



Painted for *Ostrino* by Jas. L. Weston.

A FAIR CHANCE.

## DEER-HUNTING ON SANHEDRIN.

By Minetta Ranges.



**S**ANHEDRIN or Sanhedrin, as the mountain is locally called, is a noble eye-rest for the California traveler, from whichever way he approaches its wilderness of peaks and pines. History does not tell us who gave to this interesting landmark its musical Jewish name, but it was my good fortune to run across an old hunter who told how, in the early fifties, one Pierre de Léon, an educated Frenchman, came to live with the Indians hereabout, and how when troubles arose between the several tribes, a council of chiefs took place on this central mountain, and De Léon, who was present, was said to have begun an eloquent speech with the declaration, "We are the Great Sanhedrin of the Nomalackie tribes."

The name thus dramatically introduced into Indian nomenclature, has since clung to the traditions of this vast "council-chamber"—Nature's "Hall of Gazzith"—whose superb appointments of tree colonnade, rock sculpture, cloud-picturing fountains, a rich mosaic of flora for pavement, and the whole burnished heavens for roof, fit it more for the meeting place of gods than for white hunters or Diggers in war-paint.

Viewed from the Russian River valley, Sanhedrin runs its ten miles of noduled ridge against the northern blue, its height hardly less than the snow-scarred cones of Mount Hull, St. John, and Snow Mountain. This group of Coast Range summits forms the upper apex of a rugged spur whose trend is from northeast to southwest, the whole including what is known to the few as the best deer-preserve in California.

When, therefore, Sam Paxton and Doctor George wrote to us to join them in their regular summer's hunt on Sanhedrin, the invitation was gladly accepted.

There were five of us in the party, with hunting equipments, saddles, blankets,

and "grub-box," all snugly packed in a stout spring wagon and cart. Pedro, the Doctor's deer-clog, shared the back-seat with the Commodore. Not one of us, unless it be Pedro, is likely to forget that morning's drive out the orchard lane and on up the long, shining valley with its dimplement of river blue, the wind sweet and cool in our faces, a broad sunrise brilliance on the mountains, and all the shaggy wild-wood of the foot-hills gathering to us. Sixteen miles on up stream, and we trace the Russian River to its head in Potter Valley, where modest farm-homes peep at the passers-by through loops of hop-vines and windows framed in apple-boughs.

Beyond the peaceful valley the road turns leftward to let us squeeze between the steeped bowlders that overlook Coal Creek. Thence on we zigzag across broken uplands, down whose gardened cañons the snow treasures of Sanhedrin come cascading to the south fork of the Eel River.

At this season the Eel River has a summer flow measuring no greater depth than reached our wagon-bed. But winter shows a different phase—a foaming torrent impossible to ford; and the occasional pilgrim to Sanhedrin solitudes must submit to be swung across, from bank to bank, in a basket hanging from a cable.

In climbing out of Day's Vale, our interest in the landscape grew apace; we were beginning the ascent of Sanhedrin. The forest became denser—not massed in solid shades, but grouped in beautiful open groves, the dark plumes of conifers in lovely contrast to the foliage of oak and madroño and the pale green of hazel.

High and still higher we mount, every foot of the ascent bringing fresh wonderment at the vastness and grandeur of the mountain world about us. The colossal gap between us and Mount Hull and Iron Mountain is the roadway of Eel River, its lofty walls smoothed out of jagged feature by sweeps of forest and chemical, the whole as wild as if newly created. At times we catch the glint of water from depths of gorge. We lunch by a bowlder-choked stream,

and eat the thimble-berries on its banks for dessert. After an hour's rest we are again on the road.

This glorious wilderness is a choice feeding-ground for deer. The broad forests on the east and south of Sanhedrin are, as yet, practically inaccessible to lumber traffic, and no pick of miner has defaced the comfortably-cushioned rocks. Even stock-raising is at a disadvantage, as the snow lies so late on these alpine highlands that only migratory flocks and herds come up from the valleys to graze in the short warm season.

