

while they remained wondering what it could be, for the thunder was ever becoming louder, and

“Nearer, clearer, deadlier than before”

lo! out of the west came what seemed as a dim shadow moving across the plain. With bated breath they watched the dark mass moving along like some destroying tempest with ten thousand devils at its core. Chained to the ground with a terrible awe they stood fast for many minutes till at last in the dim light, for the gloaming had come upon the plains, they see eye-balls that blaze like fire, heads crested with rugged, uncouth horns and shaggy manes; and then snouts thrust down, flaring nostrils, and rearing tails.

“My God, a buffalo herd, and we’ll be trampled to death,” almost shrieked one of the Earl’s followers.

“Peace! keep cool! Up, up instantly into these trees!” and the word was obeyed as if each man was an instrument of the leader’s will. Beyond, in the south-east, a full moon, luscious seeming as some ripened, mellow fruit, was rising, and the yellow light was all over the plain. Then the tremendous mass, headed by maddened bulls, with blazing eyes and foaming nostrils, drove onward toward the south, like an unchained hurricane. Some of the terrified beasts ran against the trees, crushing horns and skull, and fell prone upon the plain, to be trampled into jelly by the hundreds of thousands in the rear. The tree upon which the earl had taken refuge received many a shock from a crazed bull; and it seemed to the party from the tree-branches as if all the face of the plains was being hurled toward the south in a condition of the wildest turmoil. Hell itself let loose could present no such spectacle as this myriad mass of brute life sweeping over the lonely plain under the wan, elfin light of the new-risen moon. Clouds of steam, wreathing itself into spectral shapes of sullen aspect, rose from the dusky, writhing mass, and the flaming of more than ten thousand eyeballs