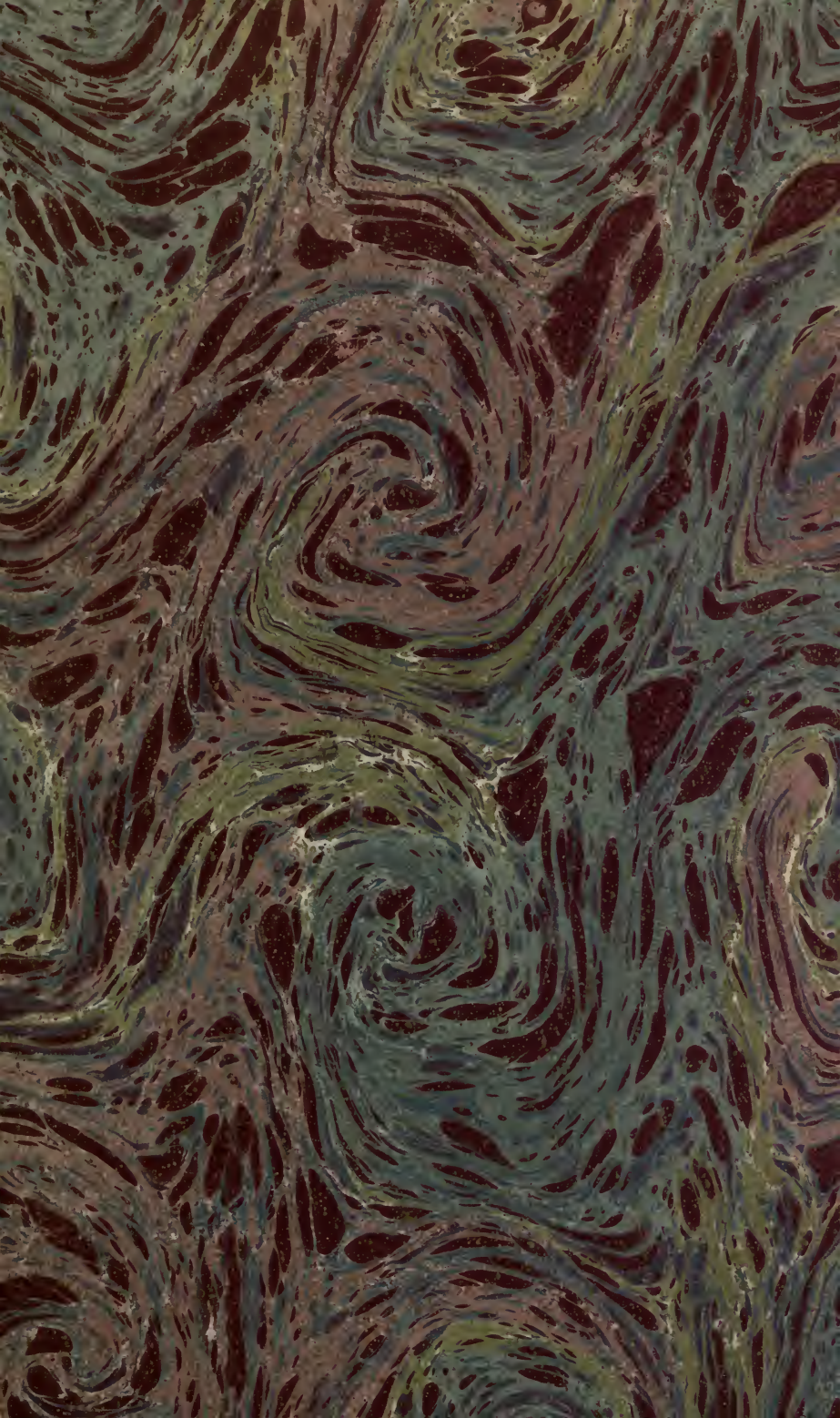


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AMELIA SHERWOOD:
OR,
BLOODY SCENES
AT THE
CALIFORNIA GOLD MINES!



[Amelia attired for the Expedition across the Sierra Nevada.—See p. 30.]

WITH
A NARRATIVE OF THE TRAGIC INCIDENTS ON
A Voyage to San Francisco.

RICHMOND:
PUBLISHED BY BARCLAY & CO.,
1850.

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No. 212.



The Pirates Boarding the Hindoo, after the blowing up of their own ship.—See p. 23



Desperate conflict and capture of the Hindoo by the crew of the Cruiser.—See p. 22.



Fatal Encounter between the Texan Trapper and an English Marine.—See p. 25.



ralleled Heroism of Amelia—she rushes between the combatants in their quarrel about the Gold.—See p. 26.

AMELIA SHERWOOD:
OR,
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CW Kenworthy

AMELIA'S GOLD MINE
BLOODY CONFLICT
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Tragic Scenes.

CHAPTER I.

THE SHERWOOD FAMILY—A SEPARATION—A CATASTROPHE.

A QUARTER of a mile off the post-road to Saratoga, and scarcely halfway up the hill which overlooks the town of C——, in Washington county, New York, the attention of the traveler is attracted to a handsome two-story frame house, indicating from its surrounding conveniences the residence of one well to do in the world. It is the homestead of William Sherwood, owner of the grist-mill in the hollow, the merry click-clack of which tells of its proximity, as the stage rumbles along on its daily errand. Of the Sherwood family there were only the father, two sons, and one daughter alive.

Amelia was the name of the only daughter. Her mother died when she had just turned her seventh year, before which Mrs. Sherwood had improved her mind by instilling into the heart of her daughter such instruction as would qualify her for the duties which she thought would at some future day devolve upon her. It is well that we cannot penetrate the future, and read in chapters of the time to come what shall befall us. Had the Sherwoods known to what trials and sufferings their beloved daughter was to be subjected, they had perhaps been tempted to question the dealings of Providence—although, to a mind gifted with more searching inquiry, the link between cause and effect would have readily been discovered. However, under the tuition of such a

father as Mr. Sherwood, the sons were deeply imbued with generous and manly sentiments, and their sister was esteemed by them as a priceless jewel. But all this had a sinister influence on the object of their affection: for, though well-educated, the controlling and directing influence of her mother being removed, she gradually came to look on a respect equal to that fraternally bestowed as due to her by every one else; and so covert was the development of this feeling, that ere she herself was well aware of its presence, it had already fixed itself deep in her bosom. In course of time, this produced its appropriate fruits—not the least injurious of which was, an impetuous self-will and waywardness, at all times unbecoming, especially in a female.

