



Three or four more Indians soon came up. They consulted for some moments. The boys could plainly hear their voices. Then the whole party passed within fifty feet of where the fugitives lay, and climbed up to the crags, planting their lances as staves in the loose mass of the slide; as they climbed, they sent the stones rattling down over the very place where the sailors lay! And once, when they ascended higher, they displaced a large boulder, which came plunging down the slide.

It was not till they had been gone out of hearing for some minutes that the poor fellows so much as dared to take a long breath. Then at length Rummy drew up his hand, brushed the stones off his face, and raising his head a little, looked around.

"Gone!" said he, in a low voice.

"What luck!" said Rummy. "I was sure they'd root us out o' here."

"So was I," said Rummy. "But we couldn't have done a better thing—if they don't come back. We'd better keep pretty still."

They lay quiet for some minutes, and then heard Frost snoring! He had fallen fast asleep. At that the two younger boys laughed.

"Good for old Pleem!" muttered Rummy.

They lay still awhile and before long they also fell asleep. If the Indians came back that way, they failed to hear them, for they slept till afternoon, when hunger waked them very disagreeably. Even then Rummy did not think it safe to uncover themselves until it should get dark. They lay and talked in low tones.

"We shall starve," said Frost. "There's not a thing we can lay our jaws to here among these mountains. We shall have to go back to the apple woods again."

"It would take more than apples to fill me," said Rummy. "I could eat a piece of pork raw," "Quit off talking about victuals," said Clum. "It makes me raving."

#### A NIGHT JOURNEY.

As soon as dusk had fallen, they crept out and

set off along the pass again. They hoped to get through the mountains, turn southward, and come out on the coast of the Gulf. They even hoped to reach the sea that night.

But the gorge led them steadily westward and northward, as they saw by the stars of the "cross," the bearings of which they had learned to recognize on board the brig. All that night they plodded on, often clambering over well-nigh impassable rocks, sitting down at times to rest, and in great misery from lack of food. Two *pumas*, as hungry as themselves, perhaps, followed after them for several hours, howling dismally.

Toward morning they came into pine woods, and with their knives peeled off the outer bark of young trees, and eagerly ate the "slivers" next the sap wood.

From this place the land fell off in a long slope to westward. They went through pine forests till sunrise, when they came out upon the brink of an abrupt hill, and saw open land, and beyond it a great expanse of water.

"The sea! Hurrah!" cried Clum.

"It don't look to me like 'old briny,'" said Rummy, at length. "Taint the true color; besides, look at the mountains beyond it."

"It's some lake," said Frost.

Their hearts sank, and for a considerable time they sat looking off, at a loss now which way to shape their course.

At length Clum cried, "Look a' there, down in that medder, 'twixt here and the water. What's that movin' there?"

The others failed to distinguish anything, but Clum persisted.

"Come on" said he, and started down the hill. "It's some kind of game."

They descended the hill, and went through woods, grass and bushes for more than a mile. "Twas not far from here," Clum now said. "Get your gun barrel ready, Rummy."

He cut a club for himself, and another for Frost. Then they went forward on tiptoe for a long way, finding nothing, then came suddenly

upon six or seven black and white cattle, lying in the high grass, chewing their cuds.

"There's your game," whispered Frost. "Somebody's cattle."

"Must be some farm not far off," said Rummy.

"I don't believe that," said Clum. "These are wild cattle. They look wild. But I don't care whose they are. See that calf there by that cow? That's my veal!"

They were in high grass and bushes, a few yards away from the cattle. Rummy stole forward on his hands and knees very slowly; then leaping to his feet, with a bound like a leopard, he came within striking distance of the calf, and gave it a tremendous blow. The cattle all sprung up with a snort, and ran. Dropping the gun barrel, Rummy seized the calf by the hind legs, and held fast to it.

The calf, a vigorous little animal, struggled and bawled sharply, whereupon the cow turned and charged with a vicious bellow. Seeing this, Rummy, still holding it, swerved around so as to bring the calf between himself and the cow; and so spiteful was her charge, that she actually threw her own calf over Rummy's head! Finally they beat her off. They dragged their prize off into the bushes.

"Now if we only had the tinder-box, and could make a fire!" cried Clum. But the tinder-box had been in the mate's pocket, and he—poor fellow!—was no longer with them. They dressed the calf with their knives, and then (they were so very hungry) cut little bits of the flesh, and, shutting their eyes, ate these, and felt greatly the better for it.

"I never thought I'd be brought to eat raw meat," said Frost.

"Wal, I never tasted any cooked that was better," said Rummy. "I shan't starve as long as I can get veal to eat."

#### ON UNKNOWN SHORES.

They took each a quantity of it, and started on again, going southward now along the shore of the lake. After an hour or two, Clum heard voices. They went forward cautiously, and discovered four native huts around in a bay, and saw several squaws and children; also a number of canoes drawn up on shore.

"We'll give 'em a wide berth," Rummy said, and set off to make a detour to landward, followed by the others. They came around to the shore again after going a mile or more, but found the walking very difficult on account of the thorny brush.

Then they came to a great number of wild cherry-trees, having cherries as large as hazelnuts, black in color, ripe and sweet. Of these they ate their fill, then lay down among the cherry-trees and had a nap. It was mid-afternoon before they waked and set off again; and they had not proceeded far, when they came suddenly upon a hut on the lake shore.

It seemed to be deserted, at least empty, nor was there any appearance of a fire since the last rain in the stone fireplace before it. They found nothing in the hut, but in a little cove close by they espied a very peculiar raft, pulled up on the sand. It consisted of two long buoyant logs, champered to a point at each end, placed about three feet apart. Over these a sort of deck was laid, rudely but very neatly done, and in the deck a mast was stepped. In short, it was a sort of native catamaran. There were paddles, also a long yard, and a sail woven or plaited of a kind of long grass.

"That's a fine craft!" cried Rummy.

"She'll sail some," said Clum.

Sailor-like they were much interested in it. "Sailin' ought to be as cheap as walkin' through thorns," remarked Frost.

"That's so, Pleem!" exclaimed Clum. "Let's try her a bout down the lake; the wind's fair. What say, Rummy?"

So they launched the raft, put their veal aboard, and pushing off, hoisted the sail. It filled, and the catamaran bowled along at a good rate.

"This is good!" cried Clum. "I wish we could sail all the way."

"Who knows but we can?" said Rummy.

"This lake may open into the sea."