

to prospect a little. We headed up the gulch, but without ever thinkin' of little Bill, and as indications was good, we kept on in the same direction for a couple of days. It was on the third day out, and we'd got about twenty miles from the Bend, and hadn't struck nothin' yet to bet on, when all of a sudden Hooker yells out, 'Holy Moses, Jake! look-a there!' and what do you s'pose we see?

"About as far as from here to that mule there, leanin' ag'in a tree, set little Bill Skinner—what was left of him, I mean, for he was a dornick. And what do you s'pose he was a settin' on? A nugget of the pure metal worth forty thousand dollars! Yes, sir! We could see in a minute how it was. Bill had found this nugget, and bein' weak for want of grub, of course he couldn't carry it. So he had set down on it to guard it. And there he set and rot. He dassent go to sleep for fear somebody'd look it, and he couldn't leave it to go any grub for the same reason. We could see he'd browsed 'round on the bushes as far as he could reach, but that couldn't keep him alive long, and so there he'd set and rot till finally he'd peggod out.

"And that's what's the matter with Posey. I wakes up in the night and see him a-settin' thar by that wagon, and says I to myself, 'Thar sets Posey on his nugget!' And one of these fine mornin's we'll find nothin' but Posey's bones a-settin' there, and his buttons and such like."

About this time, as they were now nearing the region where danger from Indian raids was apprehended, Savage's company and another party from Illinois joined forces for mutual protection, and all proceeded thenceforward under Savage's direction. Accompanying this Illinois party was a woman going out to the diggings to join her husband, who was prospering, and had sent for her to come on. The two women thereafter keeping constantly together, Posey felt his responsibility so far lightened that he occasionally indulged himself in a "square" night's sleep, while Dora and her new-found friend slumbered beneath his ample wagon-cover.

His partial separation from Dora, occasioned by the advent of this other woman on the scene soon opened his eyes to the fact that a total separation from her would take the ground entirely from under his feet, and leave him in a condition that he felt disinclined to contemplate so long as there might be a chance to avert such a calamity. He accordingly improved the first opportunity that offered, and cast himself at the feet of Dora—literally, mind you, on the lee side of a sage bush—and lisped his love. On this sacred ground let us tread as lightly as may be. Suffice it that Posey's suit prospered, and that presently a little programme came to be agreed upon between the contracting parties to this effect: They would go on for the present precisely as if nothing had happened—Dora to seek her father and Posey to seek his fortune. As soon, however, as Dora should have succeeded in restoring the doctor to health, or had happily buried him, Posey should be notified, and they would thereupon be married. Then Dora would open a school somewhere, wherever she might chance to find the indispensable children, while Posey, accompanied by his newly-fledged father-in-law, if perchance that individual should be spared, would launch into the mines and conquer Fortune at the point of the pick.

Time flew fast with the lovers after this, and they were quite startled one day when Savage informed them that they were upon the very borders of the promised land.

That evening, an hour before sunset, the train was halted for the night at a point whence the travel-worn adventurers could look down for the first time into the Sacramento Valley, and render thanks in their various ways that the end of their tedious pilgrimage was almost reached. As Dora Hanchett and Posey stood together upon a green knoll, following with their eyes the winding trail that their feet were to descend on to-morrow, they desisted, toiling slowly toward them, one of those retarding bands of unsuccessful and discouraged veterans—the reflux of the great wave of immigration constantly pouring into the golden valley—which they had frequently met in the course of their long journey. As the cavalcade drew nearer, Dora's attention fixed itself upon a curious figure that brought up the rear. Mounted upon a loose aggregation of bones and ears that purported to be a mule, this mysterious figure gradually approached, while Dora watched it as if fascinated. On and on it came, and still she gazed, spell-bound. Opposite her it paused. There was no longer any doubt: it was He. Clad in the mangled remains of the original great-coat, the original boot-tops yet towering in the region of his ears, and the upper half of the original beaver crowning his well-developed brain, there He was. Slowly and carefully he descended from the back of his shambling steed, settled himself well in his boots, pulled up the collar of his great-coat—and there was little but collar left of it—lipped the curtailed and weather-beaten stovepipe to the proper angle, opened his paternal arms and feebly embraced his daughter. He announced himself to all concerned as a broken man—a poor unfortunate going home to die, where his bones might rest with those of his ancestors, and where his humble name and his honorable record in the service of his country would be cherished by his fellow-citizens after he should be gone. Providence had surely, in his extremity, drawn his daughter to his succor. Now he was relieved of all anxiety, and might turn his mind to things above. His daughter would fan the spark of life, and keep it burning, God willing, till the old home should be reached. Then he would release her from her labor of love. Then he would be at peace with all the

world, and would cheerfully die in the midst of his weeping friends. He had up to this hour been haunted with the apprehension that his poor old frame might be left to moulder somewhere in the wide, inhospitable desert that stretched between him and his roof-tree. Now that dreadful apprehension was banished. The Lord had remembered his own. Dora would walk beside his boat and protect him, and the knowledge that she had thus been instrumental in prolonging her father's life would be her exceeding great reward.