These traits were first brought to the direct knowledge of the family in connection with Frank Richards, the son of the inn-keeper at —, between whom and Amelia a close intimacy had existed for several months previous. Frank was of an ardent temperament, but withal lacked perseverance enough to surmount the difficulties and obstacles that might naturally be expected to present themselves. And then his father was in comfortable circumstances, and did not exert that authority over him in his early years which doubtless would have been of so much advantage to him in after-life. The friendship mutually entertained by Amelia and Frank, was therefore displeasing to Mr. Sherwood and his sons. They attempted to persuade, to reason; and when these means failed to accomplish the desired end, restraint was attempted, but with no happier success; for now Amelia insisted on being released from their entreaties, as her mind was made up on the subject.

Matters continued thus for a while, until at length Frank's father had resolved to send him to New Orleans, to enter on a situation as book-keeper to a mercantile firm, with a prospect of being soon placed in a position to commence on his own account. This was readily enough acceded to by Frank, especially as by the change he should again enjoy the company of a young relative who had gone there some time before. There was but one drawback; and that was, he would thus be obliged to leave his Amelia. She, however, saw no difficulty in the matter; her father would, no doubt, be pleased to hear of the proposal to send

him to a distance; but if Frank consented to go to New Orleans, she would soon follow him. This assurance on her part reconciled him to the proposal. A week or two elapsed, and after pledging eternal fidelity to each other, they separated for a time. Previous to his departure, Frank introduced an intimate friend and confidant of his to Amelia, and arranged that he would write to her under cover to his friend.

Peter Mossman was three years the senior of Frank, was engaging and affable in his manners and conversation, and from having been two or three trips to Havana with his uncle, who owned a brig hailing from New York, he could render himself agreeable by introducing his experience of most matters within the scope of ordinary conversation. Frank had over-estimated the friendship of his companion, who very soon schemed to supplant him in the affections of Miss Sherwood—while under the pretence of friendship, Mossman used every endeavor to set himself in the most favorable light with Amelia. This was no easy task, for she truly loved young Richards, and was confident that she was sincerely loved in return.

We cannot afford space to detail all that occurred between Amelia and Frank, as represented, or rather *misrepresented* by Mossman. Amelia would not listen to doubts or cautious insinuations about the constancy of her lover; neither did she perceive the motive that prompted the deceit. If coldness was made apparent, she accounted for it by hurry of business; or if neglect was made to appear, she set it down as done to try her constancy. Matters continued in this condition for some time longer, and the only effect produced was a very visible change observed in the appearance of his daughter, by Mr. Sherwood and his sons. They attempted to ascertain the cause, but every trial served only to show that as great a change had come over the character as over the countenance of the young house-keeper. Occasionally she would rally and assume her wonted tranquil temperament—anon she was peevish, petulant, and even bold to her father, and haughty to her brothers. None could account for the sad revolution, and after many unsuccessful efforts to ascertain the cause, the attempt was relinquished in despair.

But an incident occurred which was more unaccountable still.

One beautiful moonlight evening after tea, she attired herself for the purpose of paying a visit to a friend who resided a short distance off. The clock struck ten, eleven, twelve, and she returned not.

* * * * *

CHAPTER II.

OFF FOR CALIFORNIA—PERFIDY OF MOSSMAN—A DENOUEMENT.

The ship Hindoo, for California, having cleared at the Custom-house the previous day, was seen majestically passing through the Narrows, in tow of a steamer, on the 6th August, 1847. She had not many passengers on board—a few in the saloon, and a young gentleman and his sister in the cabin. The lady had been indisposed for some time previous to her going on board, and had kept below. Such attendance as could be given her was rendered by the young gentleman, and the second day she was able to come on deck, leaning on his arm. On the succeeding day she was able to endure a little exercise by walking; and once while crossing the deck to look over the poop to the lower deck, her eyes caught the words “San Francisco!” marked in large characters on a tarpaulin, which some of the forward hands were preparing to stow away in the sail bunk. She started—gazed again—and then turned a piercing scrutiny on Mossman—for it was he. He understood what she meant, and requested she would return with him to the cabin, where he would explain all. The instant they had reached the saloon, Amelia spasmodically grasping Mossman’s arm, demanded information of the vessel’s destination, assuring him that if to any other port than New Orleans—and she strongly suspected she was on board a ship for California—she would forthwith inform the Captain of her position, and place herself at once under his protection. Her countenance bespoke the most indignant feelings; her eyes, always piercing, flashed with redoubled intensity—and her whole mien indicated that nothing short of a thorough scrutiny of his inmost thoughts would

satisfy her. Mossman quailed for a moment, but promptly regaining his self-possession, he attempted to account for his conduct by asserting that, from letters he had received from New Orleans, Frank Richards had been unfaithful, and was about to be united to the daughter of a wealthy planter in Louisiana. He told Amelia he was well aware of her devoted attachment to Frank, and that, if he had ventured to tell her the truth at the first, she would not have believed him—and cherishing an ardent affection for her himself, he believed, he said, that by inducing her ostensibly to leave her father's home, and go under his protection to find her lover in New Orleans, was the most prudent scheme he could adopt to prevent her from suffering that agony she otherwise would on learning Frank's inconstancy. He acknowledged that the letter, on the faith of which she had so precipitately acted was a forgery, to induce her to take the step he so ardently desired; and that her indisposition during the journey to the City of New York, enabled him the more readily to carry out the latter part of his scheme—to take her with him to San Francisco, and there to induce her, by his devoted attachment, to become his wife. “And,” he added, “I have long attempted to subdue the love that burned in my bosom for you, but without success; and had no very sanguine hope of finding an opportunity for unburthening my soul to you, until, on receipt of the letter from a friend in New Orleans, whom I had requested to exercise a little surveillance over Frank, in which he wrote me suggesting the fabrication of the report of the transfer of his affections to another. Oh, then, dearest Amelia, forgive this duplicity, and deign to look with benignancy on one whose life shall henceforth be devoted to thy service, and whose every aim shall be to deserve the confidence you may repose in him.”