The deer's favorite browse is chemical—"chemise brush" it is commonly called; the name is supposed to be of Indian origin. Whole mountain fronts grow this thorny, dull-colored shrub, and, shortly after the uninviting pasture has been swept by fire, deer greedily feed upon the sprouting twigs. These high woodlands also furnish unlimited supplies of other browse—leaves, buds, shoots, moss-fiber, acorns—any of which deer prefer to the sweetest of young grass. When winter sets in, small bands, led by masterful old bucks, work their way gradually down to warmer altitudes, keeping as much as possible to sheltered passes.

Each steep we gained—hunters assert there are twelve distinct summit-ridges to Sanhedrin—was housed and dreaming under living towers of cedar and pine. I have never seen mightier specimens of these trees in the Sierra or northern Coast Range than are marshaled here in stalwart clans four thousand feet above sea-level.

We wound up the south slope of the mountain, through mile above mile of primeval forest. The sun darted javelins through the dim vault of the trees, the young oaks clapped their leaves joyously, there was a spiced coolness in the air, and the vigorous splash of Cedar Creek made tumult in the ravine that walled in the road. A sign-board was nailed to an obtrusive fir, and the Commodore hailed us to "heave to till he made out the colors."

Our "sailor man" spelt out the straggling letters of "Bachelor's Camp," and the horses were turned off the road, when they crashed uphill through a tangle of berried shrubbery. A few rods of this, and the great pines stood aside to make room on a sunny glade

for sapling oaks. Sam and Burk were already here and unloading the cart. There were two hours yet of sun, and we all turned to at the jolly work of regulating camp.

Nature seemed to have done the planning for us, and with a felicitous regard for the relations of beauty and utility. You saw at once which niche she intended for the dining-room, the sun-proof boughs of a fir for ceiling, and walls of interlocked alder and pepperwood. A kitchen square alongside had an indoor water supply to delight the heart of the most exacting housekeeper. While Sam energetically proportioned off the stream into "spring-house," sink and cellar, the Doctor was intent upon building the kitchen-range, his hands fitting the rocks and clay-mortar with the nicety of a stone-mason. In the meantime the Commodore constructed table, benches and stools, the boards having been brought from a little mill a mile up the divide. Burk and I busied ourselves at various odd jobs, and finally settled to cutting fir-boughs for beds.

When it came to getting supper, Sam naturally fell into place as head cook, his experience in the army and in many a summer's hunt since, making him exceptionally expert in outdoor cooking. Add to this a painstaking knowledge of woodcraft and deer-lore, with unflinching good humor and helpfulness, and Sam's virtues as a comrade may be readily understood.

While we lingered over supper, a young man with two hunting-dogs rode up and handed us a can of fresh milk. There were general "how d'y' dos" and hand-shakings, followed by the eager question:

"Seen any deer lately, Jimmie?"

The answer was not so encouraging as we expected:

"There was plenty awhile back, but last week a couple o' 'Frisco hunters was all up an' down here an' Panther Canon, a-shootin' every digger-squirrel an' chipmunk they see, so of course scared off a lot o' deer."

Jimmie could not wait just then to further advise us; he said he "guessed he'd better git a move on, as them girls was alone at the cabin"—meaning his wife and sister—but he promised to guide us to the best hunting on the mountain.

After the exertion of the day, we

were tired and sleepy, and made little ceremony of hurrying to bed. Our tent was spread in the upper chamber of the grove, and in all the magnificent castle of out-of-doors there was never a more inviting or convenient apartment. Two giants' a Pine and a fir, upheld the stately arch of doorway through which we looked down upon the "lower story," our eyes fascinated by the weird night-effect of the scene. The smoldering fire lit fitfully the cavernous dark of the kitchen, where Sam's gaunt form moved to and fro, setting things to rights. Outside the dim circle made by the light, the black trunks of the trees stood like a stockade, and beyond them the immeasurable gloom of the forest.

