

CHAPTER XVII

RESCUED

IN spite of their utmost efforts, Mr. Hardy's party had made slower progress than they had anticipated. Many of the horses had broken down under fatigue ; and as they had no spare horses to replace them, as the Indians had in like case done from those they had driven off from Mr. Mercer, they were forced to travel far more slowly than at first. They gained upon the Indians, however, as they could tell by the position of the camping-ground for the night.

At three o'clock on the afternoon of the last day they passed the place their enemy had left that morning ; but although they kept on until long after sunset, many of them having led their horses all day, they were still more than thirty miles away from the mountains among which they knew that the Indian village was situated.

None of the guachos had ever been there, but they knew its situation and general features by report. There had been no difficulty in following the trail since they had struck it. The broad line of trodden ground, and the frequent carcasses of sheep, sufficiently told the tale.

That was a night of terrible anxiety to all. They knew that already Ethel was in the Indian village, and they thought