

Who knew where it had gone or what had stood in its track? I ran along screaming something—praying or swearing—quite mad, I think, for a little, till I fell again and the jar brought me to my senses.

I had gone over the edge of an old buffalo run scooped dry by the rush of summer rains. I lay still for a little while. I must have gone to sleep or perhaps I fainted away. Anyway, when I came to myself again the world was as still as the grave.

The wind had gone down, as it will sometimes, suddenly and entirely. The silence was horrible. I got on my feet, stiff and benumbed. In all that gray, still, ghastly space there was nothing to tell east from west, or north from south. I was lost on the big range.

It was still enough, but the cold was dangerous. I could not stop. I must move somewhere. I must make myself a purpose—a purpose to keep myself alive at least—till daylight came.

I began walking; it did not matter in what direction. If only my strength held out till morning—strength to keep off that horrible drowsiness. I stumbled heavily along. I was thinking about Molly and her baby; it all seemed like a dull dream.

And then the bells began to ring, deep and soft and far off. I stopped in my tracks to listen. It was the sound of bells, certain, full and sweet; and I turned and went blindly on, following the sound as a hound might follow a scent.

All at once I saw a light. It wasn't a star; there were no stars. And nobody lived on the big range, unless some camper was traveling about, and campers don't travel in the teeth of a norther. And this light swung and wavered, went out entirely for a second or two, and then burned up again. And near or far I could not tell, only it was a light and it moved, and I followed it. And I could hear the bells all the time.

Then all at once another one of Molly's Bible verses flashed into my head; something about a "star in the East that went before them till it came and stood over the place where the young child lay."

Well, I wasn't a wise man or I shouldn't have got in such a fix. I don't think I'm an irreverent kind of a fellow, either; a man couldn't live with Molly many years and be that.

Only I was looking for a young child, too, and babies—little ones—always did seem to me near enough to heaven to make the story reasonable enough. Anyway, there it was, meant for me or not, and I followed it.

More than once I fell, but I always got up and went on. I was talking to myself part of the time, hearing my own voice and thinking it was someone else's. I lost my sense of time again, but I kept on doggedly; and then, suddenly, the light flashed brighter, whirled about in a wild sort of a way, and went out entirely.

I gave a shout and ran forward. I thought I should die if I lost it. And there I was standing on a wide trail, with a sort of square, dark shape standing up in front in the dimness before me, with light and voices coming out of the chinks, and somehow, there was the door, and my hand on the latch, and in another second—oh! it was Molly—Molly with a lamp in her hand, bending over a feeding-box made into a cradle, with a great armful of hay and a white sheepskin for a cover, and Madison's wife kneeling on one side, and Clayton's wife on the other, and beyond, with light flashing in their great, wondering, shining eyes, a pair of astonished horses. And then there came a piping cry from the feeding-box, and I knew I had found the baby.

Burned out? Yes sir. That was the last thing; but they had been warned before the fire came down on them. Jim Clayton had taken the women and struck for the big road, and they took the first shelter they came to—a stable that had been built in the days when all the California supplies went overland by mule-train. When the wind fell he took the lantern and tried to find a cabin that used to stand somewhere near, and I had been following him for half an hour.

O, yes, I'm well fixed now; 3,000 head of cattle out on the Gunnison. And Molly spends her summers back home, and she and the babies bring back enough croup and catarrh and bronchitis and sore throat to last them half the next winter.—Christine G. Brooks in *New York Independent*.

No more expressive name was ever given to the Creator, than that of The Great Architect of the Universe.