One novelty in our tent was a miniature well, a foot or two wide and of equal depth—a break in the crust of earth above an underground stream. We had our bed directly over this stream, and from my pillow I could dip my cup into the fern-fringed bowl. I lay back in an ecstasy of privacy and rest, my limbs acquainting themselves by slow degrees with the yielding, fragrant mattress, and my senses deliciously lulled to sleep by the tinkle of the running brook.

The next day we spent in overhauling traps and straightening up camp, lazying off a bit now and then in the irresponsible way that is half the charm of out-door living. Near sunset Sam shouldered his rifle, and with Pedro at his heels, sallied forth to satisfy himself of the whereabouts of deer, for we planned an early hunt in the morning.

In Northern California, and more particularly Mendocino, the chase is usually carried on with trained hounds, some of which cost their masters no inconsiderable sum. A sheepman will give one hundred dollars for a good "varmint dog," and often numbers six to a dozen in his pack.

A shepherd-dog is generally considered the best for deer, though a cross with a foxhound and a bloodhound will often produce a mongrel superior to either parent for deer-hunting. "A dog can have too good a nose," as Sam expressed it; that is, a pure bloodhound will cause delay and trouble by sticking too long to a trail.

There are two varieties of black-tail deer—*Cariacus columbianus*—found

to-day on Sanhedrin: the forked-horn Pacific or Coast deer, and the "sprangled"-horn, the latter by far the more numerous.

When Sam sauntered into camp an hour or two later, our neighbor was making his nightly call with the milk. Sam asked him "Which way had we better go in the morning?"

There was a momentary scratching of the dark, curly pate.

"Well, I reckon we jump more deer down on the river, an' that's your best chance. Last time me an' my wife was there, she says, 'There lays a deer!' An' sure 'nough there was a big 'sprangled'-horn buck, an' 'long side o' him a yearling. I had only Dad's old Winchester, but I let fly an' jest shaved the old feller's rump, an' he lit downhill fifty feet at a jump, an' I lost him. Cap and Spot [his two dogs] headed off the little spike till I got in a shot an' killed him. It had something cur'ous 'bout it; its horns was hard with the velvet on. I never see one that-a-way before."

It was agreed that the four of us should call for Jimmie as soon after daybreak as possible, Burk promising to stay and keep camp. Accordingly, at four in the morning, I was jarred awake by something like a bomb exploding close to my ear. It was Sam, whooping outside the tent. The Commodore snorted, sleepily, "Ay, ay, sir!" and then floundered back to bed, and drew the blankets over his bald head. This would never do. I lit a candle, and stuck it with melted tallow to a box, then felt for his neck-band, and shook him till his eyes stood out, and he bawled lustily, "Belay that!" After this effectual "eye-opener" we both hurried into our clothes and joined the others in the firelight.

A hasty breakfast was eaten, while Pedro stood about, his eyes and tail eloquently mindful of what was in prospect. When we took the guns from their cases and made a start for the horses, the intelligent brute trotted from one to the other of us in an exuberance of understanding; he was as sure of the hunt as if he already scented the game.

The morning broke with perfect weather, the wide blue of the sky propped by ponderous peaks' the risen sun a glory on the world, a breeze

waking to music the vibrant pines, and every falling stream a tuneful undertone to infinite harmonies. It was not so early but a digger-squirrel scurried over the dry leaves and cones in ostentatious search for his breakfast of pine-nuts. The bark of this plebeian of the *Sciuride* is so evidently an impertinence, that one is provoked to silence it even at the risk of putting to flight nobler game.

We rode single file down the mountain. When we reached Jimmie's cabin, the family was eating out-of-doors, the dogs nosing about the legs of the table.

The delay at the cabin was a short one, as Jimmie's horse was saddled, and soon he was in advance, piloting us over a south exposure of wild mountain-side to the Eel River canon. We spoke under our breath, as deer are keen to detect the human voice, but are often indifferent to sounds made by cattle and horses. In this rough-country hunting a horse is used as much as possible to lessen the labor of the chase. Sam's Billy seemed to enter quite as intelligently into the sport as his master, who related instances where he loaded one or two deer on him and then sent him alone back to his partner in camp, while he—Sam—continued the running down of a wounded buck.