During this explanation, which was by no means satisfactory to Amelia, she stood silent and motionless. And when Mossman paused, the rose-tints fled from her cheeks, her lips quivered, and she cast her eyes to the deck. She speedily regained her wonted composure; and after the lapse of some seconds—during which Mossman was silent, waiting in anxious suspense for the fiat which should seal his happiness or misery—she with a constrained calmness said, “And pray, sir, having voluntarily admitted your

duplicity in reference to *one* letter, how can you expect me to believe that every thing you have communicated derogatory to my dear Frank, is anything else than a base lie?" Mossman instantly inferred from this question, that the chances were turning hard against him. He would have spoken, but Amelia raising her hand motioned him to be silent. She proceeded—"Mr. Mossman, I cannot trust myself to say how I estimate your treacherous conduct. My procedure has been undutiful in hurrying stealthily from the home of my beloved father and brothers—their feelings at my unaccountable disappearance may be more easily imagined than described. Still, that affection which has taken deep root in my bosom—and which I shall cherish for Mr. Richards so long as I live—is, I believe, sufficiently palliating; for had my friends been able to appreciate his excellencies as I did, they should not now have to lament me a renegade, nor I to deplore the necessity of submitting to endure the presence of one who has, by his own admission, forfeited all claims to credence. I have therefore only to say, that I shall forthwith put myself under the care of the Master of the ship, and hope to be favored with your company as seldom as possible." Before Mossman had time to utter a syllable, Amelia stepped past him, and hurrying on deck, proceeded in quest of the Captain.

Captain C—was as good a seaman as ever commanded a ship, had been several voyages to China and the East Indies, and had taken his vessel not seldom round the stormy Cape of South America. He was a seaman every inch of him—a native of New England too, and, as an Irishman would say, "mighty polite to the ladies." On the present occasion, however, he could not pay immediate attention to the request of Amelia, that he would speak with her for a few minutes; for, as he used to say, "we sailors must be wide awake for all weathers;" and appearances now indicated that the sudden gusts of wind, which were blowing from the south-west, would soon burst out a regular gale, and against which he had to prepare himself. He examined the barometer—gave directions to the man at the wheel—sent some forward-hands aloft to make all snug for a "blow"—told the mate to send him notice if the wind shifted—and then turned to listen to Miss Sherwood.

There was a sadness in her countenance that strikingly contrasted with the frank smile of the Master. "At your service now, Miss Sherwood," said he gaily; and putting her arm within his, escorted her below. In as few words as possible, Amelia made him acquainted with all the particulars of her strange position—made an unreserved disclosure of the circumstances connected with her leaving her father's house, in the expectation that Mossman would accompany her to New Orleans to find Frank Richards; but on ascertaining that she had been deceived, she had concluded, she said, patiently to abide the consequences of her rashness, in putting herself so incautiously in the power of any designing person; but, at the same time, to claim his special protection, during the long voyage on which she had so unwittingly embarked. She suggested that, if opportunity offered, he should give her the chance of returning by some homeward-bound ship, if they should be fortunate enough to fall in with one. Captain C—— listened attentively during the recital, and assured Amelia that he should consider it his duty to devote as much of his attention to her comfort as he possibly could. And especially that, having claimed his protection, she might rely on his seeing that she was in no way subjected to rudeness or annoyance from any one on board. He suggested that she should retire to her berth and rest a little, so that she might not suffer from the excitement into which she had been so suddenly thrown, while in the interim he would confer with Mr. Mossman. And Amelia complied with his advice.

For some time after Miss Sherwood retired, Captain C—— sat musing on the strange recital to which he had just listened. He coned over all the particulars in his mind, and weighed every statement—and found that Amelia's narrative had all the semblance of truth about it—not a single iota conflicting throughout the entire story. The only circumstance that for a moment appeared doubtful, was her setting out to join her lover in such a distant part of the country without the knowledge or consent of her friends; to travel so many hundred miles from "the spot where she was born." But the difficulty was, to ascertain which of the statements he had heard was true! for Mossman had, on engaging his passage, shortly previous to the sailing of the Hin

do, stated to the Captain that his *sister* would accompany him to San Francisco, and mentioned that, having had a severe attack of malignant fever a few months previous, she had not recovered completely from its effects; for she was now moody and dejected, and had latterly given indications of an aberration of mind, which rendered it necessary that she should not be left alone, but be always under the eye of some one who would see that she took no step that would bring her into danger. He had also said that, during the preceding few weeks, she had behaved very rudely to her fathers and brothers; and had even gone so far as, during a period of dejection, to deny the relationship that existed betwixt them. Further, that the present journey was undertaken more with the view of restoring her to health, than of merchandizing—her medical attendant having recommended a sea-voyage as the best means in her case to restore the healthy action of her system.

CHAPTER III.

STORM AT SEA—TRAGIC SCENE—THE HEROINE IN TROUBLE.

Captain C—— was too shrewd a man to overlook the *romantic* impression which this statement made on him at the time; and now that a *denouement* had taken place, he resolved to cross-examine Mr. Mossman. For that purpose, he desired the steward to request Mossman to meet him in his cabin. Before the message had time to be delivered, however, the Captain was called on deck. The first mate reported that there had been various indications of a change of weather since *four* bells—(*six* was now striking)—and now, it seemed as if there would be a lull but for the heavy cloud coming up from windward. The barometer had fallen a little, but had not altered for the last half-hour. While the officer was proceeding with his detached statement of progress, the Captain felt the breeze freshen, and in less than fifteen minutes he ordered the mate to call all hands. By the time they

got into the rigging, the gale was up in its utmost fury, blowing the canvas to rags. Every sail that could be secured was taken in, and the ship put before the wind—then, like a maddened war-horse, she careered onward in wild fury. To add to the horror of the scene, the thunder mingled with the fury of the conflict between the wind and sea, and the lightning flashed out in awful vividness. In the short intervals between the flashes, the vessel was shrouded in Egyptian darkness, the clouds appearing to lock old Ocean in their furious embrace. Amid all this war of elements, Captain C—— stood in the door of the wheel-house watching the steering of the vessel; and, alternately casting his eye to the barometer and the compass, gave out such necessary directions through his speaking-trumpet as were practicable in the wild revel. He was calm and collected; and his fortitude inspired the seamen with courage equal to the emergency. “Mr. Cornhill,” said he to his mate, “how many knots have we made since six bells?” “About fifteen, sir,” was the reply. “At that rate,” rejoined the Captain, “we shall be making twenty miles an hour; and if this gale last long, we shall make Cuba sooner than I have a mind to. Send another man aft here to the wheel—I believe the Hindoo will be in trouble before midnight.” “Aye, aye, sir,” was the answer; and in less than ten seconds the gallant ship was holding her head closer to the wind; but the effort to do this caused her to pitch and roll most fearfully. Still she held on; and though the thunders pealed in deafening volleys, and the lightnings flashed with dazzling brightness, Captain C—— was hopeful she would be able to keep on until the storm slackened. Another half-hour elapsed—and no change had occurred; the storm raged with merciless fury, and seemed resolved to swallow up the devoted vessel, whose creaking timbers forebodingly anticipated her being engulfed in the dreadful gale. By keeping her so much to windward, the vessel was working heavily; and the groaning of her timbers, clanking of chains, and crashing of booms, the lashings of which had slackened, created a gloomy *prestige* of approaching destruction. At this juncture, one of the rudder-chains snapped, and the vessel, yawing from her course, lurched into the trough of the sea; the waves making a complete breach over her. “Ship the tiller,” shouted the Cap-

