

The snow fell silently, drifting around the deathlike form; soon, nothing was discernible from above but a curious mass of drifted snow heaped against the rock. Hurry, canine messenger, "fetch somebody Spot," good, faithful, generous fellow, "forget and forgive," never mind old sores, set man thy superior an example of kindness for its opposite! Here he returns, stops on the bridge, looks down, and barks; there is no response! Spot snuffed and barked again louder.

"What is there old fellow?" said Wyatt, when he arrived; he looked down but could make out nothing.

Jim Snarr stooped down in the snow and peered into the darkness below.

"There's a sheep, or something here on the ledge I think," said Jim, "help me down and I'll see what it is."

Wyatt seized him by one hand and lowered him down.

Mr. Purdee stood beside Spot vainly trying to distinguish what the object was.

Jim laid his hand on the heap, with a great start and loud exclamation, "Why it's a man," he said.

"A man," said Mr. Purdee, "who can it be? But no matter who it is, he must be rescued."

"Waken him up," said Wyatt, "and I'll go for assistance."

He started off at the top of his speed, back to the "Bank" and gave the alarm. The meeting was over and the neighbours were preparing to return to their respective homes when Wyatt arrived, so that in a short time quite a number of the men were at the scene; a rope was carried down and several lanterns.

Jim tied the rope securely around the still insensible man, and he was carefully raised to the surface. As the pale deathlike face upturned, was exposed to the light, many were the living curious faces which crowded to gaze upon it. Meaning, significant glances were interchanged among the neighbours, but no one spoke until Jim, who had scrambled up, looked at the man and whispered to Wyatt, "why, this is the farmer that left the Public House, and that I could not get out of my mind all the way home."

Wyatt nodded an answer, and just

then it was shouted that a cart from the "Bank" was waiting at the turn, so four of the men took up the body and carried it up to the cart.

Mr. Purdee had sent off one of the young men for the nearest doctor who lived fully two miles away.

As soon as the men had placed the insensible form in the cart, Wyatt, who had been assisting, turned to Mr. Purdee, and said, "This is an extraordinary business."

"Yes, it is," said Mr. Purdee, "I can't see how this has happened, but I'm afraid there's something bad as well as strange."

"Why," said Wyatt, "he was in the 'Red Bull' at Hob Cross, this afternoon, and left quite suddenly, so much so, that his manner attracted Jim Snarr's notice, and made him quite curious as to whom it could be, and why he acted as he did."

Neither mentioned the name of the subject of conversation, yet both knew the man, several of the neighbours were sure they knew the face, but none were so certain as to hazard the assertion.

When they arrived at the "Bank," the body was carried into the kitchen, and laid upon a great oaken *squab* half couch half *settee*. The old farmer at the "Bank," looked at the afflicted object of general notice and involuntarily exclaimed, "Why this is Crooks! "Is not this Crooks?" Mr. Purdee."

"Yes," said Mr. Purdee, "this is Crooks, and very sorry I am to see him here."

"Well, well," said the old man, "whatever has he been doing now I wonder?"

And many wondered and shook their heads, and talked and conjectured upon the subject as they walked in company to their homes.

In the meantime restoratives were being employed to bring back consciousness and movement to the still, deathlike man.

Tom Snarr had gone back to the "Bank," with the others to see who the man was, and whether he could be brought back to life. He had never had any personal acquaintance with Crooks, but had heard a great deal said about him, and was very curious to see a man of so strange a temper. As he stood looking on, he