

# THE WEST SHORE

14TH YEAR.

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## ZEKE

**AUL** RENFREW, the artist, had gone into the heart of the the Sierras to make sketches for the fall exhibition.

He hoped to put his soul, figuratively speaking, on canvas, and win both fame and fortune at one stroke.

It was mid-summer far down in the valleys, but up here in the eternal solitude of these hoary mountains was yet a touch of winter—just enough, however, to make the air delightfully exhilarating, and the nights full of delicious repose.

He was poor, "damnably poor," he often muttered, when rent day came and left him but a scanty allowance with which to eke out the succeeding month.

The world had been slow to recognize in him the birthmark of genius. Older heads, if not more divinely gifted, who wielded the brush with a steadier hand, had hitherto overshadowed him. But he was gradually coming into favor with a discerning public, and he looked forward with reasonable expectations to a bright and prosperous future.

He pitched his camp in a little cove close beside a mountain rivulet, in whose crystal depths multitudes of silvery trout shot to and fro like a weaver's shuttle. He looked about upon the grand panorama with an almost overwhelming sense of his own littleness. Gradually this was succeeded by a feeling of exultation—a quicker leaping of arterial blood—a

dumb, intense longing to penetrate even the "holy of holies" of nature's temples, and with a daring, though reverential, hand, to make her secrets his very own, attain heights hitherto undreamed of. In the presence of these immutable monuments of the handiwork of the Almighty, all his soul's best and purest aspirations leaped to the surface; the selfish and base crept under cover. The sky looked so blue—heaven seemed so near, and the sordid, grasping world so far away.

That first night he slept the sleep of the just. He woke with the dawn, new life tingling in his veins and oozing at his finger tips.

After a hasty breakfast he started out on a voyage of discovery. He had no fear, either of molestation or of losing his way. He was accustomed to following mountain trails, and roaming for weeks at a time in solitary, isolated places.

He had grown to love this wild, Bohemian sort of life, and he was never so much at home as when, with knapsack and camping outfit, he was off for his annual summer jaunt.

After a time, however, he became aware that he had lost his bearings. He had been so lost in wonder and admiration, so filled with the keenest enjoyment, that he had utterly forgotten to note any landmarks. He must have traveled a long distance, for he was a fast walker and it was already high noon.

The thought suggested itself, that, perhaps, after all, he might have been traveling in a circle, and was nearer camp than he suspected, if he only knew the precise location of that much-desired haven. He had heard of such instances before. It would never do to sit down and quietly fold his hands. The afternoon would soon pass, and night drops swiftly and early in mountain fastnesses. Besides, there was another urgent cause for action. A man's first sense of discomfort proclaims itself in the pit of his stomach. Paul