tain, who saw in an instant what had happened. "Look out, fore and aft!" he next vociferated, but before the accustomed "Aye, aye, sir!" was responded, the tri-sail boom came down with a tremendous crash, shattered the binnacle, and broke clear through the deck into the cabin, carrying destruction in its course. A piercing cry, followed by a hollow moan, was heard; and then all else was forgotten but the clearing of the wreck. In as short a space as could be expected, matters were got into ship-shape; and again the Hindoo "walked the waters," not merely "like a thing of life," but, Ajax-like, in the aspect of proud defiance of the elements. Attention had now to be given to matters in the cabin. The scene here was one of inextricable confusion—broken timbers, shattered tables, sofas, and other furniture, were huddled into one mass against the door of the ladies' cabin; and right below the place where the disaster occurred, under the extremity of the heavy boom that had committed the havoc, lay Mossman in the arms of death. The unfortunate man was supposed to have been reclining on the sofa, and, at the time the ship got out from the control of the rudder, and reeled from her course, that the cabin furniture had suddenly shifted, bringing him beneath the place at the instant the disaster happened, in consequence of which he met a violent death. The shattered mass was speedily cleared away, and an entrance effected to the inner cabin—where Amelia was found in a swoon on the floor, with a gash in one of her temples, from coming in contact, no doubt, with some part of the furniture. She was removed and laid in a berth; her head was bathed with Bay-water, and Riga balsam applied to the wound. She began slowly to recover, and the Captain left the cabin, other matters requiring his instant attention. He again hurried on deck, but was gratified to find the gale had considerably lulled; and, moreover, a change in the barometer induced him to anticipate its speedy cessation. Nor was he disappointed. For the wind shifted shortly after, and before long the storm abated. It was now near midnight, and all hands had spent what of the night had gone in deep anxiety and incessant bodily toil. Still, they were ready for effort, if necessity had existed for it; and, as before, they would have shown the Captain that whatever they did, especially in such emergencies, was "with a

will." Captain C— now called the steward, and told him to go to the saloon, and request the wife of one of the passengers to render assistance to Miss Sherwood. There were two female passengers there—a mother and her daughter;—the latter was more dead than alive from fright, but the former had never lost her self-possession for a moment. Before embarking in his vessel, she had been acquainted with the Captain, and besides heard him eulogized as one of the most active, energetic, and sober masters that sailed from New York; and in conversation had heard it said, that if there were but one who could bring a vessel safe home through all weathers, Captain C— was that one. She, therefore, believed that no human effort would fail to be exerted to weather the gale, and the result proved her confidence not to be misplaced. On the Captain's request being made known to her, she at once consented to give what time she could spare to attend to the necessities of Miss Sherwood. She straightway proceeded to the cabin—assisted Amelia to undress—paid such attention to the wound as was requisite—found it to be not dangerous, and, ere long, was able to leave her in a refreshing slumber. Meantime, the storm having entirely ceased, the Hindoo was again put in good sailing trim, the clouds had cleared away, and amid the beauties of a serene southern night-sky, the gallant vessel sped on her course. * * * * *

CHAPTER IV.

AMELIA'S LOVER AT NEW ORLEANS—DESPONDENCY—TRAVELING PARTY.

On reaching New Orleans, Frank Richards entered with zeal and alacrity on the duties of his situation; his employers were pleased with the attention he manifested to whatever was intrusted to him, and before three months had elapsed, he had evinced a talent for business, and developed an energy in grappling with commercial difficulties, that convinced them Frank would soon attain to a high position as a business man. He wrote regularly

to his father, informing him of the progress he was making. He also wrote frequently to Mossman, and enclosed letters to him to be delivered to Amelia. She only received one or two, however, the remainder being withheld by Mossman for an object with which the reader has already been made acquainted. Frank, nevertheless, received such cold replies to his fervid epistles, that he was utterly at a loss to account for their purport. He never for a moment suspected the fidelity of his friend; but supposed that, now that he was absent, Amelia's father and brothers had regained their lost influence, and, profiting by that circumstance to the utmost, had ultimately succeeded in alienating her affections from him. In consequence, he made up his mind to refrain, at least for a time, from writing to her, but secretly resolved that whatever would be the consequence he would live and die solely for her. The last letter he wrote to her was the one on which Mossman founded the scheme which he commenced to carry into effect; but in the prosecution of which he was so suddenly called from this sublunary scene. Frank's peace of mind was sacrificed by the treachery of him in whom he had placed so much confidence: still, he labored on, hoping (though apparently against hope) that the lapse of time would so change the current of events, as to enable him once more to quaff a brimful cup of earthly bliss. In course of his career as book-keeper, many opportunities occurred of testing his probity, and at length so assured were his employers of his ability and trustworthiness, that he was deputed by them to conduct their trading business at Galveston in Texas, which consisted in trafficking at the towns on the Rio Brazos. This department was managed with Frank's usual adroitness. He established profitable trading agencies at various points, until at length the business was so much increased, as to require the presence of one of the firm at Galveston, which was in future to be the headquarters of their greatly enlarged sphere of operations. Frank by his meritorious behavior was now elevated to a more lucrative situation in the concern, and all went prosperously. But now and again, the feeling of loneliness came over our merchant in embryo—his heart-strings, though not snapt asunder, had been cruelly tampered with; and he never reflected on the fair one whom he had left behind him in the Empire State,

without experiencing feelings that in a great measure constrained him to resolve to sacrifice his prospects and return home. His father did all in his power to prevent him from taking such a step—pointing out the folly of throwing away such expectations as he had for soon realizing a handsome income. These entreaties seemed to have the desired effect. Frank consented to remain where he was ; but his friends little knew the cause of what they deemed his fickleness—they knew not of the arrow, whose poisoned barb rankled deep in his bosom—they saw not the iron that had entered into his soul ! And Frank made no explanation. He, however, yielded in the meantime to their entreaties ; but secretly resolved that, as the position he at present occupied afforded him more time for reflection than he desired—especially as his thoughts continually reverted at such periods to the hours spent in sweet converse with Amelia—he would change his occupation for one embracing more physical exercise and mental activity.