A most enchanting prospect for Dora, was it not? Even she did not put her neck under the yoke until she had first informed her father of her momentous secret, and invited him to assume his rôle in the programme already mentioned as arranged by her lover and herself. But, as a matter of course, he scorned the suggestion. Posey begged and raved, but without avail. The girl never had a question in her mind as to her duty from the moment she saw her father approaching. She must do as he said—go back with him as his slave. There was no help for it.

And so the lovers held a hurried consultation, pledged eternal fidelity and all that, agreed that Posey should go on and make his fortune, and that when Dora should be released by death from her duty to her father, he should either come back for her or she should go to him, and then they would be married. Meantime, he engaged to write to her frequently, and she promised to write to him faithfully once every week. And then farewell!

By this time the doctor's party had left him far behind, and naturally, considering the capabilities of his steed, he was growing impatient to move on. The early stars were already coming out, and he testily reminded Dora, as she lingered over her leave-taking, that there was no more time to lose. And so, without a murmur, the devoted soul turned her back upon all her new-born hope and joy, and dutifully took up the long and dreadful homeward march on foot. And Posey, his heart in his mouth and his tongue charged with unutterable execrations, gazed gloomily down into the darkening valley, that half an hour before had been filled with a radiance "that never shone on land or sea." And as he gazed all the bad in him persistently rose up to curse the despicable author of his woe, while all the good in him—about an even balance—rose up to bless the fast-disappearing idol of his heart.

Slowly and painfully, day after day, the little company of stragglers toiled on toward their distant homes, the redoubtable doctor, with his unwilling beast and his willing bond-woman, ever bringing up the rear. No one but Dora herself could know how grievously she suffered in her chains—how her very heart's blood was gradually consumed by the vampire whom she chose to cherish and obey because it was her misfortune to be his daughter.

The old home was reached at last. On the whole, the doctor had rather enjoyed the journey, and brought to the family board, as of yore, a tremendous appetite. He "resumed practice at the old stand" without delay, publishing a card to that effect in the village newspapers. He seemed scarcely to note the absence of his wife, who for a quarter of a century had been wearing her life out in a vain endeavor to justify his existence on this globe. In short, he speedily settled back into his old habit of life, and appeared to have totally forgotten that he had come home to die. And Dora, too, soon lapsed into her old routine of school-keeping, and so once more the jet boiled merrily. Once a week, with scrupulous regularity, she wrote her promised letter to Posey, and she waited long and anxiously for some word from him, but in vain. Weary weeks lost themselves in months, and months after months crept slowly away till almost a year had passed, and still the faithful soul fastidiously for some token that she was not forgotten. Then one evening she went home from her school to find that the heavens had fallen. Her father, whom she had left four hours before apparently in the highest health and spirits, was dead. The village physician attributed his sudden death to apoplexy, which seems illogical. But he was dead, whatever the cause, and his orphaned daughter mourned him with as genuine a grief as ever wrung a human heart.

When in process of time the first transports of grief had subsided there seemed to be nothing left for Dora to do but to concentrate all the overflowing tenderness and devotion of her heart upon her lover, and to brood and pine over his long-continued silence. She never doubted that he had written to her, for the mail-service, and from the gold regions was notoriously unreliable in those days, and she was by no means the only one who looked in vain for letters thence. At last she could bear the suspense no longer. The spring had opened early, and a party in a neighboring town was to start for the diggings by the middle of April. This party, in which were already included two women, Dora resolved to join. Once let her reach that indefinite region denominated "the mines," and she felt the most unquestioning faith in her ability to find her lover.

And so once more the dauntless girl set out upon that long and tedious journey of three thousand miles. Not many weeks passed before the inevitable homeward-bound stragglers began to be encountered, and of these Dora eagerly sought information concerning the object of her quest.

