

agined them after him; but as he could see nothing of them, he merely stopped occasionally to admire the wonderful beauty of the scene and to rest a little. It must have been the night air that gave him palpitation, for his heart throbbed violently, and his breathing seemed hard. There was no light, however, at the widow's, and all was as quiet within as death itself. There had been some attempts made at digging a well, it appeared, a short distance from the house, but after having reached a depth of eight or ten feet, it must have been abandoned, for there were no signs of recent digging, although the rope and windlass and the square box in which the dirt was brought up from below were still there. The moon shone through one of the windows of the shanty, on the floor within, but the light was so dazzling that he could distinguish nothing a few feet away. The door stood partly open; but that might have blown open by the strong wind of the day before, or some one may have broken it open to plunder. There was certainly no one there, for after listening for nearly a quarter of an hour he had yet to hear the slightest sound within. His joy was so great at this apparent discovery, that he could scarcely contain himself. He strode up boldly to the door and looked in, and in the next instant there was a sudden flash and a loud report of a revolver, and Jonathan lay all in a heap in the widow's doorway, shot through the shoulder. In the next instant, a woman in her night clothes dashed out of the door, over his prostrate body, screaming for help at the top of her voice, and rushing over the prairie with the speed of an infuriated demon.

As soon as he could comprehend anything at all, he realized that his neck would stretch for it this time if he was discovered. He located his wound, and felt truly thankful that he had made as narrow an escape as he evidently did, although his arm was useless and pained him severely with the least motion of his body. He realized that flight was necessary immediately, if he valued his life at all. Already the dogs for miles around, it appeared to him, were aroused to their utmost, and it would not be long before the entire community would be on the search for him. There would be no use to explain—that he only came there to ascertain if the house had been abandoned or not. However true it might be, it would not suffice; it did not look reasonable. Highly indignant and excited men would only hoot at this, and hoist him up so much the higher for his impudence in offering such a foolish apology. It would not do to go home, for that would be among the first places they would look for him. It would not do to attempt to escape across the country on foot at that moment, for dozens would be scouring the prairie in all directions on horseback in less than half an hour. His condi-

tion was not only alarming, but pitiful in the extreme. The great drops of cold sweat rolled down his face and stood over his entire body, and he shook as though afflicted with the shaking palsy. How he could escape the inevitable doom now hanging over his head—a doom that would certainly be visited upon him in less time than he dared to think of, if he did not make his escape immediately—he could not fathom. His brain seemed paralyzed; he could not think, but wandered aimlessly around in the dark, hoping something would turn up in his favor. In this manner he stumbled up to within a couple of yards of the well, and then the idea took possession of him that he would stake his only chance upon it. It was so near the scene of his hapless encounter, he reasoned, that they would be likely to overlook it. They would search for him farther on—at his home or on the prairie. The idea that he had concealed himself on the premises would never enter their brains, he thought. It was the best that he could do, anyway, in the time that he would yet have to dispose of himself at all, and come of it what would, it was his only chance.

The box was in the bottom of the well, tilted to one side, and the rope had been left out its full length. He would not have to disturb anything, so there would be no clue to suggest itself in this manner. First seeing that there were no traces of his previous intrusion, he carefully avoided any on this, stepping only where there were tufts of grass, and then grasping the rope with one hand, he let himself down as gently as possible, without a break in the earth anywhere. The box was left precisely in the position it was, and he crept under it, face upward. It was a hazardous fit, but there was no alternative—this or nothing. He lay some minutes in this way, wondering what his fate would be, cursing one moment and praying the next, when he heard the dull, heavy thud of horses' feet, as though afar off. Before long they greatly increased, from all sides, and the noise was like the rumbling of an earthquake, but continuous. Presently he heard voices—a great jargon of voices—but could distinguish nothing that was said. In fact, he was so nearly paralyzed with fear, that it was doubtful whether he was conscious at all. Dogs came sniffing to the well several times, probably in the chase of the scent, but as quickly departed, evidently without giving a clue. Once the light of a lantern flashed down, but only momentarily, and it was gone, also. He lay perfectly still, however, for more than an hour afterward—it seemed ages to him—and then, after listening for some time after, and hearing no sound whatever, he concluded that the time had now come for him to get away from there, and that as quickly as possible, and make the most of the night