

The Mountain Divide

He rejoined Bucks after he had got rid of the crowd, and the moment the relief train reported ready the despatcher sent it out, that help might reach the scene of disaster at the earliest possible moment. Bucks, calmed somewhat but suffering intensely, paced the floor or threw himself into his chair, while Scott picked up the despatcher's old copy of "The Last of the Mohicans," and smoking silently sat immovable, waiting with his customary stoicism for the call that should announce the dreaded wreck.

The moments loaded with anxiety went with leaden feet while the two men sat. It seemed as if the first hour never would pass. Then the long silence of the little receiver was broken by a call for the despatcher. Bucks sprang to answer it.

Scott watched his face as he sent his "Ay, ay." And without understanding what the instruments clicked, he read the expressions that followed one after the other across Bucks's countenance, as he would have read a desert trail. He noted the perplexity on the despatcher's face when the latter tried to get the sender of the call.