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2 The Shadow of a Great Rock

evil would befall the child, no doubt; but deep in her heart of hearts she had known that the evil must pass and the good endure. Knowing this she had borne her agony steadfastly.

Of all the rough frontier towns that stretched in a ragged line along the eastern bank of the Missouri, Council Bluffs seemed most alive with the robust spirit of the time. There the crowd was most motley; there the leaping pulse could best be felt; there was the very vortex of the mad maelstrom of passionate hope, desire, and purpose.

Night was falling, and in the deepening gloom, with the shadows thick over the dim streets, there was something half eerie in the town's aspect. The roadways were filled with huge freight-wagons, drawn together in close order to leave the middle of the thoroughfares clear. All around were oxen, mules, and horses, released from harness after the day's labour, some tethered to the waggon-