

knew all about them, that I would ride inside and sleep till morning. It seemed to me as if a subdued chuckle issued from his tobacco-stained lips, but I was too tired and sleepy to notice it. I clambered into the vehicle and composed myself for a nap, while visions of sleep, more or less disturbed, I knew, but still sleep, flitted through my mind.

For two or three miles the road was level and smooth, and I fell into a comfortable doze, lying on the back seat, with my duster for a pillow and a handkerchief for a night cap. Suddenly there was a shock such as I had never before experienced. My head was jammed up against one side of the stage and my feet sought in vain for an exit through the other, while my whole body bounced up and down like a spring-board. In my youthful days I once fell from an upper balcony to the ground, and later was one night aroused from a nap on the cars by the train jumping the track and endeavoring to test its specific gravity in a river, but this exceeded all my previous experiences. Soon recovering from my astonishment I thrust my head out the door to learn the nature and extent of the disaster. I saw the stage was moving steadily on, and as the driver spat unconcernedly over the wheel, I began to realize that we had simply run over a stone. That it was a small stone was quickly made evident, for we soon ran over several others, none of which were very large, and the effect so completely eclipsed the first effort that it sunk into utter insignificance. For an hour I did some of the liveliest ground and lofty tumbling it was ever my fortune to engage in, traveling all about the interior of the stage, and returning at every lull to the back seat, which was made the base of operations. When at last the stage stopped at a station to change horses, I crawled meekly out and remarked to the driver that I wasn't very sleepy, and I guessed I would ride with him. As he dexterously expectorated over the off wheeler's back and answered "All right," I was certain I heard a chuckle, but felt too subdued to resent it, and treated it with contemptuous silence. I felt "shuck up right bad," and then and there resigned all claim upon the back seat of an empty stage forever.

From my perch upon the box I now had an opportunity to view the landscape, or such of it as was carved from the darkness by the "bull's-eye" beneath our feet. It seemed to my unaccustomed eye as though we were constantly running into a solid wall of black, and yet the horses followed the road as it twisted in and out among the trees of the dense forest, skirted the edge of a canyon or wound up and down the steep hillsides, the driver cracking his long lash and admonishing his team in the choice English so eloquently handled by his craft, apparently as unconcerned as if upon a broad turnpike under the noonday sun.

All attempts to engage my new friend in conversation met with but faint encouragement. He was a man of few words, but endowed with a most expressive grunt. The only trouble was that, somewhat unfamiliar with the language, I sometimes failed to grasp the delicate shades of meaning, but, by putting direct questions to him, man-

aged to catch the thread of his discourse. Our most extended conversation was when, coming abruptly around the side of a hill, a magnificent spectacle burst upon our view. The whole face of a mountain, several miles distant, was ablaze with fire. The flames leaped far up into the air, twining their scorching arms about the long branches of the pines, while the whole heavens were ablaze with light.

I exclaimed, "Hello! there's a fire."

Grunt—affirmative.

"Do we pass through it?"

Grunt—negative.

"Does any one live there?"

Grunt—negative.

"How long has it been burning?"

Grunt.

My inexperience in the language prevented me from comprehending the last remark in the broad sense in which it was no doubt used, and so I ventured to ask:

"How long did you say?"

"Two weeks," he exclaimed with a snort.

"Do they not try to put it out?"

Grunt—negative.

The fire did not seem to have the gigantic proportions of a blaze of two weeks' standing, and so I remarked:

"I thought these forest fires were very dangerous and burned immense tracts of timber, but this does not look to be very extensive?"

"You don't know how much it has burned," he remarked with a great effort.

This observation was so literally true and so crushing to my ignorance that I relapsed into my former obscurity, and watched the blazing forest until an intervening hill rolled its opaque curtain before the scene.

All night long we rode, slapping our hands and stamping our feet to keep the blood circulating, gradually ascending into the mountains, and keeping the great dipper always before us. By a brilliant flight of conversation similar to the former, I ascertained that I would get nothing to eat until seven o'clock in the morning, and was compelled to satisfy my rebellious stomach by chewing the quid of disappointment. A remark that I should think he would convey a trifle of nourishment to allay the gnawing pangs within during his nocturnal journey, was answered by a grunt indicative of a failure to comprehend. The remark was simplified by saying, "Don't you pack a little grub with you and take a snack during the night?" and the responsive grunt not only conveyed the idea that he understood, but that he did no such thing, and had a "sufferin' contempt" for any one who did.

About four o'clock the stars began slowly to fade from the heavens, and the advancing army of day drove in the outposts of the legion of darkness, and in an hour had completely routed the enemy and driven them from the field. It was a grand sight to see the conquering advance of the God of Day; and as we emerged from a deep canyon and saw the snow-crowned brow of Mount Shasta bathed in the yellow rays of the sun, while below vast clouds of fog rolled over the hills on which the night