Young Richards had not long to wait for such an opportunity as he ardently longed for. The managing partner of the firm at New Orleans was suddenly attacked with yellow fever, and as Frank had once mentioned in his correspondence that he felt inclined for a change of occupation, he acceded to an arrangement which brought him to the Crescent City for a short time, to superintend some business for which he was better adapted than any of the remaining partners at that place. He was sent on a special mission to Mobile ; and, having performed its duties in the most satisfactory manner, was solicited to remain in the New Orleans department of the trade, as likely to afford thus an occupation more active than that at Galveston, and more in consonance with his wishes. This, however, he declined, and accepted the invitation of a gentleman from Boston, with whom he had been acquainted in Galveston, who suggested that they should set out together on a tour of pleasure : “ For,” said he, “ Mr. Richards, you need a change of scene, and greater activity, and you will be all the better for spending a few months in travel.” Frank, therefore, having arranged matters with his companion, sailed up the Mississippi ; and, after experiencing much that was calculated to efface the melancholy that for some time past had brooded over him ; for his friend led him into many exciting

scenes, and to witness many stirring incidents; reached St. Louis, Mo., shortly before the first reports of the golden discoveries in California were made known by some Texan traders.

* * * * *

CHAPTER V.

AMELIA'S RECOVERY—"LOOK OUT FOR SQUALLS"—PIRATES IN THE PACIFIC.

Under the gentle treatment of Mrs. Harper, her kind nurse, Amelia speedily recovered, and in a day or two was so thoroughly recruited in strength as to be able to go on deck. Captain C—— instructed the lady who had attended on Miss Sherwood to inform her of Mossman's death. Amelia felt shocked at the intelligence; but rallied herself as much as possible, reasoning that, however deplorable was the death of her pretended friend, she would be relieved from much misery and distressing reflection by being entirely freed—though so untimely for the unhappy man himself—from his presence.

Returning health brought back to Amelia all her wonted energy of purpose; and she resolved, now that she had calm leisure to reflect on her situation, to submit to the circumstances with which she was surrounded with all the patience she could summon to her aid. Captain C—— admired the decision of his charge—for as such he now especially viewed her; and was completely released from the suspicion—if, indeed, he had entertained the idea—of her being in an unsound state of mind, as insinuated by Mossman. He proposed to her, that instead of attempting to find an opportunity of returning by some homeward-bound ship, she should go to the port of destination with him, and he would have infinite pleasure in giving her a passage back to New York. On considering the proposal, and consulting with her friend Mrs. Harper, who advised her to accept the kind offer, she assented to the proposal.

The time passed rapidly away, now that there was nothing to disturb or annoy the passengers of the Hindoo. In due time she reached Rio Janeiro, where fresh supplies of water being taken on board, the white canvas was again spread to the favorable breeze. Like a sea-gull, she darted over the crested wave, leaving ridges of foam in her wake. Next the beautiful constellation of the Southern Cross attracted attention, and soon the Straits of Magellan were made. The wind blowing favorable for that passage, the course was shaped so as to go by that route. Everything "went merry as a marriage-bell," and in less than three days more the good ship was in the Pacific trade-winds, bounding merrily on her way to California.

After a continued run of prosperous weather, Captain C—— was beginning to calculate on reaching Valparaiso on an early day, when one morning a ship showing the stars and stripes at her gaff overhauled him, and signalized to keep a sharp look-out, as there was a privateer cruising off and on Juan Fernandez. Captain C—— was informed that as far as could be ascertained, the pirate vessel was manned by a crew from some of the Mexican ports, among whom were several deserters from the States army and navy; and that no mercy was shown to the unfortunate craft that could not either fight better or sail faster. She showed no colors—had no name—was a rakish square-rigged vessel, and an excellent sailer. On the receipt of this information, Captain C—— called his men aft, and stated to them the facts as narrated. Fortunately for all hands, the skipper was a man of indomitable courage, so was the mate, and the boatswain had been a gunner in the United States navy during the war of 1812. A general consultation was held, and "Never give up!" was the sentiment expressed by the entire party. Captain C—— felt encouraged by the firmness with which, in case of need, he was likely to be supported. A brace of old brass six-pounders were hauled up from the hold; several muskets, pistols, cutlasses, and hatchets, were brought to light from what served as a magazine. And then the ammunition, of which there was but an indifferent supply, was placed at hand for service. All this over, the skipper paced the deck with as proud a step as if he carried the "red flag at the fore" in the English navy.

CHAPTER VI.

BLOODY CONFLICT—PIRATE-SHIP BLOWN UP—THE HINDOO CAPTURED—AMELIA SHOTS THE CAPTAIN OF THE CRUISER, AND SAVES THE LIFE OF HER FRIEND.

Shortly after this the Hindoo anchored at Valparaiso, but had received no further intelligence of the pirate. A few days spent in renewing the water supplies, taking fresh provisions, &c., and again Captain C—— was making good headway. He had not forgot the caution about the cruiser; and though he had no wish to come into trouble unnecessarily, still he was prepared to make a stout resistance. Three or four days more passed, and now it was believed by all that the dreaded danger was over. But in this they were mistaken. With one exception the voyage had hitherto been a pleasant and prosperous one, as far as the *sailing* qualities of the ship were concerned. The Hindoo was now to pass through a fiery ordeal. On the tenth day after leaving Valparaiso, Captain C—— and his ship's company experienced what might be called the first dead calm since leaving Rio. It was not of long duration, for towards evening the usual indications betokened wind from the north-east—not quite so favorable for their progress as was desirable, but rather than be making “no way,” any movement was welcome, and as much as could was determined to be made of it. Before sundown, Captain C—— was standing away on the starboard tack with a pleasant breeze, when the look-out man descried a sail coming up on the weather bow. The Captain instantly had his glass bearing on the object; and in an hour or so, he saw as much of her as to warrant him in believing that, though she showed Mexican colors, she was the cruiser he had been cautioned against. Very much preparation was not needed to be made, but his hardy crew were summoned, and the Captain's opinion communicated. C—— now determined to keep on his course for three hours longer, calculating that by standing out of her way, he might be able to steer clear of her altogether when night came on. The stranger by this time had shaped her course