When well over an intervening ridge bristling with chemisal, Jimmie called the dogs after him and struck out alone down the river to make the drive with the wind. A deer's sense of smell is so acute that the greatest caution is necessary to keep to leeward, until he is brought by the hounds within range.

For some silent minutes the rest of us walked our horses on an obscure trail midway up the slope, where we overlook a sweep of upper and lower hillsides and ravines. On crossing a verdant dip where springs gush, we see sharp-toed hoof-prints, and judge that five deer at least have been here to drink within an hour. Thence on, our excitement and eagerness augment with every step, and our eyes rest searchingly upon each object that bears a likeness to the game.

Suddenly the hounds give tongue—a portentous outburst which the mountaineers catch and give back in a thousand stirring echoes. With bounding pulses we urge our horses toward a group of oaks. Sam hears Pedro's prolonged, mournful bay in the lead, and cries exultingly:

"He's jumped a deer! Just hear the music. Now for luck, boys."

They are grand—those urgent, death-thirsting yells, which make cataracts of our blood! Flinging ourselves out of stirrups into the shade, we tie up quickly; then with rifles held so as to clear the chemise brush, we stumble heedfully over the lip of the scarp. Sam is on ahead, and as Pedro's trumpet challenge grows nearer and more furious, keeps calling to us in an extravagance of relish, "Listen to that music! *Isn't* it beautiful?"

We are all equally enthusiastic, but the Commodore seems at a loss to understand. He glows with sympathy, but is evidently confused. His eyes wander from point to point in a puzzled way, and when Sam again exclaims, "Just hear that chorus, boys! Great guns, but that's the music for me!" he bursts forth:

"Music? I don't hear any music! If those dogs would keep still, I might."

It was said in all simplicity, but Sam looked such daggers of disgust that I hastened to interpose by asking where each of us was to be stationed.

Sam's ardor had received a heavy shock, and his answer is cold and straight to business:

"You and the Commodore stay where you are. Doc, you had better get up on that big rock below, and I'll go still farther down to those trees."

Sam is a general at a deer-drive, and we obeyed without question. From our several vantage grounds within halloing distance of each other, we commanded the mouths of three small ravines which opened into the main defile of the river. A deer is not apt to run across a cañon, but up or down it; and, judging from the direction the dogs were heading, it was certain the Commodore and I would get the first shot.

A few minutes' breathless waiting, and then a mad plunge through brush, and the bump-bump of bounding hoofs, a startling glimpse of flying horns and dun hide, and the clamorous hounds break cover within a hundred yards of us. Bang! my bullet overflies the mark by a good foot—a common mistake in downhill shooting; and the Commodore, who had never before seen a wild deer, stares open-mouthed and forgets he has a gun. Crack again! A curl of blue smoke below us, and the Doctor gets

off his pedestal with more haste than dignity, and running across a strip of open ground, disappears behind a parapet of rocks.

We made the precipitous descent at breakneck speed, coming upon the scene just as the Doctor was imperturbably shifting the position of a big buck so as to turn the head downhill, that the blood might better run from the gaping wound in the throat. The dogs, panting but elated, crowded around us, and Sam coming leisurely up, the bullet-hole was pointed out to him.

"Phew! Spine cut in two as clean as a whistle. Doc ain't much of a hunter, but fetch along your deer and he's the best running-shot in the country."

The Doctor's jolly laugh set the woods agog, and a blue jay, perched on the polished red of a madroño bough, squalled vociferously in company. We all voted the buck a noble prize; fat, glossy of rump, and with an imposing frontlet of soft horn wrapped in beautiful mouse-gray velvet.