"Bridge? No, marim," was almost uniformly the reply to her first question in that direction.

"He was sometimes called Posey," she would then suggest; and at last she found a man who

acknowledged that he knew Posey. "He was at the Buny Visty in Carter's Gulch at last accounts," this individual informed her, but he omitted to commit himself as to the nature of Posey's occupation. "Wife, p'raps?" he observed, incidentally.

"No, sir," said Dora.

"Sister?"

"No."

"Ah! Well, he's a stocky chap, that Posey, and ought to make his fortune in the mines, if anybody could. But nobody can't—take my word for't. Look at me!"

He was a spectacle indeed. The retrogressive Doctor Hanchett had been quite an exquisite in the matter of apparel compared with this tattered demotion. With Dora's companions he was less reticent concerning the character and calling of Posey than he had been with Dora herself. By his account it appeared that Posey had spent about a month in the mines without striking a single streak of luck to hearten him. At the end of that time, completely discouraged, he went to the nearest village and advertised himself as willing to work for his board at anything that might offer. The thing that offered was a situation as assistant bar-tender at the Buena Vista gambling-house. Posey accepted this situation with ardor, and discharged the delicate duties pertaining to the place so satisfactorily that he very soon found himself promoted to the distinguished position of "stool pigeon." In this capacity he developed shining talents, and the Buena Vista's gaming-tables soon became the most famous resort in all that region for those confiding birds whose favorite amusement appears to lie in being plucked. And thus Posey went on prospering until he achieved a partnership in the concern; and his partner soon after being suddenly called to that bourne whence no traveler returns, Posey found himself sole proprietor and manager of an uncommonly flourishing concern in an uncommonly lively line of business.

All this information was carefully kept by her companions from the ears of Dora, of course; and she, having obtained the long-coveted trace by means of which she felt sure that she could not fail to find her lover, was quite cheerful and happy throughout the remainder of the seemingly endless journey.

The end neared at last, however, and as Dora recognized the familiar landmarks that told her she had almost reached the fruition of her hope deferred, her eyes brightened daily, a new flush came into her thin cheeks; and though she grew more quiet and abstracted than formerly, it was plain that her reveries had no tinge of darkness, her hope no shadow of fear, her faith no alloy of doubt. And when the time came for her to part with the good people in whose company she had traveled so far, she bade them adieu with a light heart, and at once set out alone by stage for Carter's Gulch.

Reaching the straggling, ill-conditioned village at nightfall, she asked the driver, as she alighted in front of the stage-office, to direct her to the Buena Vista.

"The Buny Visty! The Buny Visty's not a hotel, ma'am," that individual explained. "It's the Golden Gate that you want, I reckon."

"No, sir," she replied confidently. "I have a friend at the Buena Vista—Mr.—Mr. Posey. Perhaps," she went on, with a little tremor in her voice, "you can tell me if he is well?"

"Posey!" He stopped some moments at the word and looked in blank amazement at the delicate, tender, unmistakably honest face that confronted him. Then he continued hastily: "Never better. Saw him yesterday morning. You see that green lantern? That's the Buny Visty. Good-night, ma'am. I stay here—if you should want a friend, you know. Good-night."

Dora thanked him for his kindness, returned his salutation, and tripped away with untroubled spirits. She had been so much concerned to conceal her own agitation as she mentioned the name of her lover that she had quite overlooked the astonishment with which that name had seemed to transfix the driver.

As she picked her way along the dark and muddy sidewalk she could not help complaining a little petulantly to herself because the stage-office had not been located nearer to that distant green lantern. But she was not the girl to lose heart now. Bravely she plodded on, and when at last she was able to discern the words "Buena Vista" upon the beacon toward which she was toiling, suddenly her heart gave a great bound, the tears rushed to her eyes, her knees quaked beneath her, and from her plump soul there went up an earnest thanks-giving to the dear Father of us all for His great mercy in bringing her safely to the end of her momentous journey.