so as to give unmistakable evidence of wishing to overhaul the Hindoo. This she would soon accomplish. The females were, therefore, sent down to the lower deck, and cautioned not to leave it till fitting opportunity should arrive. The guns were manned and charged—the muskets were also loaded and placed conveniently for use—and the cook was ordered to make a strong charcoal fire in the galley, with which to heat some shot for the long carronades. The strange craft was rapidly nearing, and now the crew of the Hindoo, through the twilight, could see that she was pierced for ten guns, and had at least fifty or sixty hands, who, from their motions and equipments, seemed prepared for any kind of reception. Nothing daunted—though he saw no chance of being able to fight the pirate with his small crew—Captain C—— directed his men to await his orders for firing, as he had not a single shot to spare. The pirate fired a gun conveying an *order* to heave to; and then hauled down the colors under which she had been sailing. This, of course, was not attended to; but in a few minutes, a bright flash from her bows, followed by a deafening report, carried some heavy shot through the rigging of the Hindoo, and her foretop-mast fell over the side. Captain C—— nevertheless kept on his course, having directed two hands to clear away the fallen rigging; but he saw he had no chance of succeeding in his manœuvre, for two boats had by this time left the cruiser, and were making direct for the prize, determined to board her at once. There was not a moment to lose. Captain C—— hastily divided his force into two parties to receive the boarders. The boatswain having thrust a red-hot ball into one of the long guns, now fired the first shot from the Hindoo, which was near enough the rover to hear distinctly the crashing of timbers that followed. In a few seconds more was dispatched another of the same kind of compliments, which reached the magazine, and in a minute after, the rover blew up with a terrific explosion, sending all that had been left on board into eternity. Some burning timbers from the exploded ship were driven through the rigging of the Hindoo. All this was the work of not more than three minutes. When the first shot was delivered by the boatswain, “That’s the talk!” said the Captain, “send the second in the same range, and then for cutlasses and hatchets to repel the boarders.” In a very

short time after, one of the pirate's boats shot up under the mizzen chains, and a gang of the most ferocious looking desperadoes, headed by the rover Captain himself, came yelling over the bulwarks. A sharp and well-directed discharge of the small arms for an instant checked their progress; but the resistance of the crew was against fearful odds, and they were compelled to recede before the superior numbers of the blood-thirsty marauders, now rendered desperate by the loss of their own ship. At the first onset, Captain C—— closed with the leader, but was overpowered, and fell bleeding on the deck. His gallant crew were obliged to retreat, and on looking behind them, their horror was excited on discerning that their ship was also on fire. The Hindoo was now at the mercy of the pirates. Short but bloody had been the conflict, and the deck was red with blood. During this awful scene the females on the lower deck were in a state bordering on distraction. Amelia, indeed, retained her consciousness, but the others swooned from the agony they endured. The next effort of the pirates was to extinguish the flames, which was soon accomplished; and the remainder of the crew of the prize were put in irons. The wreck was rapidly cleared, and the wounded, dying, and dead, thrown indiscriminately over-board, except Captain C——, who on being recognised was ordered to be taken below, and his wound examined. He had only been stunned by the blow, the wound being very slight. The cruisers now began to examine the cargo of the Hindoo. The rover's Captain having taken possession of the ship's papers, said he would spare Captain C——'s life and the lives of his surviving crew, if he would sail the vessel under his directions. To this Captain C—— reluctantly consented, hoping thereby to have an opportunity of yet rescuing the ship and bringing the pirates to justice, and therefore, as directed, shaped his course for the Sandwich Islands. He soon discovered, however, that the pirates were mutinous and dissatisfied with their Captain, and soon after a proposal was made to put him in irons, which his own crew volunteered to do, if Captain C—— would give them the ship's long boat, their arms, some ammunition and provisions, and then he might with his vessel pursue his voyage. After a desperate resistance the pirate Captain was overpowered, and seeing himself deserted by his accom-

pieces he seemed to submit. At this moment the report of a pistol was heard, and Amelia, rushing up to Captain C——, dragged him towards the bulwarks, and thus he escaped the murderer's knife; the rover made a wild leap after him, but fell dead on the deck. From the cabin doors she had been a witness of the scene, and observing the treachery of the rover, snatched up the weapon and discharged it at the villain's head, and thus saved the life of her guardian. Captain C—— immediately put the Hindoo about, and after a rapid run anchored in San Francisco bay.

CHAPTER VII.

SAN FRANCISCO—SCENES AT THE MINES—FATAL ENCOUNTER—
 QUARRELS ABOUT GOLD—HEROIC CONDUCT OF AMELIA—SHE
 PREVENTS BLOODSHED AT THE PERIL OF HER LIFE.

The following announcement appeared in the *California Star* of December 23d, 1847: "At San Francisco from New York, the ship Hindoo, Captain C——, with goods and merchandise for Clinton and Cotrel; also several passengers."

After presenting himself to his agents, and receiving the highest compliments for his bravery, Captain C——'s first care was to procure as comfortable accommodation for Miss Sherwood as he could find in the city of San Francisco. After several weeks delay, he was beginning to make arrangements for his homeward trip, when a discovery was made by Captain Sutter, that has since done more to revolutionize the United States, in a commercial point of view, than could well have been anticipated. Every one has heard about the Gold Regions: we shall therefore confine ourselves to the narration of some incidents that occurred there.

When the rush was made for the "diggings," as was to be expected, almost all Captain C——'s crew set off for the mines, leaving only his mate and the boatswain. He felt deeply chagrined at the delay to which this would subject him; nevertheless he consoled himself that his plight was not worse than that of some

skippers. The news about the gold continued to absorb the attention of old and young, and in a short time the thriving city of San Francisco looked like a place that had been visited by plague or pestilence. Even old men started for the mines, and females too forsook their homes, and set to gathering gold. In the month of June, Captain C——, when paying a visit to Amelia, (they did not reside at the same house, though he saw her every other day,) stated his intention of visiting Sutter's Fort, taking his mate and boatswain with him, having become attached to them on account of their valiant conduct in the encounter with the pirates. As from previous business transactions, he could rely on finding accommodation at the Fort, he inquired of Amelia whether she would not wish to accompany him. There had been rumors of murders, robberies, fighting, and other lawless outbreaks, but these had all taken place far above the Fort. Amelia agreed to the proposal, and next morning, every thing being in readiness, the party started for Sutter's, where they were cordially welcomed. On their arrival Captain Sutter gave the new comers all the information he possessed about the extent of the mines. He also narrated the particulars of a fatal encounter, that had on the day before taken place in the neighborhood of his saw-mill, betwixt a young Texan trapper and an English marine, the former of whom had arrived at "the diggings," with an overland party but a few days before, and who had already secured the services of a numerous company of Indians to dig for them. The circumstances were these:—the entire crew of a foreign merchantman at anchor in San Francisco harbor, deserted and went up to the mines. After spending a few days about the Fort, one of Sutter's men ascertained that they were the perpetrators of several of the most disgraceful outrages that had been reported, besides numerous acts of violence, and burglaries where they expected gold to be the reward of their villainies. In one attempt especially, they had nearly succeeded in carrying off the proceeds of six weeks' hard labor by a poor man and his wife. One of the ruffians attempted to escape with two bags of gold dust, while the others essayed to fire the house about the ears of the inmates; but while in the act, a party of Indians headed by a young trapper, arrived in time to prevent the consummation of the outrage. Leaving

The natives to execute summary justice on the villains at the house, the ranger started in pursuit of him who ran off with the treasure. Finding himself closely followed by the Texan, he threw down the gold, and prepared to defend himself. For a little while he succeeded in parrying the attacks of the avenger, but finding his strength failing under the fierce onsets to which he was exposed, he summoned all his energy for a desperate lounge to rid himself of his adversary. The wary trapper turned the blow aside, and with a fierce thrust ran the marine through the body.