The next thing in order was the pouching of the deer for packing. The skin was split down the back of the front legs from knee to dew-claw, the knees then unjointed, and the limp ends crossed diagonally and used as toggles through the slit gambrels of the hind legs. By this ingenious manipulation the hunter adjusts the carcass to his shoulders as he would a knapsack, and is thus enabled to carry the weight with the least possible friction and fatigue.

After an exhausting scale of the hot cañon wall, each of us taking turns at packing the deer, we emerged from the jungle of chemisal to the sheltering oaks, where Jimmie was waiting with the horses. The sun being now high, we were of one mind to return to camp to

refresh and cool off. All were as hungry as cannibals, so it was a great relief to find that Burk had the dinner well under way when we got there, and Sam had only to put the finishing touches by doing to a turn some venison steaks. His practiced fingers delicately disposed the floured pieces in the smoking grease, and the appetizing odors that arose made my mouth water. Burk pattered about the wood-pile, and the Doctor in brown "Mother Hubbard" overalls, a flowered calico neckerchief knotted loosely around his neck, a towel slung over one arm, and a long steel fork held ready for use—cut a comical figure as second cook.

"Deer liver" declared Sam, "ain't really meat, but hunter's bread. I've cut it just like a loaf and spread butter on. If cooked right, you can't eat enough of it to hurt you."

That night, for a late supper, we had deer meat in another form—a "digger roast," as the boys called it. A saddle of venison, sprinkled with salt, was rolled in greased brown paper, and dipped in water.

The logs of the fire were then pushed back, a hole dug in the hot ashes, the roast fitted in and covered with live coals. During the hour it was to remain we sprawled before the blazing pitch-pine, a forest of firewood to our hand, and the whole night—the all-contenting, star-hung night—before us.

When the dusk was deepening, Jimmie's wife came along with our nightly supply of milk. She laughed at our fears to let her return alone through the woods, and after a grateful "good night," both horse and rider were swallowed up in the black of the forest. The Doctor looked after her, with uneasiness:

"It doesn't seem just right to let her go alone!"



AN EXHAUSTING SCALE.

As if in answer to the kindly thought a ringing note of song reached our ears, the words indistinguishable, but the air wild and musical. It was repeated again and again, each time sounding fainter and sweeter through the hushed pines.

"She is nearly home," said the Doctor, as he gave a relieved poke to the fire.

Shortly after we had a picturesque intruder—an old hunter, called "Dad." He was well known to the boys, who made him heartily welcome. Dad had on the conventional overalls, a gray flannel shirt, minus a button at the neck, and a faded vest, with a whole row of buttons off. His old felt hat might have been the original, so battered and full of holes was it. He seated himself upon one end of the long bench, and the Commodore sat cross-legged on the other, both doing their best to balance their seat on the hummocky floor. Then we drew our visitor on to a graphic recital of how he killed the biggest panther ever seen on Sanhedrin—a ferocious beast that measured over nine feet from tip to tip and weighed two hundred pounds.

In his excitement Dad rose to better slap his thighs, the bench gave a vicious tilt, and behold, the Commodore's legs beating a wild tattoo in the air as he keeled completely over!

For four consecutive mornings we rode to various hunting-grounds, all within five miles of camp, and only once came back without bigger game than quail and grouse—the latter a splendid game-bird, slaty-blue in color and as large as a domestic hen. We kept to "station-hunting," there being less work about it, and more certainty of success. The biggest kill we had was the morning the Doctor shot three deer, all before they could run a hundred feet. That day the camp was overstocked with venison—four deer strung up to the same stout limb. We made a handsome divide of spoils with Jimmie and the men at the mill, and as a team happened to be going through to Ukiah, sent a choice hind quarter to a friend there.

I had my first luck over beyond Windy Flat, with the Doctor and Pedro to make the drive. On making the ascent of a pine-tipped steep, we came upon a couple of deer-beds—two oval depressions, each about three feet long. The soil and leaves inside were worked up fine and pressed down by plump

bodies, and the signs of recent occupancy so fresh that we half believed the beds were yet warm. Pedro scented the trail, and his tail went up.

