Once Bob stumbled and almost gave himself up for lost.

But he scrambled up quickly, and was relieved to see the bear stop, not being able to make out what was about to happen.

Then on went again, until, with a cry of terror, Bob leaped back.

He had reached the edge of a swiftly flowing stream, which ran between smooth banks of ice.

To attempt to leap that body of water would be highly dangerous, and to enter it might cost him his life.

And now the polar bear was at his very heels.

Chapter XIV.—The Finding Of The Stone Chest.

"Help! help!"

Why he uttered the cry Bob could scarcely tell.

He did not imagine that any human beings were within sound of his voice.

Yet it is natural for a person in mortal peril to cry for assistance.

Luckily his cries were heard.

Captain Sumner was returning from the *Dart*, having hastily summoned Bok, Leeks, and the others.

Glancing in the direction, he saw the polar bear and then Bob.

He did not stop to think, but, taking hasty aim, fired.

Bok also discharged his weapon, and, hit twice in the neck, the beast staggered back.

Bob now saw his friends, and, running up the stream, joined them.

With so many against him the bear tried to flee, but a second bullet from the captain's gun finished him.

"Oh, how thankful I am that you have come," cried Bob gratefully. "I thought I was a goner."

"Don't waste time here," exclaimed Captain Sumner. "These shots will alarm those people we left at the ice cave."

"That is true," said Bob. "Come on—we must rescue my father!"

And he led the way, with the captain at his side.

It was a rough journey up the side of the hill again, and more than once they had to stop to catch their breath.

At the top a surprise awaited them.

The band of strange people had disappeared!

At first Bob could scarcely believe his eyes.

"Where are they?"

"Gone!"

"But to where? I can't see them anywhere."

Captain Sumner shook his head.

A telescope was brought into play, but it did no good.

Captors and captive had alike gone, no one could tell where.

A consultation was held, and it was decided to explore the cave before going back to the *Dart*.

The descent into the cold spot was not easy, and more than once a member of the party was in danger of breaking a leg.

The bottom reached they made their way to the place where the men had been at work with their axes.

They had cut out a square hole two by three feet and six feet deep.

Gazing down into the bottom of the hole, Bob gave a shout:

"The stone chest, as sure as I live!"

"What!" cried the captain.

He too looked into the opening.

There rested what at first looked to the a square stone of a whitish-blue color.

But a closer examination proved that it was really a stone chest, having two immense hinges of iron. How had the object come there?

"I believe those people were going to dig it out when our firing frightened them off," said Captain Sumner.

"Let us see what the chest contains," returned Bob, in high curiosity.

The others were willing, and by the united efforts of the sailors the top of the chest was pried back.

A murmur of astonishment went up.

The chest contained three iron pots, one filled with silver and the others filled with gold!

"The treasure, sure enough!" ejaculated Jack, who had come along with the sailors.

"There are thousands of dollars there!" said Captain Sumner.

"We ought to take the stuff on board of the *Dart*," put in Bok. '"Taint no use to leave it out here."

The others agreed with him.

In the chest were two fur-covered sacks, and these the party used, filling them up to the top.

In the midst of the work a far-away shot was heard. Two more followed in quick succession.

'"Tis an alarm from the yacht," cried the captain. "I told my daughter and Mrs. Cromwell to fire in case anything turned up."

Without delay the sailors were sent off in advance.

Captain Sumner, Bob, and Jack started to follow with the treasure sacks, when a shout went up and a band of the hostile savages appeared at the far end of the ice cave.

"We must run for it!" yelled Bob. "Come on—for the ship!"

"Give them a volley first!" shouted the captain.

Six shots, poured into the advancing troop, threw them into confusion.

As the treasure-seekers turned to run a spear glanced over our hero's shoulder and stuck quivering in the ground a dozen yards beyond.

At the top of their speed they rushed toward the shore.

At first they fancied they were not pursued.

After going a hundred yards, however, a wild yell and the patter of feet told them they would have to do their best.

Encumbered as they were, with both the lads partly disabled and the captain no speedy runner, the savages soon gained on them.

"We must give them another volley!" panted the captain.

Though the guns chosen were breech-loaders, it took some little time to reload them whilst at a run.

Suddenly Bob felt a shock, which nearly made him fall.

However, he recovered himself with a stagger.

"The sack saved you," gasped Captain Sumner. "But for that the spear would have pierced your back. Now wheel round and fire!"

As they fronted the natives they found that not thirty yards divided them.

At that short range every bullet told.

Three men fell dead, and as many were wounded.

The captain gave them a couple of shots from his revolver before he once more turned and ran for his life.

"That accounts for about half them," exclaimed our hero.

As they gained the head of the beach Jack stopped short.

"Go on!" he gasped. "My side! I am stuck!"

Bob put his arm through that of his friend, who had dropped his gun, and dragged him onward.

The captain turned and fired the remaining chambers of his revolver among the crowd, now within a score of yards.