Captain C—— now proposed to supply the necessary utensils to his mate and boatswain, and let them work at the mines, on condition that he should have a third of their united earnings; this was at once agreed to and acted on. Meanwhile Amelia and her guardian remained at the Fort. Several exploring parties that had been sent out, returned with the most surprising accounts of the facility of procuring gold, but at the same time, gave harrowing details of the sufferings of those at the diggings from hunger and other privations. Captain Sutter made every possible arrangement to alleviate the growing distress by sending provisions and clothing to the mines; but the distance of some of the places where they were located, prevented him from doing so much as he would willingly have done.

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During the succeeding two weeks Amelia and her guardian made sundry short excursions among the diggers, affording relief in many cases where that was required, and advice where such was necessary; while Miss Sherwood was especially serviceable in conciliating parties where disagreements had sprung up—besides acting as arbiter in disputes arising from various causes. Both were not unfrequently placed in most unenviable positions among so much discordant material; but particularly so was Amelia on one occasion, and in circumstances, too, where many would have shrunk from interfering, but in which she displayed great daring and cool courage. Two men had a violent quarrel about who should obtain possession of a piece of gold belonging to an Indian, who was neither inclined to dispose of it to one or the other of them. Recriminating and threatening language was uttered against each other, and from words the quarrel came by mutual consent to be submitted to the arbitration of the bowie-

knife. Weapons were unsheathed and brandished—blades gleamed high in the sunlight—when at this critical juncture Amelia appeared, and darting between them, with outstretched hands, implored them to desist and put up their weapons, and by words of gentle persuasion, calmed their ruffled passion, and prevented the unnecessary effusion of blood.

CHAPTER VIII.

ATTACK BY BURGLARS—TIMELY ARRIVAL OF THE TRAPPER—FRANK RICHARDS DISCOVERED TO BE THE GALLANT TEXAN—CONGRATULATIONS—EXPLANATIONS—UNION OF THE LOVERS.

After another week had been passed in this way, Amelia and Captain C—— set out to visit the rancho of a family who had made a successful harvest at the mines. On arriving there, they were invited to stay till the next day, when they would have a chance of getting company to the Fort—there being several exploring parties farther up in that direction, some of whom generally returned in the morning to avoid travelling in the heat of the day. At an early hour the household retired to rest. Though the inmates of the rancho had never been disturbed, it was deemed prudent to be always prepared for any emergency that might occur; and they kept watch during the night, to prevent being surprised and robbed by marauding parties, who traversed the regions around, plundering all who were unable to protect themselves. On this evening, the father was to take the early watch. After the family had retired to rest, the Captain resolved to share the duty of sentinel. The first hour or two were spent in pleasant converse. About midnight, however, stealthy footsteps were heard in the vicinage; and immediately a heavy, but unsuccessful blow was struck at the door to force it open. The household were alarmed; the father counselled the females to be calm, and keep themselves concealed; as for his sons, they were already up and armed. Captain C—— secured a rifle; and the party, thus

prepared, awaited further attack. The burglars were much disconcerted at their failure to force an entrance, but soon repeated the attempt, in an instant after which the sharp crack of a rifle was heard, succeeded by a low moan—another ringing crack followed—and another—in quick succession. These were succeeded by the hasty tramp of retreating footsteps. The females in their hiding-place trembled with alarm, and the little garrison looked for an instant silently on each other. Before they had time to reconnoitre, a low knock was heard at the door. Captain C—— inquired who was there; to which the voice, evidently that of a young man, promptly replied, that the assailants had retreated, leaving two of their number dangerously wounded—that he it was who fired the shots—and that now, he requested shelter for the night. To prevent surprise, the inmates arranged themselves so that all the fire-arms covered the entrance. The Captain then opened the door, and admitted a young man, clothed in the wild accoutrements of a trapper, armed with a double-barrelled rifle and revolver. Seeing from his peaceable demeanor that no danger need be apprehended from him, the fire-arms were all laid aside, and the stranger attended to. He had been abroad with a party of natives exploring a tract of dry diggings, and late in the afternoon had strayed from them; and while wandering about, he had discovered a cavity containing a large quantity of gold, which he intended to gather on the following day. When evening approached, he had encamped in a spot from which luckily he overheard the plottings of the depredators who had just been repulsed, and on whose trail he had kept close watch for the last three hours, and had come up in time to aid in driving off the plunderers.

During this brief explanation on the part of the stranger, there was, at least, one anxious listener. His voice fell on the ear of Amelia, like the enchanting tones of angelic harpists—recalling to memory the voice of *one* she never could forget. She hurried into the apartment, and, gazing for an instant in the face of their deliverer, clasped both his hands in hers, exclaiming, “Frank Richards—my own, my beloved Frank!” It was, indeed, Frank who had so opportunely arrived to their rescue. So rapid had been the movement on the part of Amelia, that he started back as

if an apparition had appeared ; a second glance in the face of her who thus so unceremoniously addressed him, served to show that it was she whose affections he had supposed lost to him. He clasped her to his bosom, ejaculating, "Thank Heaven ! my dear Amelia is restored to me !"

It is needless to say, that the rest of the party in the *ranch* were as much astonished at the scene enacted before them, as the *dramatis personæ* themselves were. Captain C——, as the guardian *pro tempore* of Amelia, claimed the right of speaking first on the subject. He gave a brief, succinct account of the circumstances which placed Miss Sherwood under his protection ; and added, "He had not, he believed, traveled round the world for nothing ; he had, like a child on the sea-shore, been picking up here and there a pebble—gazing, wondering, admiring their various characteristics ; and, especially having seen so many human faces, and marked individual traits in each, he thought he would be greatly disappointed, if Frank was not worthy of the affectionate love of her, on whom he almost looked as his own child."

