

The Mountain Divide

"How old are you, Bill?"

"I am twenty."

"Twenty!" echoed Bucks, as if that were not very much, either.

"Twenty!" repeated the lineman. "But," he added, drawing himself up in his tremendous stature, with dignity, "I have been on the plains driving wagons and building telegraph lines for seven years——"

"Seven years!" echoed Bucks, now genuinely admiring his companion.

"My father was a Forty-niner. I was a line foreman when I was seventeen, for Edward Creighton, and we put the first telegraph line through from the Missouri River to the Pacific," continued Dancing, ready to back his words with blows if necessary.

"You *are* an old-timer," cried Bucks enviously.

"Any good rabbit-shooting around here, Bill?"

"Rabbit-shooting?" echoed Dancing in scorn.

"The only rabbits they shoot around here, young fellow, are Pittsburgh rabbits, that don't keep their ears hid proper. When we go hunting, we go