

CHAPTER XXXI

Dividing the Family

THE Bronsons stayed at Camp's Gulch until the end of September. And, although Dick Bronson made many excursions in the neighbourhood, night invariably found him ready to sling his hammock under the big cedar tree growing at the side of the house.

Nell sent for Dr. Russell on the next morning after her adventurous walk, but when he reached Goat's Gulch, guided by Joe and accompanied by Dick Bronson, it was to find Doss Umpey dead.

They buried him in the little graveyard at the Settlement, and although Nell shed tears at his grave, they were rather tears of pity than of affection. For although she might grieve as any good girl would over the misspent life going out in hardship and gloom, she could not pretend to a love which he had never taken the least trouble to inspire, while the buzzing and humming discomfort in her injured ear kept the remembrance of his brutality constantly before her in those days of weariness following her long walk to Goat's Gulch and her adventurous return journey.

She had rather seriously overdone her strength that day, and was so unwell that Gertrude and Mrs. Bronson insisted on the doctor prescribing for her.

After Doss Umpey had been laid in his grave, the