The small boat was in waiting, and into it they tumbled, amid a storm of spears.

Both the captain and Bok, who rowed, were stuck.

Our hero seized the oars from the hands of the latter and pulled with all his strength for the yacht.

The gunwale of the little boat was almost level with the water.

It was slow work.

Luckily, nearly all the enemies' spears were exhausted.

An arrow pierced Bob's cap, and the last spear which was thrown again wounded the captain, piercing his leg.

Fortunately the distance was so far that it only entered about an inch and fell out from its own weight.

Our hero and the captain clambered on board the schooner.

Jack was exhausted, but still clung to his bag of silver.

Scarcely had they gained the deck when a yell broke from the dark waters around them, and spears and arrows fell on all sides.

Every gun on board was now fired at the savages.

Yet they came on as if determined to kill every white person in sight.

Chapter XV.—Bob Rescues His Father—Conclusion.

The savages were pressing close upon the *Dart*. Something must be done.

"Slip the cable!" shouted the captain. "Up with the jib, topgallant sails, and gaff!"

"We must trust to weathering the point," he added to the mate. "If we do, we are safe. The current will carry us to sea."

His orders were executed.

The wind fortunately blew from the southward, and, filling the light sails, carried the *Dart* off the shore.

The yacht's head paid off, and, answering her helm, she, with the tide in her favor, bore seaward.

A few parting shots, and the *Dart*, now feeling the full force of the wind, left the fleet of canoes far behind.

The next few hours were employed in the dressing of wounds and making things a little ship-shape.

It had been a hard-fought fight, and everyone was tired out.

Fortunately, neither Mrs. Cromwell nor Viola had suffered from the attack.

Long before the crew were able to do anything more darkness set in.

Bob was very impatient to trace up his father, but just now that was impossible.

Anxiously the boy waited for dawn, while his mother wept in silence, thinking

of her beloved husband.

Would they save him?

At the first signs of morning Bob was up and ready for the search.

Captain Sumner and Jack were not far behind.

The *Dart* proceeded slowly toward land.

Satisfied that the savages had left the vicinity, the party went ashore, and once more proceeded toward the cave of ice.

A light snow had fallen, and all former tracks had been obliterated.

In vain they looked about for some trace of the Svlachkys.

"Let us go on an exploring tour," suggested the captain, seeing how badly Bob felt.

They started off first for the far end of the cavern.

They had gone scarcely a dozen rods when the captain called a halt.

"Someone is coming!" he whispered.

A crunching of snow and ice was now plainly to be heard.

The party ran for shelter behind a series of ice humps and waited.

Suddenly a man clad in furs dashed by them, running at top speed.

"Father!"

At that strange cry the man stopped as though shot.

"Who calls?" he asked, but instead of replying, Bob rushed from his hiding place.

"My son! What does this mean? How came you here?"

"We came in search of you, father," replied Bob. Father and son embraced warmly. Then Captain Cromwell turned swiftly.

"We must fly! The Svlachkys are coming! I just escaped from them."

He had just uttered the words when the crowd of strange people came down upon them.

The leader started to throw a sharp spear at Captain Cromwell, when Bob rushed in and, with one well-directed blow of his gun, laid the man on his back.

A fierce shout went up and a struggle ensued.

But the fall of their leader had demoralized the Svlachkys, and when half a dozen guns and pistols had been fired at them they fled in dismay.

After this the party from the *Dart* lost no time in returning to the vessel.

Bob and his father walked side by side, and never were parent and child happier.

When Mrs. Cromwell saw her husband alive and well, she cried for joy and threw herself into his arms. It was a happy time all around.

Captain Cromwell's story was a long one. In brief, it was as follows:

When the *Bluebell* went down, he and Ruel Gross escaped on a raft, and after several days of suffering, reached the coast of Siberia.

From there they set out for Cedar Island.

The island gained, they found the stone chest, and then Captain Cromwell was captured.

For a long while the Svlachkys held him, thinking he knew of more treasures than those already discovered.

At last, however, they grew weary of waiting, and had resolved to put him to death, when deliverance came as recorded.

That there was more treasures was proven later on.

The stone chest was taken up, and beneath was found a cross of gold that was valued at fifteen thousand dollars.

With the treasure on board, the *Dart* started southeastward for the United States.

In due course of time San Francisco was reached, and here the treasure was disposed of.

Each of the sailors belonging to the party was given five hundred dollars, besides his pay.

Jack received five hundred dollars also.

The remainder of the money was divided equally between Captain Sumner and Captain Cromwell.

With his portion of the treasure Captain Cromwell purchased an interest in another ship, and to-day is fast regaining his lost financial position.

Bob is with his father and Jack Larmore sticks to the pair.

Captain Sumner has given up his roving life and has settled down with Viola as his housekeeper. His residence is but a short distance from that occupied by Mrs. Cromwell, so the latter does not want for company when her husband and son are on the ocean.

And here let us leave, satisfied that in the future all will be well with those who have figured in the story of The Stone Chest.

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