It was some minutes before she could so far compose herself as to be able to proceed; and when she did move forward again, I think a vague notion of the true character of the Buena Vista began to cast a shadow upon her ardor. As she came within a couple of rods of the isolated wooden building in front of which the green lantern was suspended she was suddenly startled at hearing several shots discharged in quick succession within, and a minute later three or four men rushed hastily into the street and hurried away, evidently without noticing her, though they passed within a few feet of her as she stood, almost paralyzed with alarm, just outside the door. Her fright was gone in a moment, however—soon enough, indeed, to enable her to satisfy herself that none of those fugitives was the man she sought. As the door stood wide open, there seemed nothing for her but to enter, which she did at once. The front apartment of the saloon, though lighted, she found to be a mere ante-room, bare of all fur-

niture save a few chairs; and without pausing here the resolute girl, who must have had a foreboding of the awful truth by this time, passed on into the gambling-room in the rear. There, stretched upon the floor, shot through the heart, lay the stark form of the man she had journeyed so far and so patiently and hopefully to find. He had grown muscular and branny since she parted with him. His face, too, had changed, and not for the better: it was flushed, sodden and bearded, and the beard was dyed black. She knelt down beside the corpse and took one of the great hands in her own. It was still warm! But the chill of death crept over it as she held it to her heart, and thus her last ray of hope expired.

She sat still by her dead till the man's former companions came to prepare the body for burial. As it was borne to the lonely grave upon the hillside she walked beside the rough coffin. And when the grave was reached she dropped upon her knees beside it, and poured forth in a clear voice a fervent petition to the Most High to receive, for the sake of the dear Saviour who died for all the world, the soul of this poor sinner.

They had said that she might bear up till the funeral was over, but that then she would break down. She did not. The next morning she set her face to the East, and began again, for the fourth time, that awful journey across the plains. We need not follow her throughout its length. She reached her home worn and sick, but nevertheless at once took up her old school and went on with it a few weeks. And then the end came.

EVILS OF OVERDRESSING.

Of all the snares that beset young girls none are more dangerous than the love of dress. Mothers should be on the alert to guard their daughters against it. Elder sisters should not forget that young eyes are looking at them as examples, and are much more impressed by the living models before them than by any amount of "good advice." Nothing is of greater importance than the companionship permitted to young girls. Not only do over-dressed companions induce the wish in themselves to over-dress, but if the gratification is denied, "covetousness, envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness" are very likely to find births in hearts that might be otherwise full of better feelings. An undue love of overdress has been only too frequently the cause of ruin of both body and soul. Even in very young children the passion for overdressing is seen. It is the fault of the silly mothers. Little girls, with the exception that their dresses are shorter, are now clothed in all the expensive elaborations that distinguish the attire of grown women. Their skirts are covered with quantities of ornaments, trimmings, frills, and double skirts. Their feet are encased in the most costly boots, and their ankles dislocated with high heels. The hats they wear are in accordance with the rest of the toilette, and even padding and hair dye are not unfrequently used, and deception, cunning, fraud, inculcated along with vanity and reckless expenditure. One would expect to find neat plain dress in Sunday-schools if anywhere. Yet we are often pained to see children who come for free instruction decorated with feathers, gilt ornaments, quantities of ribbons, silk mantles and double skirts. Thus arrayed it is not wonderful that a general spirit of rivalry is engendered, scholar vying with scholar, not in the acquirement of learning or piety, but envying one another's finery, or puffed up with vanity at the possession of some special gew-gaw, and sneering at their less overdressed companions. We have heard mothers, with tears in their eyes, complain that they could no longer send their children to be instructed on Sundays, because they were unable to buy new or finer clothing, and the children were persecuted on account of their shabbiness—nay, even ridiculed for appearing constantly in the same bonnet—neat, but not very smart. What do the mothers of these children contemplate for them? They are to be the servants, work-girls, eventually the wives of mechanics or small tradesmen; how much better to attire them in simple neatness, to inculcate attention to instruction, to discipline their characters to moral strength, and teach them to lay by the surplus, now wasted, for some better purpose,—to aid their start in life, or to help father and mother on a rainy day. "But they must do as others do, or they will be despised," is the foolish and often fatal argument. The example and persuasion and firm perseverance of one good mother would be sure to induce many who know her—some, perhaps, who ridicule loudest—to follow her example.—*Sunday Press.*

Miss Una Hawthorne, daughter of the great novelist, is doing excellent philanthropic work in London. She is engaged in establishing a "Preventive Home" for girls in connection with a suburban orphanage. Plunging into the bad homes and destitution of London, she takes girls who are morally likely to fall, or who have fallen, but are not without hope of reform, and gives them work in the laundry of the orphanage, thus at once saving the expense of hired women, which was found to be too heavy, and giving the girls a chance of elevation. The waifs thus picked up receive their instruction in the trade and their board and clothing for the first six months, and wages for the second six months, when permanent places are found for them.