We agreed to work down the south fork of a cañon, which spread its arms at our feet. The long hollows and hill-sides were skirted with copses that deer love to haunt, and boulders, moss-spotted and whiskered, were tumbled on the sunny patches between. Sam stationed himself on a fuzzy shelf across the stream, and stood erect, gun in hand, as fine a figure of a mountain hunter as one cares to see. The Commodore stood his ground directly opposite, where he fidgeted and perspired like a man hard beset. As a sportsman he was from first to last a self-confident failure, but not once did he lose pluck and energy.

From my position midway I faced a romantic glen whose summer foliage was all alight and murmurous. Anon was the rap-tap-tap of that little carpenter, the woodpecker, or the cheerful clatter of quail in the hazel brush, but altogether it was tedious waiting. At last Pedro opened—a faint bellow, but fast growing louder and fiercer. I knew the honest fellow was talking deer, for he never gave a false alarm, and so my fingers played nervously with the trigger.

Then came the sharp report of Sam's rifle. I thought, "There goes my chance," when crash! thump! an antlered head broke from behind a rock not a hundred yards off, and with no consciousness of taking aim I blazed away. I saw that I had winded him, for he stumbled and turned from sight downhill, by which I judged him hard hit; for a deer severely wounded is sure to drag himself gulchward.

I ran to see, and Pedro, leaping the runnel below, I signed him to the spot. He bounded ahead, and, when I came up, was having a spirited bout with a six-pointer, the buck half lying, but making desperate resistance with his sharp horns and hoofs. The knife ended it, Pedro muttering savagely meanwhile.

Sam, too, was not to be outdone that morning. He had brought down a two-pointer; so we considered ourselves well repaid for a long forenoon out.

To Sam is due the credit of shooting the one Pacific forked-horn seen by us on

the trip. The fifth morning he went off on a still-hunt to Summit Lake—a pond or deer-lick seven miles from our camp, on Cedar Creek. He returned by the middle of the afternoon, and the buck he had slung across Billie was altogether the largest we had yet come upon, and its horns the handsomest. We drew closer to demand particulars.

"I guess it was just a 'happenstance,'" Sam said, with an adroit wink and thrust of his tongue. "Generally a man don't wait to see a deer, but just shoots at what might be a part of one—a patch of brown or gray, the bush above a pair of slim sticks that look like legs, or somewhere below two tips of ears or a bit of horn that the sun strikes. One time a bowlder I'd been watching, up and jumped twenty feet in the air, an' plunged downhill like an avalanche; so there's something in knowing a deer when you see it. But this time I had a whole broadside to aim at, an' I tell you—it was a picture—smooth an' fat, head up and horns branching, ears flaring an' the shiniest eyes staring straight ahead. I wished I could see him in the short blue—then a buck's the prettiest animal in the world. I knew he couldn't scent me, so I lay low a spell to watch him. Well, it wa'n't long before he concluded he hadn't heard anything, so he up with his hind hoof an' scratched his ear, an' then fell to browsing. Have you ever noticed how a deer can't keep still a second? He kept shaking, stamping an' wiggling his tail, always fighting the fleas and buck-flies. I didn't dare wait too long, so I drew a bead an' took him back of the shoulder."

We helped string up the buck, and then all hands napped in the shade for a couple of hours. When I roused up, there was Sam methodically at work on his deer—cutting off the head, separating the horns from the skull, and skinning the carcass—lamenting, meanwhile, that he had not done the last while the animal was yet warm.

"Comes a sight easier," he said, and then showed me what I persistently try to forget is there—the nest of maggots always secreted in the cavity just below the eyes in a deer.

"Ugh! that's worse than a ship's biscuit," the Commodore exclaimed.

Despite eternal vigilance on the part of a deer, a fly gets up its nostrils and lays eggs, with the result related.

When Sam had made a neat job of the dressing, he proceeded to sack the deer—"put on its nightgown," as the Doctor had it. He first whittled out a peg, and punched a hole in the bottom of a burlap sack. Then drawing the string that held the deer up through the hole, he passed the end around the limb of a oak, pulled on the cord, and swung the venison out of reach of the "varmints."

