

## T H E   W I L D   O L I V E

baffle pursuit. Once he had gained even a few hours' security, he would be able to some extent to pick and choose his way.

He steered himself by the peak of Graytop, black against the last coral-tinted glow of the sunset, as a sailor steers by a star. There was further assurance that he was not losing himself or wandering in a circle, when from some chance outlook he ventured to glance backward and saw the pinnacle of Windy Mountain or the dome of the Pilot straight behind him. There lay the natural retreats of the lynx, the bear, and the outlaw like himself; and, as he fled farther from them, it was with the same frenzied instinct to return that the driven stag must feel toward the bed of fern from which he has been roused. But, for the minute, there was one imperative necessity—to go on—to go on anywhere, anyhow, so long as it took him far enough from the spot where masked men had loosed the handcuffs from his wrists and stray shots had come ringing after him. In his path there were lakelets, which he swam, and streams, which he forded. Over the low hills he scrambled through an undergrowth so dense that even the snake or the squirrel might have avoided it, to find some easier way. Now and then, as he dragged himself up the more barren ascents, the loose soil gave way beneath his steps in miniature avalanches of stone and sand, over which he crept, clinging to tufts of grass or lightly rooted saplings, to rise at last with hands scratched and feet bleeding. Then, on again!—frantically, as the hare runs and as the crow flies, without swerving—on, with the sole aim of gaining time and covering distance!

He was not a native of the mountains. Though in the two years spent among them he had come to acknowledge