

present an abrupt form, and the traveler begins to grow weary from the prospect before him, is a spring of perennial flow, from whose waters many a tired pilgrim has slaked his thirst. I sat down by its side, thinking more of the journey before me than of quenching my thirst. Near by I observed a grave; standing at each end was a roughly hewn pine slab, partially decayed, upon one of which, had been carved with a knife, "C. Mason," the name of him who slept beneath. It was a miner's grave. On inquiry I learned that it was my old friend and acquaintance, Charles Mason, of Connecticut. He was the only son of a widowed mother, a noble fellow—frank, generous, open, who by his own exertions had obtained a fair education; of poor, but respectable parentage, and moderately ambitious. In '49, when the gold-fever raged so generally throughout the country, he became its early victim. He left all the endearments of home, impressed the parting kiss upon his mother and sisters, and with buoyant hopes of speedily obtaining a competency for their support, sought the far-off land of California. He swung the pick and shovel in these deep gorges; his merry laugh rang through the hills; the sound of his voice echoed along the peaks, and his counsel was listened to by his companions. Time passed smoothly on, till relentless disease seized him as his victim, and prostrated his manly form. His malady commenced with a diarrhœa, but terminated in a fever. Confined to the rough couch of his narrow tent, he passed day after day in lonely meditation, as he felt his strength fast wasting away. "O, that I could see my mother!" would he often exclaim, on suddenly awaking from a feverish dream. But no mother stood by him to smooth his burning brow, and with guardian-angel care, ease his rough passage from life; no sister bent over him as he contended with the fell destroyer; but a few cold, unfeeling strangers only were there, as the icy bands of death closed around him, and his manly spirit was released from its earthly tabernacle. He died. No friend shrouded his remains, and prepared him for the coffin; no parents shed tears of affection over his clayey form; no sobbing wife or sisters bent over his coffin-lid to catch the last lingering look; no throng of mourners followed him to the tomb; no church-bell tolled at his departure; no venerable clergyman uttered a prayer at the funeral, and administered heavenly consolation to the weeping. Wrapt in his own blanket, a few neighbor-