

some genial thought, or bubbled over at some joke of his companion, but which as a rule were like gimlets for sternness, so that strangers, especially stranger servants—the nigger of Jamaica, the guileless Hindoo of his Indian station, and other members of the inferior human brotherhood—trembled exceedingly when they met those eyes. Captain Ladds was accordingly well served, as cold reserved men generally are. Mankind take everything unknown *pro terribili*, for something dreadful, and until we learn to know a man, and think we know him, he is to be treated with the respect due to a possible enemy. *Hostis* means a stranger, and it is for strangers that we keep our brickbats.

People who knew Ladds laughed at this reputation. They said the gallant captain was a humbug; they pretended that he was as gentle as a turtledove; beneath those keen eyes, they said, and behind that sharp hatchet-face, lurked the most amiable of dispositions. At any rate, Ladds was never known to thrash a native servant, or to swear more than is becoming and needful at a syce, while his hatchet-face had been more than once detected in the very act of looking as soft and tender as a young mother's over her first-born. The name of this cavalier was short and simple. It was Thomas Ladds. His intimate friends called him Tommy.

They were in California, and were not buffalo-hunting now, because there is not a buffalo within five hundred miles of Sacramento. Their buffalo-hunting was over, having been accompanied by such small hardships as have been already alluded to. They rode along a track which was as much like a road as Richmond Park is like the Forest of Arden. They were mounted on a pair of small nervous mustangs; their saddles were the Mexican saddles used in the country, in front of which was the never-failing horn. Round this was wound the horse-hair lariat, which serves the Western Nimrod for lassoing by day and for keeping off snakes at night, no snake having ever been known to cross this barrier of bristly horsehair. You might as well expect a burgling coolie, smeared with oil, and naked, to effect his escape by crawling through a hedge of prickly pear. Also, because they were in a foreign land, and wished to be in harmony with its institutions, they wore immense steel spurs, inlaid with silver filigree, and furnished with