Frank Richards next accounted for his presence in California, by stating that some six months before, while at St. Louis, flying reports reached him, through some of the merchants with whom he had traded, of the gold discoveries ; and, still heart-sick on account of Amelia, he became one of the first party overland to the Sacramento Valley, in the hope that the excitements of travel would, for a time at least, dissipate the gloom that had well-nigh settled on his soul. He reached California in safety, and had been connected with an exploring expedition for dry diggings, when the circumstances already narrated transpired, and which identified him with the young Texan trapper, who had so signally distinguished himself on so many previous occasions.

In two weeks after this romantic re-union of the lovers, their marriage was celebrated at Sutter's Fort, in presence of a numerous company.

CHAPTER IX.

AMELIA PREPARES FOR AN EXPEDITION—AWFUL PRIVATIONS OF
AN EMIGRANT PARTY—CONCLUSION.

If this narrative were mere romance, the preceding chapter should have ended our labors, simply adding that our heroine and her husband were now getting comfortably settled near the residence of Captain Sutter, and that Captain C—— was a daily visitor at their dwelling. But there are horrors yet to be told, more revolting than any we have here spoken of—scenes so harrowing and repugnant even to the most vitiated, that were the statements not corroborated by the public press, they would have been withheld on account of their improbability. The letters that every day appear in the public prints in relation to similar catastrophes substantiate all that shall be recorded—and none more so than Colonel Fremont's of the sufferings of his party; and the writer hopes that this chapter will serve as a voice of warning to such as are bound for the gold regions overland.

But to return. Amelia (for so we feel inclined to designate her, notwithstanding her marriage) and Frank, after spending two or three days with their friends at the Fort, located themselves about seven miles distant, in the vicinity of the place where the party with whom Frank had traveled from St. Louis were situated; and ere long had surrounded themselves with many comforts, considering the difficulty of procuring what is essential to ease and enjoyment.

Frank, in prosecuting business with his partners in mining, had frequently to be absent from his dwelling during the entire day; he soon found, however, that it was more accordant with our heroine's wish that he should permit her to accompany him. His objection—that she could not endure the privations frequently incident to the miners, or be inclined to incur the fatigue and exposure—was successfully overruled by her; so, having provided herself with an attire adapted to the circumstances in which she was likely to be placed, and hanging a poniard to her girdle, she

was prepared to proceed with her husband on his next expedition. But this was not to be a search for gold.

Intelligence having reached Sutter's from the upper diggings, that an exploring party, after an absence of several weeks, had returned from the Sierra Nevada, and brought tidings that they had found the remains of a man, and two mules, with a quantity of baggage—it was at once proposed that a party of volunteers should be raised, to explore the neighborhood of the mountain where the bodies were found, so that, at least, the sad rites of sepulture might be performed. To Frank Richards was given the command of a company of twelve, who were to set out with supplies in case any should be found alive. Amelia resolved that she would also accompany the expedition; and suitable arrangements being made for this purpose, the heroic adventurers started on their mission of mercy.

After considerable difficulty in ascending the Sierra, the party arrived at the place where the bodies had been first discovered. On a consultation being held, it was the opinion of all, that those who had perished here had been sent in advance of a party, and that the proper course would be to push forward. After two days more of traveling, the exploring party, with Amelia and Frank at their head, halted again, and resolved that they would not be warranted in proceeding much further, as they would thereby run some risk of disaster to themselves; ultimately, however, another day's travel was resolved on before returning. Before encamping for the night, a scout returned, saying, he had seen in the distance what appeared to him to be like a thin wreath of smoke, but he could not positively determine. Combustibles were therefore set on fire, and kept burning during the night, so as to give token of the approach of the party. Next morning showed that the look-out man had been correct in his conjecture; and a few miles of further progress brought the company into the midst of one of the most horrible spectacles ever witnessed. For the sake of brevity, the following account is given in the words of Amelia, in a letter to her father:—

A more shocking scene cannot be imagined, than that witnessed by our party who went to the relief of the unfortunate emigrants in the California mountains. The bones of those who

had died and been devoured by the miserable ones that still survived, were lying around their tents and cabins. Bodies of men, women, and children, with half the flesh torn from them, lay on every side. A woman sat by the side of the body of her husband, who had just died, cutting out his tongue—the heart she had already taken out, broiled, and ate! The daughter was seen eating the flesh of the father—the mother that of her children—children that of father and mother. The emaciated, wild and ghastly appearance of the survivors added to the horror of the scene. Language cannot describe the awful change that a few weeks of dire suffering had wrought in the minds of these wretched and pitiable beings. Those, who but one month before, would have shuddered and sickened at the thought of eating human flesh, or of killing their companions and relatives to preserve their own lives, now looked upon the opportunity these acts afforded them of escaping the most dreadful of deaths, as a providential interference in their behalf. Calculations were coldly made as they sat around their gloomy camp-fires, for the next and succeeding meals. Various expedients were devised to prevent the dreadful crime of murder, but they finally resolved to kill those who had the least claims to longer existence. Just at this moment, however, as if by Divine interposition, some of them died, which afforded the rest temporary relief. Some sunk into the arms of death, cursing God for their miserable fate, while the last whisperings of others were prayers and songs of praise to the Almighty. After the first few deaths, but the one all-absorbing thought of individual self-preservation prevailed. The fountains of natural affection were dried up. The chords that once vibrated with connubial, parental and filial affection, were rent asunder, and each one seemed resolved, without regard to the fate of others, to escape from the impending calamity. Even the wild, hostile mountain Indians, who once visited their camps, pitied them; and instead of pursuing the natural impulse of their hostile feelings to the whites, and destroying them, as they could easily have done, divided their own scanty supply of food with them. So changed had the emigrants become, that when the party sent out arrived with food, some of them cast it aside, and seemed to prefer the putrid human flesh that still remained

Such were the awful scenes presented to the succoring party. Our heroine exerted almost superhuman energy in ministering to the necessities of the unfortunate sufferers. A tried man was sent back to the Fort for more assistance, which duly arrived. In as short a time as practicable, after the remains of the others were interred, the whole party commenced their return to the Sacramento, where they arrived without accident, and where measures of more permanent relief were adopted.

Our limits forbid further details. We shall, therefore, only say, that the heroism and fortitude displayed by Amelia and her husband on trying occasions, won for them the approbation of Captain Sutter, and all who witnessed or heard of them.

It has only to be added, that Mr. Sherwood and his sons, and likewise Mr. Richards, sen., in consequence of letters recently received, are now busily preparing to emigrate to the golden "land of the West."





The Pirates Boarding the Hindoo, after the blowing up of their own ship.—See p. 21



Desperate conflict and capture of the Hindoo by the crew of the Cruiser.—See p. 22.

