

it with dry wood and pine knots, it had the true old New England roar, that vibrated like sweetest music along the corded network of boyhood's memories. If my sensitive ear felt the need of additional sweet sounds, I had the never-ending, murmurous tinkle of a tiny, spring-fed, mountain streamlet, running close by the end of my cabin, with occasional orchestral accompaniment in the deep, rolling diapason of Damocles, my long-trying and faithful pack mule.

I built, or rather, excavated, a comfortable, cave-like stable for Damocles, close against the upper end of my cabin, and the grateful animal, feeling that he was close enough to command my ear at all hours, let slip no opportunity for expressing his sense of obligation. In fact, as time wore on, and he found himself well fed and housed, so demonstrative did he become, that I fell into the habit of addressing him informally, many times a day, by the first syllable of his name, which seemed to me to form a pretty and appropriate diminutive.

By the time I had completed my building operations, and hauled and chopped my winter's wood—which I piled in a formidable semi-circular barricade about my door—November was well advanced, and I began to think of laying in my store of provisions for the winter. I knew the season was close at hand when I might expect to be "snowed in," entombed alive in from six to ten feet of snow, and held a prisoner until such time in the spring as old Sol should succeed in melting away my snowy shackles.

So, one morning when the sky was heavy and the atmosphere laden with indications of coming snow, I brought out Damocles and his pack saddle, and together we wended our way toward.

The distance was not great—scarcely two miles—but the trail was steep and rugged, and it was past noon when we reached home with the first installment of my winter's store. Already snow was falling, though in a lazy, leisurely way—the big, slow-moving flakes forming an indescribably beautiful scene against the dark mountain background. Treating Damocles and myself to a hasty lunch, I started for town once more, determined to accomplish a second trip before night should close in.

By the time I reached town, the temperature had fallen considerably, a chilling northeast wind was blowing down the canyon, and the snow was coming down more steadily and rapidly; had, in short, abandoned the picturesque, and settled down to business. Evidently the winter was at hand, and a wintry little chill ran up and down my spinal column, as, an hour later, I buttoned my coat close to my chin and started on my toilsome, homeward march.

In pleasant weather Damocles and I would have thought nothing of climbing the trail to our moun-

tain nest, but now we were more than two hours in plunging and struggling over the snow-draped bowlders and pitfalls that beset our way.

When within about two hundred yards of our destination, we came to a point where the trail was uncomfortably narrow, and made a sharp curve around a high, overhanging crag. A false step just here was likely to plunge the traveler down a perpendicular declivity of thirty or forty feet—not an appalling height, it is true, but still high enough to imperil limb and vertebræ. Damocles had a special, and entirely justifiable, dislike for the spot, for the reason that his pack invariably collided with the overhanging rock, and necessitated a nervous plunge on his part to avoid losing his foothold. So, now, as we neared this pass amid the added perils of snow and fast-falling darkness, the sagacious animal, seeming to realize that he must gather and concentrate his forces for the ordeal, voluntarily paused for a breathing spell.

At the same instant, the profound, snowy stillness of the mountain side was broken by a clear, ringing voice, which seemed to rise from the depths at my feet—

"Hello! Who goes there?"

Startled though I was, by the suddenness of the sound, I bent forward and shouted back—

"A friend, if such be needed."

"Thanks," responded the voice, heartily. "A man has fallen down here from the trail, and seems to be pretty badly hurt. I can't get him up alone. Can you help me?"

Answering in the affirmative, I gave Damocles a gentle hint to resume his homeward march. Then going back a few steps to a spot less precipitous, I clambered down to the place whence the voice had come. I found a man lying prostrate and insensible on the snow, and another standing beside him, who said, in explanation—

"This man and myself have tramped over the mountains, from the Conroy mining district, on our way to town; but the storm caught us, you see, and in coming round that crag up there, he stumbled and fell, and I fear he is seriously hurt."

Something in his quiet, collected way of speaking convinced me that the injured man was no more to him than an ordinary acquaintance.

"Pretty full, isn't he?" I asked, as I bent to examine the man as well as I could by the dim light, and was met half way by the unmistakable odor of a certain distilled beverage.

"Yes, d—n it, if it were not for that, he would not be in this fix," was the straightforward reply. "However," he added, "that doesn't alter the face of the predicament. We must get him out of this if we