"You see," he explained with complacency, "by punching the hole instead of cutting it, the mesh closes tight around the string and keeps out the flies."

Sam was a master at handy tricks. But the sack did not reach more than half-way down, so he drew another sack over the exposed parts that it overlapped the first, and then secured it by baling rope about the middle.

The day came all too soon for the Commodore and me to leave Bachelor's Camp, the rest of the party having decided to stay yet a week longer. By getting an early start, we would reach the nearest stage-line in time to catch the down coach for Ukiah, and thence finish our journey by rail—one hundred and fifty miles from Sanhedrin to San Francisco in one day.

On our last night a crescent moon rocked in the gap between two fir-pinnacled domes. A subdued radiance stole abroad, and the profound stillness of the mountains was better than music to soothe one. We wandered happily under the sugar-pines, above whose swinging tops the stars flashed through thin, voyaging clouds. Such armfuls of scented cones as we carried to camp for that last night's burning! They were the largest I ever saw, measuring all the way from fifteen to eighteen inches in length, and when piled artistically, made the prettiest, crackliest camp-fire imaginable.

We were up at three in the morning, and by four o'clock had breakfasted and harnessed the horses. The Doctor was elected to drive us down Sanhedrin—a risky undertaking, for as yet no streak of dawn pierced the thick forest on Cedar Creek. Sam and Burk did their best to give us a cheerful send-off. They built a pyramid of gummy cones at the head of the road, and put a match to it when we were ready to start. The Doctor mounted to the front seat, took up the reins and whip, and set one foot on



the brake; and while Pedro howled and tugged at his chain, I climbed up beside his master.

At the final moment Sam seized the handles of two blazing cones, the Commodore snatched a couple more, and in the general illumination the procession began a reckless dash, down grade, Sam's spectral figure running on foot in the lead, his torch held high, the Commodore prancing after and brandishing his flaming cones till the fiery smoke and sparks trailed back like the tail of a comet. It was wildly fantastic and exhilarating—the illusory figures of the two men, the weird lighting of the road, which looked like a tunnel through the pits of blackness upon either hand, the dumb challenge of highwaymen boles as they stepped forth and retreated with startling abruptness—our wheels grazing the unflinching granite on one side and the brow of a frightful abyss on the other, and overhead the pale stars slipping from sight one by one.

At times a dead pine, preternaturally tall and white, menaced us with fixed, ghostly arms; or a prostrate, disjointed fir reared its hydra-headed roots, like a dragon threatening us as we tipped crazily toward its ambush. When Sam's torch gave a dying flicker, he tossed it over the cliff and threw up his arm with a shout of farewell. The horses plunged ahead, and I looked dizzily back; nothing could be seen of our friend, only a

second's glimmer of the yet burning torch—a star flung into infinitude.

We stepped for the Commodore to get in. He had carried our beacon bravely until both hands were blackened and scorched with burnt pitch. The Doctor cracked his whip at the off horse. It did not seem possible for mortal eyes to be sharp enough to keep the restive brutes in that ribbon of road. I made myself as small as I could, for our driver appeared to need all the seat. His heavy body, with the elbows held well out, balanced from right to left, the shoulders bent a trifle forward, his hat pushed back and eyes bulging with their intent lookout. With gasp and unfinished sentence, I clung to the farther end of the seat, the Doctor gently but firmly insisting that he must have "elbow-room."

It was like trying to keep to one place in a cyclone. We lurched from right to left, spinning around sharp angles, plunging into gutters, lunging ahead up rocky steeps, always a desperate dodging of shadowy trees which set themselves determinedly in our way, and then a final lightning race down a precipice, with a dismembering "fetch-up" at the bottom. We timed ourselves from "Oat Gap" to the foot of the mountain—a long four miles—and found we had made it in fifteen minutes. It was the most superb feat in mountain-driving I ever witnessed.

